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FROM THE EDITORS

Salutations and a warm welcome to the sixth volume of the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review. Undergraduate and graduate students work together to present the best available original undergraduate historical research from Virginia Tech as well as from regional institutions on the east coast. The Review seeks to provide undergraduate researchers with the opportunity to grow in their ability as historians outside the classroom, to experience the publishing process, and ultimately, to know the joy of seeing their hard work appear in print.

During the review process, we aim to diligently work with all authors who submit their work and provide them with clear feedback to help them to improve their historical knowledge and skills. When authors submit their work, we remove their names in order to facilitate a blind review process. Our board of undergraduate editors then reads each submission and scores the work according to a standardized rubric, which pays special attention to how authors engage with secondary literature on their topics, create an argument from their primary source base, and articulate their ideas. The excellence of the articles included in this volume stems from long hours of analysis, proof-reading and effort on the part of our student board to judge submissions and polish the chosen articles through the review process.

Volume Six of the Review begins with Emily Stewart's "Take Cover" which examines the implementation of the National Civic Defense Program in Montgomery County during the Cold War. Next, Cristina Urquidi seeks to explain American media reaction to Hitler's rise to power in the 1930s through the use of media framing theory in her essay "American Media Coverage of the Rise of Hitler." Then, in "Roman Corbridge and the Corbridge Hoard," Parker Leep analyzes how archaeologists and classic historians reconstruct the past through looking at the case of the Roman Corbridge. Afterwards, Bekah Smith, in her article "Freedom in the Night," reexamines the lives of African American slaves in the Antebellum South and considers how the nighttime impacted slaves' lives by giving them more freedom.

She also questions why slave owners feared the nighttime. Kelly Cooper then looks at art conservation efforts during World War II and why some communities went to great lengths to preserve artwork from the Medieval and Renaissance Periods. Her article “Saving VanEyck and Leonardo Da Vinci” asks how the power of art influenced people to act and save it. Lastly, Ian Shank’s article “Home to Port” reflects on the experiences of Italian soldiers during the African Campaign in World War II.

During our year editing the VTUHR, we learned much from our experiences of writing articles for and reviewing, editing, and designing this year’s volume of the Review. For their constant support, guidance, and encouraging words, we would like to thank the faculty in the History Department, especially our faculty editor, Dr. Heather Gumbert. This volume would not have been possible without her careful eye. Thanks also go to Dr. Mark Barrow, the chair of the History Department, and Dr. Robert Stephens, the founder of the VTUHR, the undergraduate editorial board, and everyone who chose to submit to the Review this year. We also want to show our heartfelt thanks to Faith Skiles, for her loving support as we finished the stages of publishing this volume. Thanks and baked goods are also owed to Dr. Peter Wallenstein, who proofread the journal in its final stages. Penultimately, we owe our design editor, Teresa Bliss, a bouquet of roses for the many hours she spent making this volume look the best yet! Last, but not least, we owe our thanks to you, dear reader. Accept our deepest gratitude for supporting our work and the work of undergraduate researchers everywhere!

Laeta Lectio! Happy Reading!

Kevin Caprice and Grace Hemmingson
Managing editors



FALLOUT SHELTER

Take Cover: Nuclear Preparations in Montgomery County

Emily Stewart

A nuclear weapon is an explosive device the destructive potential of which derives from the energy that is released by the splitting or combining of atomic nuclei. The use of nuclear weapons became a threat to the world with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end World War II. The United States federal government worked to aid nuclear preparations throughout the nation. Throughout approximately forty years of American history, tensions between the United States and Russia led to civil defense programs that prepared for a nuclear attack. The government set federal restrictions in order to establish guidelines for states to follow when preparing for a nuclear crisis.

In Virginia, county officials had to work with state officials to effectively mobilize nuclear defense. One such county, Montgomery County, is a rural county located in the southwest region of Virginia. During the time period from 1959 to 1963, Montgomery County was actively preparing for the possible threat of a nuclear crisis. County officers communicated with state and federal officers in an effort to make sure their municipal preparations followed the national standards. The national standards were defined, enforced, and advertised through federal funding for fallout shelter programs, national advertisements pertaining to a nuclear war, military initiatives and educational pamphlets. National initiatives trickled down to municipal preparations in Montgomery County but did not seem to have a significant effect. Montgomery County preparations can specifically be seen through the actions of local elected officials. Officers

sought federal financial assistance in order to aid local preparations. Throughout the county, local officials worked with the overall safety and benefit of the public in mind. In many instances, if not for local officials in the county, civil defense during this time period might have proven ineffective. Additionally, public support of these programs allowed officials to work more efficiently toward their goals. Nuclear crisis preparations in Montgomery County were shaped by a combination of federal initiatives and funding, local cooperation, and positive public support towards civil defense.

Many historians have researched aspects of the America's Cold War era civil defense, including Montgomery County civil defense. Study has been conducted in areas analyzing family contributions, rural town preparations, and public policies, as well as the different planning stages throughout the Cold War period. In her work *Mightier than Missiles: The Rhetoric of Civil Defense for Rural American Families*, Jenny Barker-Devine argues that during the Cold War Era, it was rural American families that provided the framework for civil defense during a nuclear crisis.¹ Without the American family structure, civil defense programs would not have been implemented effectively, especially in remote areas such as Montgomery County. Another scholar, Guy Oakes, provides more empirical weight behind the average American family's importance in nuclear civil defense. These works by Barker-Devine and Oakes contextualize the significance of rural contributions to civil defense preparations throughout the United States.

In his book *The Imaginary War*, Oakes also analyzes the relationship of national security and civil defense to civil ethics, specifically emphasizing the role of American families.² Oakes pushes a little further than Barker-Devine in that he studied not just the role American families played in nuclear war preparations, but the relationship families had with officers in the implementation of these programs. Sources from families in Montgomery County are difficult to come across, but contemporary newspapers record public opinion regarding civil defense measures among average individuals residing in Montgomery County.

Andrew Grossman, another scholar, speaks to the modern effect of Cold War institutions. In his essay *The Early Cold War and Ameri-*

¹ Jenny Barker-Devine, "Mightier than Missiles: The Rhetoric of Civil Defense for Rural American Families, 1950-1970," *Agricultural History* 80, No. 4 (Autumn 2006): 417.

² Guy Oakes, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defense and American Cold War Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9.

can Political Development- Reflections on Recent Research, Grossman analyzes three different books written to reflect on American Cold War public policy.³ He argues that the three books all demonstrate that the “institutional arrangements during the Cold War are still with us. (sic)”⁴ Throughout Montgomery County, it is evident that Cold War institutions are still present. For example, the Radford Ordnance Plant still operates, although used for different purposes now, and even some homes throughout the County still have bomb shelter bunkers.

Lastly, David Monteyne reflects on the architectural implications of civil defense mechanisms, specifically by looking at the design of fall-out shelters in America.⁵ Monteyne agrees with Grossman that Cold War institutions still linger throughout modern America in that, after the Cold War period was over, the nation did not just destroy their Cold War foundational buildings. These four historians have all researched somewhat different topics of the civil defense programs in America during the Cold War, which together help us to better understand the mobilization and support of Montgomery County civil defense programs.

After World War II, national tensions between the United States and the former Soviet Union drastically escalated into mutual distrust. One critical event that contributed to escalating tensions between the United States and Russia was President Harry S. Truman’s containment policy of 1947.⁶ This policy sought to isolate the Soviet Union from making any global advancement, including nuclear missile testing. Although the American containment policy sought to prevent nuclearization of the Soviet Union, it ultimately failed to keep atomic testing out of the nation. The first successful testing of an atomic bomb in the Soviet Union was in 1949, the same year of Truman’s containment legislation.⁷ Due to the Soviet possession of nuclear weapons, both nations ramped up internal civil defense programs. Tensions between the United States and Russia reached their

³ Andrew D. Grossman, “The Early Cold War and American Political Development: Reflections on Recent Research,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 15, No. 3 (Spring 2002): 472-473.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 481.

⁵ David Monteyne, *Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War: Fallout Shelter* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xxi.

⁶ Brett Spencer, “From Atomic Shelters to Arms Control: Libraries, Civil Defense, and American Militarism during the Cold War,” *Information and Culture* 49, No. 3 (Fall 2014): 351-385.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁸ Edward Geist, “Armageddon Insurance: Civil Defense in the United States and Soviet Union, 1945-1991”, (video of lecture, Virginia Tech: National Capital Region, September 22, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=my6TOct5PH0>.

heights during the years surrounding 1962, when the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred. President John F. Kennedy advocated strongly for the development of a program for civil defense during this time period.⁸ He helped portray civil defense programs to the American people as a necessary step of insurance against the Soviet Union.⁹ The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) was established under the Department of Defense during the Kennedy administration.¹⁰ The overall goal of the OCD was to implement and utilize a system of shelters in order to save as many lives as possible in the event of a nuclear war.¹¹ In order for the United States to effectively implement a national civil defense program, the federal government relied on municipal programs like that of Montgomery County. Through national programs, a federal budget, and the notion of “necessary insurance,” Montgomery County officials worked toward providing secure, thought out civil defense measures, and officials diligently considered possible places of storage, means of financial support, as well as public information initiatives beneficial to its citizens.

Montgomery County did not seem to have its own unique civil defense preparation plans. The county government worked only to fulfill the federal guidelines pertaining to local civil defense. For the most part, Montgomery County officials only did the necessary steps in order to set up a safety plan in the case of a nuclear crisis and did not go beyond the federal emergency action requirements. The Montgomery County government worked with the Virginia Army Corps of Engineers in hopes of securing the proper civil defense measures such as shelter, storage, and emergency supplies. Once the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors received the proper approval from the Army Corps of Engineers, local officials were able to work with other county departments in preparation for a nuclear crisis. Specifically, the Board of Supervisors worked with the county police department, the Radford Ordnance Plant, and local members of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). By working with various branches of state and local departments of government, Montgomery County officials were able to ensure effective defense measures were established.

The United States Office of Civil Defense provided financial assistance to Montgomery County in order for the county to find proper public sheltering in the event of a nuclear crisis. From 1960 to 1961,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Monteyne, *Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*, 47.

¹¹ Geist, *Armageddon Insurance*.

¹² Monteyne, *Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*, 47.

there was a major increase in national funding for civil defense programs.¹² The increase in federal funding for civil defense proved to be beneficial for all of Montgomery County's civil defense programs, but even more specifically its efforts to find adequate public shelter space. Correspondence between Ira Claxton, Director of Civil Defense for the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, and J. D. Snow, district engineer in the Norfolk branch of the Army Corps of Engineers, displays detailed plans for the county's nuclear crisis preparation.¹³ According to the guidelines provided by the OCD, the Army Corps of Engineers had to complete a shelter survey in order for Montgomery County to receive any federal assistance.¹⁴ This survey ultimately revealed acceptable public shelters and was designed to explore recommendations for the improvement of shelters.¹⁵ Along with conducting the shelter survey, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided a Fact Sheet on the Department of Defense Community Fallout Shelter Survey Program for Virginia in order to specify a clearer explanation on the procedures accompanying the shelter survey program.¹⁶ This source clearly states that the main purpose of a fallout shelter is to "prevent deaths and to reduce biological damage."¹⁷ Therefore, it became vital for Montgomery County to find adequate shelter in order to provide protection to its citizens. Correspondence between Montgomery County and the Norfolk Army Corps of Engineers during the year 1961, displays the significance behind securing shelter space for civil defense preparations. After the shelter survey was completed, yielding positive results, Montgomery County was able to move forward in securing federal funding for the next steps in their nuclear emergency action plans.

After securing federal funding, Montgomery County successfully put into place other necessary nuclear crisis emergency action plans. One specific plan, referenced in a Montgomery County Board of Supervisor's letter, asserts the importance of emergency aid for food and medical supplies the federal government was responsible

¹³ J. D. Snow, Letter to Mr. Ira D. Claxton, 22 December 1961, box 2, folder 5 Orrin Rankin Magill Papers, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

¹⁴ Monteyne, *Designing for Civil Defense in the Cold War*, 48.

¹⁵ J. D. Snow, Letter to Mr. Ira D. Claxton, 22 December 1961.

¹⁶ U.S Army Engineer District, Norfolk, Fact Sheet on Department of Defense Community Fallout Shelter Survey Program for Virginia: Norfolk, VA, 1961, Orrin Rankin Magill Papers, box 2, folder 5, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

¹⁷ Fact Sheet on Department of Defense Community Fallout Shelter Survey Program for Virginia: Norfolk, VA, 1961.

¹⁸ Ira D. Claxton, Letter to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, 20 February 1962, box 2, folder 5, Orrin Rankin Magill Papers, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

¹⁹ Claxton, Letter to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, 20 February 1962.

for providing.¹⁸ From this letter, we learn the federal government provided aid for items such as emergency food and medical supplies to counties and cities only after the local government was able to secure some type of warehouse space to ensure the safe storage of the emergency supplies.¹⁹ These letters display evidence of the County responding to federally set standards for municipal preparations. In order for Montgomery County to obtain federal funding for nuclear preparations, the local government needed to secure a space for the emergency supplies to be stored safely.

Local officials in Montgomery County worked diligently in order to find adequate storage for emergency supplies in compliance with the Army Corps of Engineers Shelter Survey guidelines. Ira D. Claxton, the director of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors during the year 1962, secured storage space at the Radford Ordnance Plant.²⁰ In his letters, Claxton does not explain the exact measures taken in order to secure the shelter space. Rather, he just simply states that he has secured the space to use in the event of a nuclear crisis. Specifically, Claxton was granted access to the east wing of the Radford Ordnance Plant for the storage of emergency supplies and equipment.²¹ In order obtain this storage space from the Radford Ordnance Plant, Claxton worked with various departments and branches of the Montgomery County government. Specifically, in his letters, Claxton references working with the Montgomery County sheriff, Mr. Arington.²² According to a letter Mr. Claxton sent to the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Arington was put in charge of receiving and storing the supplies in the Radford Ordnance Plant once they arrived in Montgomery County.²³ Although the detailed responsibilities of Mr. Arington's duties were never discussed in the Board of Supervisors letters, he served a crucial role in the local civil defense preparations. The letters of correspondence, which reference the funding, show the serious approach Montgomery County was taking in order to adequately prepare for a nuclear crisis. With the help of the federal legislation that provided local funding, Montgomery County properly obtained supplies and shelter in order to protect its citizens against a nuclear attack.

²⁰ Ira D. Claxton, Letter to Mr. Douglass A. Moore Jr., 8 February 1962, box 2, folder 5, Orrin Rankin Magill Papers, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

²¹ Claxton, Letter to Mr. Douglass A. Moore Jr., 8 February 1962.

²² Claxton, Letter to the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, 20 February 1962.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Radford Ordnance Plant, Montgomery County Emergency Operational Plan: (Radford, VA), 1963, box 2, folder 5, Orrin Rankin Magill Papers, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

After securing the Radford Ordnance Plant for shelter, it became vital for Montgomery County to draft an Operational Defense Plan. Prepared by Ira Claxton, the Montgomery County Operational Defense Plan was distributed to nineteen different civil defense service chiefs.²⁴ Outlined throughout the plan are topics such as the mission of, responsibilities and duties of, and legal authority for Emergency Plans in the event of a nuclear emergency.²⁵ Instructions on how to react during a national nuclear threat, the differing missions of the various sectors of civil defense preparations, as well as the proper protocols and procedures are all laid out in this lengthy document. The degree to which this plan was distributed, as well as the bulk of information provided throughout the plan, attests to the seriousness with which local officials took civil defense in Montgomery County during this time period.

Along with providing military assistance to civil authorities' emergency operational plan, Montgomery County also drafted a USDA Defense Board Emergency Operating Plan. This coincided with the overall emergency operation plan for Montgomery County.²⁶ Specifically, the USDA Emergency Operation Plan provided instructions for local farmers in order to "preserve life, food resources, and help more food resources get to emergency and distressed areas."²⁷ Laid out throughout the USDA emergency plan are procedures such as management of livestock, water, crop, timber, along with the technical aspects of inventory, transportation, manpower, and communications that were all thought to be essential for survival during a nuclear crisis.²⁸

The people of Montgomery County responded to the mobilization efforts and civil defense programs by recognizing the hard work of local government officials. One newspaper article, "From Shirts to Missiles: That's Industry in City Area," attests to the significance of the Radford Ordnance Plant. This article addresses the success of

²⁶ Montgomery USDA County Defense Board Emergency Operating Plan: Christiansburg, VA, 1965, Orrin Rankin Magill Papers, box 2, folder 5, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "From Shirts to Missiles. That's industry in City Area: Many varied plants mark industries here," *The News Journal: All-American Souvenir Edition* (Radford, VA), Virginia Newspapers Collection, box 10, folder 2, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ben Beagle, "Radford Ordnance Plant Still Big One," *The Roanoke Times*, 13 January 1963, Virginia Newspapers Collection, box 12, folder 2, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

the Radford Ordnance Plant with regards to the production of Space Age Missiles.²⁹ Published in 1963, this article points out the Radford Ordnance Plant was also producing other military weaponry.³⁰ Another article, published in 1962, speaks of the importance of the missiles the Ordnance Plant was producing. The article, titled “Ordnance Plant Still Big One,” by Ben Beagle, speaks of missiles used for tactical artillery.³¹ The Radford Ordnance Plant most likely ramped up military weaponry and missiles in order to combat the threat of a nuclear missile crisis, and the people of Montgomery County were proud of its contributions. Another newspaper article, “Over-emphasizing Need for Industry is Risky,” by Nancy St. Clair, speaks to the public opinion on how to save and store for nuclear crisis preparations.³² Frederick G. Cowherd, interviewed for this article, stated that farms should be encouraged to produce surpluses: “we have to keep ourselves strong in and ready for an attack of any kind.”³³ Cowherd’s interview displays the public was aware of the danger, as well as ready to prepare for any nuclear emergency event. Montgomery County officials worked attentively to materially prepare for the event of nuclear war and the county’s citizens recognized the efforts, as well as the significance of their preparations.

By 1963, Montgomery County was well prepared in the case of a nuclear emergency. Without assistance from the federal government, Montgomery county would not have been able to mobilize individuals or civil defense programs. Through government action and community support, the county successfully organized for nuclear war. By following federal guidelines, Montgomery County secured adequate storage for emergency supplies, as well as a safe place for the population to safely evacuate. The Radford Ordnance Plant became vital to the civil defense preparations in Montgomery County, allowing local officials to store emergency supplies in the east wing of the plant. Emergency Action Plans, like the USDA Defense Plan, set nuclear reaction standards for Montgomery County. The public also played a crucial role in civil defense preparations. Without public support, Montgomery County’s nuclear war reparations probably would not have launched successfully. Although the functionality of the nuclear preparations will remain unknown, since a nuclear crisis never occurred, Montgomery County aligned with the rest of the United States in their arrangements. Throughout America, civil defense still seems to play a crucial role in foreign policy. The era of civil defense, originating back to the beginning of the Cold War, still impacts America today.

³² Nancy St. Clair, “Over-emphasizing Need for Industry is Risky,” Virginia Tech and Local History Mounted Clippings 1870’s- 1960’s, box 46, Virginia Tech Special Collections.

³³ *Ibid.*

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In my free time I enjoy reading, watching good movies, dancing, and spending time with my friends and family. Around campus I am involved in the Student Government Association, Christ's Church at Virginia Tech, the Residential Leadership Community, and currently serve as a Resident Advisor in Johnson Hall.



Roman Corbridge and the Corbridge Hoard: Reconstructing the World of Roman Britain

Parker Leep

The last vestiges of the Roman-British world exist throughout modern day Britain and Scotland, ranging from coin hoards in the countryside to Roman urban remains in modern English cities. In particular, the Roman town of Corbridge in northeastern England played an important role throughout the history of Roman Britain and also is home to a variety of material culture evidence that has helped shape how the modern world views and understands Roman Britain. By examining modern Corbridge, its history, and the Corbridge Hoard, one can reconstruct and better understand the Roman world of Britain during this period both militarily and culturally.

The Roman site at Corbridge, also known by its Latin name *Coria*, played an important role throughout the duration of Rome's occupation of Britain, from Agricola's campaigns in the late first century to Septimius Severus' northern campaign in 208 CE and beyond. The town had both military and cultural importance during the Roman era, serving as a supply depot for the Roman military and a strategic outpost along the Stanegate Frontier prior to the construction of the Hadrian's Wall Frontier, begun in 122 BCE.¹ Archeological evidence shows that the first Corbridge fort dates to the late first century, in the midst of the Roman governor Agricola's campaigns into northern Britain and Scotland. Agricola probably constructed the original Corbridge fort, known as the Red House Fort, during his fourth cam-

¹ Patricia Southern, *Roman Britain: A New History, 55 BC-AD 450* (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2013), 178.

paigining season in 80 CE. It served as a supply base for his ensuing Scottish invasion and also guarded Roman communication routes along the eastern coast of Britain.² Rome continued to garrison the Red House Fort until the late 80s, when archeological evidence shows the fort was purposely dismantled and destroyed.³



Figure 4: The Stangate Frontier

The Red House Fort is important for several reasons. Most importantly, it provides evidence of the location and direction of Agricola's fourth campaigning season in 80 and helps outline the Stanegate Frontier. It also contributes to the layout and modern understanding of a Roman fort.⁴ The excavation site at Red House contains defensive ditches, a military workshop, and a barracks complex. It also

shows evidence of a bath complex at the fort, which is an indication that Roman cultural customs spread to, and were present at, Roman outposts along the northern frontier. The Red House Fort site also includes a tombstone from the first century of a Roman cavalryman, who served as the signifer of the ala Petriana, a Gallic cavalry unit.⁵ This tombstone, seen below, reveals that Rome used auxiliary units to garrison its forts throughout Britain, as opposed to exclusively Roman legions. This is extremely important in assisting modern scholars better understand the organization of Roman provincial armies and troop placements.

Following the dismantling of the Red House Fort, Rome built a series of forts located at the modern day Corbridge site from the late 80s until 160, resulting in a permanent legionary fort.⁶ The first fort dates from the 80s until 105 when charred remains show the fort burned down and had to be replaced. Due to Corbridge's strategic location

² Ibid, 137.

³ "History of Corbridge Roman Town," Corbridge Roman Town – Hadrian's Wall, English Heritage. <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/corbridge-roman-town-hadrians-wall/history/>.

⁴ "Beaufront Red House Agricola's Military Site," Roman Britain Organization (27 January 2016) http://roman-britain.co.uk/places/red_house.htm.

⁵ "RIB 1172. Funerary Inscription for Flavinus," Roman Inscriptions of Britain. <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/1172>.

⁶ "History of Corbridge Roman Town," Corbridge Roman Town – Hadrian's Wall, English Heritage.

on the eastern flank of the Stanegate road and early Roman frontier, Rome used this fort to guard a crossing at the River Tyne. The second and final fort was constructed of stone following the destruction of the first fort and was used as a supply depot and support base during the construction of Hadrian's Wall from 112 to 128. Remains of several granaries dating from this period have been discovered, showing that Corbridge evolved into an important supply center and depot on the northern frontier, even when the frontier moved north to Hadrian's Wall.⁷



Figure 2: Tombstone of ala Petriana's signifer at Red House Fort

The stone ruins at Corbridge that are visible today are the remnants of Corbridge's second fort and the accompanying town, much of which dates to 160 and after. During the 140s and 150s, when Antoninus Pius moved the Roman frontier north to the Antonine Wall, Corbridge temporarily lost its strategic importance along with Hadrian's Wall, and the old frontier fell into disuse and disrepair. At the beginning of his reign, the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius abandoned the Antonine Wall and moved the frontier back to Hadrian's Wall, increasing Corbridge's strategic value.⁸ Inscriptions dated to 161 reveal that legionary detachments from the Sixth Legion Victrix and the Twentieth Legion Valeria Victrix were stationed and undertook several major building projects at Corbridge.⁹ Corbridge was important for both military and civilian reasons following the return to Hadrian's Wall. It served as a supply depot and provided men for the garrisons at Hadrian's Wall, the outpost forts beyond the Wall, and it also served as a civilian urban center and important market on the frontier.¹⁰ Corbridge continued to remain an important military and economic hub along the northern frontier for the next several decades. There is evidence at Corbridge that there was a widespread fire at the Roman site towards the end of the second century. While there are Roman recordings of a Scottish invasion across the "Wall" during the 180s, the actual cause of the fire

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Southern, *Roman Britain*, 210.

⁹ "RIB 1148. Inscription," Roman Inscriptions of Britain. <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/1148>.

¹⁰ "History of Corbridge Roman Town," Corbridge Roman Town – Hadrian's Wall, English Heritage.

and damage at Corbridge is not known.¹¹

Corbridge continued to play an important role in Roman Britain during the third century. In 208, the emperor Septimius Severus arrived in Britain with the intention of conquering Scotland, revealed by coins commemorating his victory that he distributed following its success in 210.¹² While Septimius Severus established new forts north of Hadrian's Wall, Corbridge is believed to have served as a supply depot and launching site for the invading army due to its granaries. Inscriptions show that one Corbridge granary was also rebuilt prior to Severus's invasion.¹³ A paucity of recordings and inscriptions dating from the rest of the third century and the fourth century makes it difficult to understand what function Corbridge served during this time, but it is assumed that it remained an important commercial center along the northern frontier.¹⁴ It was most likely incorporated into the short-lived Gallic Empire during the Crisis of the Third Century, but there is no evidence as to what role the town played within the Gallic Empire. A lack of sources plagues historians of Corbridge during the early fifth century, but it was most likely abandoned along with the rest of Roman Britain in the early 400s as the western half of the Roman Empire disintegrated.

While Corbridge is better known as a military site and for its role in Roman Britain's military history, the civilian town surrounding the fort also played an important role during the Roman period and helps reveal what civilian towns and life were like in Roman Britain. The civilian town grew after the frontier line's return to Hadrian's Wall around 160. The town's growth can also be attributed to Corbridge's location along the north-south Dere Street, which was a strategic Roman road that passed through Corbridge. There are multiple remains of buildings that can help us recreate what Roman Corbridge looked like. Several granaries, an aqueduct, a massive open air market, and even a large decorative fountain reveal the large size and extent of the Corbridge town.¹⁵

It is not known whether Corbridge was a Roman civitas center or

¹¹ David J. Breeze and Brian Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall* (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 128.

¹² "RIC IV Septimius Severus 241," Online Coins of the Roman Empire, <http://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.4.ss.241>.

¹³ Breeze and Dobson, *Hadrian's Wall*, 134.

¹⁴ "History of Corbridge Roman Town," Corbridge Roman Town – Hadrian's Wall, English Heritage.

¹⁵ J. O. Bevan, *The Towns of Roman Britain* (London: Chapman & Hall Ltd., 1907).

not, but it is possible, considering that its western counterpart on the Stanegate Road, Carlisle, is recorded as one.¹⁶ The portion of Dere Street that passes through the Corbridge site is one of the best preserved Roman roads in Britain and provides an excellent example of how Roman roads were constructed. The granaries at Corbridge are preserved well enough to show that they were built with raised floors and a ventilated underfloor in order to keep the grain from becoming damp and ruined.¹⁷ Corbridge's buildings and organization, including the granaries, are also important in understanding the layout of Roman towns. While Corbridge was not as large as several southern British towns, including London, it incorporated a developed street network.¹⁸ This helps modern scholars reconstruct the architectural layout of the average Roman town in Britain. Overall, the architectural remains of Corbridge's fort and town have been tremendously helpful in reconstructing the world of Roman Britain.



Figure 3: Corbridge Granaries with raised floors and ventilated underfloors

The ruins of the various Roman forts and civilian town at Corbridge are also important because of the dozens of inscriptions discovered at these sites, providing both military and cultural evidence from the Roman Britain period. These inscriptions are invaluable to modern understandings of Roman Britain, due to the lack of other written sources in Britain. Various inscriptions from around the Corbridge site are dedicated to a variety of deities and gods. One such religious inscription in Corbridge was found on an altar dedicated to Apollo Maponus.¹⁹ The altar also depicted engravings of Apollo and the Roman goddess Diana. In this particular case, this inscription is important because it provides evidence of a blending of Roman and British religion; Maponus was a Celtic deity whereas Apollo was the more traditional Roman god. This evidence reveals that British religion survived during the Roman period despite the influx of Roman gods, altars, and temples throughout Britain. Other inscriptions and altars found in Corbridge are dedicated to a variety of deities from across the Roman Empire.

¹⁶ David Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession: Britain in the Roman Empire* (London: Penguin Group, 2007), 261.

¹⁷ "History of Corbridge Roman Town," Corbridge Roman Town – Hadrian's Wall, English Heritage.

¹⁸ Mattingly, *An Imperial Possession*, 288.

¹⁹ "RIB. 1121. Altar Dedicated to Apollo Maponus," Roman Inscriptions of Britain. <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/1121>.



Figure 4: A Corbridge altar similar to the one dedicated to Apollo Maponus. This one is dedicated to Jupiter Dolichenus.

Inscriptions throughout Britain are also some of the best sources that show where legionary and auxiliary units were stationed, when they served and fought, and the building projects in which they participated. Corbridge is no different from other Roman forts and towns and has a wide variety of inscriptions revealing which military units were garrisoned in Corbridge. One inscription, dated between 197 and 202, reveals that a detachment of the Sixth Legion's Pia Fidelis Unit worked on Corbridge's headquarters under the governor Virius Lupus.²⁰ Various other inscriptions reveal further building projects conducted in Corbridge by various military units between the first and fourth centuries. While many legionary and auxiliary records have been lost since the end of the Roman Empire, inscriptions allow modern scholars to determine which legionary and auxiliary units served

in Britain, where and when they served, and the work that they accomplished while in Britain.

These inscriptions also help modern scholars and experts determine Roman leadership during the various periods of the Roman occupation. Besides a small number of governors such as Agricola and Julius Frontinus, who are known through Tacitus' Agricola and an aqueduct building manual respectively, many of Rome's British governors' names are either rarely mentioned or recorded or not at all. Inscriptions throughout Corbridge assist historians in piecing together the tenures and actions of various Roman governors during the Roman occupation. A building inscription in Corbridge dated from around 140, for example, reveals that this construction occurred under the Roman governor Quintus Lollius Urbicus and was dedicated to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius.²¹ This inscription is important because it gives scholars and historians names and dates. In this case, the inscription mentions who the Roman governor and emperor were

²⁰ "RIB 1163. Inscription," Roman Inscriptions of Britain. <https://romaninscriptionsofbritain.org/inscriptions/1163>.

²¹ "RIB 1148. Inscription," Roman Inscriptions of Britain.

at the time. It also helps scholars understand Roman troop stations by mentioning the Second Legion Augusta on the inscription. Without these inscriptions, both in Corbridge and the rest of Britain, it would be much more difficult to piece together the actions, dates, and campaigns of the various Roman emperors and governors during the period of Roman Britain.

One of the most important contributions the Corbridge site has made to modern scholars' understanding of Roman Britain and the Roman Empire as a whole is the Corbridge Hoard. While dozens of hoards have been discovered throughout Britain, the Corbridge Hoard in particular has proved to be a goldmine of information and material culture evidence that provides a view of the Roman world. Starting in 1947, Britain's Durham University conducted annual excavations at the Corbridge site as part of its archeological program. In 1964, Durham students excavating the Corbridge fort's headquarters discovered an iron and wooden chest extremely close to the headquarters site.²² At first, archeologists had trouble dating the hoard. The area that the hoard was discovered in indicates that the hoard could have been from Hadrian's reign between 122 and 138, but it could have been buried any time between the later first century and early second century.²³ The contents of the hoard included weapons, armor, construction tools, and various other domestic items. It is possible that the hoard belonged to a Roman military workshop or armory in Corbridge due to its collection of weapons and tools, but this cannot be determined until further evidence is discovered.

The Corbridge Hoard has proven valuable by assisting in both understanding and reconstructing the military and cultural worlds of Roman Britain and the Roman Empire. Although the hoard includes a wide variety of items, its most important content is its lorica segmentata remains. Lorica segmentata, the primary armor of the Roman legions, was made up of segmented plate armor made of soft iron that wrapped around a man's torso, chest, and shoulders.²⁴ The style and design of this armor changed throughout Roman history, but the Corbridge Hoard's pieces illustrate the armor's design from the early second century. Prior to the Corbridge Hoard's discovery, Roman experts and scholars knew that Roman soldiers wore segmented armor to protect themselves, but no complete set or collection of

²² M. C. Bishop and L. Allason-Jones, *Excavations at Roman Corbridge: The Hoard* (English Heritage. UK Archaeological Data Service, 1988), 3.

²³ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁴ M. C. Bishop and J.C.N. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment* (London: BT Batsford Ltd., 1993), 85.

the segmented plates had been discovered to show how this armor functioned and was put together. Before this discovery, the modern understanding of lorica segmentata came primarily from Trajan's Column in Rome, which featured thirty different carvings of soldiers wearing lorica segmentata armor.²⁵ While the lorica segmentata reliefs engraved on Trajan's Column provide a basic outline and view of the armor, how the Romans used it, and what it looked like, they did not provide any insight as to how the armor functioned or was worn. The lorica segmentata segmented plates in the Corbridge Hoard, as seen below, provided scholars and historians with a much-needed example of how this armor functioned and was put together and worn.



Figure 6: Reconstruction of a Lorica Segmentata similar to those used by the Corbridge Hoard

The Corbridge Hoard also included a variety of weapons that help the modern world understand how the Roman military fought and how it was armed. In particular, it contained dozens of spearheads of various shapes and sizes that both Roman infantry and cavalry forces used. These spearheads include javelin pilum heads, lancae cavalry spear heads, and hastae thrusting infantry spear heads. Most of the spearheads from the Corbridge Hoard appear to be cavalry lancae spear heads and cavalry javelin pilum heads, due to the high number of larger and lengthier spearheads. These spearheads were “low shouldered,” meaning they had a longer length of entry which would inflict more damage.²⁶ Because these spearheads are low shouldered, more of the blade was exposed, which meant it could penetrate further than a “high shouldered” spearhead. Roman cavalrymen used their spears to thrust down at enemy soldiers in close combat, and the length and size of many of the Corbridge spearheads would be ideal for this purpose. The hoard's javelin pilum heads were probably used by both Roman cavalry and infantry forces. Javelins were a staple weapon of the Roman soldier, who often threw his javelin into the enemy forces prior to contact. Made of soft iron, pilums were designed to bend upon impact, making it impossible for enemy soldiers to reuse them.²⁷ The Corbridge Hoard also included a number

²⁵ Jon Coulston, “The Human Figure Types,” Trajan's Column Project, University of St. Andrew's. <http://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/trajans-column/the-project/the-human-figure-types/>.

²⁶ Bishop and Allason-Jones, *Excavations at Roman Corbridge*, 9-13.

²⁷ Benjamin Hollis, “The Pilum (Spear),” RomanMilitary.net, 2016. <https://romanmilitary.net/tools/pilum/>.

of artillery bolts that could be used for catapults or other Roman artillery pieces. These artillery bolts prove valuable in understanding the Roman military during the first and second centuries. Usually, auxiliaries, non-Roman forces, composed Roman artillery forces, but auxiliary forces did not use lorica segmentata as their armor, which was reserved for the Roman legions. The combination of lorica segmentata and artillery bolts in the Corbridge Hoard means that legionary, not auxiliary, forces used artillery during the first and second centuries.²⁸

In addition to military armor and weapons, the Corbridge Hoard included a variety of domestic items. One of the Hoard's most intriguing contents is its abundance of writing materials, including both writing tablets and papyrus. The wooden writing tablets found in the chest were in terrible condition at the time of discovery, but are still valuable in understanding the mediums that Romans used to write on. More well-known are the Vindolanda tablets, which were wooden tablets that the Romans used ink to write on. The Corbridge tablets differ from the more famous Vindolanda tablets in that they used wax, rather than ink, to inscribe words onto the wood.²⁹ These Corbridge tablets were be hollowed out and then filled with wax, which could be written on. The Corbridge chest also included small fragments of papyrus, which is an extremely rare discovery in Britain. Although it is almost impossible to translate the inscriptions on these writing mediums due to their deteriorated state, they still contribute to the modern understanding of how Romans wrote and communicated during this period.

Various other non-military items were also found in the Corbridge Hoard chest that help reconstruct daily life in Roman Britain and the Roman world. A gaming set, furniture fittings, beads, window glass are all unique material culture items found in this particular hoard.³⁰ The furniture fittings, beads, and window glass provide insight into Roman home life in Britain, while the gaming set is an example of the leisure activities of the Roman soldiers. The Corbridge Hoard even included a number of feather remains, which may have been used to stuff cushions or furniture, or as a writing tool. Another possible explanation for the presence of these feathers can be found in Rome on the Arch of Constantine. While Constantine's name graces this monument, he built it using spolia: pieces of older monuments dedicated

²⁸ Bishop and Allason-Jones, *Excavations at Roman Corbridge*, 105.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

to past Roman emperors. These emperors included Trajan and Hadrian, who were both emperors around the time to which the Corbridge Hoard dates.³¹ Scientific examination of the feathers indicates they were most likely from a fluffy bird that matches the helmet plumes and crests found on the Trajanic and Hadrianic spolia reliefs on the Arch of Constantine. Therefore, it is possible these feathers were intended to be used as helmet decorations. These non-military items included in the Corbridge Hoard are both interesting and important, contributing to the material culture record of Roman Britain and enabling its reconstruction through a modern view.

While Britain today no longer looks as it did between the first and fifth centuries, there is enough material culture and archeological evidence to reconstruct Roman Britain's history along with the military, cultural, and religious conditions of that era. The archeological site and findings at Roman Corbridge are a treasure trove of material culture for modern historians, allowing them to reconstruct the typical Roman border town in northern Britain and its daily life and buildings. The dozens of inscriptions discovered at this site provide valuable information on religion, Roman leadership, and the military units stationed at Corbridge during this period. The dates from these inscriptions also assist in piecing together the chronological parameters and history of the Roman-British period. The Corbridge Hoard, one of the most valuable remnants of Roman Britain, helps modern scholars reconstruct and understand the Roman military, from its armor to its weapons, and includes multiple domestic and non-military items that help create a modern view of Roman domestic and daily life in Britain. Just as Corbridge played an important role throughout the Roman occupation of Britain, it is playing just as important a role today in helping the modern world recreate and understand Roman Britain and the Roman Empire.

³¹ Jas Elsner, "From the Culture of Spolia to the Culture of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antiquity Forms," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000): 152.

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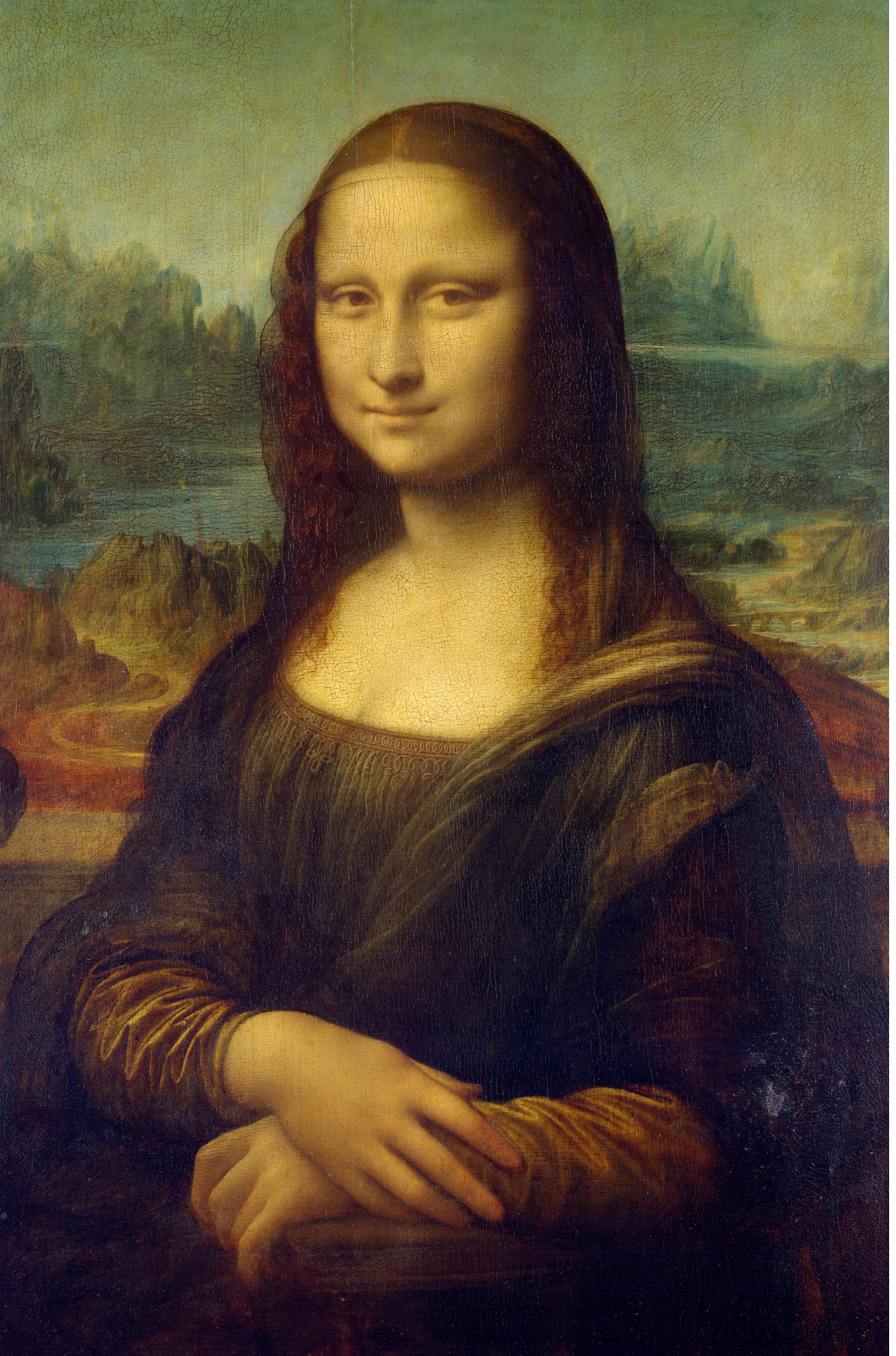
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Saving van Eyck and Leonardo da Vinci: The Power of Art in the Era of World War II

Kelly Cooper

“The statue rocked onto an inclined wooden ramp. We were all terrified, and the silence was total as the Victory rolled slowly forward, her stone wings trembling slightly. The curator of sculpture sank down on the steps, murmuring, ‘I will not see her return.’”
-In *The Rape of Europa* (2006)¹

What appears at first glance as inanimate objects or structures, works of art have the ability to attain great influence and power. Few events highlight their power better than actions taken in World War II. During World War II, the fate of many artworks became uncertain as Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring set out to plunder Western Europe of its rich culture and precious art works for Germany’s gain. A particular lover of art himself, Hitler saw certain works of art as more desirable than others. He wanted to build the Führer museum in his adopted hometown of Linz, which would house artwork of his choosing from all over Europe. This included a number of early modern pieces such as Hubert and Jan van Eyck’s *The Ghent Altarpiece* (fig.5). Hitler saw old master works such as this as representative of the Aryan race. The “Aryan race,” as defined by the Nazis, lived in north-western Europe and represented a racial and cultural ideal for a German-occupied Europe. As such the Nazis favored cultural expressions from these regions. For instance, the van Eycks were from the Netherlands, so Hitler viewed their art as superior to non-German, Jewish,

¹ *The Rape of Europa*, directed by Richard Berge (2006; Venice, CA: Menemsha Films, 2008), DVD.

or Eastern European art, which he called “degenerate.” Even western European abstract works, such as those by Picasso, were defined as “degenerate” partly because they deviated from the artistic tradition of realism. As such, a large number of artworks considered “Modern,” as well as Jewish artworks and works by Communist artists, fell into the of “degenerate” art. Hitler ordered more modern and abstract material objects and artworks be cast into fires, for he saw them as representative of a racial category and political view he despised. Essentially, he may have wanted to destroy the power of art that did not aid his own journey to authority or increase the power of his Reich.

Hitler’s attack discriminate actions on European art in the midst of World War II led to varying reactions for how to protect Europe’s art heritage. Countries around Europe took measures to prevent Nazis from stealing or destroying their art. Many institutions went to great lengths to protect the works for which they were responsible. The Louvre Museum in France hid the Mona Lisa (fig.1) in Château d’Amboise. Employees encased her in fine wood and wrapped the portrait in red satin. Additionally, they kept the Mona Lisa in her own room and moved her several times after that to keep her location a secret. Some art officials managed to save works that were close to the front lines. For example, individuals were able to save Leonardo Da Vinci’s Last Supper (fig.2) while the rest of the Santa Maria delle Grazie crumbled during a bombing. Yet, through the course of the war, the world lost several masterpieces. For example, the frescoes of the Camposanto, the longtime glory of the city of Pisa, are mostly gone. No one tried to protect the building and frescoes thinking that the enemy would avoid them because they were too materially and culturally valuable. As a result, the frescoes were severely damaged in a bombing and are a mere shadow of their original grandeur.

This paper will examine how architecture and artwork in World War II were culturally valued and how perceptions about a work’s importance led to varying degrees of protection. Why were some works saved, or protected, but not others? How did countries, institutions, or communities make such decisions? The result is that the actions taken during the war irrevocably altered numerous works in terms of their material condition. Hundreds of works were involved in the movement of art during World War II. Whereas many studies have focused on the problem of “degenerate” modern art, this paper will focus on more “traditional” works. It will examine four case studies: the Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, the Camposanto, and The Ghent Altarpiece. Many of the works discussed in this paper were created during the Italian late-Medieval period and Renaissance with the exception of

The Ghent Altarpiece. Just as the Renaissance was a rebirth of Rome, Hitler wished to instill a rich culture reminiscent of the Roman Empire in Germany. Thus, there was a particular focus on ancient and Renaissance works in Hitler's collection, in addition to works that represented Aryan culture.

Just as Hitler valued certain pieces of artwork due to his perception of their value, European institutions and communities took their own decisions as to how to preserve certain works of art and architecture based on their perceived significance. The Louvre moved the Mona Lisa along with other priceless objects as a precaution against the invading Germans for fear of losing Leonardo's pensive lady to the Nazis. After locals in Milan heard about the Nazi destruction of artwork, they took last minute precautions and utilized reinforcements to save The Last Supper. Officials in Pisa ultimately decided not to take measures to protect the Camposanto (fig. 3 and 4). They considered it a piece of world heritage, and it was unfathomable that any pilot would willingly damage it. But it was very difficult for World War II era bombers to hit an object precisely. Indeed, an Allied plane accidentally destroyed the monument, leaving fragments for the world to mourn. The influence of these medieval and early modern works on society in turn affected the degree of their protection and their resulting condition after the war. While institutions and individuals protected the Mona Lisa and The Last Supper, others stole works and left them in a horrendous condition. For example, the Monuments Men found The Ghent Altarpiece a foot above a cave floor. Several works hidden in the Neuschwanstein Castle were simply stacked to the ceiling.² Numerous countries threatened by the Nazi regime sought to save cultural heritage and artwork in various ways, leading to efforts before, during, and after the war to preserve the artwork and make sure they continued to influence society for years to come.

“The Power of Images”

The actions taken involving artwork in World War II highlight the power of art to incite strong reactions among individuals and governments. World War II endangered several pieces of artwork as Hitler and Göring attempted to strip cultural identity in the form of images from towns and cities across Europe. With each attack on local art,

² Robert M. Edsel and Bret Witter, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Center Street, 2009), 351 and 383. The Monuments Men were a group who worked under the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives program in the U.S. This program was specifically designed to protect cultural heritage. They were mostly art historians, museum curators, and scholars who worked with the Allied armies to protect and locate stolen artwork.

European communities lost another piece of their culture. During World War II the influence and power embodied in each dried brush-stroke, gold leaf, applied plaster, and edifice of stone instigated the preservation, destruction, and “the greatest treasure hunt in history.”³ This was not the first time images have been targeted for destruction. In his book *The Power of Images* David Freedberg names various iconoclastic movements in the Old Testament, eighth and ninth century Byzantium, the Protestant Reformation in Europe, the French Revolution, and so on.⁴ Over centuries, artworks and images moved people emotionally. Response does not necessarily mean people find works of art aesthetically pleasing, but rather that they are moved by the cultural power within the paintings and structures. Freedberg argues that:

People are sexually aroused by pictures and sculptures; they break pictures and sculptures; they mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journeys to them; they are calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt. They give thanks by means of them, expect to be elevated by them, and are moved to the highest levels of empathy and fear.⁵

The destruction and damage of material objects would not occur if there were not strong meanings associated with them. Numerous scholars such as Robert M. Edsel, Noah Charney, Lynn H. Nicholas, Jonathan Petropoulos, Matila Simon, and Elizabeth Simpson have contributed to our understanding of the actions taken by Hitler and his regime and owners or protectors of art during the World War II period.⁶ However, I am looking to employ David Freedberg’s ideology on the power of art and add to the popular conversation of the role of art during the Second World War.

³ Ibid, xiv.

⁴ David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 10.

⁵ Ibid, 1.

⁶ Noah Charney, *Stealing the Mystic Lamb: The True Story of the World’s Most Coveted Masterpiece* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010); Robert M. Edsel, *Saving Italy: The Race to Rescue a Nation’s Treasures from the Nazis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2013); Robert M. Edsel and Bret Witter, *The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes, Nazi Thieves, and the Greatest Treasure Hunt in History* (New York: Center Street, 2009); Lynn H. Nicholas, *The Rape of Europa: The Fate of Europe’s Treasures in the Third Reich and the Second World War* (New York: Knopf, 1994); Jonathan Petropoulos, “Art Historians and Nazi Plunder,” *New England Review* 20, no. 1 (2000): 5-30, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/stable/40244488>; Jonathan Petropoulos, *The Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Matila Simon, *The Battle of the Louvre: The Struggle to Save French Art in World War II* (New York: Hawthorn, 1971); Elizabeth Simpson, ed. *The Spoils of War: World War II and Its Aftermath: The Loss, Reappearance, and Recovery of Cultural Property* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997).

Hitler curated and planned his own collection of art for himself and Germany that best represented his political views. He attempted to enforce a certain history and culture on German and Western society by getting rid of works that evoked a message or power he was trying to eradicate. Essentially, he wanted to get rid of all work that he referred to as degenerate, and so the fate of Western Europe's culture rested on Hitler's valuation of the art works. There were many atrocities of World War II and many facets, one of which was Hitler's war on culture.⁷ He was not alone, for his right hand man, Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, also participated heavily in the confiscation of artworks. He himself stated, "It used to be called plundering. But today things have become more humane. In spite of that, I intend to plunder, and to do it thoroughly."⁸ Hitler foresaw a new Rome in Germany. He told his architect "to create monuments that over the centuries would become elegant ruins so that a thousand years into the Reich, humankind would still be looking in awe at the symbols of his power."⁹ Where Berlin was going to serve as the German version of Rome, Linz was going to serve as the culturally rich city of Florence.¹⁰

Hitler wanted to collect works that reflected his idea of a pure, Aryan race and culture. Having famous objects that reflected that notion brought together in one museum would display his political propaganda to the world. The influence of his chosen artwork was meant to encourage others that the Reich was a rebirth of Rome and tradition. Meanwhile, it appears Hitler wanted to get rid of Modern and "degenerate" artwork that would encourage views that opposed Hitler's plans for Germany and Europe. As a result, not only did museums and private collectors fear their works might fall into the hands of the Nazis, but also they feared that their work would qualify as "degenerate" art and the Nazis would destroy them. In the beginning of the war, many people did not understand what rationale Hitler utilized for evaluating artworks' value.¹¹ Hitler allowed for "degenerate" works to be sold abroad in order to fund his empire, but this did not guarantee their survival. One of the more prominent dealers for looted art was the Galerie Fischer in Switzerland. In this case, the works the Galerie did not sell by a specific date burned in a pyre.¹² When the museums

⁷ Edsel and Witter, *The Monuments Men*, 9.

⁸ Robert M. Edsel, *Saving Italy: The Race to Rescue a Nation's Treasures from the Nazis* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2013), 74.

⁹ Edsel and Witter, *The Monuments Men*, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 11.

¹¹ *The Rape of Europa*, directed by Richard Berge.

and the private collectors in Western Europe heard of Hitler's actions, it became a conundrum as to how to protect the art. The power of artwork influenced Hitler's actions, while the power also caused other institutions to fight to protect the works.

The Mona Lisa

When the war broke out in 1939, museums were in a mad race to hide their artwork, including Leonardo da Vinci's famous Mona Lisa. To

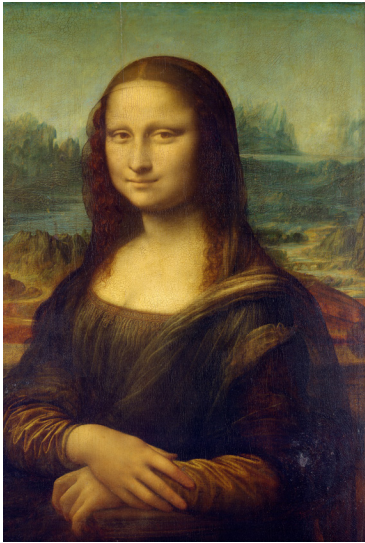


Figure 1. Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, c. 1500–07. Paris, Musée du Louvre.

describe the rush for the protection of influential artwork across Europe, one scholar explains how the “Venetian collections left the city in trucks precariously balanced on barges. In Amsterdam, Rembrandt’s *The Night Watch* was rolled up and evacuated.”¹³ In France, a similar atmosphere transpired as the Louvre emptied their museum for there was no guarantee any of the artwork was safe. The event included lowering the *Nike of Samothrace* down the grand staircase and packing the *Mona Lisa* safely for transportation by truck to a chateau in France. The fear that the Nazis would discover these hiding places and steal some of the most precious works in France led to the movement of the Louvre’s works several times over the course

of the war.

Over the centuries, the *Mona Lisa* has become a powerful symbol of France and the Italian Renaissance. France acquired the *Mona Lisa* after Leonardo’s death, for he brought the painting with him when he went to work for King Francis I. Additionally, the portrait’s presence in France had become particularly significant as it was less than thirty years after the highly publicized theft of the painting in 1911. Consequently, the *Mona Lisa* was one of the biggest attractions of the Louvre, and it would have been a prized possession for Hitler.¹⁴ The influence of the painting as an example of the Renaissance, a master-

¹² Noah Charney, *Stealing the Mystic Lamb: The True Story of the World’s Most Coveted Masterpiece* (New York: Public Affairs, 2010), 197.

¹³ Simpson, ed. *The Spoils of War*, 40.

¹⁴ “Italians Ask France to Give Up ‘Mona Lisa,’” *New York Times*, July 16, 1940. <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/105244128?accountid=14826>.

piece by an Italian master, and a development in Renaissance portraiture all combined to make the painting particularly significant in its power. This portrait shows the advancement Leonardo da Vinci made for portraiture in the Renaissance by transforming portraits from a partial, side depiction to a portrait that engaged with the audience. The portrait also exhibits Leonardo's sfumato technique that "blends light and dark and one form with another to enhance the unity of the composition."¹⁵ Sfumato translates from the Italian as blurred or soft, and the technique creates a more realistic image and sense of atmosphere behind the figure. Her subtle smile invites the reader in as well, a scene that was uncommon prior to Leonardo's painting. Leonardo spent years on the Mona Lisa, modifying it so much that "it seems to be a meditation on ideal feminine beauty and an exploration of the sitter's (and perhaps the artist's) psyche."¹⁶ Leonardo arranged this portrait in such a way that it places the figure "as part of a larger universe."¹⁷ France valued the power within this work, and the Louvre sought to save it from interested individuals in Germany and Italy. The popularity of the Mona Lisa increased internationally after thieves stole her in 1911, but the portrait's thought-provoking smile, the intricate arrangement and presentation of the composition by the Italian old master transcends the Renaissance and continues to captivate audiences and individuals on its own.

The story of the Mona Lisa during World War II reflects how many museums and collectors went out of their way to protect significant artwork from the Nazis. Paris feared they would become the next target of the German Luftwaffe air raids. Consequently, the Louvre moved their pieces out in a major operation to save the art and material objects. On August 28, 1939, the Mona Lisa was loaded into a crate and placed into a truck for the chateau of Chambord just days before war broke out on September 3.¹⁸ The Grande Galerie of the Louvre was "a largely empty, hollow grave, for on these walls where millions had once come to view the world's masterpieces, there were nothing but scribbled words in white chalk," notes for the curators to remind them of what once adorned their walls.¹⁹ The Louvre was trying to ensure the protection of their artwork so Hitler or others in the Axis Powers

¹⁵ John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy: Fourth Edition* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2011), 392.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 393.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ "The Louvre During the War: Photographs 1938-1947," Louvre: Press Release, accessed May 5, 2016. http://www.louvre.fr/sites/default/files/medias/medias_fichiers/fichiers/pdf/louvre-press-release-louvre-during.pdf.

¹⁹ Edsel and Witter, *The Monuments Men*, 124.

did not use the influence of looted artworks for their own gain. The Italians stated France should give the Mona Lisa back to them since Leonardo da Vinci was from Florence. They in turn complicated the fight for the painting and its influence.²⁰ The University of Rome even made the statement that the Louvre had already packed the painting up, so the museum would just have to send it their way.²¹ Italy and Hitler's attempt to use the war to take art from France worried the Louvre.²² The Mona Lisa held cultural value to many different people and that value transcended country borders. Hitler may have wanted the Mona Lisa to increase the cultural value of his museum, but France could not fathom losing this cultural icon. The French museum knew that a piece of the Renaissance and Leonardo da Vinci was figuratively embedded within the brushstrokes, and they were desperate to protect Leonardo's lady in order to keep a piece of that history in France.

The Last Supper

One of the most recognizable artworks of the Renaissance rests in Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. However, its powerful presence was almost lost. The Last Supper was

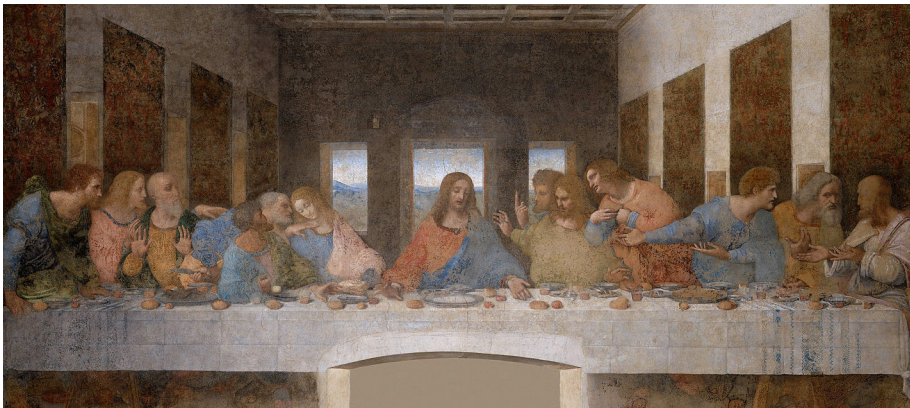


Figure 2. Leonardo da Vinci, Last Supper, begun c. 1495. S Maria delle Grazie, Milan.

not transportable like the Mona Lisa, and Hitler could not physically possess it as a piece in his museum. Thus, the protection of this piece varied, though the cultural significance is arguably as strong as the

²⁰ "Italians Ask France to Give Up 'Mona Lisa.'"

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

Mona Lisa is. There had long been a fear of losing The Last Supper before World War II, for Leonardo da Vinci famously experimented with the use of oil paint and tempera on a fresco.²³ Thus, the paint was chipping away before he even finished the work. By 1628, the vast majority of the fresco had worn away.²⁴ The fragility of the Renaissance piece seems to have made it all the more precious.

This painting depicted The Last Supper, a popular scene throughout the history of Western art even before the Renaissance. Leonardo's arrangement of the composition and the tools he used helped infuse it with a certain power to capture people's attention which differs from other attempts to paint The Last Supper. Leonardo specifically chose to depict this scene during the moment Christ revealed someone betrayed him. Thus, he highlighted the rampant emotions and reactions of the apostles by arranging them in four groups. In these groups, they express confusion and differing hand gestures and body movement, as opposed to the lone and emotionless Judas. In the center of all this is Christ behaving in a calm manner. The painting was in itself highly expressive and the experimental technique of using tempera and oil a secco, or on dry plaster, achieved the effects of a detailed oil painting on fresco. Now heavily deteriorated, the materials Leonardo used had achieved such effects as "the glint of light on the wine glasses, the dull sheen of the ceramic bowls, and the crusty goodness of the bread."²⁵ The materials and the expressive nature of The Last Supper radiated tremendous influence on the viewer, affecting how one reads the narrative of the scene.

With the outbreak of war and fear of aerial bombings, individuals took the initiative to brace the wall of The Last Supper with sandbags and scaffolding in 1940. The Last Supper may have been deteriorating, but it appears the locals wanted to protect it for as long as they could.²⁶ A bomb would only speed up the process of losing this work. On August 15, 1943, a bomb "slammed into the center of the Cloister of the Dead," and heavily damaged the building.²⁷ The initiative by the local officials protected the work from crumbling along with the rest of Santa Maria delle Grazie, for the fresco held major cultural and artistic

²³ "Da Vinci's 'Last Supper' Weathered to Faded Blots," *New York Times*, Dec 16, 1946. <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/107439956?accountid=14826>.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

²⁵ Paoletti and Radke, *Art in Renaissance Italy*, 372.

²⁶ "Last Supper' on View again in Milan Convent," *New York Times*, June 20, 1945. <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/107265048?accountid=14826>.

²⁷ Edsel, *Saving Italy*, 3.

significance.

After the bombing, the workers did not want to remove the scaffolding and sandbags due to fear of more bombs, but they also feared facing the reality that The Last Supper was breaking apart behind the reinforcements. Upon hearing the news that Milan had been bombed, Deane Keller of the Monuments Men traveled there to see the damage. When he got to the site the “devastation to the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, and the miracle that had occurred there, took his breath away.”²⁸ With that said, it seems people were hesitant to discover whether The Last Supper was intact. Once individuals removed the reinforcements, they would know whether it still remained or if the world had lost a great masterpiece. The threat of rain also posed a danger, for water could ruin the remaining pieces of the work. Thus the scaffolding and sandbags remained until the refectory could be rebuilt and provide shelter for the fragile fresco.²⁹ Until the locals and art officials could remove the sandbags and scaffolding, they could only imagine that The Last Supper was still in the condition the community last saw it. However, the reinforcements rested against the fresco for so long that moisture collected in places and created bubbles “of swollen plaster.”³⁰ Art officials attempted to preserve and restore the work after the war, for it was in need of great care.³¹ However, during the war no one wanted to face the possible reality that a bomb could reduce The Last Supper to just a name in books with a poor quality image beside it.

Camposanto



Figure 3. Master of the Triumph of Death: Triumph of Death, 1330s. Camposanto, Pisa.

²⁸ Ibid, 283.

²⁹ "Last Supper' on View again in Milan Convent."

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

The Camposanto is a site that locals in Pisa and around the world valued as a heritage site, but the locals did not protect it with any



Figure 4. The Camposanto after bombing, Edsel, Robert M. *Saving Italy: The Race to Rescue a Nation's Treasures from the Nazis*. W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2013.

reinforcements because it was so valued. Similar to *The Last Supper*, the Camposanto was a medieval cemetery with a vast number of unmovable frescoes. In the case of the immovable Camposanto, it appears locals assumed pilots would avoid the structure in order to prevent damaging the revered frescoes. The Camposanto was a part of humanity's culture and history. However, only a few volunteers watched over it; when it caught on fire, there was no water supply to put out the flames.³² Clearly, even significant artworks were not entirely safe from the ravages of war, and taking steps to protect heritage was and is necessary.

Pisa, Italy held a rich culture and history as a maritime republic in the Middle Ages. The most remarkable sites included the Duomo, the Baptistery, the Leaning Tower, and the Camposanto.³³ Pisans built the Camposanto on an ancient cemetery in 1278, and it contained a vast number of medieval frescoes that were added over the next two hundred years. Legend states individuals during the Second Crusade brought the soil of the Camposanto from Golgotha, where Christ died on the cross. As a result, the name of the Camposanto means "holy field." It retained Gothic marble arcades that surrounded the courtyard. A significant remnant of the Middle Ages, the early Renaissance, and the glory of Pisa, one newspaper could not make a simple note of the horror of what happened to the frescoes that burned.³⁴ Rather the history and importance of the frescoes was so great, the newspaper wanted to devote a "separate story" to the bombing of the

³² "The Campo Santo of Pisa Now," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 86, No. 503 (1945): 35, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/stable/869013>.

³³ A.C. Sedgwick, "A Fourth of Pisa Wrecked by Shells," *New York Times*, September 29, 1944. <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/106759128?accountid=14826>.

³⁴ Herbert L. Matthews, "Vast Pisa Ruins seen on Tour; Many Noted Structures Blasted," *New York Times*, Jan 22, 1945. <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/107136451?accountid=14826>.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Camposanto.³⁵

Pisa only received a Group C status from the Allies. Art historians and locals could not argue for the more coveted Group A status for every city or town. The military leaders who made the decision of Group status perhaps noted the vast number of artworks, Renaissance period works in particular, in Florence. Pisa and cities like it had significant cultural heritage, but not the large number of works as Florence. Consequently, while authorities told the pilots to try to avoid monuments, they also told them “any consequent damage was accepted.”³⁶ While locals, art historians, and Monuments Men attempted to save as many pieces of cultural heritage as possible in cities such as Pisa, they were still operating under military leaders. Meanwhile, the Allies listed Florence as a Group A city. The vast amounts of Renaissance art in Florence may have swayed officials into labelling Florence as a Group A city, but the decision not to give Pisa this label aided in the loss of a major remnant of Medieval culture.

While significant Renaissance artworks and architecture in Florence only sustained minor damage from the Allies, no one could say the same for some works in Pisa or the Camposanto. Keller was reported initially relieved when he went to Pisa, for the Baptistery was still standing. Bombs had hit the Duomo and, although damaged, it was ultimately intact, and the Leaning Tower “had maintained its flawed verticality.”³⁷ As his continued surveying the area around these monuments, though, “he stopped in his tracks: the roof of the Camposanto was gone. Only a few stubs of charred timber were visible. In this war, even the cemeteries were dying.”³⁸

The Camposanto and its frescoes were representative of Medieval and early Renaissance culture with frescoes depicting the Last Judgment, Hell, and the Triumph of Death (fig. 5). The Triumph of Death provides detailed imagery that serves as moral allegories to warn against luxury such as music and hunting and laziness. Hunters in this same scene encounter three bodies, and they are forced to face their own mortality just as is the viewer by looking at the work. The frescoes are rife with metaphors and allegories that include numerous meanings. The Camposanto was a place with holy connections, covered in didactic works of art, and it served as the final resting place for powerful figures such as members of the Medici family. All of these elements

³⁶ Edsel, *Saving Italy*, 179.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 180.

³⁸ *Ibid*.

combined to make the Camposanto one of the most influential sites in Italy. This was a major component of Pisa's rich history. For several hundred years, the Camposanto had been the site that travelers came to see, not the Leaning Tower.³⁹ Yet, in one night, "the world of culture [...] suffered one of the greatest losses of the war."⁴⁰ The citizens of Pisa knew that aerial bombardment was a tactic employed by the Allies during the war, yet they did not line the Camposanto with sandbags or other forms of protection. It appears it was inconceivable that anyone would target this sacred site. However, they did not account for the difficulty pilots faced flying at night, who did not always drop their bombs on the right location. While the destruction of the Camposanto on July 27, 1944 was an accident, the war left the city with remnants of frescoes and a fragmented connection to their medieval past.



Figure 5. Hubert van Eyck, completed by Jan van Eyck, The Ghent Altarpiece, c. 1423–32. Ghent, St. Bavo.

The Ghent Altarpiece

Although the Nazis and others revered certain pieces of art, they did not store their pieces of collected art in conditions that attested to their value. Hitler's search for vast numbers of powerful artworks to add to his museum resulted in a lack of space to store them.

When Neuschwanstein castle, five other castles, and a monastery began to overflow, the Nazis then turned to the mines as a storage facility. The mine at Altaussee thus "began to fill from February 1944 on, as Allied air attacks threatened the existing castle storage centers."⁴¹ In May of 1945, the Monuments Men arrived to find numerous art works in poor conditions. The Monuments Men came to the mine and found the passageway blocked by debris. Hitler had demanded that his troops destroy the mines by using bombs to collapse the tunnels. If he and his Third Reich could not have the works, then neither could the rest of the world. The works he stole were pieces of history and culture. When Hitler realized he could not have power over the world, he initially wanted to destroy the power within the artworks as well.

³⁹ Ibid, 181.

⁴⁰ Herbert L. Matthews, "Frescoes in Pisa Virtually Ruined," *New York Times*, Jan 23, 1945, <http://login.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.vt.edu/docview/107172754?accountid=14826>.

⁴¹ Charney, *Stealing the Mystic Lamb*, 269.

It seems important that, although Hitler decided to bomb the mine, he also recanted shortly afterwards. Despite the works he did destroy, perhaps he could not fathom destroying those he deemed the best, especially since pieces such as The Ghent Altarpiece rested in the mine. Nevertheless, he set a precedent of looting and destroying property, art, and books. His failure to surrender and his previous brutal action influenced other Nazi leaders to make violent decisions, and in this case, the tangible pieces of history within the mine, and The Ghent Altarpiece, were almost lost.

The Monuments Men were anxious to get to the artwork to evaluate the damage and begin the long process of restoring European culture and significant remnants of its heritage to its people. The rampage of the Nazis throughout Europe led to near losses of culture and history. Thus returning the objects that helped define a city, town, or culture was one more step to healing from the war. Once they were able to get through the blocked passage, they found van Eyck's Virgin Mary of The Ghent Altarpiece simply sitting there waiting, "silently reading a book" in her panel.⁴² With her were seven other panels of The Ghent Altarpiece.⁴³ The only thing separating the fifteenth century masterpiece from the floor of the salt mine were cardboard boxes. Despite their importance, the Nazis did not have the resources to deal with the large number of looted works during the war.

The Ghent Altarpiece is a polyptych painting that consists of many different panels and sections that help give it its significance. One can view the work as two triptychs (three parts) connected to each other. The van Eycks meant for the piece to move in a variety of ways in order to display multiple views and meaning. For example if one closed the top panels and opened the bottom, the closed top shows the Annunciation of the Lord over the opened central panel that shows the Mystic Lamb. The lamb represents Christ's sacrifice, and his blood in the cup alludes to the Eucharist. Overall, this particular arrangement shows the beginning and the end of Christ's life on Earth. These altarpieces are not pictures that close with wings, but pictures with doors. They were portals that brokered between the earthly, material world and the spiritual world they represented. Viewers could see them as doors to spiritual fulfillment or doors to heaven. They are plainer on the outside when closed as opposed to the inside. This adds to the notion of the Altarpiece as a doorway to other realms. The idea of a doorway is furthered through the subtle colors on the outside followed

⁴² Edsel and Witter, *The Monuments Men*, 383.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

by the spiritual, colorful world on the inside that can transport a viewer. The altarpiece itself is similar to a membered body with parts that work together to form a whole. As the altarpiece opens into colorful panels, it acts as a “Porta Coeli,” the gateway that you have to pass through to get to the kingdom of Heaven. The piece represents the physical presence of Christ; it is the door that you have to go through. Thus, the overall materiality of The Ghent Altarpiece evokes a powerful presence for the viewer. The influence and inspiration the work can have on individuals directly contrasts with the condition the Monuments Men found it in since the Nazis could not properly care for the vast amounts of work they obtained.

It quickly became clear that there were a number of influential pieces of art inside the mine in addition to The Ghent Altarpiece. The Monuments Men came upon Michelangelo’s Bruges Madonna on a dirty mattress, four more panels of The Ghent Altarpiece, pieces by Vermeer, and more. The artwork had survived, and Monuments Man George Stout wasted little time to “press for a war crimes investigation of what had happened in the remote salt mine in the Austrian Alps.”⁴⁴ The attempt to destroy the mine and the horrendous condition in which the Nazis kept works nearly obliterated significant pieces of culture. Hitler and the Nazis wanted to strip the power of cultures away and replace it with a new Germanic culture, but when they could not succeed in holding onto that power, they were going to destroy the tangible pieces of power that they held.

The Monuments Men worked quickly to remove the works from the mine. It had become clear that the boundaries of the countries would fall back to those established by the Yalta Conference, and the Allies would not be able to remain in the territory they conquered. The Monuments Men feared that, if they did not move the artwork out, the Soviet Union would claim the art to increase the stature of their own museums, forcing the previous owners and communities to suffer the loss of their powerful artworks once more. The Monuments Men packed The Ghent Altarpiece into a crate of its own. They lined the truck bed that carried the Altarpiece with waterproof paper, layered over by felt, and additional protective material.⁴⁵

Some members of the Western Allies questioned whether they should hand back the treasures found in Austria and Germany, for they were spoils of war.⁴⁶ The works were a symbol of their defeat over Hitler

⁴⁴ Charney, *Stealing the Mystic Lamb*, 384.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 386.

and his Reich. However, spoils of war have historically been objects taken from their home country or city. The Nazis had already stolen artworks in the mines and castles from their homes in the first place. Eisenhower specifically answered this question by ordering “the immediate return of the most important works of art to each respective country until the more systematic process of returns could be implemented.” The Ghent Altarpiece was one of the first in line. Belgium received The Ghent Altarpiece in a grand ceremony that took place at the Royal Palace, and this is representative of its importance in Belgium’s history.⁴⁷ Large numbers of other works thus followed, for there were numerous other mines and locations that held art works, it was just a matter of sifting through all of them. The Monuments Men spent six years gathering art works and identifying their original locations. Many works are still missing, and some had no owners to go back to, as was the case with art owned by Jews who perished in concentration camps or fled their homes. However, the desire to retrieve The Ghent Altarpiece and other pieces of art during and decades after the war shows the inclination of people to connect with significant pieces of culture again.

After the War



Figure 6. “Rorimer at Neuschwanstein.” Image. Retrieved from Monuments Men Foundation: Photos. Accessed April 24, 2016. <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/archives/photos>.

After the war, some pieces were as they had been before 1939, while others were in need of great care, and some pieces were nearly destroyed. The Mona Lisa went back to France in a similar shape as before the war and the Louvre proudly hung her once more. At the end of the war when individuals removed the sandbags, it became clear that The Last Supper did not survive unscathed. Humidity had greatly weakened the state of the fresco. While the

Monuments Men established a temporary roof over The Last Supper as they did at the Camposanto, water still posed a problem as the

⁴⁶ Tom Mashberg, “Returning the Spoils of World War II, Taken by Americans,” *New York Times: Arts*, May 5, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/06/arts/design/returning-the-spoils-of-world-war-ii-taken-by-our-side.html>.

⁴⁷ Crosby, “Venus Fixers’ Won Their War, Too.”

close contact between the sandbags and the fresco allowed for present moisture to create bubbles of plaster on the painting.⁴⁸ Additionally, a “jumble of faded blots” covered the fresco due to outdoor exposure.⁴⁹ Despite damage, The Last Supper still remains on the wall today. The Refectory and art officials have desperately fought to save this piece of their heritage. Dr. Pinin Brambilla Barcilon worked on The Last Supper for twenty years, trying to restore the fresco and repair war damage.⁵⁰ However, it will never be the same fresco as it was when Leonardo da Vinci set aside his tools and walked out of the building. Yet the world still sees the fresco as a piece of Leonardo da Vinci and Milan’s history. As a highlight of Renaissance, art and history specialists are trying to hold onto this piece as long as possible. Similarly, the conditions of the mine damaged The Ghent Altarpiece, and there is one panel, the Just Judges panel, that is still missing. Yet, individuals restored the overall work, and it remains a popular piece for many to see. A copy of the Just Judges panel was made for the Altarpiece so that people could immerse themselves in this piece of history and culture more fully. These artworks are more than paint on a panel or wall. They have strong cultural significance that continues to draw many people emotionally.

The bombing of the Camposanto is one of the great tragedies in recent art history, but its strong connection to Pisa’s medieval history continues to move art experts to try to save what is left of the piece. Amid the rubble, Deane Keller set about trying to save these remains of Pisa’s culture. Although the bombs did not completely destroy all of the frescoes, the baking sun of Tuscany would do so if they remained exposed without a ceiling.⁵¹ Keller and other local men established temporary shade by utilizing scaffolding. Aided by a team, Keller tried to save what he could and restored some of the few frescoes that remained after the attacks. However, some actions taken after the war appear to have further damaged the frescoes. Shortly after the war, “the paintings were detached from the walls and glued onto canvas, stretched across asbestos frames.”⁵² The bombing did not produce exactly what we see of the frescoes now. Rather the colors were still rather strong and what was left of the frescoes was clear.⁵³ Now the background is

⁴⁸ “‘Last Supper’ on View again in Milan Convent.”

⁴⁹ “Da Vinci’s ‘Last Supper’ Weathered to Faded Blots.”

⁵⁰ Ken Shulman, “Monumental Toil to Restore the Magnificent,” *The New York Times: Arts*, July 2, 1995, <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/02/arts/art-monumental-toil-to-restore-the-magnificent.html?page-wanted=all>.

⁵¹ Matthews, “Frescoes in Pisa Virtually Ruined.”

⁵² Alasdair Palmer, “The Cleaning Power of Pisa,” *The Telegraph: Art* (United Kingdom, London), May 14, 2002. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3577408/The-cleaning-power-of-Pisa.html>.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

fading away and “the figures are like ghosts emerging from a thick mist.”⁵⁴ There are still fierce debates in Italy and around the world over the proper way to preserve the frescoes and fear of losing more of what remains.⁵⁵ People are desperate to save the frescoes, their link to the Medieval world in Pisa, and there is anguish over its deterioration despite restoration attempts.

Overall, the political, historical, and cultural meaning within many works of art elicited many different reactions as to how to protect them before, during, and after World War II. The Mona Lisa, The Last Supper, the Camposanto, and The Ghent Altarpiece were highly revered for their connection to the past, culture, and the emotion and power embedded within them. Therefore, Hitler and Göring vied for numerous pieces, such as those listed. Others conveyed a message or artistic representation that Hitler did not deem fit for his new empire. Thus, museums, churches, and locals tried to save their precious art works. People could not believe that a structure that survived for hundreds years, such as the Camposanto, could fall. They grieved over what had been, and they desperately worked to save what remained. Today the Mona Lisa and The Ghent Altarpiece sit behind strong bulletproof glass, in manners the original owners or institutions did not mean for visitors to view them. This is an effort to preserve the works for fear of losing them still remains, whether it is through environmental damage or the emotional, violent response of an individual. The Last Supper stands as a miraculous remnant and it emanates a kind of pride in those who know its story. Not even World War II and bombing could obliterate it. In addition, the families of original owners of the artworks the Nazis had taken in World War II continue to fight for their pieces in legal battles between museums and family members, countries, and so on. Artworks and objects involved in the struggle between nations more than seventy years ago still have a powerful influence over individuals and society today.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

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Freedom in the Night

Antebellum Slave Life After Dark

Bekah Smith

Throughout the course of history, nighttime has witnessed people in some of their most active as well as inactive states. At no given point in time have the hours after sunset remained completely silent. For the world in which we live today, sleeping from seven to ten hours each night is the healthy norm.¹ People who tend to have trouble staying asleep for the duration of the night are labeled as insomniacs. But who is to say that those with this problem are not just experiencing the more natural pattern of sleep?² For many centuries, sleep was broken into two separate segments. As light entered the landscape of the night, segmented sleep started to disappear.³ Nighttime offered many a certain feeling of freedom that individuals lacked during the daylight hours. It was a time of the day where people felt as if they had control over their lives and could escape the certain realities they faced during the hours in the day. This feeling is present in every era of history whether it is the peasant class escaping the constraints imposed by the nobility or teenagers escaping their parents in the modern era.

¹ "National Sleep Foundation Recommends New Sleep Times," National Sleep Foundation, accessed 8 December, 2016, <https://sleepfoundation.org/media-center/press-release/national-sleep-foundation-recommends-new-sleep-times>.

² A. Roger Ekirch, "The Modernization of Western Sleep: or Does Insomnia Have a History?" *Past and Present* 226, no. 1 (2015): 149-192.

³ Segmented sleeping has both a "first" and "second" sleep cycle. Originally, the segments of sleep started as equal period, until the onset of industrialization. Industrialization and artificial light pushed back the first period of sleep to starting later and caused there to only be time for one segment of sleep. Ekirch, "The Modernization of Western Sleep?" 149-192.

The antebellum South is no exception when it came to this view of the night. Whites dominated the social and economic spheres in the period leading up to the Civil War. Not only did white Southerners control both of those spheres, but they also controlled the lives of blacks living below the Mason Dixon line. For slaves, the signs of daylight signaled that long hours of work were only moments away. In daylight, the sound of the overseer's whip cracking kept slaves from falling out of line, but darkness created an entirely new atmosphere where freedom seemed within reach. Nighttime and darkness catered to the slave's ability to choose how they conducted their hours after work, enhanced the thoughts and hopes of escaping from the plantation lifestyle, and finally offered the chance to rest after long work hours. No white southerner wanted to fathom the thought of lacking control over the slave population. However, nighttime came close to becoming this unimaginable thought. White Southerners knew the disadvantages night brought to their control over slaves; therefore, they demonstrated their authority through various "night rules."

The movement of slaves during the night is not an area that seems to have generated much conversation among scholars. The main narrative that slaves fall into is that of the brutality and oppression they endured in the South. While that narrative is important to reconstruct, the movements and actions of slaves after their work hours is just as crucial to our understanding. Looking at slave choices during the night can speak to what male and female slaves wanted for themselves as well as their families. Stephanie Camp and Deborah White both speak at great lengths in their books of the slave's nights, especially those of female slaves. Larry Hudson's book, *To Have and To Hold*, focuses on the nuclear slave family and included descriptions of their activities during the hours of darkness. The topic of slavery brings about many questions, but observing slave movements occurring at night may answer some of those questions. What roles did men take on during the night? What were the responsibilities of women after work hours? Did night play a significant role in slaves attempting or successfully running away? What was the reaction of white Southerners to slave mobility during the dark and did this mobility threaten daytime work? What were the sleeping conditions of slaves? In the antebellum South, nighttime offered slaves more than sleep. Night for slaves allowed them greater freedom such as white men experienced during the day. A sense of freedom existed for slaves, both male and female, during the hours of darkness: freedom not just from exhaustive hours of labor, but the freedom of choice in how to spend their time without the watchful eye of overseers.

Male Slaves after Working Hours

Nighttime, just as the day, promoted a kind of segregation, but whereas daytime was defined by a segregation of races, nighttime provided a segregation of the sexes within the slave world. It is no surprise that white Southerners led different lives than slaves during the night. However, male and female slaves also led different lives. Male slaves found themselves enjoying small doses of freedom that were otherwise unavailable during the daylight. Working in the fields, slaves were prohibited socializing among friends, family, and neighbors; however, upon returning home men found it possible to sit around and talk to one another before heading to sleep.⁴ Some men were not as lucky to find their nights open for talking and relaxing. Family chores still awaited the return from the fields. “Sometimes the men had to shuck corn till eleven and twelve o’clock at night” recalled Elisabeth Sparks, a former Virginia slave.⁵ Men occasionally hunted, fished, and collected firewood for the home during the night.⁶

Some male slaves volunteered themselves to work “overtime,” which meant that the work they did during the night would earn them wages or property. William Cook’s owner permitted him to split rails to earn extra money for his family.⁷ Overtime work did not merely provide some opportunities for wages; rather it allowed some families to have food set on their table. Pompey Lewis returned to the fields after his normal daily hours with the hopes of providing more for the family. He was able to lay claim to five-hundred and forty pounds of bacon and other items that he purchased.⁸ The bare minimum rarely seemed to suffice and to find oneself living under a master that allowed overtime seemed to be as close to a miracle as one could get.

Unlike Pompey Cook and William Lewis, living with family did not always prove true for all slaves. Men frequently lived away or separately from their spouses and children.⁹ Wandering off the plantation at

⁴ Deborah Gray White, *Ar’nt I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1999), 122.

⁵ Federal Writers’ Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 17, Virginia, Berry-Wilson, 1936, manuscript/mixed Material, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn170/>

⁶ Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 33.

⁷ Larry Hudson, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁹ When referring to family members living abroad, it means that they are owned by different families and living on different plantations.

night was unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of slave owners; leaving the premises was only possible if a slave gained permission in the form of travel passes. Men relied on the benevolence of their owners to grant them travel passes to see their family and friends living elsewhere. Unfortunately, not all male slaves found their masters to be understanding and forthcoming with passes to see their wives. But, travel passes could benefit the slave owner and not simply the slave's desire to visit loved ones. Nighttime became the time that masters sent men on errands, often having them deliver letters, messages, goods, or materials wherever needed.¹⁰ From obtaining passes to visit relatives to running errands, male slaves were primarily the ones granted the ability to travel. However, leaving the plantation without passes occurred on numerous occasions, especially when nighttime frolics and parties took place on nearby plantations.¹¹

Nighttime gave men the chance to be protectors of their family. In the daylight hours, the mindset had to be one based on survival of the individual. No one wished to be punished and in order to avoid it at all costs men sometimes silently witnessed their wives or family members undergoing brutal reprimands. One Georgia man delayed his efforts to save his wife from the torture she endured as a punishment. Rescuing her during the daylight hours was unthinkable because of the torture he might then endure. Waiting until nighttime proved to be this man's best hope to save his wife.¹² This Georgia slave did not face this dilemma alone. The sense of duty to protect loved ones did not perish in male slaves; rather, slave owners forced them to exert that feeling of duty in secret.

A Female Slave's Work Never Ends

Long days of work for women had long nights filled with work to follow. Fieldwork required female slaves, just like men, to work from sun up to sundown; however, a man's night did not consistently require him to perform extra labor. Women constantly executed additional tasks upon the onset of nightfall. Owners depended on their females to produce textiles for the use of the plantation, and one Georgia woman recalled her owner demanding that she spin at night. Many women faced these same demands and were punished the next morning if they failed to complete their tasks.¹³ Spinning and

¹⁰ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 27-28.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 93.

¹² White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 146.

¹³ *Ibid*, 122.

textile production for the plantation's use was no frivolous task that slave women could take lightly. Female slaves took on the responsibility of preparing clothing for the plantation. Unlike their masters and mistresses of the plantation, who found joy in their clothing and often bought their outfits already made, the clothing slaves wore came from the hands of female slaves working in the night. Slaves did not have the pleasure of purchasing ready-made clothing or repurposing other ready-made materials. While these luxurious garments graced the backs of their masters and mistresses, cheap materials covered the backs of slaves. Female slaves, like their mistresses, valued the fashion of the day. While their mistresses possessed an abundance of clothing options, female slaves used night as a time for the creation of their own personal clothing.¹⁴ Women often adorned their apparel to construct their own identity through the use of tree bark, bamboo, and poison ivy dye.¹⁵ The limitation of resources posed difficulties at points, but women stayed up well past the men creating their custom dresses for special occasions.¹⁶ The night offered female slaves a chance to create their own distinctive self. In essence, it was at this time that they felt for a moment that they owned themselves. During the daylight such individuality was stripped from them.

Spinning and textile production played large roles in a woman's night hours, but these were not their lone responsibilities after hours. Women still found themselves with chores to do in the slave quarters even without working the field, spinning, and clothing production filling their hours. Saturday afternoons generally were the day when women were able to do laundry for their families; however, the numerous responsibilities that filled a female slave's time did not always allow for Saturday afternoon laundry. The chore of laundry then became another burden of the night hours.¹⁷ Elisabeth Sparks remembered her mother experiencing the burden of laundry in the night:

She had to wash white folks clothes all day an' huh's after dark. Sometimes she'd be washin' clothes way up 'round mid night. Nosir, couldn't wash any nigguh's clothes in daytime.¹⁸

Many women found themselves not only having laundry waiting for them after a long day's work, but other chores as well. Cooking supper for the family was a task that could never wait upon returning home from the fields and only occasionally was there enough food to

¹⁴ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 113-117

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 110.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 106.

¹⁷ White, *Ar'nt I a Woman?*, 121-123.

¹⁸ Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 17, Virginia, Berry-Wilson, 1936, manuscript/mixed

last into the following day for lunch.¹⁹ Slaves frequently fell victim to sickness induced by poor dietary habits. It fell upon the women to try to keep themselves, along with their family, healthy by guaranteeing there were nutritious meals on the table.²⁰ Between the extra work given by one's master and the everyday chores at home, slave women rarely saw the back of their eyelids. Sleep did not rank high on their list of priorities.

Female slaves worked as homemakers on the plantations, but other slaves sometimes feared them. While not every slave shared a belief in witchcraft and sorcery, there did exist talk of witches' existence within the slave quarters. For those slaves that did accept the presence of witches, the idea was that their sorcery caused illnesses or even restless nights.²¹ Primarily female slaves fell to becoming the ones accused as having mystical powers. Nighttime accelerated the fear of witches and represented the peak time for perceived witch activity. While it was impossible to tell the difference between witches and non-witches in daylight, the night was when "she shed her human skin and became a shadow who 'rode' her victims."²² A slave community in Georgia believed one of their own to be a witch. She had the name of "old Aunty" or "cat witch." Old Aunty faced accusations of beating a woman in the night who claimed soreness upon waking.²³ Slave Jacob Stroyer remembered that for any accidents occurring during the night hours witches held the blame.

Sometimes a baby would be smothered by its mother and they would charge it to a witch. If they went out hunting at night and were lost, it was believed that a witch led them off, especially if they fell into a pond or creek.²⁴

Fear of what a witch might do in the hours of darkness caused many slaves to tread lightly among those they assumed were possessed of supernatural powers.

Chasing Freedom under the Moonlight

Freedom seemed much closer for slaves during the night hours. The moonlit paths and amount of darkness in night provided favorable conditions for men and sometimes women to test their luck in escap-

Material, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn170/>.

¹⁹ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 33.

²⁰ White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 83.

²¹ *Ibid*, 135.

²² *Ibid*, 135.

²³ *Ibid*, 135-136.

²⁴ Jacob Stroyer, *My Life in the South* (Salem: Newcomb & Gauss Printers, 1898), 55.

ing the tortuous life of a slave. Perhaps the one thing that had always made it easy for whites to practice slavery was also the blessing that allowed many to make it to freedom: the color of their skin. Slavery in the Americas had occurred differently than in ages before. In times past, people were enslaved following the conquest of their homes or an incurred debt. However, in the New World, slavery had emerged as a system based upon race alone. And it was difference defined by the color of one's skin that helped to trap millions in servitude. However, in many cases, the dark complexions of the slave's skin often gave those on the run a greater advantage during their nocturnal attempt at reaching a life filled with freedom and choice. The majority of runaways started their journeys on foot with the hopes that patrols could not follow on horseback into certain areas commonly used as paths of escape. Successful runaways did not embark on the journey alone. Commonly male family members or friends whom could be trusted to this act of secrecy helped the fugitive by bringing items of necessity to them.²⁵ The Underground Railroad is the exemplar network many slaves relied upon when hoping to find freedom in the North or Canada. The organization moved slaves under cover of night over distances of ten or even twenty miles that lay between most underground stations.²⁶ Most runaways were men. As above, men obtained travel passes with greater ease than female slaves did and, in turn, this made it possible to observe the landscape prior to their freedom attempts.²⁷ Not only did the men see the lay of the land, but they were also less likely to have attachments to the plantation.

Women were responsible for unborn and living children when travelling during the night. Long distance travels with children were never easy, and children often cried from tiredness and hunger, giving the group away.²⁸ Slave Henry Bibb tried to run away one night with his wife and child, but did not make it far before patrollers caught them. Though not reaching safety was disappointing, for Bibb the difficulties travelling with his whole family at night made his capture almost one of relief.²⁹ A man travelling alone was far more common for runaways than men with family or a woman travelling unaccompanied. In much

²⁵ Stoyer, *My Life in the South*, 65.

²⁶ The Underground Railroad led approximately 100,000 slaves to their freedom from 1810-1850. A "station" or "depot" was the home or place of shelter that slaves used during the night until they thought it was safe to move to the next location. Whites and blacks participated in helping these slaves escape the brutality of slavery, but blacks predominately paved the way to freedom. "Africans in America," Public Broadcasting Service. 1999. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2944.html>.

²⁷ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 41.

²⁸ White, *Ar'nt I a Woman?*, 71-72.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 72.

of the South, women comprised less than a third of total runaways: the largest percentage of women fugitives were found in Louisiana, where they comprised just twenty-nine percent of the runaway population.³⁰

Women did find ways to escape, but their absence proved to be only temporary. Familial ties and bonds were of grave importance to female slaves. A journey toward freedom only seemed worth it if one's child was able to travel as well. Thoughts of leaving children behind on the plantation often were the reason that kept many women from attempting escape.³¹ Truancy, on the other hand, offered female slaves a form of escape that did not mean permanently abandoning their families. Frequently a female slave escaped into the woods for a few nights in order to avoid slavers' brutality, but they could return to their families with ease. Sallie Smith, for example, wanted only to leave the plantation temporarily, and she slept in the woods under moss and leaves to keep hidden.³² The darkness of night gave slaves, both men and women, the ability to attempt escape, whether to permanent freedom in the North or to a temporary freedom just beyond the reality of plantation life. Nighttime saw much movement from slaves travelling paths seeking both kinds of escape from plantation life.

Controlling the Night Hours

The institution of slavery sought to control every moment of those who found themselves bound in the system of unfree labor.³³ Nighttime challenged that idea of controlling and managing the movements of slaves. As above, slaves did not solely work and sleep, rather the night gave them a chance to experience a mild freedom. White Southerners often feared that the small taste of independence night offered would lead to insurrections planned and carried out by slaves. Numerous forms of management existed during the night hours with the hopes of preventing meetings, frolics, travels, and rebellions of slave men and women. Denial of travel passes and mandatory curfews were among the ways that slave masters tried to prohibit nighttime movements from occurring. A Mississippian owner, William Ervin, required that his slaves know the plantation boundaries and set a curfew.

³⁰ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 38.

³¹ White, *Ar't I a Woman?*, 70-71.

³² Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 36-37.

³³ Free labor is only when the laborer has the ability to move freely within the labor system. Unfree labor is where the laborer has no choice or say in his or her labor type.A

At nine o'clock every night the Horne must be blown which is the signal for each to retire to his or her house and there to remain until morning.³⁴

Overseers enforced curfews on the plantations by checking each house to determine who was present and who was absent. Curfews not only signaled the return home, but also served to remind slaves that candlelight was to be extinguished as well. Slave Matilda McKinney remembered having to eat sitting in the dark when she was younger because of a curfew. Travel passes, for the most part, expired before the onset of darkness requiring once again that the slave return to the plantation by dark.³⁵ Both the pass denials and curfews were ways to keep white Southerners' minds at ease regarding their fear of unauthorized slave activity after work.

The minority of slaves were lucky enough to live on plantations where nighttime rules were nonexistent. Visiting friends and family elsewhere posed little problem with no rules barring travel without passes during the night. Male slaves frequently utilized this time and freedom to see wives and girlfriends. While slaves enjoyed these relaxed, or non-existent, night rules, white Southerners found it dangerous. One plantation owner, Henry Smith, did not require his slaves to obtain passes to travel at night and earned the name of "negro spoiler"³⁶ from his community. Another owner did not require passes nor allow patrollers on his property and his neighbors referred to his slaves as "old Ingram's Free Niggers."³⁷ White Southerners viewed owners like Henry Smith and Ingram as giving slaves too much freedom, which could lead to the downfall of what they affectionately referred to as their "peculiar institution."

While some slaves enjoyed nighttime freedoms, other took freedom into their own hands. Masters denying passes did not stop men and women from sneaking off the plantation grounds after sunset. Slave owners frequently found out that their slaves had enjoyed a night of levity at plantations nearby. Celebrations thrown, whether legally or illegally, drew attendance of men and women even without passes. In order to prevent people from travelling and merrymaking into the night, some plantation owners established patrols. So-called "Patty-rollers" enforced the rules of plantation owners and attempted to prevent the gatherings of slaves past sunset. Charles Crawley described

³⁴ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 20-21.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

the pattyrollers as “a gang of white men gitting together goin’ through de country catching slaves an’ whipping an’ beatin’ em up if dey had no remit.”³⁸ Groups of patrolmen had the nightly duties of breaking up any party that occurred and punishing slaves that travelled without passes.

Slave activity during darkness not only made white Southerners feel threatened physically, but also socially and economically. Freedom offered to slaves by night challenged a complex balance between slaves and their owners. That taste of independence raised concerns amongst white plantation owners, for they believed that slaves would begin to see their owners as being “natural enemies,” which could lead to disobedience during the day.³⁹ The activities of slaves that filled their evening hours led many plantation owners to believe that daytime yields suffered as result of this covert nightlife. Frederick Olmsted witnessed slaves working in the fields of Virginia and believed that they would “go through the motions of labour without putting strength into them. They keep their powers in reserve for their own use at night, perhaps.”⁴⁰ Owners were convinced that night’s empowerment of slaves had crept into their daytime lives in the fields.

Unfavorable Sleep

When time permitted, sleep did take over the night’s remainder. For people of this time, sleep involved lying down on a bed with blankets, and for some, it might have included circulating cooler air. Slaves, on the other hand, experienced no such luxury. Austin Steward, a former Virginia slave, recollected the conditions in which slaves slept in his autobiography. The cabins were small and put together, as he said, “in the rudest possible manner.”⁴¹ Flooring often was the earth itself, and masters never provided furniture to their slaves. If families or individuals desired a bed to sleep on it was up to them to produce one. Holes left in the sides of the building were the only windows that existed for slaves.⁴² There was no way to protect the interior from weather entering the windows nor from the cold and damp floors.⁴³ Heat filling the

³⁸ Federal Writers’ Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 17, Virginia, Berry-Wilson, 1936, manuscript/mixed Material, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn170/>.

³⁹ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 127-128.

⁴⁰ Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1862), 80.

⁴¹ Austin Steward, *Twenty-two years a slave, and forty years a freeman; embracing a correspondence of several years, while president of Wilberforce Colony, London, Canada West* (Rochester, N.Y., W. Alling, 1857), 13.

summer air provided better conditions for rest than the cabin; and so many, slaves moved to sleeping under trees until the cooler months arrived.⁴⁴ Many found it hard to sleep in such unforgiving conditions. Not only did the building make rest hard to come by, but also overcrowding did not help. Numbers ranged as to how many people lived in each cabin depending on the plantation's population; however, it was common for anywhere from ten to twelve people to live in one cabin.⁴⁵ During the summer months, the heat plagued slaves at night. The number of bodies inhabiting one room and summer's heat added together made unfavorable sleeping conditions.

Domestic slaves had the luxury of being able to sleep in the big house, avoiding the damp floors and overcrowded space.⁴⁶ Austin Steward, a domestic slave, often slept in the same room as his owners, but his job was to circulate cool air in the room by fanning his master to sleep. Once his owner fell asleep, he was able to sleep as well. Though sleeping in the big house protected Steward from outside elements, he still had to manage with having only the floor as his bed.⁴⁷ Neither the big house nor slave cabin provided favorable conditions for sleeping. Now, that is not to say that slaves tried to avoid sleep. For the majority of the time when slaves found themselves with nothing to do they headed off to bed.⁴⁸

Sleep was important for multiple reasons in the world of slavery. After working from sun up to sundown, the chance to lay down and rest the body was a welcome respite. Adding to that, allowing the body to rest was one way to help ensure good health and well-being. The living conditions being unfavorable and uncontrollable on their end meant doing the best they could to try to avoid illnesses. As lack of sleep often led to exhaustion and a kind of physical crashing, the dread of oversleeping the next morning was a real fear, particularly for slaves. Partygoers and night owls from the previous night would show up to the fields late, but later paid the price of the whip.⁴⁹ Despite the poor conditions, no slave, whether female or male, underestimated the importance of their sleep.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson: Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada*, (Boston: Bolles and Houghton, 1849), 9-10.

⁴⁴ Stoyer, *My Life in the South*, 45.

⁴⁵ Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson*, 9.

⁴⁶ The "big house" was the term used by slaves to reference their master's or mistress's home.

⁴⁷ Steward, *Twenty-two years a slave*, 26-27.

⁴⁸ Federal Writers' Project: Slave Narrative Project, Vol. 17, Virginia, Berry-Wilson, 1936, manuscript/mixed Material, retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/mesn170/>.

⁴⁹ Camp, *Closer to Freedom*, 20-21.

Freedom in the Night

Nighttime represented much more than just the sun sinking below the horizon and the moon rising for slaves. The darkness proved to be more than the change in sunlight. Rather, in the words of Ebenezer Pettigrew, an Albemarle Sound planter, “night is their day.”⁵⁰ That choice of phrasing by Mr. Pettigrew shows that even white Southerners understood the significance of nightfall for the enslaved peoples living among them. This understanding is why many plantation owners did all they could to prevent slaves from enjoying the mobility that darkness made more accessible. Patrols, curfews, and physical boundaries were all ways in which masters tried to assert their dominance with the onset of night. Men frequently tested the perceived lessening of control by whites with attempts to escape their life of bondage. Providing for family, whether that be food or furniture, also fell to men during their free time at night. Female slaves saw the darkness as a time to care for the needs of family. She took on many extra responsibilities after the sun set beyond the horizon. Night was versatile. When considering the Antebellum South, it is indeed important to pay attention to the horrors of the slave system, to the inhumanity and the wrong done to a particular group of people. It is easy to speak of the work required of the slave and conditions in which he worked. However, one should not forget that these enslaved peoples had lives that existed outside of the fields. After working all day, slaves could organize the night for themselves. This was its own form of rebellion. Slaves could have easily collapsed upon returning home only to wake the next morning to the horn signaling work; instead, men and women stayed up into the morning hours embracing this little moment of freedom. The assumption that nighttime and darkness were meant only for sleep is inaccurate. Sleep did occur within the span of night’s hours, but sleep was not the sole option for slaves by any means. Mobility was one of the largest forms of freedom that a slave could experience. Slave owners did their best to limit the slaves’ mobility during the night with the hopes of destroying that chance to taste a small dose of independence. A slave’s nighttime was more than just darkness and sleep; it consisted of choice, and above all, the semblance and feeling of freedom.

⁵⁰ David S. Cecelski, *The Waterman’s Song* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 70.

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American Media Coverage of the Rise of Hitler: An Indicator of Depression-Era American Isolationism or of a False Assessment of the Rise of the Chancellor?

Cristina Urquidi,

Introduction

This study seeks to analyze the response of the US media to the rise of Hitler, a process which occurred during the Great Depression, in the 1930s. At a time when the attention of the country was focused on domestic economic problems, assessment of the rise of a leader who became such a prominent figure is an interesting topic worthy of analysis. While his rise could not be wholly ignored, one can imagine that it would probably have been spoken of more in a less tense domestic climate. Overall, this study shows that the rise of the Führer was not described in as critical of a way as should be expected of a democratic nation, especially one that would go on to fight, in an extremely bloody and protracted manner, this man and all he represented.

In an attempt to establish an adequate answer to the question, we must firmly establish what can be considered to be an appropriate representation of what constitutes the United States' media. For this reason, this study includes analysis of a variety of different types of print publications which vary in size, audience, political leaning, and motivation. The New York Times was a traditionally liberal newspaper that had a massive readership during this time. It enjoyed a reputation as an agenda-setting media outlet, and its content revealed what it considered should be important to its reader. The Wall Street Journal was also often agenda-setting but reflected the interests of the public to a greater extent than The New York Times. The Wall Street Journal attempted to write about what concerned its readers, which is why

its economic leaning was readily consumed by members of the American public during the Great Depression. It was a conservative periodical, and also had a large audience during the 1930s. Time Magazine was a widely consumed weekly magazine during the 1930s and remains very popular among a similar demographic today. Rather than being agenda-setting, this publication attempted to reflect public interest and write about what the public wished to read. This publication is useful in determining the general attitude of the American public towards a specific topic. The Literary Digest was a weekly magazine that, unlike The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, was very opinion-based and did not attempt to as great of an extent to present news in a non-partisan way. While readership was large, it was not nearly as massive as the first three publications and was not as consistent in its reporting of world events. Nevertheless, like Time Magazine, The Literary Digest seemed to reflect what was on the mind of the average American. The last two publications analyzed were much more limited in their audience, but provide interesting insights into the attitudes and concerns of the two audiences which they hoped to reach. The Pittsburgh Chronicle was an African-American publication and grew to become very popular in the 1930s. It was quite opinion-based and had a very specific agenda it hoped to put forth. Finally, The Sentinel was a prominent Jewish weekly in the 1930s. The reaction of this news outlet is of interest, as it captured the reaction of American Jews toward the growing wave of anti-Semitism in Europe.

Overall, the response to Hitler's rise will be analyzed across these news sources. It will be determined whether the consistent lack of critical and investigative reporting towards the rise of the Führer was merely due to the more pressing issues occurring in the US during the Great Depression, pushing articles about the topic to the later pages of the periodical, or whether there was an ill-assessment, and subsequent underestimation, of the power and strength of Hitler and his growing movement.

Hitler's Rise to Power: A Brief Account

A brief history of Hitler's rise is essential for studying the media's responses to his rise. His rise can be traced earlier than 1932, but for the purpose of this study, his first run at President is the first event that will be analyzed. He ran against incumbent Paul von Hindenburg. Hindenburg won by a low margin; thus a run-off had to be conducted. In the run-off, it was established clearly that Hindenburg would be president. Hindenburg at first feared Hitler's immense popularity that he accrued during 1932 through speeches and rallies, and viewed it as a threat to his power; therefore, he initially did not appoint Hitler as Chancellor. However, in

the next elections in November of 1932, the Nazis lost many seats to the Communists, making right-wing Germans even more desperate to get Hitler into power. Eventually, former Chancellor Franz von Papen, supported by the conservative German National People's Party, convinced Hindenburg to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. On January 30th, 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor by Hindenburg.

Hitler's appointment was a watershed event in German history, as he immediately began setting his grandiose plan for Germany into action. He ordered an expansion of the Gestapo; appointed Goering as head of the new security force; and began eliminating any and all opponents. The next important event of Hitler's Chancellorship was the Reichstag fire, which took place on February 27, 1933. This event is significant as it is said to be the reason why the Nazis were able to become so established in the German government. The fire was an attack on the German parliament building and was blamed on Communist bricklayer Marinus van der Lubbe. The Nazis took this event as a pretense to acquire more power, as they claimed that it was evidence of the Communists attempting to take control of Germany. The fault of the fire has been questioned, with some even purporting that it was the Nazis themselves who led the attack in order to gain control. Regardless of who was at fault, the Nazis certainly did gain control following the fire. Immediately following the fire came the Enabling Act, a constitutional amendment that gave Hitler and the German Cabinet plenary powers with which they could enact laws without the approval of the Reichstag. The laws under the Enabling Act of 1933 also essentially declared war on the Communists and gave Hitler emergency powers to suspend the civil liberties of any person accused of being Communist. It also allowed for mass arrests of Communists. The next event that will be analyzed is the death of Hindenburg, which resulted in Hitler assuming the roles of both Führer and Chancellor, marking his accumulation of all power in Germany complete. The events of this period of time are what will be considered as Hitler's "rise," for the purpose of this paper. The major periodicals of the time framed the major events of Hitler's rise to power and early Chancellorship in specific ways to send certain messages to their readership. This article will analyze each media source its use of framing theory with respect to the historical events.

Media Framing Theory

Framing theory is an idea that was first formally elaborated by Erving Goffman. Goffman's essay, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, advances his postulation that humans operate in primary frameworks, which govern the way they interpret the events of their

environment.¹ In this analysis, news sources will be viewed in their coverage of Hitler regarding two aspects: both the simple mention, measured quantitatively, of the events of his rise and the rise of Nazism, as well as the attitude of the articles in which he was mentioned, and how this attitude was related to media-framing, if that proves to be motivation behind the tone of the author. Humans digest and understand information through these natural and social frameworks in order to understand events in a wider context. These frameworks are closely tied to communication and the spreading of information and form the basis of media-framing theory. In regards to media, this theory argues that journalists knowingly present information in a specific way (a “frame”). This frame, in line with Goffman’s ideas, greatly affects how the reader interprets information. Thus, when this frame is consciously employed by a journalist, it can be considered a form of agenda-setting theory. McCombs and Shaw first proposed this theory and established the following hypothesis:

In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position.²

Reports of Hitler fall into two categories— “credible” frames and “non-credible” frames. Credible frames presented Hitler’s rise as probable, citing his popularity and political skill. They presented Hitler as a potential leader, although articles presenting his potential as a leader were fearful of his rise, noting its imminence. Non-credible frames underestimated and undermined his potential power, emphasizing limits on his power, highlighting his lack of experience and Austrian heritage, and arguing that Nazi popularity would be ephemeral. Non-credible frames were dismissive of Hitler’s power. Few, if any, publications, presented credible frames of Hitler prior to his appointment as Chancellor in January 1933, and even through the beginning of 1933?, the use of this type of frame persisted. The motivations behind this will be assessed in this study. There is a clear lack of consistent and credible framing of Hitler across the board in American media, as news outlets underestimated Hitler’s popularity, but rather solely advanced the strength in popularity of the German Republic.

¹ Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1986), 21-40.

² *Ibid*, 21-40.

³ *Ibid*, 21-40.

The New York Times

The New York Times was an American daily newspaper which, since its foundation in 1851, has remained one of the most prominent and widely read publications in the country. By the 1930s, it had already established this reputation, and it was generally accepted that the publication had liberal leanings. The audience of this paper was broad—spanning households of all socioeconomic backgrounds with interests not only in events occurring in the US, but also abroad. In contrast to other media outlets that will be analyzed in this study, The New York Times should not be considered a reflection of American interest and concern but, rather, a source that created it, informing the American citizens about important topics that merit such attention and shaping the debate that emerged. Since 1896, the paper’s slogan “All The News That’s Fit To Print,” has been displayed on the front page, and this slogan was an appropriate description of the newspaper.³ It intends to cover most major events occurring in the US and the world. Fitting this description, The New York Times was the first American publication to report on Hitler’s rise in 1932. Prior to this, coverage of the eventual Chancellor of Germany was sporadic. However, once Hitler was appointed Chancellor, The New York Times began extensive coverage of the Reich leader. Initial coverage was not condemnatory nor investigative and even implied a possible stability that could come with his appointment. However, The New York Times at this time was decidedly more critical of Hitler than many other of the major publications included in the study. Because Hitler presented more of a threat to Europe than the US, The New York Times initially drew a collection of reactions from the continent, as opposed to advancing its own opinion. This strategy ultimately changed as Hitler gained political prominence and power, and The New York Times to informed their readers of the rise, as well as background, of this man and the Nazi party. The New York Times, while clearly less centered on America than the other publications studied, was still delayed in reporting of the rise of Adolf Hitler, and markedly not very critical of the man, considering the great strides he took toward undermining democracy during the first months and years of his Chancellorship.

The New York Times is one of the three publications studied that contains clear usage of media-framing theory. As mentioned, The New York Times seemed to set the news and establish people’s opinions, as

⁴ “The Rise of Adolf Hitler,” last modified 1996, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/riseofhitler/runs.htm>.

opposed to reflecting public opinion. However, as it did not only serve to reflect public opinion, it did keep public interest in mind, especially on the front pages and major headlines, in order to continue to be successful in selling papers. As mentioned, coverage of Hitler by The New York Times, as well as other major American news outlets, increased exponentially in 1933.

The greatest mention of Hitler prior to his appointment as Chancellor in the pages of the The New York Times occurred when he ran for president in March of 1932. In this election, Hitler ran against incumbent Paul von Hindenburg, and the reaction of the publication, presenting a non-credible frame of the candidate and severely underestimating his relative success, is worth noting. Hindenburg won the first round of the election, with support from 49% of the electorate, or 18,651,497 votes.⁴ Hitler, however, came in second place, receiving 30% of the vote, or 11,339,446 votes.⁵ A run-off had to be conducted as Hindenburg did not win the majority, but the media reactions to the first elections will be analyzed as opposed to the run-off, as these reactions are more worthy of note, because Hindenburg's eventual success in the run-off was expected. Prior to the election, the paper's reporting revealed a sense of fear about the success of Hitler and the Nazis, exemplified in an article entitled "Nazi Uprising Feared," although it was pushed back to page seven.⁶ The article did not express a fear in the US but merely reported on protests in Berlin, during which protesters had decreed that "a vote for Hitler means voting for hatred, inexperience, nepotism, and ruin for the German people....Vote for Hindenburg and you vote for wisdom, tradition, impartiality, responsibility, union, right, freedom, and preservation of a new rise of the Reich and the people."⁷ Absent from the issue on March 10th was any mention of the arguments of the Hitlerites against Hindenburg. The paper implied that Hitler's supporters were not so formidable a force, as nothing about their ideals, beliefs, or strength was mentioned. After the elections on March 13th, The New York Times published an article expressing the relief felt by the United States after the success of Hindenburg. In the article "Result in Germany Elates Washington," the author described that the "Returns Help to Prove Germans Retain Faith in Conservative Political Leadership," and that "Hoover, Secretary of State Stimson, and other high officials...ha[d] been anxious for

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Nazi Uprising Feared," *New York Times*, March 10, 1932, 7.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "Result in Germany Elates Washington," *New York Times*, March 14, 1932, 8.

the continuance of the present regime in Germany and would view a victory by the Hitlerites as a distinct menace to the European situation.”⁸ This reaction seems to be the most negative of Hitler up to this date, and remained so for the next several mentions of his rise. In a subsequent article on March 15th, *The New York Times* deemphasizes the prominence of this fear, in an article entitled “German Republicanism,” in which the author wrote “(i)t is humanly certain that President Hindenburg will win the runoff election next month. For Hitler, it is impossible to foresee more than 14,000,000 votes, representing his own poll on Sunday and that of the Hindenburg Nationalists.”⁹ The use of strong rhetoric such as “impossible” in describing Hitler’s ploy at gaining power was seen consistently in early articles about his actions. While it is true that Hitler was over 2.5 million votes short of 14 million, using such words severely underestimated the relatively large success he had achieved, considering his rapid rise to political relevancy. The article went on to state that “the simple fact is that the outside world, and a considerable number of Germans at home, have been led to exaggerate the numerical strength of Hitlerism and to underestimate the strength of German republicanism and democracy.”¹⁰ This article seems to go against the previously mentioned article about relief felt in Washington, as it deems any fear as unfounded. The article mentioned the “hard times which have settled over Germany since the war,” commonly cited as one of the major reasons for Hitler’s rise, but went on to say that this will “account more for the passion of Hitlerism than for its numbers,” and concluded by cementing the belief in the strength of the German republic.¹¹ The media consistently used non-credible frames, both subtle and overt, implied and explicit, that pointed to the inevitable failure in Hitler’s rise.

After Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor on January 30, 1933, the American media, including *The New York Times*, had a strong reaction. For the first time, Hitler graced the main headline on the front page, which read “Hitler Made Chancellor Of Germany But Coalition Cabinet Limits Power; Centralists Hold Balance In Reichstag. Wall Street Doesn’t React.”¹² However, even with Hitler’s assumption of such power which, as demonstrated, had clearly not been predicted, the headline was curbed by the second half of the statement: “But Coa-

⁹ “German Republicanism,” *New York Times*, March 13, 1932, 20.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² “Hitler Made Chancellor Of Germany But Coalition Cabinet Limits Power; Centralists Hold Balance In Reichstag,” *New York Times*, January 31, 1933, 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*

lition Cabinet Limits Power; Centralists Hold Balance in Reichstag.”¹³ The article went on to describe how the Cabinet, which constitutionally limited Hitler’s power, was “not truly representative of Hitlerism,” and that its composition “leaves Herr Hitler no scope for gratification of any dictatorial ambition.”¹⁴ The article also discussed the reaction of Wall Street, a necessary inclusion, due to the concern with the country’s economy by the American people. Thus, the headline contained a non-credible frame, in which Hitler’s power was underestimated, due to the limitations placed upon him. Overall, in response to this event, The New York Times had a relatively positive reaction, save one article entitled “Germany Ventures.”¹⁵ In this article, the author wrote of the “disturbing effect at home,” and the “grave apprehensions abroad” that this appointment will create.¹⁶ However, it ended on an uneasy, but not wholly negative note, stating that “(m)uch of his old electoral thunder has either been stolen from him or has died down into a negligible rumble. The more violent parts of his alleged program he has himself in recent months been softening down or abandoning.”¹⁷ Ultimately, the author concluded that Hitler’s actions should be watched closely, but that “Germans have repeatedly shown to stand by and defend and preserve their republic,” and they will probably “triumph over every danger,” including Hitler, “suddenly rising in their path.”¹⁸ The rest of the articles, however, take on a more positive tone, pointing to the limits on his power. In an issue on February 5th, the same sentiments of positivity remain, this time defined less by the limits on his power than his actual policies. One article explained that “his changes have almost always been on the side of reason and common sense,” and that Hitler’s voice “seems to [resonate like] an entire orchestra.”¹⁹ He was beginning to be described as a credible leader as he was spoken of positively or reported within a credible frame. The next notable event in Hitler’s rise was the Reichstag Fire that occurred on February 17th, 1933, which not only destroyed the symbol of German democracy, but was perhaps the first event that led to Hitler’s dictatorship. The fire was blamed on Communists, and this justified the creation of an “emergency decree, the Decree for the Protection of the People and the State,” which “suspended the right to assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and other

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ “Germany Ventures,” *New York Times*, January 31, 1933, 3.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ “Diet Dissolution Refused in Prussia,” *New York Times*, February 5, 1933, 1.

²⁰ “The Reichstag Fire,” *The New York Times*, last modified January 29, 2016, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/>

constitutional protections, including all restraints on police investigations.”²⁰ Because of this event, later in the year, Hitler suggested the transfer of all power to himself, and this was voted upon and approved by the Reichstag, resulting in Hitler becoming the most powerful man in Germany. The response of *The New York Times* to both of these events will be assessed.

On February 28th, news of the fire covered the front page of *The New York Times*, as expected, because this was a major incident in Germany. The main article, “Incendiary Fire Wrecks Reichstag; 100 Red Members Ordered Seized,” simply reported the details of the event as they were understood, including the supposed guilt of a Communist.²¹ On March 1st, the following day, the front page of the periodical was devoted to the beginning of Hitler’s crusade to limit fundamental civil rights under the justification of protecting Germany from the violent Communists who had destroyed the Reichstag. The article seemed to confirm the validity of this precaution, without any hint that this could be a slippery slope into a more grave and widespread suspension of rights. The article, “Hitler Suspends Reich Guarantees; Left Press Banned,” speaks of the “Emergency Decree” designed to “Combat ‘Communist Terror’ by eliminating ‘Constitutional Safeguards.’”²² The author wrote that “last night’s fire, which rendered the Reichstag building untenable for at least a year, has provided for the expected basis for measures of repression throughout the Reich unprecedented save in time of war or revolution.”²³ Thus, while it did point to how the measures were “unprecedented,” it added that they are “expected,” due to the alleged attack by the Communists.²⁴ It argued that this response of a suspension of “all constitutional articles guaranteeing private property, personal liberty, freedom of the press, secrecy of postal communications and the right to hold meetings and form associations,” was a result of the “wave of popular hysteria” in Germany.²⁵ Hitler’s actions, this article and others, argued, were catalyzed by the fear of communism, and were not condemned to the extent that might have been expected from a leading periodical of a democratic nation (although this lack of condemnation could possibly predict the same

article.php?ModuleId=10007657.

²¹ “Incendiary Fire Wrecks Reichstag; 100 Red Members Ordered Seized,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1933, 1.

²² “Hitler Suspends Reich Guarantees; Left Press Banned,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1933, 1.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ “Hitler’s Press Chief Hints Ban May Last,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1933, 11.

trend during the Red Scare following the Second World War in the US). The *New York Times* did not seem to have much of a negative reaction, even when it asserted that “Hitler’s Press Chief Hints Ban May Last,” and that he “Intimates Left Papers Will be Suppressed Permanently.”²⁶

The next important event, was the Reichstag vote, giving legislative power to Hitler. The *New York Times* deemed this news worthy of front page display again on March 24th, 1933 with the main headline “Hitler Cabinet Gets Power to Rule As A Dictatorship; Reichstag Quits Sine Die.”²⁷ The article discussed the text of the Enabling Act, which granted Hitler extraordinary power. The article also stated that Hitler had “no desire to increase [Germany’s] armed forces if other nations disarmed.”²⁸ The author added that Hitler had “achieved the great triumph for which he has been fighting for fourteen years, and it is considered that he is now the master of Germany with power greater than any of his predecessors in the Chancellery.”²⁹ There was some mention of the gravity of this newfound power by Hitler:

under the enabling act the Cabinet will have the power to promulgate laws without reference to the Reichstag. In its deeper implications the law will enable the Hitler-Papen government to override the Federal Constitution even to the extent of eliminating President von Hindenburg from further promulgating laws and decrees, as this power is given to the cabinet.³⁰

However, the author did not frame this in an agenda-setting method. There was no comparison to anything an average American reader might know, which could advance the fact that this magnitude of power was unprecedented, as future articles would include.

Also in this issue was one of the first mentions of the terrors of the Holocaust. On page two, the periodical published an article “Nazis Resentful At Agitation Here,” which explains the German resentment of American opposition to Hitler’s anti-Semitism.³¹ In it, the author c Dr. Heinrich Simon, who declared: “the outside world has failed, with the fewest exceptions, to form a true conception of the German state

²⁷ “Hitler Cabinet Gets Power to Rule As A Dictatorship; Reichstag Quits Sine Die,” *New York Times*, March 24, 1933, 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ “Nazis Resentful At Agitation Here,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1933, 2.

³² *Ibid.*

of mind since the war...completely misunderstood.”³² The issue also included reports on violence towards Jews in Poland.

The next major step in Hitler’s rise was the death of Hindenburg, which resulted in Hitler’s assumption of the powers of both Führer and Chancellor. This step, to consolidate power in the person of Hitler, was one of the first times that true alarm, without qualification, towards an event in Hitler’s rise emerged in the American media, although this fear is documented to be emerging out of Europe. President Hindenburg died on August 2nd, 1934 and, on the following day, the front page of *The New York Times* read: “Hitler Takes Presidential Power, Ending Title; Army Swears Fealty; Ratifying Election Set for Aug. 19,” with the following subheading: “Hitler to Be Only Fuehrer and Chancellor; Says ‘President’ Is for Hindenburg Alone.”³³ The publication included reactions from across much of Europe, particularly from the French, in an article entitled “Hitler’s New Role Troubles French: Now That He Is Supreme in Reich They Fear He May Set Out on Foreign Adventures.”³⁴ It is worth noting that the word “adventures” was used, in place of stronger vocabulary, such as “conquest” or “destruction.” The periodical also included that “Vienna is Perturbed,” and that the “Soviet Is Gloomy on the Outlook.”³⁵ It was here, for the first time, that *The New York Times* clearly attempted to convey the gravity of this event to its readers, as it printed the following:

the official news machinery proclaimed to a stunned nation that in Adolf Hitler would be vested the powers of both President and Chancellor—giving him autocratic authority of a scope never accorded to a Hohenzollern monarch of the past nor vested in the head of any other modern State.³⁶

This article was one of the first instances of media-framing by *The New York Times* with the purpose of causing alarm in the American people. This desire to cause alarm most likely because it had become abundantly clear that Hitler had accomplished his goal of complete power, and had not been limited by any outside forces. However, the periodical still seemed to urge restraint, as, in an article entitled

³³ “Hitler Takes Presidential Power, Ending Title; Army Swears Fealty; Ratifying Election Set For Aug. 19,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1934, 1.

³⁴ “Hitler’s New Role Troubles French: Now That He Is Supreme in Reich They Fear He May Set Out on Foreign Adventures,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1934, 1.

³⁵ “Vienna is Perturbed,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1934, 1; “Soviet is Gloomy On The Outlook,” *The New York Times*, August 3, 1934, 1.

³⁶ “Nazi Chief Now Supreme,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1934, 1.

³⁷ “Roosevelt Sends Hitler Message,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1934, 4.

“Roosevelt Sends Hitler Message,” the author wrote, “But Washington Circles Do Not See Death Causing Great Change in Situation.”³⁷ Thus, while there seemed to be need for alarm in Europe, this fear should not have extend to the home front. .

After Hitler was officially voted Führer, on August 19th, the American media, especially The New York Times, finally took note of the potential threat of Hitler’s expansion of power for the western world.. The front page read, “Hitler Now World’s Supreme Autocrat; Legally Answerable to Nobody for Acts.”³⁸ The article argued that “powers greater than those held by any ruler in the modern world are put in the hands of Adolf Hitler as a result of today’s plebiscite.”³⁹ The article repeated this same idea in different ways to its readers, seemingly to ensure complete understanding of the gravity of the situation:

As Reich leader and Reich Chancellor he holds the powers that belonged to the late President von Hindenburg and he has in addition the enormous authority conferred on him as Chancellor by an act adopted when the Nazis obtained full power in the Reich. Under that act he had virtually supreme legislative authority.⁴⁰

The article continued “(i)t must be realized that the Reichstag has become a mere rubber stamp for his decrees.”⁴¹ Another article, entitled “Absolute Power Is Won,” continued to compare Hitler’s power to that of others, an example of a credible frame, as it says:

The endorsement gives Chancellor Hitler, who four years ago was not even a German citizen, dictatorial powers unequaled in any other country, and probably unequaled in history since the days of Genghis Khan. He has more power than Joseph Stalin in Russia, who has a party machine to reckon with; more power than Premier Mussolini of Italy who shares his prerogative with the titular ruler; more power than any American President ever dreamed of.⁴²

The final step that cemented credible frame reportage of Hitler occurred with Hitler’s first major violation of the Treaty of Versailles—the reintroduction of military conscription in Germany on March

³⁸ “Hitler Now World’s Supreme Autocrat; Legally Answerable to Nobody for Acts,” *New York Times*, August 20, 1934, 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ “Hitler Now World’s Supreme Autocrat; Legally Answerable to Nobody for Acts,” 1.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² “Absolute Power is Won,” *New York Times*, August 20, 1934, 1.

⁴³ “Germany Creates Army of 500,000, Orders Conscription, Scraps treaty; Entente Powers Confer on

16th, 1935. On the following day the front page of *The New York Times* read, “Germany Creates Army of 500,000, Orders Conscription, Scraps treaty; Entente Powers Confer on Action.”⁴³ In the article, while there was not much mention of US reaction, there was a compilation of reactions from European powers, especially from the French, who consider it a “stunning blow.” Thus the paper framed the article in such a way as to elicit a fearful reaction from its readers.⁴⁴ Thus, reporting of Hitler’s rise by *The New York Times* was sporadic and notably lacking in an investigative or condemning nature.

The Wall Street Journal

The *Wall Street Journal* was a business-focused, daily, conservative American newspaper. It began as a brief bulletin listing news about stocks distributed to traders at the stock exchange in the 1880s, but became *The Wall Street Journal* in 1889. By the 1930s, circulation had grown exponentially, and, with the stock market crash in 1929, *The Wall Street Journal* became a household name and product read by tens of thousands of Americans, most of them businessmen.⁴⁵

The reportage of the *The Wall Street Journal*, like the *New York Times*, exemplifies media-framing theory. However, the *Journal* was also a news periodical that reflected the interests and concerns of the American people. This reflection was made abundantly clear in the type of news it included, as it was all surrounding the condition of the American economy. While news events were included, there was almost always some mention of the effect this had on the American economy. In the case of the rise of Hitler, this trend persisted.

Prior to Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor, there was hardly mention of him or the Nazi movement. On March 15, 1932, after the presidential election that Hitler lost, *The Wall Street Journal* ran a piece entitled “Stability in Germany,” comfortably buried on page eight.⁴⁶ In the article, the author described the success of Hindenburg as “a characteristic thing” that was common of the German people.⁴⁷ The article, with a strong economic tone, argued that “at a moment when

Action,” *New York Times*, March 17, 1935, 1.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Cynthia Crossen, “It all Began in the Basement of a Candy Store: Dow Jones Saga Reflects The Forces That Shaped The Wall Street Journal,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 1, 2007.

⁴⁶ “Stability in Germany,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 1932, 8.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

the German home political situation is intimately related to world finance and world economic reconstruction, the German people have rejected political adventuring.”⁴⁸ The article completely discredits Hitler’s progress, even though he gained a large 30% of the vote.⁴⁹ The article ensured its readers that stability, both economic and political, remained in Europe, and that the world markets had not responded negatively to the event.

Between this edition and the declaration of Hitler as Chancellor, there was hardly mention of Hitler or the rise of the Nazi movement. Clearly, *The Wall Street Journal* and the average American businessman were more focused on events within the borders of the US economy. There was mention of the appointment of Hitler as Chancellor on January 31st, 1933, although it was pushed to the second page, in an article entitled “Hitler Granted Chancellorship.”⁵⁰ The article, however, was even less critical than *The New York Times*, and seemed to imply that Hitler would accept limits to his power.⁵¹ The article mainly focused on the reaction of the economy: “Stocks gained one? to two points, while bonds, especially Reich loans, lost two to three.”⁵² The article cited Hitler’s Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick, perhaps hoping to quell any fears about Nazism’s success: “The government’s goal is to live in peace and friendship with the world.”⁵³ In this edition, there was nothing on the front page to draw attention to such a momentous event in Hitler’s rise, depicting the attitude of the newspaper, which was largely focused on the US, especially concerning the US economy.

There was no mention of the Reichstag Fire, and no real mention of the Reichstag vote on legislative power given to Hitler. The only mention of Hitler was in the March 24th, 1933 edition--the day after the vote-- which concerned Germany’s currency, in an article entitled “Hitler Demands Revision Of Debt.”⁵⁴ There was increased coverage of Hitler after Hindenburg died, when the periodical subsequently published an article entitled “Hitler Assumes All Reich Power,” although it was on the second page and not the front page.⁵⁵ This article, how-

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ “Hitler Granted Chancellorship” *Wall Street Journal*, January 31, 1933, 2.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ “Hitler Demands Revision Of Debt,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 24, 1933, 1.

⁵⁵ “Hitler Assumes All Reich Power,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 4, 1934, 2.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

ever, did not condemn Hitler, but merely described the oaths he made during his appointment, and concluded that “the Nazi extremists are not strong enough to do harm.”⁵⁶ In another article related to the topic, “Nations Await Hitler’s Move,” The Wall Street Journal wrote that Hitler was now clearly in a “stronger position,” but insisted that “open markets show no reaction,” a response in line with its economic motivations.⁵⁷ The reaction of the periodical was clearly focused on the response of the markets, although it did describe the “apprehension” in Europe following this event. The Wall Street Journal was far less critical than The New York Times, and did not make an attempt to frame any article in a way to try to convey to its readers the magnitude and political significance of this event.⁵⁸ However, this restraint was most likely due to the fact that the goal of the newspaper was largely just to convey the economic situation of the US and the world.

Time Magazine

Time Magazine was a weekly newsmagazine published in New York. Its first issue was published in 1923 and, by 1927, it became “the most influential newsmagazine in the United States.”⁵⁹ Until the 1970s, Time was known to be more conservative when it came to political matters.⁶⁰ Time Magazine was often criticized for its somewhat light style, as it was written for the average American, and its audience was meant to be very broad. However, it was because of this light style that Time is such a useful publication to study for this research. The magazine often reflected the attitudes and sentiments of the American public, and was less concerned with agenda-setting, than The New York Times, for example.

The coverage of Hitler prior to his appointment as Chancellor reflected a broad consensus about Hitler’s future: he was someone who had had a chance at to gain political prominence, but failed in its attainment. Prior to his appointment as Chancellor, there was sporadic, but concrete mention of Hitler. After Hitler’s loss in the presidential elections of 1932, Time ran an article entitled “Vive Hindenburg,” which reported that Paris “had been extremely nervous lest Adolf Hitler win the German election and repudiate the Treaty of Versailles.”⁶¹ A month

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ “Time: American Magazine,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. April 17, 2013. <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Time-American-magazine>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Vive Hindenburg!,” *Time Magazine*, March 15, 1936, 24.

⁶² “Hitler Stopped?,” *Time Magazine*, April 18, 1932, 17.

later, after the run-off election, TIME published an article entitled “Hitler Stopped?” that discussed Hitler’s loss without giving much information about the man or his campaign.⁶² This article did, however, argue that there was a “rising fascist tide,” although it concluded that, for the moment, it had been defeated by Hindenburg.⁶³ Coverage of Hitler by Time can be described as minimal at best, as the rise of fascism was not seen as a viable threat to the American people. Even at the beginning of 1933, prior to Hitler’s appointment, there did not seem to be much concern for his rise. In the annual Man of the Year article, this year awarded to Franklin D. Roosevelt, Time reported Hitler’s loss:

in 1931 Adolf Hitler was Germany’s rising star. In 1932 he and his Nazis slipped back to the tune of 2,000,000 lost votes. His thunder was largely stolen by General Kurt von Schleicher, the new Chancellor to whom many a German looks as Man of Next Year.⁶⁴

Thus, Hitler was seen as declining in prominence, and it seemed as though Time had predicted that a different German would rise to prominence and would even be worthy of a Man of the Year title. This title essentially declared the man chosen as the most interesting man of the time and presented his face on the front of the magazine. Being awarded this honor cemented a man’s status and placed him at the forefront of consciousness of the American people.

After Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor, Time’s coverage of Hitler was similar to that of The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, characterized by hesitation, but optimism, largely guaranteed by “anti-Hitler ‘safeguards’” in which the American media put some trust.⁶⁵ Unlike the other two news outlets, however, Time began to delve more into Hitler’s background at this point in time. This deeper personal investigation is not surprising, since Time often focused its reporting on the personal details and backgrounds of figures on the political scene, to a greater extent than news sources such as The New York Times, which were more events-based, and would not cover the background of Hitler until further along in his rise.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ “Man of the Year,” *Time Magazine*, January 2, 1933, 10.

⁶⁵ “Hitler Into Chancellor,” *Time Magazine*, February 6, 1933, 22.

⁶⁶ “Flaming Reichstag,” *Time Magazine*, March 6, 1933, 22.

Reporting of the Reichstag Fire was included, but subsequent actions by Hitler were not condemned, and did not predict the rise to power of Hitler, who was able to take advantage of this situation to create an emergency state, setting himself up for absolute power. While in its coverage *Time* noted that Hitler was “seeking control of the Reichstag by a campaign of unparalleled violence and bitterness,” it did not conduct much investigation or include much analysis of exactly how it was so violent or what acts could be attributed to the Chancellor.⁶⁶ This seemed to be a trend in all reporting on events surrounding his rise. *Time* did not respond to the Reichstag vote offering Hitler legislative power, most likely because it merely cemented what had been established by The Reichstag Fire, and *Time* was more concerned with American affairs, in general. *Time* did include reports on Hindenburg’s death, and Hitler’s subsequent assumption of power of the Führer and Chancellor. In fact, there were five articles pertaining to Hitler’s actions, but none condemning Hitler’s seizure of such power. Articles mostly reported on Hindenburg and described Hitler as “intuitive.”⁶⁷ There was no concrete investigative journalism into his actions, nor was there any framing by the journalists to attempt to convey to the readers how much power Hitler now possessed. There was subsequently no mention of Hitler’s official movement into the position of Führer and Chancellor in late August.

Coverage of Adolf Hitler by *Time* increased tremendously following his first violation of the Treaty of Versailles—the reintroduction of military conscription in Germany. On March 25th, 1935, *Time* ran an article entitled “Chains Broken!,” which characterized Hitler as a figure larger than life who caused great “excitement” and happiness in Germany.⁶⁸ The article claimed that “Joy filled German hearts to bursting last week when beloved Realm leader Hitler took the most popular plunge of his career.”⁶⁹ *Time* repeatedly referred to Hitler as “Messiah,” rhetoric that seems as though it should be found more in an article published by Nazis, as opposed to the leading newsmagazine of a democratic country. For example, *Time* wrote “Messiah of rearmament though he is, Adolf Hitler speaks with the tongue of Peace,” a seemingly paradoxical sentence. The vocabulary used in this article was most likely a reflection of the sentiment felt by many Americans—that the Treaty of Versailles was too harsh on Germany, and that ac-

⁶⁷ “End of Three Lives” *Time Magazine*, August 13, 1934, 17.

⁶⁸ “Chains Broken!,” *Time Magazine*, March 25, 1935, 22.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ “Man of the Year,” *Time Magazine*, January 2, 1939, 13.

tions such as a military conscription and rearmament should be seen as justified measures to allow Germany to survive. While *Time* did not praise Hitler himself, it also did not report the issues that arose with the breaking of the Treaty of Versailles; instead it repeated the narrative that Germany had broken from its chains and been saved by its leader. One sentence reads Perhaps if not for the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Versailles, actions such as these by the Führer could be seen and understood for what they really were—naked acts of aggression. Thus, it seems as though *Time* was guilty, in this article, of minimizing Hitler's aims.

Hitler was not given the proper attention by *Time* until January of 1939 when he was given the coveted title, "Man of the Year," cementing him as a person of major concern for the American public. It was at this point that the larger significance of Hitler's actions were understood, as he was no longer described as a messiah, or a savior, but as a "conqueror."⁷⁰ At this point in time, following events such as the Anschluss, Hitler's menacing, anti-Semitic, anti-democratic motivations were made transparent, and Hitler was seen by *Time* and, thus, the American public, as the true villain that he was.

The Literary Digest

The *Literary Digest* was an American weekly magazine founded in 1890. Unlike the first three publications analyzed, *The Literary Digest* was largely opinion-based and included partisan analysis, rather than objective accounts of news events. By 1927, *The Literary Digest* had become a prominent news outlet, its readership numbering over one million subscribers.⁷¹ Average Americans interested in not only news, but also analysis of such news events comprised its audience. Overall, analysis of Hitler by this publication seems to be a bit delayed, with coverage often not appearing in the magazine in the issue of that week, but this could be due to the nature of production of the periodical. In general, writers do not seem particularly concerned about the rise of Hitler but rather, with the United States interests in political developments in Germany.

There was no mention of Hitler's failure to win the presidential election of 1932 in Germany, which was the most notable event in Hitler's rise prior to his becoming Chancellor. There was also no mention of

⁷¹ "Press: Digest Digested," *Time Magazine*, May 23, 1938.

⁷² "How They Put a Nazi on the Spot," *The Literary Digest*, February 4, 1933. 13.

the runoff election later that year. When Hitler became Chancellor, there was no mention of the event in the February 4th issue. There was an article about German nationalists and the death of a “devoted Hitlerite,” but nothing of Hitler’s new power.⁷² On February 11th, came mention of Hitler’s rise to Chancellorship with the article “What Hitler Rule Means to Europe.”⁷³ Although pushed to page twelve, *The Literary Digest* asserted that Hitler and his fellow Nazis “are not figures to be joked with.”⁷⁴ The article added that, to Europe, specifically France, this event “is of greater importance than any event since the fall of the Hohenzollerns.”⁷⁵ A similar comparison between Hitler and the Hohenzollerns was mentioned by *The New York Times*, but not until Hitler’s ascension to Führer after the death of Hindenburg. *The Literary Digest* seemed to predict the importance of this step in Hitler’s rise prior to the newspaper. However, this comparison was taken by *The Literary Digest* from a Paris newspaper, and the article was meant to explain some European power’s more negative response to the event. The article also described the British response to the event, which seemed divided. While the *Daily Herald* “declares solemnly that ‘with Hitler’s appointment the way is prepared for the return of the ex-Kaiser,’” the *London Daily Mail* wrote “it looks as if Germany has a stable Government at last.”⁷⁶ Regardless, it is clear that *The Literary Digest* was focusing on what the event meant to Europe, as opposed to the US.

The Literary Digest had no response to the Reichstag Fire or to the Reichstag vote which gave legislative power to Hitler. Finally, on April 8th, there was more coverage of Hitler, as articles about the Chancellor were moved from the “Foreign Comment” section, to “Topics of the Day,” for the first time, signaling a rising interest in the leader in the American consciousness. In contrast to the previous article run by the periodical, entitled “What Hitler Rule Means to Europe,” on April 8th, *The Literary Digest* ran the article “What Hitler’s Rule Means to the World,” implying the increasing importance of Hitler’s rise to the world, on a broader scope than just Europe.⁷⁷ The periodical acknowledged how “in a brief two months after he had entered the republican Cabinet, Adolf Hitler had turned the Government into the most absolute of modern dictatorships.”⁷⁸ Despite this, the author of the article

⁷³ “What Hitler Rule Means to Europe,” *The Literary Digest*, February 11, 1933, 12.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “What Hitler Rule Means to Europe,” 12.

⁷⁷ “What Hitler’s Rule Means to the World,” *The Literary Digest*, April 8, 1933, 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

continued the trend of many other news outlets, writing that “recent Hitler speeches show an unexpectedly moderate tone,” and arguing that he wanted “sincere friends of peace.”⁷⁹

After Hindenburg died, and Hitler took on the role of Führer, the front page of *The Literary Digest* presented the headline “Hitler, Absolute Ruler, Calls for Peace: In Interview, Nazi Leader Declares Germany Learned Lesson in 1918; Eulogizes Hindenburg in Speech Monday Noon Before Reichstag.”⁸⁰ While focusing on the death of Hindenburg, the article discussed the resulting European feelings of unease to this event. When Hitler officially became Führer, articles about Hitler were pushed back to the “Foreign Comment” section, and the article “The First Setback for Germany’s Nazis: Six-Day Speaking-Drive, Led by Goebbels, Preceded National Referendum to Approve Leader’s Assumption of Joint Powers, But Election Results Disappoint Hitlerites,” simply discussed Europe’s reaction to the event, without mention of the US reaction.

When Hitler first violated the Treaty of Versailles, *The Literary Digest* published the article “Adolf Hitler’s Stroke at the Versailles Treaty Stirs All Europe.”⁸¹ In it, the author wrote that “Chancellor Adolf Hitler last Saturday finally carried out the German purpose to make the Treaty of Versailles just another scrap of paper.”⁸² Like the reactions by other publications, *The Literary Digest* did not condemn the action, but argued that Germany had a right to increase their military presence and protect themselves as other nation-states had been doing throughout to inter-war period.⁸³ The author continued the article with the European response, describing it as full of unease and apprehension.⁸⁴ Even the front page of this issue was still focused on domestic affairs, as it centered on Senator Huey Long and issues regarding the US Congress. Overall, despite its reputation as a deeply opinionated publication, *The Literary Digest* seemed to skirt around establishing real opinions regarding Hitler’s rise, as it mostly compiled European reactions and opinions. Stronger opinions were held, and news was analyzed, to a greater extent regarding the domestic affairs touched upon by the magazine.

⁸⁰ “Hitler, Absolute Ruler, Calls for Peace: In Interview, Nazi Leader Declares Germany Learned Lesson in 1918; Eulogizes Hindenburg in Speech Monday Noon Before Reichstag,” *The Literary Digest*, August 11, 1934, 1.

⁸¹ “Adolf Hitler’s Stroke at the Versailles Treaty Stirs All Europe,” *The Literary Digest*, March 23, 1935, 9.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ “The Pittsburgh Courier,” *Public Broadcasting Service*. http://www.pbs.org/blackpress/news_bios/courier.

The Pittsburgh Courier

The Pittsburgh Courier was “once the country’s most widely circulated black newspaper with a national circulation of almost 200,000.”⁸⁵ In the 1930s, “it was one of the top selling black newspapers in the country.”⁸⁶ The audience of the periodical was African-Americans, and topics covered by the newspaper were always those of interest to this specific community. It often “called for improvements in...conditions in which black people were forced to live in Pittsburgh and elsewhere throughout the nation,” and “protested misrepresentations of African Americans in the mainstream media.”⁸⁷ Overall, The Pittsburgh Courier “sought to empower African Americans economically and politically.”⁸⁸ The Courier was clearly very politically-centered, and every issue was related to the human rights struggles of the African-American community at the time. All the articles related to Hitler are concerned with anti-Semitism and how this could be compared to the struggle of African-Americans. While this periodical contains no specific responses to the same events, all articles relevant to Hitler’s rise will be analyzed.

The first mention of Hitler did not appear until April 1933, after he had been declared Chancellor. It appeared on the front page, but under the fold, in an article entitled “Jewish Pogroms in Germany.”⁸⁹ In it, the author condemns the actions of Hitler and the Nazi movement, in the most explicit statement of the periodicals surveyed here, writing “Jealous of the financial, mercantile, artistic and scientific achievements of its...Jews, Hitler’s Germany has launched a campaign of terrorism against them, driving them from their jobs, beating and killing them.”⁹⁰ The Courier focuses on the implications of Hitler’s anti-semitic ideology and makes clear the stakes of Hitler’s leadership. The author continued, “One of the supposedly most enlightened countries of the world, Germany has suddenly descended to the murderous level of reactionary Poland and Roumania in its persecution of the Chosen People.”⁹¹ However, the lessons drawn from these events--what the publication hoped the reader would take away from their coverage--

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⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “Jewish Pogroms in Germany,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 22, 1933, 1.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “Jewish Pogroms in Germany,” 1.

⁹² Ibid.

interestingly had little to do with Germany at all, but much to do with the experience of African-Americans living in the United States. The author wrote:

What is to be learned from this regrettable spectacle...The masses can be easily inflamed against a minority group anywhere whenever unscrupulous leaders will it. American Negroes need always to keep this in mind and not lapse into any false sense of security. We must be eternally vigilant. We must keep our defense well organized and prepared to go into action on all fronts where our citizenship rights are threatened. Right now we are virtually unprepared. We do not adequately support the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, our one efficient defense organization.⁹²

The publication uses the news regarding Hitler and Nazism, in order to give out advice on how they themselves should operate. This provides insight into the perspective of the African-Americans at the time, and shows that they felt a connection to the unfair persecution and discrimination that Jewish people were undergoing in the early 1930s. More than the white Protestant editors of the publications mentioned so far, this author is able to empathize with the situation faced by German Jews. The author concluded that “the Jews have the kind of organization that is hard to beat. Negroes can learn much by watching the methods of the Jews.”⁹³

In another article published in the April 22nd, 1933 issue, writers again explicitly compare the situation of Africans Americans in the United States to that of Jews in Germany.. In “How Can U.S. Aid Germany’s Persecuted When Justice Is Joke in Alabama, Queries,” the author referred to the Scottsboro case, a famous case in which African-Americans were unfairly prosecuted, and related the issue to anti-Semitism in Europe. For this writer, it was hypocritical to condemn such injustice abroad when there was injustice occurring domestically.⁹⁴ In 1934, the periodical “expos[es] the activities of Hitlerism in America” in an article entitled “Hitler Invades America.”⁹⁵ The author discussed the influx of Nazi propaganda in America, and described the

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “How Can U.S. Aid Germany’s Persecuted When Justice Is Joke in Alabama, Queries,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 22, 1933, 1.

⁹⁵ “Hitler Invades America,” *The Pittsburgh Courier*, April 7, 1934, 10.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Nazi movement as “a new Ku Klux Klan in the making.”⁹⁶ Overall, a major theme in the newspaper in articles related to Hitler and Nazism was the hypocrisy of the US in these issues. Additionally, there was no call to join any movement or initiative against anti-Semitic forces but, rather, a focus on what lessons could be learned and comparisons drawn to the plight of African-Americans living in Pittsburgh, as well as in other parts of the country. There was a clear agenda-setting prerogative in this paper, but this agenda would be in the interest of its audience—to further the progress and improve conditions of African-Americans in the US.

The Sentinel

The Sentinel was “the premier Jewish weekly in Chicago” during the 1930s.⁹⁷ The publication “reflected the changing Chicago Jewish community, but also national and international Jewish news.”⁹⁸ While not many issues have been digitized, this study will analyze two issues that have been preserved—one from 1931 and another from 1935. Despite the lack of issues available, important trends and insights can be gained simply from these two articles. Since the publication was Jewish, it presented a very partisan perspective, and nearly every word was aimed at its specific audience, which was much more narrow than those of the first four periodicals mentioned. Even as early as 1931, there was mention by the publication of the dangers of Hitler’s anti-Semitism. In an article, “New Fighters of Anti-Semitism,” the author discussed the injustices done to the Jewish people in Germany, whose rights had already been infringed upon.⁹⁹ As this was written for a Jewish audience, The Sentinel hoped to inform Chicago readers of the plight of their fellow Jewish people abroad, in order to garner support in the US.

In another article of the same issue, entitled “The New Jew of the Old World,” author Brainin wrote about that the problem of anti-Semitism in central Europe was “riding on its highest crest.”¹⁰⁰ He added that “Hitlerism in Germany...ha[s] produced a new type, A Jewish post-war generation.”¹⁰¹ Although Brainin is vague about the details

⁹⁷“The Jewish Sentinel,” Illinois State Library, Illinois Digital Archives. <http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16614coll14>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “New Fighters of Anti-Semitism,” *The Sentinel*, June 19, 1931, 2.

¹⁰⁰ Reuben Brainin, “The New Jew of the Old World,” *The Sentinel*, June 19, 1931, 8.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

of the Nazi movement, he did explore and condemn its implications for Jews in Europe. In an October 1935 issue, there was more interest paid to the rise of Nazism specifically. The magazine went into detail about many Nazis in Germany, as well as supporters in the US, and condemned the movement. Overall, the magazine often did not describe events in Hitler's rise as the other national news sources had, but focused on the anti-Semitism movement in Germany, and on what this meant not only for Jews of the region, but also for Jewish people living in the United States. It seemed to sometimes imply a call to action on the part of American Jewish people.

Conclusion/Results

Overall, it is clear that there was a consistent lack of critical condemnation, as well as the absence of strong investigative work into the rise of Hitler from 1930 to 1935. The motivation for this lack of criticism is unclear, but it seems to be a combination of a strong focus on domestic issues, combined with an incorrect assessment of Hitler's motivations and strength. The previous is clear by what the news publications did choose to cover widely, and to put on their front pages, which included issues related to the US economy and politics, especially on FDR and his New Deal, which was being implemented from 1933 to 1938. Diplomatically, the US was in a state of isolationism, weary from World War I. US journalists seemed to mirror this sentiment. In the case of *The Pittsburgh Courier*, domestic issues related to African-Americans were considered more important. The only publication that seemed to properly place great importance on Hitler's anti-Semitic injustices was *The Sentinel*, and it was a Jewish publication. However, insufficient attention was paid to Hitler's rise politically. Additionally, there was a clearly incorrect assessment of Hitler's motivations and his strength. Initially, there was too much faith placed in the strength of the German Republic in combating the rise of Fascism. As Hitler was gaining power, it was assumed that limits on his power would prevent any dictatorship. Then, when Hitler performed actual acts of aggression, such as the implementation of a military draft, news publications rationalized this as a result of the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, which was thought to have placed extremely harsh punishments on Germany in 1919. Thus, the coverage of Hitler by the major news sources of the time was very naïve, and mainly verbatim compilations of European responses to events of his rise. However, the journalists were not alone. Even European statesmen and politicians, extensively educated in issues such as diplomacy and politics, held a naïve view of Hitler, which was exemplified by a long-standing, widely held policy of appeasement in the 1930s. While this study does not make the case that any more incisive report-

ing by journalists could have had any impact on the sequence of events or would have altered history, it does make a case for the importance of the accuracy of journalistic reporting in an attempt to properly represent what was occurring. It also points out the early signs of a sentiment of appeasement, and the evident tendency of journalists to make excuses and justifications for Hitler's actions, a practice that was later mirrored by statesmen. Finally, this study serves to prove that, in this case, American journalists were focused on domestic problems, which were severe, instead of devoting more attention to proper reporting of Hitler's rise to dictatorship.

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From Home to Port: Italian Soldiers’ Perspectives on the Opening Stage of the Ethiopian Campaign

Ian Shank

“Maintaining a diary in these conditions is not an easy thing; it requires sacrifice, willpower and dedication; how many hours of sleep and rest are enclosed in these pages that contain my present life... in the end I am not a writer, nor a novelist, nor a scholar, I do what I can—that which my limited capacities allow.”
- Elvio Cardarelli (1935)

As a cool, evening breeze rocked the bridge of his assigned troop ship, twenty-three year old Liberto Micheloni looked out on a port in motion.¹ Several decks below his perch scores of laborers hurried to load last-minute provisions. Several priests delivered final benedictions. A full military band marched in formation and blared a continuous stream of national hymns to raucous public applause. It was September 21, 1935, and across Naples’ central pier thousands of Italian foot soldiers, packed shoulder to shoulder, were on the move, ambling slowly, anxiously, down the quay toward a flotilla destined for the shores of Italian East Africa. They had come from across the peninsula—farmers, students, and career soldiers by trade—promised adventure and heroism on the far-flung frontiers of Italy’s colonial empire. For many, this moment was the culmination of months of travel and preparation—a long-awaited crescendo of Fascist military solidarity. For others, it was the last time they would set foot on Italian soil.

¹ Liberto Micheloni, *Diary of Liberto Micheloni, Dall’Italia all’Africa Orientale, 1935-1938*. MS. Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, Pistoia, Toscana, 10.

Turning from the spectacle below Micheloni directed his attention to a small sheaf of papers splayed out before him. Not yet bound, it numbered some nine pages in all. Since departing his native Pistoia several weeks prior—a provincial capital nestled in the heart of Tuscany’s rolling green hills—Micheloni had often found himself turning to these loose pages to record and reflect on his journey. Thus far, his entries comprised little more than a string of scattered observations, including notes here and there of appointments made and missed, of enlistment procedures, or of the weather. By the time of Micheloni’s arrival in Naples it was not quite a diary. Not yet. But by the end of his three-year tenure in East Africa it would comprise 168 pages, revealing in exacting detail the story of one young man swept up in the first totalitarian military campaign of the twentieth century.²

It was nearing 8 p.m., and the sun was just beginning to sink beyond the horizon. By now Micheloni had been aboard for over two hours. He was growing impatient and restless. Putting pen to paper he began, haltingly, to write. “The wait is becoming enervating...” he trailed off, almost hesitant, before exclaiming, “I don’t understand why we have not yet set sail!”³ A few moments later, as if on cue, a motor groaned to life.

At precisely 7:40 p.m., “the ship cast off from the pier, pulled by a tug-boat” into the murky waters of the Mediterranean.⁴ Deafening cheers of soldiers and citizens alike pierced the evening air. Overwhelmed by the majesty of the moment—by the sights and sounds of so many of his countrymen united in common exultancy—Micheloni turned once more to the scattered pages at hand:

The moment is exciting, indescribable; the cheering crowd waves handkerchiefs and tricolor flags, the military band plays, everyone aboard sings, all in unison, a patriotic

² For this article, I have focused my research primarily on private, posthumously published wartime diaries maintained over the seven-month duration of the Ethiopian Campaign, sourced primarily from Italy’s National Diary Archive in Pieve Santo Stefano, Tuscany (l’Archivio Diaristico Nazionale). Diaries, for my specific aims here, are uniquely valuable source materials for a number of reasons. Unlike letters, memoirs, or oral histories, a diary’s audience is typically a very limited audience. Whether merely to chronicle the passage of events, or to reflect on one’s place in them, writing a diary is both a personal and voluntary process. As this is an inherently spontaneous act of expression, so too do these resources provide special insight into the degree of ideological spontaneity that characterized each diarist’s participation in the Ethiopian campaign. Originally written and transcribed in Italian, all diary translations—unless quoted from English language secondary sources—are my own.

³ Liberto Micheloni, *Diary of Liberto Micheloni, Dall’Italia all’Africa Orientale, 1935-1938*. MS. Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, Pistoia, Toscana, 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*

song... as the ship moves ever further away, and our land disappears from sight, eyes grow moist.⁵

To Micheloni, the sheer energy and enthusiasm of the departure was a moving spectacle to behold. And yet, as was the case with many of his comrades, his catharsis was rooted in more than the pageantry playing out before him. As Mussolini would proclaim but a week and a half later—before yet another teeming throng of expectant onlookers assembled to hear Il Duce’s much-awaited declaration of war against Ethiopia—“never before as in this historical epoch has the Italian people so revealed the quality of its spirit and the power of its character.”⁶ After decades of being relegated to a secondary position in European politics, this was, at long last, to be the beginning of Italy’s resurgence. After trying and failing to conquer Ethiopia forty years prior, this would be Italy’s redemption.⁷ More than another display of Fascist military might, more than a parade of popular mobilization, this departure was, like the war to come, a proclamation of fascist Italian glory.

Returning to his notes, Micheloni searched for the words to articulate what he had witnessed. As a volunteer for the Ethiopian campaign Micheloni had long been drawn to the historical gravity of fascist rhetoric—its bombastic assertions of national exceptionalism and the promise of a powerful, modern Italian state rooted in the glories of Italy’s Roman and Renaissance past. After some reflection, his mind wandered to Dante. Recalling a passage from the *Purgatorio* in which

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Benito Mussolini, *Scritti E Discorsi Dal Gennaio 1934 Al 4 Novembre 1935* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1935), 218-220.

⁷ In what would soon be rewritten as the First Italo-Ethiopian War, Italian and Ethiopian forces first clashed in December 1894 following the forced imposition of an Italian protectorate over the Kingdom of Menelik II. After more than a year of intermittent combat, hostilities concluded with the ignominious Italian surrender at Aduwa on March 1, 1896, where some 10,000 Italian soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured in what historian George W. Baer has called the “greatest military defeat incurred by any European nation at the hands of Africans in all of the nineteenth century.” George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 4. Years, even decades after the surrender, the shame of Aduwa would linger perniciously in the Italian psyche. For many Italians, even those who had had no direct participation in the conflict, the “Aduwa Complex” was an enduring source of national humiliation; a constant reminder that Italy was in some way inferior to the rest of imperial Europe. As historian Alexander de Grand writes, “memories of the defeat would be recalled [at every moment of national hesitation]... as a sign that Italy might once again buckle under pressure.” Alexander de Grand, “Mussolinis Follies: Fascism in Its Imperial and Racist Phase, 1935-1940,” *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004): 129. In this way, it is clear that Mussolini conceptualized the Second Italo-Ethiopian War not merely as a military conquest but as a means of cauterizing Italy’s “deep wound that would not heal.” Indeed, as Mussolini roared from his pulpit in Rome on the eve of Italy’s second invasion of its colonial neighbor, “With Ethiopia we have been patient for forty years! Now, it is time to say enough!” Benito Mussolini, “Mussolini Justifies War Against Ethiopia,” Speech, Rome, October 2, 1935.

Dante, having escaped from hell, begins his harrowing ascent to paradise, Micheloni somberly recited:

It was now the hour that turns back the longing of seafarers
and melts their hearts, the day they have bidden dear friends
farewell.⁸

Micheloni turned to the next sheet of paper. His diary was now ten pages long. After jotting down a few more thoughts, he paced pensively to the bridge from which he had first beheld the fanfare that roiled the Port of Naples. The day had been “full of emotions.”⁹ Staring, now, into the darkness, he felt at once exhausted and full of nervous excitement. For months he had contemplated the prospect of war in the abstract; seen and felt the palpable swell of colonial fervor as it swept through Italy. Now, as his ship churned slowly, relentlessly south, Micheloni’s journey had suddenly become all too real.

He was not alone in this regard. To a large extent, Micheloni’s story is typical of the hundreds of thousands of Italian soldiers who were ferried across the Mediterranean to fight in the Ethiopian theater—young men, often the children of World War I veterans, raised with only a dim recollection of Italy as it had existed before Mussolini. Like Micheloni, most of these soldiers would remember their embarkations in almost exclusively euphoric terms and as an unvarnished triumph of fascist purpose and dynamism. Yet, for many, this level of enthusiasm was a relatively new phenomenon. Indeed, by the time they set sail for the Ethiopian frontier, I argue that most Italians had already begun a substantial emotional and ideological evolution in the weeks and months between their departure from home and their arrival at the Port of Naples. For some this was as simple as swallowing the sorrow of leaving home and embracing the virtuous pursuit of shared sacrifice. For others, it meant sincerely grappling with the pro-war fervor that had come to grip Italy and beginning to conceptualize themselves as agents of fascist conquest. This was a process that would reach its climax on the docks of Naples, but have its roots in these soldiers’ initial journey across the peninsula.

The Volunteers

For volunteers like Micheloni the enlistment process was a relatively painless ordeal. Beyond constituting an act of volition, the process could occasionally be planned to minimize the resultant disruption to

⁸ Micheloni, *Dall'Italia all'Africa Orientale*, 10.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

family life. But this was not a luxury afforded to everyone. Indeed, for the vast majority of Italians who were mobilized, news of their participation often came suddenly, like a bolt out of the blue, with the reception of a single telegram or postcard summoning them to the local recruitment station.¹⁰

Such was the case of Mario Saletti, a young telegraph operator from the Tuscan town of Montepulciano. Having submitted his enlistment papers several days prior he described his recruitment as follows: I am sitting alone in my office, thinking about my examination, my approaching departure date, when the machine activates and I receive the following telegram:

‘Extremely Urgent—Post Office of Abbadia di Montepulciano
By order of the Colonial Ministry applicant Saletti, Mario to
report to the Colonial Recruitment Station of Naples
with camp bed, mattress, and blanket between October 16 and
the first hours of Oct 17 to receive embarkation ticket
and boarding pass STOP

- Director of Province Borgiotti.’¹¹

The date was October 16, 1935. To make it from Montepulciano to Naples within the next twenty-four hours—a journey across more than a third of the Italian peninsula—he would have to leave immediately. Scrambling, Saletti raced home, arriving with but an hour to pack his belongings, scarf down a harried meal, and bid his loved ones farewell. For some of Saletti’s family members, still unaware of Saletti’s call to arms, the sudden news of his departure was almost too much to bear:

Mother cries, the poor thing is so good, she has worked so hard and who knows how much more she will have to work and suffer still...I must depart, we do not even have the time to say anything to one other [sic.] beyond a greeting. I leave her! For those who do not know it seems a crime, while it is a sacrifice that burns my heart and leaves a lump in my throat.¹²

The scene was emotional and anguished. But even amidst the frenzied turmoil of his departure—as Saletti embraced his mother for perhaps

¹⁰ Historian Angelo del Boca suggests that of the “500,000 Italian troops” eventually deployed to the Ethiopian theater, “the conscripts outnumbered the volunteers by five to one.” Angelo Del Boca, *The Ethiopian War: 1935–1941* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 57.

¹¹ Mario Saletti, *Diary of Mario Saletti, Sono in Ufficio Soletto, 1935-1936*. MS. Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, Montepulciano, Toscana, 1.

¹² *Ibid.*

the last time—his resolve remained steady. By now he had made up his mind. He “must depart” and make a “sacrifice.” Though painful to behold, his mother’s tears would not sway him from seizing his destiny. At 2:30 p.m., after “a moment of emotional hesitation,” Saletti’s father accompanied him to the local train station.¹³ Moments later the two embraced for a final farewell. They did not say much. They did not have to. Between them, there was an unspoken understanding that Saletti had been called to serve something greater than himself—a cause that transcended the bond between father and son. As the train pulled away, and Saletti struggled to compose himself, he took solace in the knowledge that his departure carried his father’s implicit blessing:

I think of my father, try to rally my spirit, in a desperate effort to overcome the urge to cry from the homesickness that always grips me so strongly... my father is sick, he has had a stroke, and yet he is of my opinion; he himself would have pushed me to leave, if there had been a need for it, for country, for faith.¹⁴

Separated by age and circumstance, the shared convictions of Saletti and his father were telling. What the next months and years would ask of them neither could yet know. What they did know was that in this moment of grief, uncertainty, and fear, there was also hope. Hope in the virtue of shared sacrifice, in the pursuit of national grandeur, and in the power and promise of fascist militancy.

This was, in many ways, the defining sentiment of Saletti’s fellow volunteers as they began their journey to the Port of Naples. For these soldiers, war had not torn them from their families and homes. This would be a trying ordeal, but in the words of another volunteer, Giuseppe Ghione, on the eve of his own departure, the pain of parting was also a clarifying experience:

I go home to say farewell to my family before my departure for East Africa. I spend the day in their company. Will it be perhaps my last? The moment is painful, but there are other duties that diminish this sense of separation, or at least make it less painful. Duty before all else!¹⁵

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Giuseppe Ghione, *Diary of Giuseppe Ghione, Appunti della Mia Vita in Africa, 1912-1940*. MS. Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, Savigliano, Cuneo, 2.

It had not been imposed by Il Duce, nor by the need to protect their country from external aggression. Rather, war had been personally seized upon as an opportunity to do something more—to forge a more glorious future for themselves and fascist Italy on the Ethiopian frontier. Like any sacrifice, it would necessitate giving up part of the life they had known in the service of something larger than themselves.

Conflicted Conscripts

For the many soldiers who conceived of their departure as a painful but worthwhile sacrifice, there were countless more—particularly those who had not volunteered to fight—that first understood their conscription in much more tenuous terms. Generally, this did not constitute dissent so much as lingering uncertainty. Reading the opening pages of most diaries from the period one gets the overwhelming sense that individuals were keenly aware of the pro-war fervor that had swept through the Italian peninsula—and of the single-minded devotion to fascist imperialism that was supposedly propelling them forward—and yet were still markedly unsure about their role in the campaign unfolding before them.

Particularly illuminating in this regard is the testimony of Manlio La Sorsa, a twenty-six-year-old medical officer from Lecce, located in the heel of the Italian boot. With a university degree in chemistry and pharmacy La Sorsa was, in many respects, a deliberate and methodical thinker. This much is made clear within the opening sentences of his diary, which begins with a stirring proclamation of purpose:

It is my intention to record in this diary the impression that I will have during my journey in Africa...This is not a pleasure trip (if that were true, I would not have come)...but a duty to fulfill, a mission to perform. I believe that Africa would never have presented itself more beautifully and full of emotions to me without the background of a war. And that's exactly why I'm going, attracted above all by the thought of living a more adventurous life.¹⁶

For La Sorsa's supposed ideological certitude, however, a closer look at the passage belies a fundamental tension in his self-analysis. On the one hand, like Saletti and Ghione, La Sorsa demonstrated a clear appreciation for the gravity of his participation in the campaign. As

¹⁶ Manlio La Sorsa, *Diary of Manlio la Sorsa, Il Mio Viaggio in Africa, 1936-1937*. MS. Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, Lecce, Apulia, 1.

he wrote, his departure was fundamentally “a duty” and “a mission” in the service of fascist Italy. This would seem to suggest a somber, selfless dedication to the cause—a claim that is, nevertheless, somewhat undermined by La Sorsa’s later acknowledgement that he was “attracted above all by the thought of living a more adventurous life.” This implicit tension, between responding to a collective call to arms, and an individual thirst for adventure, was only amplified as La Sorsa continued to expound on his main sources of inspiration:

I have never had the temperament for hunting, but the fact remains that I have always immensely enjoyed the natural spectacle of dense forests inhabited by lots of ferocious animals, of vast deserts, of rivers full of crocodiles, of villages devastated by locusts, of caravans wiped out in front of some dry and abandoned oasis... no film has ever excited me as much as [the 1930 American documentary] *Africa Speaks*, and others like it.¹⁷

Suddenly, as if guiltily catching himself mid-digression, La Sorsa switched gears again, reminding himself that while certain elements of his journey may have been more thrilling than he originally allowed himself to believe, he still remained, at his core, motivated by more noble aspirations:

But as I said before this is not only a trip that I am making, but a duty, indeed a duty above all, and I am sure that I will spare nothing of myself, because the trust placed in me will never be betrayed.¹⁸

La Sorsa’s vacillation between altruism and adventurousness is notable for a number of reasons. At face value, La Sorsa’s still less-than-ironclad ideological convictions suggest that, at least at the outset of the campaign, many Italians probably understood their enlistment in considerably more banal terms than those espoused by the fascist propaganda machine. Given the evident pain and inner conflict of soldiers like Saletti and Ghione, this much is hardly contestable. What is significantly more contentious, however, is that this original uncertainty could, in turn, seem to support a more skeptical appreciation of fascist indoctrination.

Many scholars have also tended to prematurely point to precisely these kinds of testimonies—in the limited capacity that these testimonies are addressed at all—to make blanket statements about the

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

limited ideological motivations of Italian troops for the duration of the campaign. Historian Christopher Duggan provides one such example. In his own treatment of La Sorsa's testimony, Duggan speculates that "most of those who went out to Ethiopia in 1935-1936 probably viewed their time abroad in predominantly more mundane terms: as a relief from unemployment and hunger back home, and also, in many cases, as a welcome opportunity for novelty and excitement."¹⁹ In this reading—widely espoused among scholars of fascism as well as in popular Italian discourse—La Sorsa's vacillation is thus primarily illustrative of a static internal disconnect that defined the experience of most Italians in Ethiopia. That is, it betrayed a disconnect between a simultaneous appreciation of the high-flown fascist idealism that should have been motivating their participation, and an awareness of the personal desires and aspirations that actually were motivating their participation.²⁰

Still, this is not the only way of understanding La Sorsa's vacillation. Rather than an essential consequence of grappling with fundamentally incompatible sources of inspiration—in which any apparent display of fascist fealty was compromised by an equally apparent pursuit of personal aggrandizement—this vacillation can also be seen as a moment of transition and reflection. It was a first step towards finding a deeper, more fulfilling sense of purpose in the service of fascism. After all, if the Ethiopian campaign was at least partially engineered as a vehicle for fostering the fascist indoctrination of the Italian polity, moments of initial uncertainty would not only have been normal and expected, but entirely compatible with the larger ideological program of the Mussolini regime.

From this perspective, what is most striking in reading soldier testimonies from the opening phase of the Ethiopian campaign is less a prevailing mood or energy about the process of mobilization so much as a lingering lack of personal ownership over their participation in the conflict itself. This sense of existential disconnect was pervasive, though it was perhaps most immediately obvious in the diary entries of conscripts like Elvio Cardarelli—individuals who, at the outset of the campaign, often understood their calls to enlist as little more than an unwelcome imposition by distant government authorities.

¹⁹ Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, 268.

²⁰ See, too, historian Richard Bosworth, who concluded his 692-page treatise on Mussolini's Italy by saying simply that "when all the huffing and puffing had been done, Italians had not become the fervent adepts and peerless warriors of a new political faith. Instead, in the best parts of their minds, they had found solace in the understanding that, under a dictatorship such as Benito Mussolini's, to endure was all." R. J. B. Bosworth, *Mussolini's Italy: Life under the Dictatorship, 1915-1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 572.

By the time Cardarelli received his enlistment orders in February of 1935 he was twenty-three years old. A native of Vignanello—a commune of some 4,000 located thirty-seven miles north of Rome—Cardarelli was the third of four children in “a family of noted butchers and grocers.”²¹ Like many of his comrades, he had been born as the specter of the Great War was just beginning to cast its shadow over Europe. By the time his father was called to serve in the early months of 1915 Cardarelli was only three—not yet old enough to appreciate the significance of his father’s sudden departure. Yet for the next three years, his very real sense of abandonment, and the subsequent economic hardship it brought his family, would profoundly alter his understanding of the world. Indeed, in the years following his father’s return, Cardarelli is said to have voiced a frequent lament for the trauma of war, saying that if he “ever had a family he would prefer to have daughters, since one day the boys would go to war, forcing the family to suffer as he once had.”²²

At 17, having completed his secondary education, Cardarelli left home for his first extended sojourn abroad. Following in the occupational tradition of his family he traveled north, to Munich, to undergo training as a professional waiter, before ultimately completing his education in Paris.²³ In 1932, having returned to Vignanello, Cardarelli enlisted in the army to complete his mandatory military service—institutionalized since Italy’s unification in 1861—eager to put his military obligations behind him and embrace the quiet comfort of life in his hometown. After a year and a half in the service of the *Corpo Automobilistico dell’Esercito* (Army Automobile Corps) in Florence, Cardarelli returned home for what he hoped would be the last time. He began working with his father, marrying soon thereafter.

Cardarelli looked forward to the beginnings of a happy, comfortable life, but these hopes were to be short-lived. They were upended by the delivery of a nondescript government postcard in the first weeks of February 1935:

Around 18 months after my discharge, when the course of my private life had resumed brightly and I was even beginning to think about settling down (having found my ideal woman—a good, loving girl with the best qualities) I unexpectedly received my draft card calling me to arms.

²¹ Elvio Cardarelli, *Dove La Vita Si Nasconde Alla Morte: La Guerra D’Etiopia Raccontata Da Un Soldato Nel “Diario Del Mio Richiamo”* (Vetralla: Davide Ghaleb Editore, 2008), 103.

²² *Ibid.*, 104.

²³ *Ibid.*

Given that for some time there had been talk of Italy setting her sights on Ethiopia... I immediately understood that my turn had come. It is therefore useless to describe the dismay that this call aroused among my loved ones. Particularly my mother, who has a limitless affection for me, could not bear the thought of my leaving so soon.²⁴

Cardarelli tried to assure his mother that everything would be fine; that “even though [he] had to leave for Africa” he would be gone for “no more than a few months.”²⁵ He managed to see her “a little calmer.”²⁶ Yet when the time came for his departure, Cardarelli was stricken. Before boarding the train, he gripped his father in one last tearful embrace, notably devoid of the mutual convictions that characterized Saletti’s final farewell. For Cardarelli there was no sense of purpose or optimism in his departure, only a deep, seemingly all-consuming depression:

[Once aboard] I slowly made my way towards the troop quarters, seized by a sense of nostalgic sadness: I think of all the sad things in life, I think of this train that runs swiftly through the night, of my home, of my mother, of all my loved ones, of my loving wife, my God-given companion, whom I love deeply: things dear and loved, when, when I will see you again?²⁷

Cardarelli was not alone in his anguish. Looking around after a brief stop to pick up more recruits—most of whom had only just bid their own families farewell—the shared sense of sorrow in the cabin was manifest:

The train resumes its run... I do not have time to be with my sad thoughts, my comrades are there with me, on their faces I read my own pain...we try to raise each other’s spirits, we begin with eating, we try to joke, but our voices sound fake, every so often I have to drive back the tears that start to well up. We need more liveliness, more cheerfulness, we begin to sing, I see one of my comrades in front of me weeping as he sings. I understand that everything is useless... our suffering cannot be stifled, at least for now.²⁸

²⁴ Ibid, 127.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 131.

²⁸ Ibid, 136.

Nowhere, however, was Cardarelli's sense of resignation and detachment more apparent than in the way that he conceptualized his role in the campaign unfolding before him. At least implicitly, this disengagement was obvious even in Cardarelli's original description of the circumstances surrounding his enlistment—brought about as a consequence of “Italy setting her sights on Ethiopia” rather than any personal display of nationalism—as well as his assessment of the geopolitical rationale for the Italian war effort:

The Italo-Ethiopian dispute has intensified... new incidents have arisen and Italy has made perfectly clear that she wants to take advantage of them to execute plans that have been in motion for several years. Meanwhile she recalls the class of 1912, forms new divisions, and prepares to start final training...of which I am a participant.²⁹

Here, at the most basic level, Cardarelli's brief appraisal of Italo-Ethiopian relations belied an almost uncanny understanding of the campaign's primary political overtones. In mentioning “new incidents” in the *East African Theater*, for example, he was likely referring to the then-infamous Walwal incident which had occurred in early December 1934, in which a small number of Italian and Ethiopian forces clashed in an ambiguously defined border region between Ethiopia and Italian Somaliland. By February of 1935 news of the incident had been widely broadcast throughout the peninsula. In the months following the confrontation, Mussolini had ordered the press to “blow it up into a front-line story,” featuring the incident as an act of wanton hostility so serious in nature that it could not be ignored.³⁰ Though a number of contemporary maps showed the conflict zone well within the territorial confines of the Ethiopian Empire, Mussolini was unequivocal. As he wrote to his generals shortly thereafter, “the problem of Italo-Ethiopian relations is a historic problem that must be resolved in the only manner with which these problems are always resolved: by force of arms.”³¹

Today it remains unclear which side fired first on those fateful December days. And yet, scholars overwhelmingly concur that the immediacy of Mussolini's response, coupled with the intensity of the regime's subsequent propaganda campaign, was primarily opportunistic, amounting to little more than a feeble bid to legitimize his otherwise longstanding colonial ambitions. After all, as noted scholar of Italian

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 130.

³⁰ Boca, *The Ethiopian War*, 19.

³¹ Angelo Del Boca, *Gli Italiani in Africa Orientale 2* (Roma: Laterza, 1979), 256.

colonialism Angelo Del Boca has noted, “in the history of Italian-Ethiopian [disputes] the Walwal incident was hardly the first or even most serious.”³² By late 1935, “at least 51 border skirmishes had been recorded” in the preceding twelve years alone.³³ In this regard what is striking about Cardarelli’s testimony is that even mere months after the flare-up—thousands of miles from the conflict zone, in a society saturated with bellicose propaganda—he was seemingly well aware that the Walwal incident was nowhere near as grave or unprecedented as the Mussolini regime would have him believe. Indeed, as Cardarelli discerningly surmised, his conscription was hardly the result of a sudden, outrageous assault by a foreign invader, but a predictable consequence of “plans that [had] been in motion for several years.”³⁴

The Collective Self

Similarly evident in this excerpt—and even more representative of his comrades’ attitudes—is the sense that Cardarelli still remained largely uncertain about his particular position in the Italian war effort. Indulging his clear trepidation, and even cynicism, regarding the nature of the campaign, Cardarelli suggested that his participation was ultimately due to “Italy [having] made perfectly clear that she wants to take advantage” of the present situation.³⁵ “She”—not him, or a collective polity—had recalled “the class of 1912” and set “her sights on Ethiopia.” Here, Cardarelli’s use of the third person is particularly illuminating. By removing himself from the narrative—and describing a war effort driven by distant, almost intangible forces—Cardarelli implicitly paints himself as a passive participant, swept up in a campaign driven by external, rather than collective, visions for the future of Italy.

Given Cardarelli’s self-described perception of the campaign his limited identification with fascist rhetoric is hardly surprising. Yet this sense of detachment was similarly pervasive even among many of Italy’s most enthusiastic recruits. One telling example is the testimony of Guglielmo Morlotti, a twenty-three year old radio operator from a small town nestled in the shadow of the Italian Alps. Like Cardarelli, Morlotti had already satisfied his mandatory military service by the time of his embarkation for Ethiopia. Between 1929 and 1934 Morlotti had served as a wireless operator in the *Corpo Reale Equipaggi Marittimi* (Maritime Crews Royal Corps) where he had learned the skills for

³² *Ibid.*, 254.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

his later career in radio. He liked the pace and order of military life, having voluntarily elected to stay in the service for three years beyond the standard two-year tenure of Italian peacetime conscripts.³⁶ When the opportunity to enlist in the Ethiopian campaign presented itself in early 1935, Morlotti jumped at the opportunity:

After five years of voluntary service in the Royal Navy I took my leave, on September 31 of the last year. A new life, new thoughts, new duties... but the days pass swiftly and Italy desires her place in the sun, Ethiopia offends her... I decide that I too should leave as a volunteer. I leave my job, send a telegram home, and then I am off!³⁷

In contrast to Cardarelli, Morlotti showed no comparable anguish at the prospect of an extended stint far from home. If anything, after less than a year of civilian life, he was thrilled by the opportunity of returning to his former military pursuits. Yet, just as Cardarelli framed his appraisal of the Ethiopian campaign in a way that essentially removed himself from the larger calculus of the Mussolini regime—as an almost external conflict between distant, abstract political entities—so too did Morlotti portray Italy’s desire for “a place in the sun” more as a third-party ambition than a collective cause for action.

This relative sense of detachment between self and state was only further accentuated later on, as Morlotti expounded on the geopolitical rationale for the war:

Empire! Italy must provide space, sustenance, and work for 44 million Italians. The space is insufficient, Italy must expand herself, it is necessary. A necessity of life. At Versailles they cheated us, allowing us the crumbs after having seen the allies gobble up the remains of a great banquet..., And the Italy of those times, demoralized, disorganized and tired, protested feebly (or shamefully?). But soon she awoke, she transformed herself.³⁸

At first glance Morlotti’s testimony reads as an almost exact regurgitation of the contemporary pro-war propaganda circulating throughout the peninsula. This is particularly evident in Morlotti’s description of Italy’s purported snubbing at the post-WWI Treaty of Versailles—incidentally the only part of his description that uses the collective

³⁶ Vanda Wilcox, “Encountering Italy: Military Service and National Identity during the First World War,” *Bulletin of Italian Politics* 3, no. 2 (2011): 287. JSTOR.

³⁷ Guglielmo Morlotti, “I Diari Di Mio Padre,” *I Sentieri Della Ricerca*, no. 12 (December 2010): 225.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

pronoun “us”—which would feature prominently in Mussolini’s declaration of war on October 2, 1935:

It is not only an army that strives toward its objectives but a whole people of 44 million souls against whom an attempt is being made to consummate the blackest of injustices: that of depriving us of some small place in the sun. When in 1915 Italy exposed itself to the risks of war and joined its destiny with that of the Allies, how much praise there was for our courage and how many promises were made! But after the common victory to which Italy had made the supreme contribution of 670,000 dead, 400,000 mutilated, and a million wounded, around the hateful peace table Italy received but a few crumbs from the rich colonial booty gathered by others.³⁹

Seen side by side, the manifest similarity between these texts is striking. Yet this apparent concurrence was hardly representative of the sincere ideological indoctrination so sought by the Mussolini regime. Indeed, while Morlotti displayed a clear mastery of the rhetoric ostensibly motivating his enlistment, a closer reading of his particular testimony—examined in the context of contemporary fascist thought—also betrays a sense of ideological disconnect that is, in many respects, broadly comparable to Cardarelli’s.

Here it bears delving deeper into the finer points of fascist doctrine. As a political ideology, fascism was fundamentally premised on the primacy of the collective, wherein the individual was to be at once subsumed within the Italian fascist state without being wholly marginalized. As Mussolini wrote in *The Doctrine of Fascism*—published in 1932 as the purported philosophical manifesto of the regime—“if the 19th century was the century of the individual...we are free to believe that this is the collective century.”⁴⁰ Fascism, in this regard, was to be fundamentally “anti-individualistic,” predicated on the idea that “the only liberty worth having [was] liberty of the State and of the individual within the State.”⁴¹ Whereas liberalism had held personal autonomy as a cornerstone of self-governance, “Fascism reassert[ed] the rights of the State as expressing the real essence of the individual.”⁴² Nonetheless, for the overwhelming centrality of the State, Mussolini was just as emphatic that fascism was not to be defined by the blind subservience of the masses. Rather, fascism was to produce a “State

³⁹ Mussolini, *Scritti E Discorsi*, 218-220.

⁴⁰ Benito Mussolini, *The Doctrine of Fascism* (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1932), 25.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴² *Ibid.*

based on millions of individuals who recognize its authority, feel its action, and are ready to serve its ends...not the tyrannical State of a mediaeval lordling.”⁴³ Most critically, this meant cultivating a radically new social consciousness across the peninsula—one in which Italians would not only prioritize collective concerns over personal ambitions but come to see the state as the purest incarnation of the self. In pursuing these ends Mussolini’s ideological program depended not on the elimination of the individual but on the total and willing identification of the individual with the state. As Il Duce elaborated, “Fascism desires the state to be strong and organic, based on solid foundations of popular support... in which the individual, by self-sacrifice, by the renunciation of self-interest, by death itself, can achieve that purely spiritual existence in which his value as a man consists.”⁴⁴

Here, where monarchy had been defined by passivity and subjugation, fascism was to be defined by alacrity and totalitarian ownership. In this context, Morlotti’s testimony provides an example of fascist enthusiasm nonetheless still unfounded on a sense of true, collective ownership. For instance, although Morlotti is all too eager to espouse the necessity of Italian expansion, he, like Cardarelli, refrains from making collective statements of purpose in pursuing these ends. Again, Morlotti’s use of the third person is particularly illuminating. Rather than assuming a direct stake in the coming campaign, Morlotti asserts that “Italy”—as a distant and abstract political entity—“must provide space, sustenance, and work for 44 million Italians.” Similarly, whereas “Italy” was once “demoralized, disorganized, and tired,” Morlotti states she has, seemingly of “her” own accord, since “awok[en]” and “transformed herself.” Taken in context these subtle speech patterns have important implications. Far from furthering the prevailing party line—in which the Italian fascist state was to be the ultimate expression of the collective—Morlotti instead gives the impression of a unilateral political apparatus whose trials and triumphs were largely separate from those of the Italian polity.

In this regard, perhaps even more notable is the conspicuous absence of Morlotti in his own testimony. In stating that Italy “must expand herself,” for instance, Morlotti rhetorically distances himself from his own participation in the campaign, importantly refraining from a more possessive, fascist statement like “we must expand ourselves.” Later, this passivity is similarly apparent in Morlotti’s evaluation of Italy’s resurgence under fascism, where his eventual assertion that

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 10, 39.

“[Italy] has transformed herself” reads more like the testimony of an outside observer than that of an individual who has, ostensibly, been similarly transformed. Perhaps most significantly of all, in the sole area where Morlotti does express a deeper identification with the Italian state—in its post-WWI repudiation at the Treaty of Versailles—he is referring to its pre-fascist form. Here again this is not so different from Cardarelli. Indeed, just as Cardarelli struggled to identify with the stated motivations for the Ethiopian campaign, so too did Morlotti demonstrate a clear enthusiasm for fascist rhetoric, and yet still stop short of identifying himself, individually, as a purveyor of fascism and an agent of imperial aggrandizement.

Taken together, the testimonies of Morlotti, Cardarelli, and their comrades speak to the diversity of perspectives that underpinned the opening salvo of the Italian war effort. For some—drawn, voluntarily, by the military fervor of the Mussolini regime—the departure from home represented a painful but worthwhile sacrifice. For others, it constituted little more than an unwelcome imposition. And yet, by and large, these soldiers—in spite of their widely divergent backgrounds and expectations—shared a common uncertainty about their role in the campaign, having yet to fully take ownership for their participation in a conflict still overwhelmingly understood in the abstract terminology of the state. Here, at this juncture in the campaign, a genuine sense of collective purpose remained lacking. Yet as Italian soldiers joined together—in trains, barracks and training camps across the peninsula—this critical sense of unanimity gradually began to take form.

From Provincialism to Nationalism

For many soldiers, one of the key obstacles to identifying with a collective war effort was first identifying as a common polity. This had been a central limitation of Italian governance ever since the Italian Risorgimento, famously prompting unification leader Massimo d’Azeglio to quip: “We have made Italy; now we must make Italians.”⁴⁵ By 1935—almost three quarters of a century later—social and cultural fissures remained a defining feature of Italian life. Though fascism had aggressively sought to mitigate these internal divisions for over a decade, historians like Paul Corner have aptly noted that, from the beginning, a cardinal shortcoming of Mussolini’s regime was that the “fascist ‘national rebirth’ of Italy faltered at the medieval gates of a

⁴⁵ Suzanne Stewart-Steinberg, *The Pinocchio Effect: On Making Italians 1860-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1.

hundred towns and cities as local traditions—and local interests—met up with the novelty of the national movement.”⁴⁶ Pulled from every corner of the peninsula, Italian soldiers were hardly immune from these cultural divisions. Indeed, for those with limited experience away from home, connecting with their new comrades could often be a trying ordeal.

Particularly at the outset of the campaign, a frequent and visceral source of alienation for many Italian diarists was the marked linguistic dissimilarities between themselves and their supposed countrymen. More often than not, this was colored by a broader sense of homesickness, as was the case with a young Tuscan recruit, Vasco Poggesi, who inwardly noted “we are all Italian... but sometimes you feel a bit lost in the Babel of dialects and you long desperately to find a friendly face and a clear and distinct voice that you can only hear in Tuscany.”⁴⁷ Still other diarists were even more melancholic. “I feel alone here” lamented another soldier from the southernmost region of the peninsula, “there is no one else from Calabria...they’re all from northern Italy...at night I always dream that I am home.”⁴⁸

Here, Mario Saletti was but another recruit who found himself naturally gravitating towards other soldiers from his own North-Central Italy. Following his arrival in Naples, Saletti had found himself immediately overwhelmed by the rough-and-tumble energy of the city’s inhabitants. Having managed to talk down an opportunistic cab driver from an astronomical 100 lire fare to 30 lire—“not without much fatigue”⁴⁹—Saletti stumbled, exhaustedly, aboard his assigned troop ship. Later, after meeting a handful of fellow soldiers, he eventually found solace in the companionship of another North-Central Italian from the region of Emilia Romagna:

The others depart, a Romagnolo and I stay and organize our selves...the superintendent in the kitchen, a Neapolitan, has naturally made a rich risotto alla Napoletana. My appetite has disappeared; I eat very little, weighed down by a feeling of general malaise...my only comfort is my Romagnolo friend, a good and strong fellow who seeks me out often.⁵⁰

For as much as Saletti may have originally preferred the companion-

⁴⁶ Paul Corner, *The Fascist Party and Popular Opinion in Mussolini’s Italy*, 4.

⁴⁷ Duggan, *Fascist Voices*, 264.

⁴⁸ Francesco Milano and Antonio Milano, *Un Ragazzo Calabrese Alla Conquista Dell’Impero: Lettere E Appunti per Un Diario Mai Scritto 1934-1936* (Calabria: ICSAIC, 2005), 21; 39.

⁴⁹ Saletti, *Sono in Ufficio Soletto*, 2.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

ship of his provincial neighbors, however, circumstance would soon force him outside his comfort zone. At times this was clearly a grating experience. Particularly in his interactions with soldiers from Naples—a city known for the boisterous vitality of its inhabitants—Saletti struggled to find common ground with his supposed countrymen.

“Last night the Neapolitans made noise until midnight,” he scribbled to himself, sour and sleep-deprived, “peppered with the usual vulgar words.”⁵¹ Not one for complacency, Saletti had not laid still for long. Rising from bed and storming over to the rowdy group, he quickly singled out the loudest southerner among them:

I made him understand that if he did not stop he would run the risk of accepting a well-placed shoe to his dull face; the gesture that followed the threat had some effect, and only a few minutes later I savored perfect silence...what a shame to confuse our healthy enthusiasm with the low intellect of this rabble.⁵²

For better or worse, however, Saletti would soon find himself in the company of numerous Neapolitans within his platoon. At first this was met with the Tuscan’s usual consternation. But slowly, gradually, Saletti began to soften his tone.

As time went on, he began to discover a shared sense of purpose and belonging with his new comrades, eventually reevaluating his previous provincialism. “Among the Neapolitans,” he begrudgingly acknowledged later, “there are a few good fellows.”⁵³ A little while on, his animosity had all but evaporated:

The Neapolitans wish me well, they pay me many compliments; they are chatters, often peppering their sentences with lewd words, but at their core they are not bad people, indeed I must say that most have a heart of gold.⁵⁴

Saletti’s small story provides a telling illustration of the significant national acculturation wrought through the enlistment process. Here, although it would be an exaggeration to say that every Italian soldier underwent a change of heart as dramatic as Saletti’s, it is clear that, in its execution, the process of enlistment for the Ethiopian campaign was instrumental in beginning to build the sense of collective Italian

⁵¹ Ibid, 5.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid, 4.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 6.

identity so desired by the Mussolini regime. Beyond merely mustering a vast number of recruits, wide-scale mobilization fostered meaningful communication between previously disparate peoples across the peninsula. It forced soldiers, firsthand, to challenge dialectic markers of separation. And through this process—and these crucial confrontations—it encouraged often heterogeneous companies and conscripts to begin truly thinking of themselves as a united fighting force.

Similarly instrumental, in this regard, was many soldiers' exposure to the country they had been called to serve. For some, the journey to the port of Naples was the first time they had ever experienced Italy as it existed beyond the confines of their hometowns. Likewise, in his harried sprint from Montepulciano to Naples, Saletti was among many soldiers who expressed a curiosity with the scenery that passed his compartment window. "I want to see the countryside," he lamented privately, but that was "impossible" due to the speed of the train.⁵⁵ For Saletti expedience was, unfortunately, of the essence. By the time he received his recruitment papers in mid-October 1935 Italy had already been at war for two weeks. There was, quite simply, no time for tourism.

Nonetheless, this sense of urgency was not always characteristic of the enlistment process. While soldiers like Saletti were rushed from home to harbor in a matter of hours, others often meandered across the peninsula for weeks and months at a time—stopping to pick up more recruits, or staying in military camps for rudimentary training—which afforded them the opportunity to explore parts of the country they still knew only by name. This could be a mesmerizing, eye-opening experience for soldiers accustomed to the predictable rhythms of village life, as was the case with one young recruit from Calabria, Francesco Milano, in a letter he penned home from Rome in late 1934:

[Now] I am in Rome, the capital of Italy, where there are many beautiful things to see... on November 11 there will be a big parade with Il Duce in attendance, and so I will also have the honor of seeing Mussolini.⁵⁶

For Milano, simply beholding the architectural grandeur of Rome left him starry-eyed. Yet he was almost beside himself once the day of the parade rolled around, when he suddenly found himself face to face with Il Duce:

⁵⁵ Ibid, 1.

⁵⁶ Milano, *Un Ragazzo Calabrese Alla Conquista Dell'Impero*, 22.

Today there was the big parade that lasted until noon. I tell you that I saw Mussolini three times—but I assure you right up close—who spoke with us soldiers. Before, we—that is, us soldiers—halted in a big avenue and he passed on horseback but walking very slowly and spent the parade looking us in the eye one by one in a way that seemed like he wanted to talk to us and told us “courage men”: if you could see him, with a fixed gaze and gravitas like you cannot believe, just imagine how contented I felt to see Il Duce and to have him see my face, because he looked at all of the soldiers there one by one with those eyes that went up and down in a way that see everything.⁵⁷

Far from an empty display of fascist regimentation, the parade proved to be a deeply and personally affirmative experience for Milano. Having grown up in Mussolini’s Italy, Milano had been bombarded by Il Duce’s likeness for almost as long as he could remember; seen and felt the radical transformation of Italian politics under fascism; listened, intently, to Il Duce’s thunderous speeches over the radio. Now, he had looked the man in the eyes. And Mussolini, as formidable as Milano had ever dared to hope, had stared straight back. As Milano strolled the streets of Turin several weeks later—dazzled, once more, by the majesty of Italian industry and architecture—he looked out on the world with fresh enthusiasm:

I walked around Turin and it is an even more beautiful city than I thought, and there are things here that hardly exist in Rome, and then I saw many factories for motorcycles, bicycles, and other things. I also saw Fiat buildings... how many beautiful things...I like Turin a lot.⁵⁸

Elvio Cardarelli was yet another soldier who expressed a quiet reverence for Italy’s former northern capital. Still stricken by his unexpected departure from home, Cardarelli was only just beginning to come to terms with his enlistment when he arrived on the streets of Turin. Yet, along with his comrades, he could not help but feel moved by the sight of the city’s many monuments to Italian nationalism:

We visit the most beautiful spots in Turin: such as [the Basilica of] Superga, which is the tomb of the members

⁵⁷ Ibid, 27-28.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 38.

⁵⁹ Cardarelli, *Dove La Vita Si Nasconde Alla Morte*, 130.

of the House of Savoy... where the most illustrious people of the royal family lie. To climb up to the basilica, since it is located on a hill, you have to make the journey by funicular ... once there you can enjoy the great spectacle of all of Turin down below.⁵⁹

By the time he arrived in Naples—following a month of intermittent travel and training outside Turin—Cardarelli was feeling noticeably more optimistic. By now he had grown close with several other soldiers. Thoughts of home, increasingly, did not evoke the visceral pain they once did. Resolving to make the most of the two days before his departure, he gathered a few friends for a trip into the city:

We all agree to go out in the morning, and return in the evening. We have a camera with us that will serve marvelously to record a few memories, and without further discussion, we go out like tourists.⁶⁰

As Cardarelli later mused in his diary, “the days passed rather well.”⁶¹ Accompanied by his fellow soldiers, Cardarelli “visited most of the city, took photographs...and even took a dip” in the Mediterranean.⁶²

For all of its apparent leisure, however, this was more than a simple pleasure trip. Rather, for a soldier pulled into war against his will—in service to a cause he did not yet identify as his own—Cardarelli’s cautious enthusiasm was representative of a much larger personal shift weeks in the making: one that had not only expanded his engagement with Italy’s national heritage, but significantly altered his appreciation of the country’s colonial ambitions. This would be all too apparent two days later, as Cardarelli surveyed the teeming crowd assembled to wish him well on his way across the Mediterranean:

The spectacle is beautiful: songs and music. The little ladies of the Red Cross distribute flowers and smiles, as well as two children that climb secretly aboard, who hand out writing paper and tissues ... the troops begin to board: the balilla and young fascists offer their handkerchiefs, the students imitate them offering badges that they have on their caps, patriotic songs are sung. And in the air an infinite sense of brotherhood and Italian spirit.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid, 136.

⁶¹ Ibid, 137.

⁶² Ibid, 137.

Cardarelli was not the only soldier with a renewed sense of camaraderie and national pride. Indeed, regardless of their backgrounds—or the myriad motivations behind their enlistment—soldiers would almost unanimously describe their embarkation in the same florid language, seemingly overwhelmed by the patriotic fervor that suddenly gripped them so deeply.

Here, Manlio la Sorsa was one of many soldiers who turned to his diary to wax eloquent about the majesty of the moment. Once visibly torn between the pursuit of selflessness and self-interest, he now marveled, above all, at the all-consuming collective ardor of his comrades and countrymen:

Finally, after witnessing many hugs and tears, many sad scenes, and also many hearty farewells, our steamer (Sardinia) packed full of men (more than three thousand between workers and soldiers), lifts anchor and heads slowly towards its distant destination. The spectacle is beautiful and evocative. Several hundred people are on the docks that wave hundreds of multicolored handkerchiefs, many (often the women) cry, others yell out the names of their loved ones, others sing, while a band plays patriotic songs. The morale of our troops is extremely high and worthy of the moment.⁶⁴

The sheer energy of the departure was infectious; feverish. Yet perhaps even more telling than the manifest enthusiasm of many of these soldiers was their clear sense of catharsis—of having not only beheld the awe-inspiring might of Italian fascism, but having found, individually, a renewed sense of duty and pride in the service of something larger than themselves.

For some, like Guglielmo Morlotti, this was a profound moment of transition. Having once conceived of the Ethiopian campaign as a distant and abstract confrontation of political entities, Morlotti now looked inward. As his troop ship slowly pulled away from the Italian coast—seemingly propelled by the forceful cheers of the assembled crowd below—he turned to his diary to reflect on the significance of this next chapter of his life:

We leave the last strip of Italy behind. I feel no inner turmoil,

⁶³ Ibid, 139.

⁶⁴ La Sorsa, *Il Mio Viaggio in Africa*, 7-8.

no tears, but smiles. I will be moved when I see her again upon my return, beautiful, more powerful than before. I will be happier when I retrace this land because I will feel, above all, more worthy.⁶⁵

One month later, as Mario Saletti continued his own journey across the Mediterranean, he would voice a similar sense of purpose and independence. “Only those who have left their country,” he mused to himself, “can understand the enthusiasm and emotion of these moments.”⁶⁶

Looking up, Saletti stared out over the watery expanse that seemed to spread in every direction. Since leaving Naples several days prior, he had felt the air grow gradually, perceptibly warmer. Soon, they would make berth at Port Saïd at the mouth of the Suez Canal. “I realize that this is where the hard, difficult life will begin,”⁶⁷ Saletti scribbled in his diary, mentally steeling himself for the months ahead.

He put pen to paper once more.
“But I will not lose my spirit.”⁶⁸

Conclusion

In this article I analyzed the journey of Italy’s soldiers from home to the port of embarkation. Far from a united and uniform fighting force, I showed that Italian soldiers originally conceived of their enlistment in strikingly divergent terms. At the outset of the campaign some were clearly reluctant, suspicious recruits. Others, meanwhile, were broadly enthusiastic about the adventure and adversity that lay ahead. But all—to some degree or another—had yet to take firm personal ownership of the campaign they had been called to serve. Nonetheless, over the course of these soldiers’ journeys south, their first engagements with the country and countrymen that existed beyond the domains of their provincial homes ultimately yielded a crucial measure of national solidarity by the time of their embarkation for the Ethiopian front.

⁶⁵ Morlotti, “Il Diari di Mio Padre,” 226.

⁶⁶ Saletti, *Sono in Ufficio Soletto*, 2.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

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