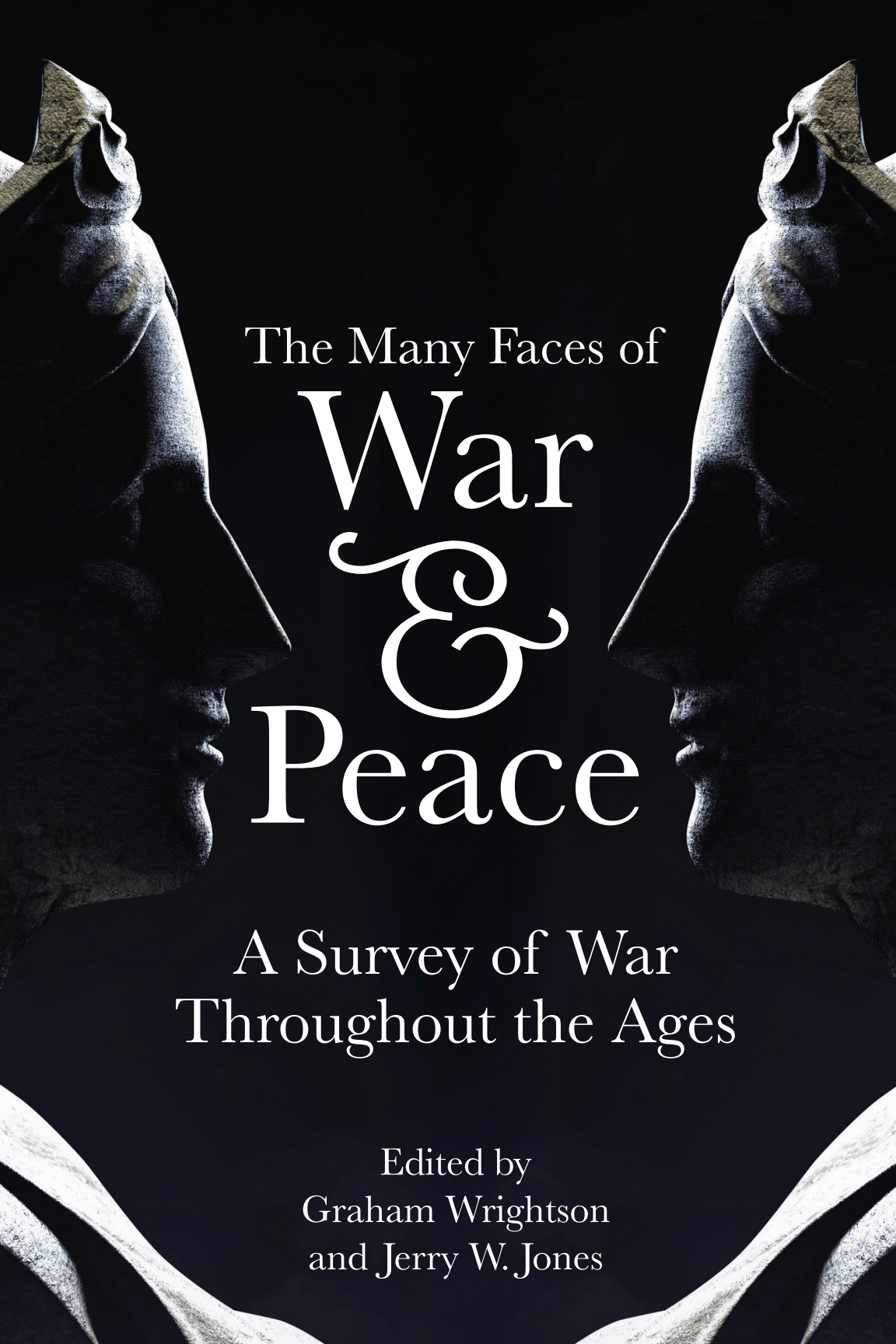




The Many Faces of

War & Peace

A Survey of War
Throughout the Ages

Edited by
Graham Wrightson
and Jerry W. Jones

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Wrightson, Graham (Graham Charles Liquorish), editor. | Jones, Jerry W., 1964– editor. | Marine Corps University (U.S.). Press, issuing body.

Title: The many faces of war and peace : a survey of war throughout the ages / edited by Graham Wrightson and Jerry W. Jones.

Other titles: Survey of war throughout the ages

Description: Quantico, Virginia : Marine Corps University Press, 2026. | This is a publication issued by the United States federal government or produced with federal funds. | Includes bibliographical references. | Summary: “This edited volume examines the intersection of preparing for war, prosecuting war, and making peace after war, from the ancient world to the modern world. The problems of training, logistics, tactics and strategy, and civil-military relations are remarkably consistent through time. This book features an international group of contributors, a consideration of major themes from ancient history to the modern world, and a look at the economic and social factors affecting warfare”— Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2025054583 (print) | LCCN 2025054584 (ebook) | ISBN 9781966233008 (paperback) | ISBN 9781966233015 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: War—History. | Military history.

Classification: LCC U27 (print) | LCC U27 (ebook) | DDC 355.009—dc23/eng/20260206 | SUDOC D 214.502:W 19

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025054583>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025054584>

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Published by
Marine Corps University Press
2044 Broadway Street
Quantico, VA 22134

1st Printing, 2026

ISBN: 978-1-966233-00-8 (paperback); 978-1-966233-01-5 (epub)

DOI: 10.56686/9781966233008

THIS VOLUME IS FREELY AVAILABLE AT WWW.USMCU.EDU/MCUPRESS

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FOREWORD

There exists a tendency among the officer corps of each of the United States' armed forces to view warfighting through a lens shaped by doctrine (certainly Service and increasingly—if grudgingly—Joint), history, and a liberal dose of Carl von Clausewitz. We tend to believe that currently serving military professionals are those best prepared to understand war and its wide-ranging consequences because we think we are the only ones seriously and competently examining war and its myriad questions. Indeed, the most parochial among us believe that only those within our Service or even specialty have this ability. As serving officers and noncommissioned officers are the ones keeping abreast of trends and preparing their units to answer the inevitable call to duty, it is logical to hold such beliefs. Preparing for war is our profession and we are mindful of the many responsibilities that go with this. The reality, however, is that individuals outside the profession also study such questions, albeit with different motivations and perspectives. Frequently, these individuals consider questions we might not, and they derive answers and insights the serving professional would be well-served to consider.

Since 2015, Dr. Graham Wrightson has brought together historians of widely varied backgrounds to consider war's many faces. Some are retired or former officers from one of America's Services, some are individuals who served for many years in the enlisted ranks. Still others are career civilians from both the United States and foreign countries whose observations reflect deep consideration of facts either not weighted or discounted by military experience. The latter are particularly valuable as they demonstrate a perspective shaped by vastly different national experiences and educational traditions. The American perspective is valuable, but it is not universal. Collectively, these authors have created a multidisciplinary

body of analysis that facilitates a better understanding of war's human and cultural impacts—how war and its preparations and aftermaths have shaped individuals and groups in ways unimaginable without war's less-than-gentle touch.

This collection captures the proceedings of the ninth Many Faces of War Conference and examines questions of invasion, insurgency, escape, and associated citizen behaviors. The events transpiring in Ukraine and the Middle East gave the conference's theme particular relevance. These conflicts have seized the attention of many as radical changes in technology have pushed requirements for drones, short-range air defense, information operations and tactical electronic warfare, subterranean operations, and cyber warfare into the spotlight. It is vital to consider the implications associated with these constantly evolving capabilities. Evolution is, in the final analysis, one of war's three defining characteristics. Despite this, and as this collection ably illustrates, it is equally important that we remain aware of war's second enduring, immutable characteristic: its human dimension. The club gave way to the arrow, the arrow to the musket, the musket to the rifle. What remained unchanged through all this is the humans who used such weapons and the populations on whose behalf they were employed, for this is where war's face truly resides.

In 1998, the U.S. Army Research Institute hosted the Infantry Situational Awareness Workshop at Fort Benning, Georgia. This workshop considered the many issues associated with the increasing digitization of the battlefield and the Army's Force XXI program. Force XXI was, in the words of Army lieutenant general Paul E. Menoher, both a "vision and a process" that sought to give mounted Army forces a decisive edge over any opponent by virtue of obtaining information superiority. This, in turn, would enable the commander to understand first, act first, and finish decisively. The underlying assumption in all this was the use of technology and its ability to eliminate many of a battlefield commander's traditional challenges. Conceptually, with information superiority, much of war's fog

and friction would fall by the wayside and give a commander an almost omniscient understanding of himself, his enemy, and the environment.

What became apparent in the workshop's presentations and papers was the fact that despite technology's promise, there remained battlefield immutables—conditions that reach back to humanity's earliest conflicts. Some of these reside in the domain of tactics and operational art. Others remain in the human dimension. The papers in this collection address a broad range of discrete subjects, but all ultimately derive their value by linking back to the human dimension.

We cannot answer with any real accuracy what tomorrow's wars will look like—the Russo-Ukrainian War and all the expert statements predicting events that proved wrong clearly illustrates that point. What we can say is that many of the answers to tomorrow's warfighting problems reside in the past, if we are willing to take the time to seek them and accept that some of the best answers do not come from inside the profession of arms.

Colonel Paul J. Cook, USA (Ret), PhD

The Many Faces of

War
&
Peace

INTRODUCTION

War throughout History

by Graham Wrightson, PhD

War is not a recent invention. Throughout the history of humans, from prehistory in the paleolithic times with stone axes and spears through to the modern age of missiles, drones, and computers, humans have innovated new ways of killing each other. War is not new, and many of the consequences of waging war have not changed. This volume examines what happened before, during, and after war throughout history. From the Greeks to the modern age, matters of training and logistics in preparation for war, the importance of tactics and strategy, and the intricacies of making and maintaining peace remain similar.

Although the papers in this volume span the breadth of history, they divide into pre- and post-gunpowder era warfare. But what really shows in the volume is the way they are all interconnected. The important themes in military history that are avenues of interesting and incisive scholarship cross the artificial barriers of time, region, and country. Moreover, this intersection of topics creates a perfect window to compare waging war in different places and times and perhaps, hopefully, even learn a few lessons we can apply in the future.

These papers all descend from an annual conference hosted in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, every March entitled the Many Faces of War. The specific theme changes each year, but each iteration seeks to bring together scholars and students of military history of all eras and areas with an interdisciplinary goal of sharing knowledge, ideas, and connective them-

atic analyses of war. The title of this volume, *The Many Faces of War and Peace*, was the theme of the 2023 conference, and many of these papers stem from that year. Some papers from the 2024 event, which focused on “Invasion, Insurgency and Citizens” in memorial of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings, add some extra spice to the volume as they examine guerrilla warfare and the actions of civilians in conflict zones. On many levels, the actions of citizens, or actions against citizens, both in war and peace define how we feel about or examine specific conflicts.

The very names of wars in history depend often on the point of view of the citizen bodies involved in or originating the conflict. Whether it is the American Revolution—alternately known as the American War of Independence in the United Kingdom (where to admit to a revolution would be to admit the political citizenship rights of colonists)—or the Vietnam War—named from the perspective of the U.S. combatants where the final outcome of the war largely depended on the enthusiasm for the conflict among citizens, both those in the war zone and those at home—citizens play an inordinately important role in determining the origins and outcomes of war. Thus, war and peace became the theme.

The volume neatly divides into seven chapters on pre-gunpowder era warfare and seven on the development of modern warfare. The first six chapters examine Greek and Roman warfare, covering all the themes important to this volume. The first, “Jumping from the Cliff(s) during Times of War: The Case of Aglauros” by Ioannis Mitsios, examines the mythical case of women’s involvement in war through protesting action and suicide to avoid slavery and worse. The treatment of women and other citizens during war is a topic just as emotionally relevant now as it ever has been with stories of atrocities still commonplace, unfortunately. The 7th, 10th, and 12th chapters in this volume also touch on the impact of war on women and noncombatants in connected societies.

Continuing an examination of feminine themes in warfare, the second chapter, “Balance in the Phalanx Dance: The Importance of Dancing as Training for Maintaining Balance in Close-combat Warfare” by Graham

Wrightson, addresses matters of gender stereotyping in war and takes a truly interdisciplinary approach to answering a question that has long been a point of contention in scholarship on ancient Greek hoplite warfare. Pyrrhic dancing has long been discounted as a military training tool in Classical Greece and understood more as entertainment. In a modern culture in which dancing has lost its militant connections, and in many cases also its masculine identity (consider how many boys enjoy and are proud enough to publicize going to dance class with their sisters in dance academies around the world), Wrightson argues that in pre-modern cultures, and some modern ones, dancing was an expected requirement of military training for all men. Chapter 8 also addresses the stereotype of war as a masculine concern and a perceived lack of martial ability as a feminine condemnation.

The third chapter, “Get to the Point: What Questions Should We Ask about a Spear?” by Sean Manning, examines the intricacies of warfare through the weapons themselves. This and the 13th chapter examine the logistics and the networks that go into waging war, both ancient and modern, showing that even thousands of years apart, the military-industrial complex has a huge influence on how war is fought, where, and by whom. Rarely do we examine scientifically the weapons of war and their roles in understanding the patterns of warfare throughout history.

Chapter 4, “Pyrrhus’s Imprint on Hannibal” by Fernando López Sánchez, assesses the influence that past generals and commanders can and did have on later armies. This is particularly interesting since both generals in question fought against Rome but at different times and with different styles of army. Like the final piece in the volume, this chapter asks us to think about military science as a continuum within which earlier events and decisions remain relevant to contemporary soldiers and commanders.

The fifth chapter, “‘Now by Menaces, Now by Hope, All with the Threat of War’: Three Missions by Two Prominent Roman Ambassadors in the Unipolar World of the 160s BCE” by Benjamin Scolnic, details the military and diplomatic missions in the Roman world that could and

often did lead to war. In many cases, the causes of war throughout history have remained similar, and examinations of diplomatic relations can shed light on the importance of interactions in warfare. This chapter again connects with the overarching theme of chapters 9 and 14 in examining the effect politics plays on the conduct of war.

Chapter 6, “Runaways Running Away: Strategies of Slave Flight and Revolt in Ancient Rome” by Aaron L. Beek, examines how the lines between peace and war can blur when it comes to enacting control over an unwilling population of conquered people, in this case slaves. Enslavement was often a result of losing a war, and the history of slave rebellions, especially those that led to wars—the famous ones in Roman history, such as the much-depicted revolt of Spartacus and his gladiators—offers interesting insights into how military might polices the domestic sphere. This connects to other cases of civilians in conquered areas resisting the control of the occupying power as described here in chapters 7, 8, and 10.

The seventh chapter, “‘Anime tribolate se potete, datevi in viaggio pace e buon piacere’: Traveling the Mercenary-Infested Borderlands of the Holy Roman Empire and France, 1360–1370” by Ölbei Tamás, describes the difficulties the chaos of the Hundred Years’ War caused for travel throughout Europe for everyone, regardless of status or wealth. Smaller topics like this within warfare are what enlighten recent scholarship in war studies and allow us to get a more realistic glimpse of everyday life in war-torn environments. This examination of people’s lives links with the 10th piece in the volume, which presents a more modern perspective on a similar theme.

The eighth chapter is the bridge (historically) between the ancient and modern worlds. “The British Quest of the Masculine in the Feminine Orient: Tracing the Development of Gurkha Recruitment and Discourse in the British Indian Army” by Diptangshu Dutta Gupta assesses the impact of cultural stereotypes on recruitment techniques in the early years of the modern period: the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It serves as a fascinating introduction to the ideology of war in the British Empire

and, alongside chapter 2, assesses the effects of gender stereotyping in historical analyses of war as a masculine ideal and what that entails. This is a very modern topic in view of the somewhat recent relaxation and the new tightening of rules on whether women can enter combat zones, yet these two chapters demonstrate that the arguments have always remained the same throughout history.

Chapter 9, “Pierre Koenig as a Symbol of Free France War Aims” by Benjamin F. Jones, examines the interactions of citizen guerrilla forces on invasions. It also assesses the codependency of allies and their different goals and the impact that has on the planning and logistics of wars. This chapter presents a fascinating case study of many of the questions faced by generals and overall commanders that we may not realize at first glance. It connects well with chapters 5, 6, and 12, which also examine questions of civilians engaging in war.

Chapter 10, “Civilians at War: The Italian Population in the Second World War, 1940–1943” by Rocco Melegari, follows the theme of war and peace by examining the impact occupied populations can have on occupiers and vice versa. Civilians engaging in peacetime activities while under occupation of conquerors is an exciting area of research and blurs the line between peace and war. This chapter fits well with the previous one analyzing guerrilla and insurgency responses, while this one examines reprisals against the general population in response to insurgency events. It also connects to chapter 6, which examines slave insurrections, and chapter 7, which examines the impact of war on normal peacetime activities.

The 11th chapter, “The Wages of Unreadiness: The End of American Empire in the Southern Philippines in 1942” by Jerry W. Jones, assesses the consequences of limited transition time in preparing to face an invasion and the importance of connection with the local civilian population. Again, this piece blurs the line between war and peace in examining how preparation for war during peacetime can impact the success or failure of responses to attack. The saying “fight for peace but prepare for war” is always so true. This chapter connects with chapter 2, concerning peace-

time preparations for war, as well as more directly with the 12th chapter.

Chapter 12, “Blacklisted: Guerrilla Responses to Local Collaborators in Negros Oriental, Philippines during the Second World War” by Justin Jose A. Bulado, continues the examination of war in the Philippines by charting the violent resistance of the local population to officials cooperating with the occupying forces. The goodwill of the locals has always been crucial in conquests regardless of the period or location. This chapter connects with the 10th and 11th chapters on civilian interaction in the Second World War and with the fifth on how local viewpoints affect the politics of war.

Chapter 13, “Naval-Capital Towns as the Center of the Military-Industrial Complex” by Ryan Christopher Nanak Walker, examines the process of how states prepare for and fund war, albeit in a case study on submarines specifically. Nonetheless, the idea of researching the background of arms production has recently spread from modern history to inform more research of the more distant past in the ancient and medieval worlds. This is evident in the third chapter’s examination of the origins of spears and argument for the importance of understanding the industrialization to better appreciate the impact of war on societies.

The final chapter, “The Sun Never Sets: Defense, Economics, and the Fate of Modern Empires” by Frank Hoffman, brings the historical analysis through to the modern era and examines the cost of maintaining an empire. It starts with the British (connecting with the eighth chapter), French, Spanish, and Portuguese colonial empires and analyzes the patterns of colonial repatriation and the factors that contributed to the success or failure of postcolonial states. Most interestingly, it examines the implications of these historical patterns for contemporary global strategic competition, with a focus on the foreign policy of the modern United States. This chapter closes the volume with a fascinating examination of how a study of historical military tendencies can shed light on the modern world and confirms the intention of the book that many issues in war and peace are valid regardless of time or place. War is a constant and so are the issues that surround it.

Jumping from the Cliff(s) during Times of War

The Case of Aglauros

by Ioannis Mitsios, PhD

Introduction

Aglauros, presented by the ancient authors as either the daughter or wife of King Cecrops, was an Athenian heroine who received cult on the Acropolis of Athens.¹ The two main episodes that the heroine is involved with are: a) the birth of Erichthonios, and b) the war between Athens and Eleusis. The first episode takes place during times of peace, while the second during times of war—but in both cases Aglauros jumps from the cliffs of the Acropolis and dies. This chapter examines the context and the positive and negative aspects of the suicide of Aglauros during times of peace and war by employing a holistic approach, taking into consideration the literary, epigraphic, iconographic, and topographic evidence, along with the historical and ideological context of the classical period.

¹ On Aglauros, see Pierre Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes: la religion des filles à Athènes à l'époque classique: mythes, cultes et société* (Paris: Belles lettres, 1987), 28–32; Robert Parker, “Myths of Early Athens,” in *Interpretations of Greek Mythology*, ed. Jan Bremmer (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 195–97; Robert Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2005), 52, 222, 270, 381, 434; Emily Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1989), 23–27; Nikolaos Oikonomides, “The Athenian Cults of the Three Aglauroi and Their Sanctuaries below the Acropolis of Athens,” *Ancient World* 21 (1990): 11–17; Philipp Harding, *The Story of Athens: The Fragments of the Local Chronicles of Attika* (London: Routledge, 2008), 27–29; and Ioannis Mitsios, “The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical Period: Contribution to the Study of Athenian Autochthony” (doctoral diss., University of Athens, 2018), 20–27.

Aglauros has been examined by various scholars.² Aglauros's name is first attested in Euripides's work *Ion* and is connected to the birth of Erichthonios. In the first passage, Euripides speaks of the involvement of the daughters of Cecrops—here named as daughters of Aglauros, indicating the heroine's importance compared to her other two sisters (Herse and Pandrosos)—in the birth of Erichthonios (Euripides, *Ion* 21–26). In the second passage, the involvement of the daughters of Cecrops in the birth and nurture of Erichthonios is also attested and additionally we come across a different element of the story: their tragic fate and the death of the daughters of Cecrops (Euripides 267–74).

Jumping from the Cliffs during Times of Peace

The majority of the literary sources (as well as the iconographic evidence) relate Aglauros (and her two sisters, Pandrosos and Herse) to the episode of the birth of Erichthonios. The fullest account of their involvement and participation can be found in Apollodorus (*The Library* 3.14.6) and Pausanias (*Description of Greece* 1.18.2). According to the mythical tradition, Athena placed her son Erichthonios in a chest and entrusted it to the daughters of Cecrops (Aglauros, Herse, and Pandrosos: also known as the *Kekropids* or *Aglaurids*), forbidding them to open it. Pandrosos was the only loyal daughter who obeyed Athena's rules. Aglauros and Herse, the errant daughters, paid for their disobedience when they jumped to their deaths from the Acropolis, either after being startled by the terrible serpent guarding the chest or after having been driven mad by Athena (Apollodorus 3.14.6; and Pausanias 1.18.2). Most literary sources mention Aglauros as the disobedient daughter, and scholars have rightly stated that Aglauros is always included in the narratives as the guilty daughter of Cecrops.³

² See footnote 1.

³ Oikonomides, "The Athenian Cults of the Three Aglauroi and Their Sanctuaries below the Acropolis of Athens," 16.

The episode of the disobedient behavior of the Aglaurids is depicted in up to seven vases of the classical period, starting from 480 up to 400 BCE, although on different versions.⁴ The earliest depiction is attested on a red-figure cup attributed to the Brygos Painter from Vulci, now in Frankfurt, dating from 480 BCE.⁵

The first side of the vase depicts Triptolemos in a winged chariot (showing his departure from Eleusis), along with several other figures, and the tondo shows Poseidon pursuing a woman, probably Aithra, mother of Theseus. The other side of the vase is split in two scenes. On one side, a male figure is accompanied by a younger male and a female, while the other side shows two women running toward the three figures on their left, in the view of an enormous snake. Although the scene shows neither the chest nor the baby Erichthonios: a) the appearance of the snake who emerges from a cave, rearing its head and baring its teeth, and b) the depiction of the terrified girls who run toward the other side of the vase (seeking safety from the serpent) securely relate the scene with the daughters of Cecrops and Athena's entrustment of the chest with the baby Erichthonios. Given that, the left side of the vase must depict King Ce-

⁴ For the treatment of the disobedient behavior of the Aglaurids in vase painting, see *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 1 (1981), s.v. "Aglauros, Herse, Pandrosos," 288–89; Alan Shapiro, "The Cult of Heroines: Kekrops' Daughters," in *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, ed. Ellen Reeder (Baltimore, MD: Princeton University Press, 1995), 44–45; Marion Meyer, *Athena, Göttin von Athen: Kult und Mythos auf der Akropolis bis in klassische Zeit* (Wien: Phoibos, 2017), 276 n2217; and Mitsios, "The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical Period," 81–82 (with emphasis on vases deriving from the Acropolis of Athens). The episode of the disobedient daughters of Cecrops is depicted in the following vases: 1) a red-figure cup attributed to the Brygos Painter, dating from 480/70 BCE, now in Frankfurt (vase no. 204131, collection ST V 7, Beazley Archive Pottery Database [BAPD], Liebieghaus Skulpturen Sammlung, Frankfurt); 2) a red-figure column krater attributed to the Orchard Painter, dating from 470/60 BCE, now in San Antonio (vase no. 6595, collection 86.134.36, BAPD), San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio, TX; 3) a red-figure alabastron attributed to the Karlsruhe Painter, dating from 470/60 BCE, in Athens (vase no. 209099, collection 17917, BAPD, National Archaeological Museum, Athens); 4) a fragmentary red-figure skyphos, attributed to the Lewis Painter, dating from 470/60 BCE, in Athens (vase no. 213241, collection Akr. 508+509, BAPD, National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece); 5) a red-figure pelike, attributed to an early (unnamed) Mannerist, dating from 470/60 BCE, now in Leipzig (vase no. 206765, collection T 654, BAPD, Antikenmuseum der Universität Leipzig); 6) a red-figure lekythos, attributed to the Phiale Painter, dating from 430 BCE, now in Basel (vase no. 376, collection BS 404, BAPD, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig, Basel); and 7) a red-figure pyxis, dating from 450/40 BCE, in Athens (vase no. 44371, collection A 8922, BAPD, National Archaeological Museum, Athens).

⁵ BAPD vase no. 204131.

Figures 1a and 1b. Cup of Brygos with the depiction of the disobedient behavior of Aglauros and Herse.



Source: Frankfurt, Liebieghaus ST V 7

Figure 2. Column krater of the Orchard Painter with the depiction the disobedient behavior of Aglauros and Herse.



Source: San Antonio Museum of Art, inv. no. 86-134G (63)

crops and Erysichthon, his young son who died childless.⁶ The girl on the side of Cecrops must be Pandrosos, the only loyal and obedient daughter while on the other side, Aglauros and Herse, the two disobedient daughters of Cecrops must be shown. Although the scene that decorates the cup refers to the disobedient behavior of the daughters of Cecrops, the iconography of the vase does not indicate the tragic fate of Aglauros and Herse and it seems they are unharmed and they escape death.⁷

The episode of the disobedient daughters of Cecrops is also depicted on a red-figure column krater attributed to the Orchard Painter, dating from 470/60 BCE, now in the San Antonio Museum of Art.⁸ On the vase, Athena wears a helmet, an aegis, and a chiton and holds a spear with her left hand. With her right hand she grabs the arm of a girl, who raises her left hand in alarm and tries to flee to the left, holding a tendril. Next to this girl is another one, also trying to flee to the left and also holding a tendril. On the right of Athena is a girl wearing a heavily draped mantle, looking from a distance to the other two. The females on the left of Athena are identified by most scholars as Aglauros and Herse, while the one on the right as Pandrosos.⁹ The fact that they are both depicted as: a) holding tendrils, b) are treated as a pair, and c) are depicted on the left of Athena—who looks as if she is chasing them—helps us to identify them as Aglauros and Herse, the two disobedient daughters of Cecrops. Pandrosos, the obedient sister on the right of Athena, seems to be isolated from her other two sisters and her proximity to the goddess, as well as the

⁶ For the limited literary sources and iconography of Erysichthon, see *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*, vol. 4 (1988), s.v. “Erysichthon II,” no. 1–6.

⁷ Shapiro, “The Cult of Heroines: Kekrops’ Daughters,” 44.

⁸ BAPD vase no. 6595.

⁹ Shapiro, “The Cult of Heroines: Kekrops’ Daughters,” 44; and Rachael Rosenzweig, *Worshipping Aphrodite: Art and Cult in Classical Athens* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 50. On the contrary, John Oakley, “Attic Red-Figure Column-Krater Attributed to the Orchard Painter,” in *Greek Vases in the San Antonio Museum of Art*, eds. Alan Shapiro, Carlos Picón, and Gerry Scot III (San Antonio, TX: San Antonio Museum of Art, 1995), 154–55, identifies the girl on the right as Herse instead of Pandrosos.

Figure 3. Alabastron of the Karlsruhe Painter with the depiction of the disobedient behavior of Aglauros.



Source: Athens, National Archaeological Museum 17917

fact that she has both arms covered in her mantle, indicate her loyal and rational behavior.¹⁰

A red-figure alabastron from the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, also dating from 470/60 BCE and attributed to the Karlsruhe Painter, seems to also allude to the disobedient behavior of Aglauros.¹¹ The first side of the vase shows Athena holding a spear with her right hand and wearing a Laconian peplos, an aegis, and a Corinthian helmet. The other side depicts a female figure wearing a chiton and a himation, a sakkos on her head, and she appears with a gesture similar to the previously examined column krater. Although her gesture and pose are more mild and less dramatic compared to the ones shown on the vase attributed to the Orchard Painter at San Antonio and no other females (her sisters) are depicted, her identification with Aglauros is considered safe.¹²

An almost identical depiction of the disobedient Aglauros is attested on red-figure lekythos at the Basel Museum, dated to 430 BCE and attributed to the Phiale Painter.¹³ On the left side of the vase a female figure, identified with Aglauros, is fleeing, while raising her hands in alarm in the typical gesture that denotes peril. On the right side, Athena, carrying a spear in her left hand, grabs the woman by the hand. Between Athena and Aglauros, a chest and a snake are depicted, allowing us the secure identification of the scene with the birth of Erichthonios and the disobedient behavior of Aglauros. The depiction of the snake is in total accordance with both Apollodorus's and Pausanias's testimonies on the nurture of Erichthonios and additionally it seems that it was an important element of the myth both in the literary sources and the iconographic treatment of the episode.

¹⁰ For the iconography of the wrapped-up mantle as a symbolism of modesty, *aidos* and *sophrosyne*, see Reeder, *Pandora: Women in Classical Greece*, 123–24.

¹¹ BAPD vase no. 209099.

¹² For the comparison with other vases and the safe identification with Aglauros, see Alan Shapiro, "Cults of Heroines in Ancient Athens," in *Worshipping Women: Ritual and Reality in Classical Athens*, eds. Alan Shapiro and Nikolaos Kaltsas (New York: Alexander S. Onassis Public Benefit Foundation, 2008), 182.

¹³ BAPD vase no. 376.

Figure 4. Lekythos of the Phiale Painter with the depiction of the disobedient behavior of Aglauros.



Source: Basel, Antikenmuseum und Sammlung Ludwig: BS404

Figure 5. Pyxis with the disobedient behavior of Aglauros, Herse, and Pandrosos.



Source: Athens, National Archaeological Museum A8922

Another depiction of the disobedient behavior of the daughters of Cecrops derives from a red-figure pyxis at the National Archaeological Museum of Athens, dated to 420/400 BCE.¹⁴ On the far left, Cecrops, the half-human and half-snake autochthonous king of Attica, watches the episode, while on the far right appears Athena and the chest (guarded by snakes) with the baby Erichthonios. The central scene shows all three daughters of Cecrops (Aglauros, Herse, and Pandrosos) running away on seeing the snake, indicating their disobedient and guilty behavior, following the testimony of Euripides (who speaks of the tragic fate of all the daughters of Cecrops).

From these characteristic vases, we can see that the context of the depiction of the episode of the disobedient behavior of the daughters of Cecrops varies and that there was not a standard depiction. In some vases, the girls are fleeing from a huge snake, while in others they are fleeing

¹⁴BAPD vase no. 44371.

from Athena. Some vases depict one, two, or even three daughters of Cecrops as the disobedient ones, but it has to be noted that in all of the cases, Aglauros is shown as one of the disobedient daughters of Cecrops (and never the loyal and faithful one).

Jumping from the Cliffs during Times of War

Philochorus attests that during the war between Athens and Eleusis, the oracle of Delphi declared that the city of Athens would be saved only if someone sacrificed himself.¹⁵ Therefore, Aglauros threw herself from the cliffs of the Acropolis, heroically sacrificing herself for the salvation of the city. The act of leaping from a cliff is common in Greek mythology, resulting in heroization and deification. Other examples of heroines exist, such as the cases of Ino and Molpadia (Hemithea).¹⁶ In terms of Aglauros, her jump from the cliff of the Acropolis resulted in the foundation of a sanctuary where the Athenian ephebes took their ephebic oath.¹⁷ The location of the shrine of Aglauros has been securely identified on the east slope of the Acropolis—thanks to the discovery of an inscription found in situ by Dontas—and is associated with a cave.¹⁸

Other cults of Aglauros may have existed outside the Acropolis but they are not relevant to her voluntary self-sacrifice for the salvation of the city and so are not examined here.¹⁹ Several literary sources attest that the Athenian ephebes took their oath at the sanctuary of Aglauros, invoking her name, along with other war deities (Demosthenes, *On the Embassy* 19.303; Philochorus 328 F 105; and Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 15.7–8). In fact,

¹⁵ Philochorus von Athen, 328 F 105, in Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* [Fragments of the Greek Historians; FGrH], part 3b, Ethnography part 2 (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1964), 129.

¹⁶ Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 203; Gregory Nagy, *Greek Mythology and Poetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 223–26; and Jennifer Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 102.

¹⁷ For the ephebic oath, see Reinhold Merkelbach, “Aglauros (Die Religion der Epheben),” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 9 (1972): 277–83; and Peter Siewert, “The Ephebic Oath in Fifth-century Athens,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 (1977): 102–11.

¹⁸ George Dontas, “The True Aglaurion,” *Hesperia* 52 (1983): 48–63.

¹⁹ Aglauros may have received cult at Porthmos, given that the priestess of Aglauros and Pandrosos appears in close connection with the priestess of Kourotophos. On the issue, see Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 139–40.

the ephebes swore to Aglauros, Hestia, Enyo, Enyalios, Ares and Athena Areia, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone, and Herakles. On top of that, the priestess offered sacrifices to Aglauros, Ares, Helios, the Hours, Apollo, and the other customary gods. Aglauros had her own priestess, and several inscriptions confirm that the office has existed since the early third century BCE.²⁰

Certainly, the oath of the ephebes at Aglauros's sanctuary to defend the city of Athens with their freshly acquired arms gave Aglauros a warlike character. This specific warlike context is further highlighted with her connection to Ares, the god of war. According to some ancient authors, Aglauros was the wife of Ares and the mother of Alcippe, while others attest that Aglauros was worshiped in Cyprus along with Diomedes, Ares's opponent (Hellanikos von Lesbos 323a F1, in Jacoby, FGrH, 40–41; Apollodorus 3.14.2; and Porphyri, *Absistentia* 2.54). There may be at least three depictions of Aglauros and Ares in votive reliefs dating from the late fifth and early fourth century BCE in Venice, Palermo, and the Louvre, showing the heroine in a cultic context.²¹

There are other groups of heroines who sacrifice themselves for the salvation of the city during times of war (or plague and famine). These examples include the Erechtheids/Hyakinthids, daughters of King Erechtheus and Queen Praxithea and the Leokorai, daughters of King Leos (Philochorus 328 F 105; Polyaeus 1.21.2; and Apollodorus 3.14.2).²² However, unlike the other groups, Aglauros is the only heroine who vol-

²⁰ For the sacrifices to Aglauros, see the following inscriptions: *Inscriptiones graecae* (IG) II.2.3459 (early third century BCE); Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum (SEG) 33:115 (around 250 BCE); IG II.2.948 Z. 10f. now: IG II.3.1373 (around 180 BCE); IG II.2.1039 Z. 57f. (early 1st century BCE); and IG II.2.5152 (Imperial period).

²¹ Relief 126, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Venice, Italy; relief 768, Museo Archeologico Regionale "Antonino Salinas," Palermo, Sicily; and relief Ma 742, Musée du Louvre, Paris. Most recently, on the examination of the reliefs, see Andrew Stewart, "The Borghese Ares Revisited," *Hesperia* 85 (2016): 577–625, <https://doi.org/10.2972/hesperia.85.3.0577>; and Ioannis Mitsios, "Venice 126, Palermo 768 and Louvre 742 Votive Reliefs Revisited: Aglauros and Ares," *Talanta* 55/56 (2024): 51–66.

²² On the examination of these heroines, see Ioannis Mitsios, "Ancient Pandemics in Mythical Athens," *Interface* 17 (2022): 85–108; and Ioannis Mitsios, "Dying for 'Doing': Mythical Athenian heroines in service of the city," in *Ancient Warfare II: Introducing Current Research*, ed. G. Wrightson and Jared Kreiner (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2024), 7–23.

Figure 6. The shrine of Aglauros on the east slope of the Acropolis of Athens.



Source: Author's collection

untarily sacrifices herself alone for the salvation of the city, while in all the rest of the cases the heroines form a part of a group of virgins.

Aglauros is also spelled Agraulos by some sources and the heroine's connection with the ephebes and the guarding of the city is further proved by the etymology of her name (Philochorus 328 F 105; Polyaeus 1.21.2; and Apollodorus, 3.14.2). The meaning of Aglauros's name has been interpreted as "bright water" and the meaning of Agraulos as the one "living in the field."²³ Agraulos's name is related to *agraulia*, a word used to refer to military services, and her name has also been paralleled with a passage of Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (559–62) that states that "those who were

²³ Deborah Boedeker, *Descend from Heaven: Images of Dew in Greek Poetry and Religion* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 104.

guarding the city sleep in the open and are in danger of the dew/humidity of the day,” resembling the name of Agrauros.²⁴

Taking into account the brave act of her self-sacrifice and heroic status, Aglauros was the chief patroness of the ephebes and was an exemplary heroine, acting as a role model for the Athenian ephebes. In fact, the heroic self-sacrifice of Aglauros—and her jump from the east cliff of the Acropolis for the salvation of the city of Athens—acted as a paradigm during historical times. Herodotus (*Histories* 8.53) attests that some Athenians fell from the east cliff of the Acropolis when the Persians were conquering the city and were ascending the Acropolis of Athens. Given that, the mythical self-sacrifice of Aglauros by jumping from the east cliff of the Acropolis for the salvation of the city acted as an example for the historical suicide of the Athenians during the Persian sack of the Acropolis, who jumped from the same spot where the heroine committed suicide and her sanctuary was located.²⁵

Aglauros’s suicide, besides her connection with the Athenian ephebes, related her to the goddess Athena and the Athenian festivals. According to the literary tradition, Aglauros was the first who adorned the gods, and several different ancient sources attest Aglauros either as an epithet or a priestess of the goddess Athena.²⁶ On top of that, the heroine was related to major Athenian festivals. Hesychius and Photius connect Aglauros with the festivals of Plynteria and Kallynteria.²⁷ The heroine’s connection with the festival of Plynteria is also supported by the epigraphic evidence, and according to the Calendar of Thorikos (SEG 33:115) Aglauros received an offering in connection with the Plynteria. Photius attests that the festival of the Plynteria got its name when the sacred clothes of Aglauros—

²⁴ Boedeker, *Descend from Heaven*, 105–9.

²⁵ On the east slope of the Acropolis as a *mnemotopos* of mythical and historical wars, see Ioannis Mitsios, “The East Slope of the Acropolis as a *Mnemotopos* of Mythical and Historical Wars,” *Deimos* 2 (2026): 36–57.

²⁶ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, s.v. “Plynteria and Kallynteria”; Bion von Prokonnesos, 332 F1, in Jacoby, FGrH, 166; Harpocration, *Lexicon of the Ten Orators*, s.v. “Aglauros”; Photius, s.v. “Aglauros”; and Philochorus, 328 F 106.

²⁷ Hesychius of Alexandria, *Alphabetical Collection of All Words*, s.v. “Plynteria”; and Photius, s.v. “Plynteria and Kallynteria.”

which had not been washed for years after her death—were subsequently washed.²⁸ Given that, the origins of the Plynteria were related to Aglauros's self-sacrifice for the salvation of the city during the war between the city of Athens and Eleusis. A similar connection applies to the origins of the festival of Kallynteria. The Plynteria was a commemoration of Aglauros's death, while the Kallynteria has been interpreted as commemorating Aglauros's actions as a priestess of Athena when she was alive.²⁹

Conclusion

Having examined the self-sacrifice of Aglauros, it is important to note that there is contradictory evidence concerning both cases of her death. Aglauros's suicide during times of peace was related to the story of Erichthonios and has negative aspects, while her self-sacrifice during the war between the city of Athens and Eleusis has positive aspects. Given that, the heroine Aglauros is an ambiguous persona; she is presented either as a disobedient, foolish girl, who is driven by her (female) curiosity to open the chest in which Erichthonios was placed, resulting in her death, or as a brave heroine, who sacrifices herself for the salvation of the city. These ambiguous ancient presentations of Aglauros fit well with the contradictory context of other heroes who received cult on the Acropolis of Athens and who were also connected to several mythemes with some positive and some negative aspects. For example, King Cecrops, the mixanthropic and *diphyes* (half human/half snake) hero who received cult on the Acropolis, is presented by some sources as an autochthonous Athenian hero—i.e., born from the Attic soil, while others present him as a settler of Egypt, pointing to his Egyptian origin (Apollodorus 3.14.1; Philochorus 328 F

²⁸ Photius, s.v. "Plynteria and Kallynteria."

²⁹ Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Athenian Myths and Festivals: Aglauros, Erectheus, Plynteria, Panathenaia, Dionysia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 110–11, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199592074.001.0001>.

93; and Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 1.28.7, 1.29.1).³⁰ Similarly, contradictory and unorthodox evidence refer to Erechtheus, another Athenian hero who received cult on the Acropolis of Athens.³¹ During the war between the cities of Athens and Eleusis, the Athenian king Erechtheus killed the Eleusinian king Eumolpos (son of Poseidon), and Erechtheus was then killed by Poseidon as revenge for the death of his son (Lucyrgus, *Against Leocrates* 98–100). The paradox of the story lies in the fact that both Erechtheus and Poseidon were worshiped on the Erechtheion and the god Poseidon was worshiped under the epithet Erechtheus, indicating a harmonic coexistence in cult between the hero and the god who killed him (Pausanias 1.26.5).

Given that, Aglauros fits into the schema of ambiguous and contradictory heroes and heroines who received cult on the Acropolis of Athens, where the fluidity and flexibility of Greek myth is obvious, and heroines and heroes were presented both as positive and negative personas, capable of doing good or ill.

³⁰ On Cecrops, see Utah Kron, *Die zehn attischen Phylenheroen. Geschichte, Mythos, Kult und Darstellungen* (Berlin: Mann, 1976), 84–103; Laurent Gourmelen, *Kékrops, le roi-serpent. Imaginaire athénien, représentations de l'humain et de l'animalité en Grèce ancienne* (Paris: Belles lettres, 2004); Mitsios, “The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical Period,” 173–217; Ioannis Mitsios, “Kekrops: The Positive Aspects of Diphyes and ‘Mixanthropic’ Nature. Serpents and Autochthony,” *Frontières 8: Revue d’Archéologie, Histoire & Histoire de l’Art* (2023): 29–41; Ioannis Mitsios, “Kekrops: The Positive Aspects of Diphyes and ‘Mixanthropic’ Nature. The Case of Egypt,” *Mètis* 22 (2024): 313–35; and Ioannis Mitsios, “Identities on the Acropolis of Athens,” in *The Materiality of Ancient Greek Identities, 9th to 2nd centuries B.C.*, eds. Emma Gooch and Jerome Ruddick (London: Bloomsbury Academic 2025), 105–9.

³¹ On Erechtheus, see Kron, *Die zehn attischen Phylenheroen. Geschichte, Mythos, Kult und Darstellungen*, 32–83; Mitsios, “The Iconography and Cult of Heroes on the Acropolis of Athens from the Late Archaic to the Classical Period,” 102–72; and Mitsios, “Identities on the Acropolis of Athens,” 100–5.

Balance in the Phalanx Dance

The Importance of Dancing as Training
for Maintaining Balance in Close-combat Warfare

by *Graham Wrightson, PhD*

Many scholars of Greek warfare emphasize the importance of Pyrrhic dancing and the *hoplitodromos* (the competitive running race in full hoplite armor) in Greek culture.¹ However, the prevailing view is that such events did not originate to benefit hoplite combat or training. Adam Schwartz argued this extensively, concluding that “ultimately the question of the value of dancing for hoplite combat cannot be assessed with any certainty.”² While there is no way to prove with certainty the association of dancing with hoplite combat, that is true of most things concerning hoplite warfare. However, despite his long discussion and correct analogy to martial arts practices, Schwartz never mentions the all-important issue of balance.³ Throughout history—and still today—balance is arguably the most important skill in hand-to-hand combat in all its forms. If during

¹ See, for example, Everett L. Wheeler, “*Hoplomachia* and the Greek Dances in Arms,” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 23, no. 3 (1982): 223–33; Steven H. Lonsdale, *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Nancy B. Reed, *More than Just a Game: The Military Nature of Greek Athletic Contests* (Chicago: Ares, 1998); Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Duckworth, 2005); and Adam Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite: Arms, Armour and Phalanx Fighting in Archaic and Classical Greece* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009).

² Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 46–53, for his full discussion of the hoplite armor race and Pyrrhic dancing.

³ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 50–51.

battle you fell down in the line wearing full armor, it was difficult to get up again and you were at the mercy of your opponent.⁴ In modern martial arts and combat sports, falling often leads to losing the bout; in dancing it causes you to mess up the routine. Using comparative evidence to modern training in boxing and martial arts, as well as dance and the current U.S. Army's *Combatives: Hand-to-Hand Combat*, Field Manual 21-150, this paper will argue that balance was so crucial in the phalanx that dancing became the most important training for soldiers—much more so than weapons training—to the extent that Pyrrhic dancing is the only hoplite training regimen that entered into popular Greek culture.

The group of scholars who argue for the use of a hoplite shield in individual combat, headed by Hans Van Wees, use as evidence for a hoplite's maneuverability the importance of Pyrrhic dancing and the *hoplitodromos* (the competitive running race in full hoplite armor) in Greek culture.⁵ Adam Schwartz argued against this extensively, concluding that ultimately the question of the value of dancing for hoplite combat cannot be assessed with any certainty; but so far as can be judged from the textual sources, it contributed only indirectly and insignificantly to the hoplite's weapon skills, but probably to a great degree to overall suppleness, agility and bodily strength.⁶

While we cannot know anything for certain, the proliferation of martial dances in many cultures around the world suggests dancing was important to soldiers. What connects dancing and martial arts is the balance required. No scholar previously has associated dancing as training for balance in combat.

⁴Xenophon, *Hellenika*, 5.4.33, states that the Spartan king, Kleonimos, fell down and got up three times in the phalanx before he was killed.

⁵See Van Wees, *Greek Warfare*.

⁶Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 53. See pp. 46–53 for his full discussion of the hoplite armor race and Pyrrhic dancing.

Balance in hand-to-hand combat throughout history, whether in a formation or as an individual, was arguably the most important skill. In full armor, it was difficult to get up again if you fell, and you were at the mercy of your opponent if in direct combat. As noted above, Xenophon (*Hellenika* 5.4.33) states that the Spartan king, Kleonymos, fell down and rose three times in the phalanx before he was killed. Clearly, it depended on circumstances and was not always instantly fatal to lose your footing, but this story is told precisely because it was unusual. Schwartz rightly comments that “once a man had fallen to the ground inside the phalanx, it was exceedingly difficult to get up again,” and Victor Davis Hanson discusses how hoplites further back in the phalanx could use their butt spikes to dispatch fallen opponents beneath them.⁷ Yet, neither scholar focuses on the importance of balance to prevent this. Schwartz does mention “the risk of throwing the attacker off balance” but goes no further, even though doing so would help his main arguments concerning the phalanx’s shoving, the *othismos*.⁸ In the narrow, three-feet-wide space occupied by each hoplite, maintaining balance while fighting was crucial. Fallen heroes feature on many occasions in Homer’s poems and in classical texts or in iconography, showing its importance in the Greek consciousness.

Balance is crucial also throughout medieval warfare and into modern warfare. The U.S. Army handbook for hand-to-hand combat techniques lists physical balance first under basic principles.

- a. **Physical Balance.** Balance refers to the ability to maintain equilibrium and to remain in a stable, upright position. A hand-to-hand fighter must maintain his balance both to defend himself and to launch an effective attack. Without balance, the fighter has no stability with which to defend himself, nor does he have a base of power for an attack. The fighter must understand two aspects of balance in a struggle:

⁷ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 184; and Victor Davis Hanson, “Hoplite Technology in Phalanx Battle,” in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (London: Routledge, 1991), 67–74.

⁸ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 191–92.

(1) *How to move his body to keep or regain his own balance.* A fighter develops balance through experience, but usually he keeps his feet about shoulder-width apart and his knees flexed. He lowers his center of gravity to increase stability.

(2) *How to exploit weaknesses in his opponent's balance.* Experience also gives the hand-to-hand fighter a sense of how to move his body in a fight to maintain his balance while exposing the enemy's weak points. . . .

- b. **Position.** Position refers to the location of the fighter (defender) in relation to his opponent. A vital principle when being attacked is for the defender to move his body to a safe position—that is, where the attack cannot continue unless the enemy moves his whole body. To position for a counterattack, a fighter should move his whole body off the opponent's line of attack. Then, the opponent has to change his position to continue the attack. It is usually safe to move off the line of attack at a 45-degree angle, either toward the opponent or away from him, whichever is appropriate. This position affords the fighter safety and allows him to exploit weaknesses in the enemy's counterattack position. Movement to an advantageous position requires accurate timing and distance perception.
- c. **Timing.** A fighter must be able to perceive the best time to move to an advantageous position in an attack. If he moves too soon, the enemy will anticipate his movement and adjust the attack. If the fighter moves too late, the enemy will strike him. Similarly, the fighter must launch his attack or counterattack at the critical instant when the opponent is the most vulnerable.
- d. **Distance.** Distance is the relative distance between the positions of opponents. A fighter positions himself where distance is to his advantage. The hand-to-hand fighter must adjust his distance by changing position and developing attacks or counterattacks. He

does this according to the range at which he and his opponent are engaged.⁹

These principles still ring true today but were even more important in ancient and medieval combat when the combatants were heavily armed and armored. In battle, staying on your feet was crucial to survival. In the close clash of phalanxes, there was little opportunity to get back up. Moreover, keeping your balance while throwing the enemy off his balance, even momentarily, was enough of a life-or-death advantage.

Wrestling as Training for Battle and the Importance of Balance

The ancient Greek sport of wrestling and the more violent version of pankration both emphasized throwing the opponent off balance. These were crucial to the physical training of men as soldiers. As Plato describes in the *Laws* (814d):

that wrestling of this kind is of all motions by far the most nearly allied to military fighting; and also that it is not the latter that should be learned for the sake of the former, but, on the contrary, it is the former that should be practiced for the sake of the latter.

⁹ *Combatives: Hand-to-Hand Combat*, Field Manual 21-150 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1992), 1-1–1-3. The whole section is of interest in addition to what is quoted above: “b. Mental Balance. The successful fighter must also maintain a mental balance. He must not allow fear or anger to overcome his ability to concentrate or to react instinctively in hand-to-hand combat. . . . f. Momentum. Momentum is the tendency of a body in motion to continue in the direction of motion unless acted on by another force. Body mass in motion develops momentum. The greater the body mass or speed of movement, the greater the momentum. Therefore, a fighter must understand the effects of this principle and apply it to his advantage. (1) The fighter can use his opponent’s momentum to his advantage—that is, he can place the opponent in a vulnerable position by using his momentum against him. (a) The opponent’s balance can be taken away by using his own momentum. (b) The opponent can be forced to extend farther than he expected, causing him to stop and change his direction of motion to continue his attack. (c) An opponent’s momentum can be used to add power to a fighter’s own attack or counterattack by combining body masses in motion. (2) The fighter must be aware that the enemy can also take advantage of the principle of momentum. Therefore, the fighter must avoid placing himself in an awkward or vulnerable position, and he must not allow himself to extend too far. g. Leverage. A fighter uses leverage in hand-to-hand combat by using the natural movement of his body to place his opponent in a position of unnatural movement. The fighter uses his body or parts of his body to create a natural mechanical advantage over parts of the enemy’s body. He should never oppose the enemy in a direct test of strength; however, by using leverage, he can defeat a larger or stronger opponent.”

Wrestling was important for helping soldiers in battle, however, it did not necessarily work in reverse that battle helped wrestlers improve. The sport taught techniques that improved soldiers' abilities for war. Other than being able to literally overthrow an opponent, the principal skill learned from wrestling was surely balance and keeping one's feet in hand-to-hand combat.

Schwartz describes the *Thessalian feint*, moving a shield back quickly to throw an opponent off balance and thus expose his vulnerable side to a death blow.¹⁰ The whole success of this maneuver in the phalanx rests on mastering balance in one-on-one combat. Moreover, when Schwartz describes a hoplite being hit on the head and losing consciousness, he fails to emphasize the more pertinent problem of the soldier being knocked off-balance.¹¹ During battle in any form, one moment of failing balance would be enough to decide the contest and determine the winner and the loser and often the one who came out alive.

In medieval fight manuals for those engaging in judicial duels to the death or for those practicing for the everyday realities of war and violence, footwork and balance in wrestling features highly. Mark Rector writes in his foreword to a recent edition of Hans Talhoffer's fighting manual that these late medieval martial arts required practice:

And they were arts, worthy of much study and practice, since one's life could depend on their mastery. . . . Combatants in the Middle Ages used footwork, actions on the sword, leverage, timing and distance to exploit and enhance the sword's inherent cutting and thrusting capabilities. These skills were supplemented with techniques for disarming, grappling, wrestling, kicking, and throwing the opponent.¹²

¹⁰ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 41–45.

¹¹ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 34–35.

¹² Mark Rector, foreword to *Hans Talhoffer: Medieval Combat in Color*, by Hans Talhoffer, ed. Dierk Hagedorn (Barnsley, UK: Greenhill, 2018), 9.

In Talhoffer's manual, the techniques of wrestling are by far the most common, as Rector notes, more than specific skills with individual weapons:

Nearly a third of the armed combat plates show some kind of wrestling or grappling, and Talhoffer devotes thirty-two plates to wrestling alone. Wrestling is essential to the German art of fighting, since all martial art comes from it, and because the fight must become hand-to-hand once distance is closed within the effective range of the weapons, or if either of the combatants should be disarmed.¹³

Such was the importance given to wrestling by these medieval German sword masters that one of them, Master Ott the Jew, became famous for being wrestling master to the dukes of Austria and for first separating the techniques of wrestling from sword fighting.¹⁴ If it was unusual to teach wrestling separately from knightly dueling, then (unlike in Greece) wrestling was not a sport to teach warfare. Rather, warfare practice required becoming skilled at wrestling.

This medieval emphasis on the importance of wrestling in close combat mirrors the Greek emphasis on wrestling and pankration as training for combat and echoes the Asian martial arts' emphasis on grappling and throwing the opponent. Greek soldiers trained as youths at wrestling and then brought that knowledge to the hoplite phalanx. They then supplemented this expertise in athletic grappling with techniques of drill with weapons taught in the Pyrrhic dance as martial forms, just as in Asian martial arts and as depicted in the medieval fight manuals. In all these instances balance is paramount.

¹³ Rector foreword, 11. See also Christian Henry Tobler, *Lance, Spear, Sword, and Messer: A German Medieval Martial Arts Miscellany* (Wheaton, IL: Freelance Academy Press, 2022); and Benjamin J. Smith, *The Art of Longsword Fighting: Teaching the Foundations of Sigmund Ringeck's Style* (Barnsley, UK: Frontline Books, 2021). There are several books about the techniques of medieval sword fighting written by modern authors and all emphasize the importance of learning the footwork and the forms of the specific technical arts.

¹⁴ See especially Jessica Finley, *Medieval Wrestling: Modern Practice of a 15th-Century Art* (Wheaton, IL: Freelance Academy Press, 2014).

Balance in Martial Arts

Balance is arguably the most crucial focus of modern martial arts training. Beginners practice basic techniques to hone balance, which makes learning the forms used easier. The practice of military forms, the core of modern martial arts, is to be able to understand and counter the opponent's moves. Martial arts emphasize this in the arena or ring, but it is just as true on the battlefield in a melee. Every style of martial arts from jiu-jitsu and judo to tai chi and yoga emphasizes that balance is the most important aspect and is perhaps the only element common in all of them.

Many scientific studies demonstrate that studying martial arts, dancing, or participating in high-level sport improves balance: "The performance of high-level motor tasks during sport learning and training or competition implies to master simultaneously both static and dynamic balance."¹⁵ There are numerous studies on the importance of balance in sport, whether for improving performance, or reducing injury risk.¹⁶ In martial arts, improving balance generally improves results.¹⁷

Balance ability was related to competition level for some sports, with the more proficient athletes displaying greater balance ability. There were significant relationships

¹⁵ See further, "Proper balance control in the achievement of motor skills is mainly based on muscular synergies that minimise the displacements of the centre of gravity while maintaining upright stance, proper orientation, adapted locomotion and adequate gestures, figures or techniques imparted to the sport practiced." Philippe Perrin et al., "Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control," *Gait & Posture* 15, no. 2 (April 2002): 187, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0966-6362\(01\)00149-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0966-6362(01)00149-7).

¹⁶ On improved performance, see Gary C. C. Chow et al., "Sensory Organisation and Reactive Balance Control of Amateur Rugby Players: A Cross-sectional Study," *European Journal of Sport Science* 17, no. 4 (2017): 400–6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17461391.2016.1257656>; and Deepa Abichandani and Vinayak Hule, "Assessment of Anaerobic Power and Balance among Elite Indian Under-19 Football Players," *International Journal of Science and Research* 6, no. 9 (2017), <https://dx.doi.org/10.21275/ART20176597>. On reduced injury, see Malachy P. McHugh et al., "Risk Factors for Noncontact Ankle Sprains in High School Athletes: The Role of Hip Strength and Balance Ability," *American Journal of Sports Medicine* 34, no. 3 (2006): 464–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0363546505280427>; Malachy P. McHugh et al., "The Effectiveness of a Balance Training Intervention in Reducing the Incidence of Noncontact Ankle Sprains in High School Football Players," *American Journal of Sports Medicine* 35, no. 8 (2007): 1289–94, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0363546507300059>; Robert J. Butler et al., "Dynamic Balance Performance and Noncontact Lower Extremity Injury in College Football Players: An Initial Study," *Sports Health* 5, no. 5 (2013): 417–22, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1941738113498703>; and Jaco Ras and Threethambal Puckree, "Injury Incidence and Balance in Rugby Players," *Pakistan Journal of Medical Science* 30, no. 6 (2014): 1346–50, <https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.306.5648>.

¹⁷ See, for example, Li Shu, "Impacts of Core Strength Training on Balance in Martial Arts Athletes," *Review Brazilian Medical Esporte* 29 (2023): unpaginated, https://doi.org/10.1590/1517-8692202329012022_0304.

between balance ability and a number of performance measures. Evidence from prospective studies supports the notion that balance training can be a worthwhile adjunct to the usual training of non-elite athletes to enhance certain motor skills, but not in place of other conditioning such as resistance training.¹⁸

Studies also demonstrate that even rudimentary study in martial arts improves balance compared with people who have never studied these skills.¹⁹ Especially in a sport such as Taekwondo, “With these fast and powerful kicks, good stance and footwork are essential for keeping balance and preventing self-injury.”²⁰ Another study demonstrated that teenage Taekwondo athletes have better balance than older adults without practice in the sport.²¹ In boxing, footwork is often seen as the most important element of a fight.²² The crucial element of all of these seemingly disparate forms of movement is balance and the associated footwork.

This focus on balance and body control is central to martial arts where the prime goal of practicing forms is to become centered.²³ In the book *It’s*

¹⁸ Con Hrysomallis, “Balance Ability and Athletic Performance,” *Sports Medicine* 41 (2011): 221–32, <https://doi.org/10.2165/11538560-000000000-00000>.

¹⁹ On improved balance, see W. W. Tsang et al., “Tai Chi Improves Standing Balance Control under Reduced or Conflicting Sensory Conditions,” *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* 85 (2004): 129–37, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2003.02.002>; Mariona A. Violan et al., “The Effect of Karate Training on Flexibility, Muscle Strength, and Balance in 8- to 13-Year-Old Boys,” *Pediatric Exercise Science* 9, no. 1 (1997): 55–64, <https://doi.org/10.1123/pes.9.1.55>; and Ma Ada and Lily Han Qu, “Effects of Karate Training on Basic Motor Abilities of Primary School Children,” *Advances in Physical Education* 7, no. 2 (2017): 130–39, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ape.2017.72012>.

²⁰ Hio-Teng Leong et al., “Low-level Taekwondo Practitioners Have Better Somatosensory Organisation in Standing Balance than Sedentary People,” *European Journal of Applied Physiology* 111 (2011): 1787–93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00421-010-1798-7>; and Shirley S. M. Fong, Siu-ngor Fu, and Gabriel Y. F. Ng, “Taekwondo Training Speeds up the Development of Balance and Sensory Functions in Young Adolescents,” *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport* 15 (2012): 64–68, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2011.06.001>.

²¹ M. A. Suzana and Willy Pieter, “Motor Ability Profile of Junior and Senior Taekwondo Club Athletes,” *Brazilian Journal of Biomotricity* 3, no. 4 (2009): 325–31.

²² See David Christian, *Footwork Wins Fights: The Footwork of Boxing, Kickboxing, Martial Arts & MMA* (self-published, 2018); and Kamil Krocowski, *Energetic Body Grounding: Karate-based Method for Improved Balance, Footwork and Optimal Structural Strength* (self-published, 2021).

²³ “The best way . . . is to stay connected to the ground. The statement ‘he’s got his feet on the ground’ refers to someone who is centered.” Terry Dobson, *It’s a Lot Like Dancing: An Aikido Journey*, ed. Riki Moss (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1994), 109.

a Lot Like Dancing: An Aikido Journey, Terry Dobson describes the importance of balance to this process:

The prime quality of earth is balance. . . . When you are in a high stress situation and act appropriately, then you are balanced, focused, and adaptable. These are the qualities of centeredness.²⁴

Other martial arts scholarship describes being centered in different ways, but it all depends on the body being balanced.²⁵ Practitioners must adopt a stance that is both stable and highly mobile in all directions since you don't know how or in which way your opponent will attack.²⁶

The strongest skyscraper is only as strong as its foundation. The same thing is true of martial arts practitioners. You're in serious trouble if you're unable to maintain a balanced position or if your foundation is unable to withstand the reaction force of your own techniques. Back in the "old days" the development of strong stances was of paramount importance. Students were often made to practice various foothold exercises for several years to ensure that they developed a stable base from which they could issue power. . . . All stances are intended to do one of two things:

To serve as a stable platform from which you can move quickly, and

To serve as a stable platform from which you can launch techniques.²⁷

²⁴ Dobson, *It's a Lot Like Dancing*, 13.

²⁵ "The weight of your body mustn't sit on your heels or on the balls of your feet, lest you lose your balance when the reaction force of your blow zips back through your body and down to your driving foot. Your weight has to be settled into the centers of the soles of your feet." Phillip Starr, *Martial Mechanics: Maximum Results with Minimum Effort in the Practice of the Martial Arts* (Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2008), 132.

²⁶ "[The stance] mustn't be so wide that mobility is lost nor should it be so narrow that it is unstable." Starr, *Martial Mechanics*, 123.

²⁷ Starr, *Martial Mechanics*, 47.

Balance and stability are crucial in any form of fighting throughout history. Alongside stance is the importance of footwork in winning a fight.

To be able to do that you have to master stance and footwork, twin subjects that are often eschewed by beginning students. . . . So, if you want to be able to effectively apply your techniques in actual combat, you must first learn how to stand and move. . . . In a basic sense, footwork is what happens *between* stances. . . . However, simply practicing the individual stepping techniques is not enough. You must be able to move the entire body as an integrated unit, with speed and fluidity while maintaining perfect balance.²⁸

It is this practice and perfection of footwork between fighting stances that is the key to competing in fights.

In combat, transitions in movement must be made smoothly and quickly. You've got to get your body to work with you instead of against you. This can be accomplished if you begin your movements from a stable but highly mobile and "loaded" fighting stance.²⁹

Martial Arts as Dance

As the term suggests, most martial arts originated with military movements practiced for use on the battlefield or for self-defense in one-on-one, often ritual, duels or combat. Yet, many martial arts developed into dances. Many works emphasize the similarity of martial arts movements to dance.³⁰ Arguably the most famous martial arts dance is capoeira. Capoeira is a sport, a dance, and a martial art rolled into one. It developed out of techniques for self-defense and combat and, accompanied by music, developed into a dance as well as a sport. It is often seen more as a dance

²⁸ Starr, *Martial Mechanics*, 55–56, emphasis original.

²⁹ Starr, *Martial Mechanics*, 121.

³⁰ Dobson, *It's a Lot Like Dancing*.

form than a martial art, yet its origins and the skills learned are decidedly military. After practitioners of the art became soldiers in Brazil's war with Paraguay, Brazilian authorities saw the military potential in capoeira rather than as a disruptor of social order.³¹ There are numerous historical examples of practitioners of capoeira winning street fights and even killing opponents.³² Fighting techniques accompanied by music led to a dance, and learning the movements of that dance taught people how to fight. Thus, it is not a huge jump to see how Pyrrhic dancing and other martial dances originally taught practitioners how to fight better through perfecting certain movements.

Dancing was, and still is, the easiest and perhaps most entertaining way to practice balance. Many studies have demonstrated that dancing improves balance, as does gymnastics.³³ Football programs at U.S. universities have employed aspects of dance training for decades, specifically to improve agility and balance, especially among the larger athletes such as linemen.³⁴ Courtiers in the Middle Ages practiced their dance moves not

³¹ Maya Talmon-Chvaicer, *The Hidden History of Capoeira: A Collision of Cultures in the Brazilian Battle Dance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 62.

³² See Nestor Capoeira, *Capoeira: Roots of the Dance-Fight-Game* (Berkeley, CA: Blue Snake Books, 2002), esp. 9–10.

³³ See esp. J. P. Ambegaonkar et al., "Balance Comparisons between Female Dancers and Active Nondancers," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 84, no. 1 (2013): 24–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2013.762287>; Justyna Michalska et al., "Effect of Expertise in Ballet Dance on Static and Functional Balance," *Gait & Posture* 64 (2018): 68–74, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaitpost.2018.05.034>; and Marie Fabre, Jean Blouin, and Laurence Mouchnino, "Enhancing the Internal Representation of the Body Through Sensorimotor Training in Sports and Dance Improves Balance Control," *Research & Investigations in Sports Medicine* 6, no. 1 (2020): 474–76, <http://dx.doi.org/10.31031/rism.2020.06.000629>. See also P. G. Gerbino, E. D. Griffin, and D. Zura-kowski, "Comparison of Standing Balance between Female Collegiate Dancers and Soccer Players," *Gait and Posture* 26 (2007): 501–7, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gaitpost.2006.11.205>; Jennifer M. Schmit, D. I. Regis, and M. A. Riley, "Dynamic Patterns of Postural Sway in Ballet Dancers and Track Athletes," *Experimental Brain Research* 163 (2005): 370–78, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00221-004-2185-6>; R. W. Simmons, "Sensory Organization Determinants of Postural Stability in Trained Ballet Dancers," *International Journal of Neuroscience* 115 (2005): 87–97, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207450490512678>; T. Aydin et al., "Effects of Extensive Training on Female Teenage Gymnasts' Active and Passive Anklejoint Position Sense," *Journal of Sport Rehabilitation* 11 (2002): 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsr.11.1.1>; and E. Bressel et al., "Comparison of Static and Dynamic Balance in Female Collegiate Soccer, Basketball, and Gymnastics Athletes," *Journal of Athletic Training* 42, no. 1 (2007): 42–46.

³⁴ "We employ an aerobic dance specialist who . . . designs a 45 minute workout designed to improve aerobic capacity as well as coordination and agility. This has also proved especially effective with our linemen in increasing their body control and balance." Gary Weil, "Football: University of Notre Dame Off-season Strength and Conditioning for Offensive Linemen," *National Strength and Conditioning Association Journal* 7, no. 2 (1985): 28–30.

just to impress ladies but to be able to keep their balance in the melee of battle. The English pastime of Morris dancing developed from practicing forms for surviving medieval hand-to-hand combat.

This metamorphosis has several important aspects from the point of view of the developmental history of the dance. What is happening here is that the basic forms of medieval combat have gradually become surrounded by dramatic trappings until the aesthetic forms have completely usurped the martial.³⁵

Some type of military dance or martial forms set to music exists in cultures from all around the world.³⁶ In martial arts from boxing and mixed martial arts (MMA) to judo and tai chi, footwork and balance are paramount and dancing can help develop those skills.³⁷ Dancing helped soldiers throughout history learn to better stay on their feet and thus increase their chances of survival in combat. William H. McNeill argued for the importance and close connection of military drill and dancing as well as the benefits the rhythmic movement to music provided to soldiers practicing for battle.³⁸ Dancers have to perfect timed movements to music and practicing elab-

³⁵ John Forrest, *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458–1750* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 90.

³⁶ There are too many examples from cultures all over the world to list further reading here, but some of the most famous are the war dances of the Plains Indians in North America, the Scottish Highland sword dance, and Kabuki dance in Japan. An inexhaustive list of war dances throughout the world: Aduk-Aduk (Brunei); Ardah (Arabian Peninsula, Kuwait); Ayyalah (Arabian Peninsula); Baris (Bali, Indonesia); Bende War Dance (Nigeria); Buza (Russia); Blood walk (Bloods of United States); Cakalele (Maluku, Indonesia); Capoeira, as well as some similar Afro-Caribbean arts; Cibi (Fiji); Crip Walk (Crips of United States); dirk dance and sword dances (Scotland); European sword dances or weapon dances of various kinds; Haka (Māori people of New Zealand); Hoko (Rapa Nui/Easter Island); Hopak (Ukraine); Hula and Kapu Kuialua (Native Hawaiians); Indlamu (Zulu people); Juego de maní (Cuba); Kabasaran (Minahasan people, North Sulawesi, Indonesia); Kailao (Wallis, adopted by Tonga); Khattak (Afghanistan and Pakistan); Khorumi (ხორუმი) (Georgia); Ohafia War Dance (Eastern Nigeria); Panther Dance (Burmese Bando with swords [dha]); Pentozali (Crete); Pyrrhichios (Greece); Razfah (Oman and the United Arab Emirates); Reggada (Morocco); Sagayan (Philippines); Siva Tau (Samoa); Tahtib (Egypt); Takalo (Niue); Yarkhushta (Յարխուշտա) (Armenia); and Yowlah (Oman and the United Arab Emirates).

³⁷ To the author's knowledge, there are no detailed books (although there are many internet articles) focused solely on the benefit of dancing to boxing and MMA, but biographies of famous fighters like Sugar Ray Leonard and Muhammad Ali emphasize their reliance on dancing before boxing. See, for example, "Why Dancing May Be the Missing Ingredient of Your Fight Game," *Evolve Vacation* (blog), accessed 21 July 2025.

³⁸ William H. McNeill, *Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

orate steps reliant on great balance to stay “light on their feet.”³⁹ Many dance injuries result from an error in balance.⁴⁰ Dance is reliant on having good balance and improving it through practice.

This fluidity of movement between martial arts forms or stances is also what blurs the line between practicing fighting techniques and dancing, according to Dobson.

It’s a lot like dancing. The more time and energy you spend on learning the steps, the less you’ll enjoy the dance. At the same time, if you don’t know the steps and you’re all enjoyment, you’re not very artistic. Every teacher teaches us in a different way. It seems to me that at the beginning there’s a preoccupation with learning the steps, and I think that’s good. But later, it’s important to know that the music is critical, too. Just feel the music and get into the feeling of the flow without worrying about the disparate parts. Participate in the flow. Eventually you have to cut loose of the techniques and let yourself go. To do that is scary. Remember that it’s a martial art. Too often the word “martial” receives too much emphasis and the word “art” receives too little.⁴¹

When learning martial arts, knowledge and practice of the steps leads to the flow of the movements, and this can look aesthetically pleasing and so become an art form. Dobson wrote, “You learn the craft, then you learn to throw away the craft and participate in the art.”⁴² This emphasis on flowing from one martial form to the other is why some martial arts are viewed as more artistic than martial, such as aikido or capoeira, while others are

³⁹ F. Clarke et al., “Balance in Theatrical Dance Performance: A Systematic Review,” *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 33, no. 4 (2018): 275–85, <https://doi.org/10.21091/mppa.2018.4041>.

⁴⁰ Keryl Motta-Valencia, “Dance-Related Injury,” *Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Clinics* 17, no. 3 (August 2006): 697–723, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmr.2006.06.001>.

⁴¹ Dobson, *It’s a Lot Like Dancing*, 87.

⁴² Dobson, *It’s a Lot Like Dancing*, 88.

seen as more martial than art, such as Tae Kwon do or kung fu. Yet, all martial arts teach basic forms intended to improve ability at fighting, and all of them emphasize balance and footwork as the most crucial aspects.

Judo especially focuses on maintaining control of balance in a variable and often changing environment while forcing the opponent to lose theirs.⁴³ Dancing is practiced in front of a mirror and so balance is related to visual spatial awareness.⁴⁴ One study following hypotheses postulated in others demonstrated that judo produced better spatial awareness and balance in changing environments than dancers and a group of control adults, neither dancers nor judoka:

In this study, comparing the balance control of highly skilled judoists, dancers and controls, we show that only judoists were able to maintain a better balance control than controls in all circumstances, i.e., with or without sensory deprivation (eyes closure) or external perturbation (movement of the support).⁴⁵

Ballet dancers fared worse, particularly in balancing with their eyes closed:

With eyes closed, dancers display the worst balance control. This could be due to the fact that training in Classical Ballet develops specific modalities of balance, which

⁴³ "In Judo, competitors have to efficiently control their dynamic posture because the techniques of this martial art are mainly based on constant displacements aiming at disturbing the balance of the opponent in order to make him fall. Then, during fights (i.e. randori), each judoist learns to use unstable dynamic situations to turn them to his advantage, using the stimulation of muscular, articular and cutaneous mechanoreceptors to adapt to the constant modifications of posture, support, ground and partner contact." Perrin et al., "Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control," 187. See also, Jarosław Maśliński et al., "Body Balance in Judokas," *Journal of Combat Sports and Martial Arts* 7 (2016): 43–49, <https://doi.org/10.5604/20815735.1222834>.

⁴⁴ "Conversely, the morphocinematic actions of Classical Ballet dancing, involving static balance as well as complex chained dynamic choreographic figures, suggest that this art is a physical activity where balance control is essential, and mostly relies on visual afferences. Classical Ballet dancers work in a stable environment, either in front of a mirror or on stage, with unwavering visual spatial referential." Perrin et al., "Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control," 187.

⁴⁵ Perrin et al., "Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control," 191. See also T. Paillard et al., "Are There Differences in Postural Regulation According to the Level of Competition in Judoists?," *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 36, no. 4 (August 2002): 304–5, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsm.36.4.304>.

are not transferable to posture control in our test situations.⁴⁶

This, along with similar studies, demonstrates the significant improvements in balance offered by practicing sports, dancing, or martial arts.⁴⁷ The above study also found that “learning a sport and training it over a long period of time appear to improve the efficiency of both static and dynamic postural control in daily life activities.”⁴⁸ In sports that are both martial arts and dancing, such as aikido, capoeira and Pyrrhic dancing, the balance will be a core part of success.

Balance in Human Development

Balance is crucial to success in hand-to-hand combat, wrestling, martial arts training, or in dancing, but it is also crucial to human development. Scientific studies have shown repeatedly how important balance is in children and young adults as well as people with learning difficulties or to mitigate problems brought on by age-related illnesses. Improving balance through dance or movement therapy is also one of the more recent avenues for medical assistance in the elderly.⁴⁹ Specific martial arts that em-

⁴⁶ Perrin et al., “Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control,” 191.

⁴⁷ “In conclusion, our results confirm that high-level sportsmen display improved balance control in relation with the requirements of each discipline. Because the visual afference is a major input used by Ballet dancers to achieve a better balance regulation, they are likely to fare less well than controls in daily life situations where this afferent is missing. Conversely, Judo training leads to the best performances in terms of maintaining a stable stance in all circumstances as the result of privileging somatosensory afferences as an essential component of balance control, abilities likely to have a positive bearing in current activities.” Perrin et al., “Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control,” 193.

⁴⁸ Perrin et al., “Judo, Better than Dance, Develops Sensorimotor Adaptabilities Involved in Balance Control,” 187.

⁴⁹ See for example, P. W. Overstall, “The Use of Balance Training in Elderly People with Falls,” *Reviews in Clinical Gerontology* 13, no. 2 (2003): 153–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959259803013273>; Fuzhong Li, “Transforming Traditional Tai Ji Quan Techniques into Integrative Movement Therapy—*Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance*,” *Journal of Sport and Health Science* 3, no. 1 (March 2014): 9–15, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2013.11.002>; Madeleine E. Hackney and Gammon M. Earhart, “Effects of Dance on Movement Control in Parkinson’s Disease: A Comparison of Argentine Tango and American Ballroom,” *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine* 41, no. 6 (2009): 475–81, <https://doi.org/10.2340/16501977-0362>; and Allison F. Winters, “Emotion, Embodiment, and Mirror Neurons in Dance/Movement Therapy: A Connection Across Disciplines,” *American Journal of Dance Therapy* 30 (2008): 84–105, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10465-008-9054-y>.

phasize balance also have medical therapeutic uses, especially among older people, whether in slow movements such as tai chi, or more active martial arts such as taekwondo.⁵⁰

A recent study of four modern Greek dances that developed out of Pyrrhic dancing demonstrates that these improve balance, especially among children.⁵¹ The authors argue that traditional cultural dances are of greater benefit to balance than creative dances because “every step and position in the dance requires a well-developed balance control, e.g. many steps are performed on the balls of the feet.”⁵² Studies of other traditional cultural dances around the world also emphasize the balance benefits to both children and older adults.⁵³

Two of the Greek dances in the above study are military in origin and one is even described as a Pyrrhic or war dance in the ancient Greek

⁵⁰ Somporn Sungkarat et al., “Effects of Tai Chi on Cognition and Fall Risk in Older Adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment: A Randomized Controlled Trial,” *Journal of the American Geriatric Society* 65 (2017): 721–27, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.14594>. “Tai Chi Chuan (Tai Chi) may be particularly beneficial to older adults with MCI because it incorporates physical and mental activity. It involves whole-body coordination of continuous, rhythmic movements with dynamic weight shifting and single limb support, as well as several cognitive activities involving movement recall, switching, and spatial orientation that require attention and executive control.” See also, Siu-Ming Fong and Gabriel Y. Ng, “The Effects on Sensorimotor Performance and Balance with Tai Chi Training,” *Archives of Physical and Medical Rehabilitation* 87 (2006): 82–87, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2005.09.017>; William W. N. Tsang and Christina W. Y. Hui-Chan, “Effects of Tai Chi on Joint Proprioception and Stability Limits in Elderly Subjects,” *Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise* 35, no. 12 (2003): 1962–71, <https://doi.org/10.1249/01.mss.0000099110.17311.a2>; William W. N. Tsang and Christina W. Y. Hui-Chan, “Effect of 4- and 8-wk Intensive Tai Chi Training on Balance Control in the Elderly,” *Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise* 26, no. 4 (2004): 648–57, <https://doi.org/10.1249/01.mss.0000121941.57669.bf>; M. A. Brudnak, D. Dundero, and F. M. Van Hecke, “Are the ‘Hard’ Martial Arts, Such as the Korean Martial Art, Taekwon-Do, of Benefit to Senior Citizens?,” *Medical Hypotheses* 59, no. 4 (2002): 485–91, [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0306-9877\(02\)00203-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0306-9877(02)00203-7); and Ronita L. Cromwell et al., “Taekwondo: An Effective Exercise for Improving Balance and Walking Ability in Older Adults,” *Journals of Gerontology, Series A*, 62, no. 6 (2007): 641–46, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerona/62.6.641>.

⁵¹ Loukia Kapodistria and Dimitris Chatzopoulos, “A Greek Traditional Dance Program for Improving Balance of Young Children,” *Research in Dance Education* 23, no. 3 (2021): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2021.1980525>. The four dances are: “‘Sousta’ (‘Spring, coil’), Syrtaki (known from the movie ‘Zorba the Greek’), ‘ta koukia’ (‘broad beans’) and the ‘dance of the sponge divers’.” Kapodistria and Chatzopoulos, 4.

⁵² Kapodistria and Chatzopoulos, “A Greek Traditional Dance Program for Improving Balance of Young Children,” 3.

⁵³ Giorgios Sofianidis et al., “Effect of a 10-Week Traditional Dance Program on Static and Dynamic Balance Control in Elderly Adults,” *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity* 17, no. 2 (2009): 167–80, <https://doi.org/10.1123/japa.17.2.167>; Elif Top, Ayse Kibris, and Metehan Kargi, “Effects of Turkey’s Folk Dance on the Manual and Body Coordination among Children of 6–7 Years of Age,” *Research in Dance Education* 21, no. 1 (2020): 34–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2019.1708888>; and Penpak Noopud et al., “Effects of Thai Traditional Dance on Balance Performance in Daily Life among Older Women,” *Aging Clinical and Experimental Research* 31, no. 7 (2019): 961–67, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40520-018-1040-8>.

sources. The syrtaki dance is the closest modern dance associated with Pyrrhic dancing. The Greek authors of the study describe it as: “Syrtaki. Dance steps and positions reenact the tactical battle movements of Great Alexander’s army.”⁵⁴ This dance, in which the steps are still associated with ancient Greek military origins, is popular throughout Greece and demonstrates the balance needed to perfect the fast movements and steps required while holding the shoulders of the people either side of you in the dance (or perhaps originally the battle) line. The Cretan sousta dance in this study is also based on an ancient military Greek dance described by the Greek author Callimachus (*Hymn to Zeus* 52) as people beating their shields outside a cave to mask the cries of the baby Zeus and protect him from his vengeful father Cronos. Callimachus (*Hymn to Artemis* 240) also describes a war dance of Amazons around the image of the goddess Artemis in Ephesus. Both times he uses the term *prulis*. Scholiasts to Aristotle have him connect the *prulis* as a Cypriot war dance in full armor performed at funerals in a practice begun by Achilles.⁵⁵ Daniel Kölligan argues that the origin of the Cretan term for war dance, *prulis*, comes from the linguistic root of jumping or being light-footed.⁵⁶ The associated term *pruleis* is connected with hoplites, especially the *promachoi*—the hoplites who fought in the front ranks in the positions of honor for those of the highest fighting abilities. If this is indeed the case, then these war dances practiced the skills needed by the best hoplites, perhaps in an age before the phalanx, when fighters “jumped around” and had to be light on their feet.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Kapodistria and Chatzopoulos, “A Greek Traditional Dance Program for Improving Balance of Young Children,” 4. Also see Stelios Rigas, “Ζορμπάς, Συρτάκι από το εφηβικό χορευτικό της Αρναίας” [Zorba, Sirtaki from the Arnaia Teenage Dance Group], 28 September 2019, YouTube video, 4:13.

⁵⁵ Scholiast T on *Iliad* Book 23 line 130 (= Aristotle *fragment* 519.9) and in a scholion to Pindar *Pythian* 2.127.

⁵⁶ Daniel Kölligan, “A Note on Greek *πρυλές* ‘Foot-soldiers’ and *πρύλις* ‘Pyrrhic,’” *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana* 18, no. 2 (2022): 163–77, <http://dx.doi.org/10.30842/alp23065737182163177>.

⁵⁷ On this early style of warfare, see especially Van Wees, *Greek Warfare*.

Pyrrhic Dancing as a Martial Art Improving Balance

The crucial importance of Pyrrhic dancing in Greek warfare was the same as in modern martial arts training or medieval fight handbooks: maintaining balance in all situations and learning how to practice footwork and movements between specific military stances or forms to better stay on your feet while fighting hand-to-hand in battle. The best practitioners of the arts taught in the Pyrrhic dances then had better martial skills in individual combat, just as modern martial arts athletes today.

No less an authority than Socrates (Plato, *Laos* Book 8 628F) described the best dancers as being the best in battle. As late as the second century CE, Dio Chrysostom (*Speeches* 2.60–61) suggests to the Roman Emperor Trajan that Pyrrhic dancing was great military exercise. Practicing these martial forms with movements likely accompanied by music then led to the development of actual dancing, just as with military dances or modern martial arts.

Even today music helps with physical exercise—that is why people create their playlists when they go to the gym to match the kind of exercises they will perform. Very rarely does smooth jazz inspire the rigors of CrossFit or weightlifting. Janet O'Shea, in her book, argues that studying martial arts without the competitive aspect of engaging in actual competition fights is socially important in emphasizing the importance of play, just like dance classes, doing something for the fun of it rather than for any specific end goal.⁵⁸ It is in this way that Pyrrhic dancing could have been practiced by women and children as forms of pleasurable entertainment and exercise, just as martial arts like tai chi and capoeira are in modern society.

The Greeks enjoyed a wide variety of dances, and a number would be considered war dances.⁵⁹ The Pyrrhic dance specifically is associated with real Greek warfare because the participants wore a helmet and carried a

⁵⁸ Janet O'Shea, *Risk, Failure, Play: What Dance Reveals about Martial Arts Training* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190871536.001.0001>.

⁵⁹ For a list of such dances, see Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists* 6.628c–3ie; and Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4.95–104.

shield and spear just as hoplites did. Plato describes Pyrrhic dancing in detail:

Motion of the whole body, other than wrestling, has for its main division what may be rightly termed dancing; and we ought to consider it as consisting of two kinds—the one representing the solemn movement of beautiful bodies, the other the ignoble movement of ugly bodies; and of these again there are two subdivisions. Of the noble kind there is, on the one hand, the motion of fighting, and that of fair bodies and brave souls engaged in violent effort; and, on the other hand, there is the motion of a temperate soul living in a state of prosperity and moderate pleasures; and this latter kind of dancing one will call, in accordance with its nature, “pacific.” The warlike division, being distinct from the pacific, one may rightly term “pyrrhiche”; it represents modes of eluding all kinds of blows and shots by swervings and duckings and side-leaps upward or crouching; and also the opposite kinds of motion, which lead to active postures of offence, when it strives to represent the movements involved in shooting with bows or darts, and blows of every description (*Laos* 814e–815a).

Thus, according to Plato, there were two types of Pyrrhic dances in Greece associated with war, and both dances taught movements specifically associated with fighting techniques in battle.⁶⁰ Greek men improved their fortunes in battle by learning, practicing, and excelling at both forms of Pyrrhic dance. But what they improved most by doing so was their balance.

⁶⁰ See also Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 51. “Plato informs us that there were two basic types of dance: one which imitated defensive fighting (evasive manoeuvres such as dodging, jumping, ducking, retreating, parrying), and one which emulated attacking (blows, feints, counterthrusts etc.).” Lysias, *Defence*, XXI.1–4, describes competitions in Pyrrhic dances.

Will Shüler argued that Greek men serving in the chorus of Greek tragedies and dancing to music in choreographed routines also served as a preparation for war.⁶¹ The routines mimicked army drill movements, even sharing the same names.⁶² Schuler rightly points to the important connections with fighting in the phalanx of the movement, music, and harmony in the choral dance. The sounds of the flute (*aulos*), and the physical practice of the movements alongside others in rehearsed routines helped the young men in the army and on stage. The Hellenistic tactical writers give “choral” as one of the names of the three countermarches of the later sarissa phalanx (Aelian, *Tactica* 27.1, 4; and Arrian, *Tactica* 23.1). Apuleius (*Metamorphoses* 10.29), describes a Pyrrhic dance where the participants took up military formations such as wedges, a hollow square, and circles and dividing into separate troops. This suggests some Pyrrhic dances choreographed military movements. We cannot know for sure if the name of the march originated in the choral dancing or vice versa, but we should at the very least acknowledge a clear connection in Greece between choral dancing and military maneuvers.⁶³

Xenophon records a dance he witnessed in Thrace where the audience actually thought one of the participants was dead, such was the realism of the dance (*Anabasis* 6.1.12). This dance must have mimicked actual combat techniques. Yet Schwartz, conveniently for his argument against the usefulness of Pyrrhic dancing as martial training, confines this episode to a footnote and does not discuss it.⁶⁴ Athenaeus complains that in his day, fewer children from the age of five practice the Pyrrhic dances compared with those in the Classical Greek period (*Deipnosophists* xiv 631a). However, since women and children also were taught the dance

⁶¹ Will Shüler, “The Greek Tragic Chorus and Its Training for War: Movement, Music and Harmony in Theatrical and Military Performance,” in *War and Theatrical Innovation: Palgrave Studies in Theatre and Performance History*, ed. Victor Emeljanow (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 3–21.

⁶² Shüler, “The Greek Tragic Chorus and Its Training for War,” 11. This echoes McNeill, cited above, that military drill and dancing go together well.

⁶³ Compare with Wheeler, “*Hoplomachia* and the Greek Dances in Arms,” 233.

⁶⁴ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 51n163.

steps, Schwartz argues that the dance “was used not so much as a direct exercise for fighting in the phalanx: rather, it was thought of as a fitness exercise or a beautiful dance, including (although not exclusively) moves vaguely mimicking fighting of a rather generic kind.”⁶⁵ Schwartz has failed to prove that the Pyrrhic dance did not teach actual martial techniques. Instead, he has argued that this form of dance was akin to modern uses of martial arts, such as capoeira or karate, as fitness exercises or for bettering balance. However, in modern times such martial arts have become recreational simply because most people, fortunately, do not need to practice actual fighting techniques so they can put them to use in battle.

In the world of Ancient Greece, every adult male had to serve in the army during their prime years, so they would have made use in battle of any fighting techniques learned through these dances or sports such as wrestling. In cultures where every man had to fight, men were encouraged to practice exercises or dances associated with the techniques of battle. This need is what made fight dances so common and provided fight instructors with the demand for their services. If the dance was irrelevant, why was it so common?

The specific movements practiced in the Pyrrhic dance allowed Greek men fighting in the phalanx as hoplites to feel more assured in their balance in a situation where staying on their feet could be the difference between life and death. The hoplite was able to practice the movements associated with fighting with spear and shield. They could practice offensive moves such as thrusting their spear in various directions or cutting and stabbing with their swords, or as Plato describes, other “blows of every description.” They also simultaneously learned defensive techniques for avoiding the enemy’s attacks and “eluding all kinds of blows and shots by swervings and duckings and side-leaps upward or crouching” according to Plato (*Laws* 814e–815a).

⁶⁵ Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 51. See also Lonsdale, *Dance and Ritual Play in Greek Religion*, 148, for women in Pyrrhic dances.

Wheeler examines the usefulness of the Pyrrhic dance for martial training and states, “We cannot say that Pyrrhic dancing totally prepared the individual to fight in the phalanx,” but Rawlings argues that there was practical use in learning the steps and routines: “Aspects of the *pyrrikhē* were useful in the phalanx, particularly the elements that promoted marching in step and uniform movement. It might be suggested that those who practiced dancing in arms were likely to move more gracefully in formation and were less likely to jostle others, or be ill at ease in equipment.”⁶⁶ However, none connect the importance of balance.

Unfortunately, we have little evidence for the specifics of hoplite training besides what Plato described in Pyrrhic dancing.⁶⁷ Wheeler argues that the traveling hoplite instructors known as *hoplomachoi* did not teach Pyrrhic dancing.⁶⁸ Yet, even if Plato is incorrect in his description of Pyrrhic dancing teaching movements that were specifically relevant to fighting in a phalanx, Greek men definitely practiced and improved their balance in these dances. This is the one aspect that connects all forms of martial arts, wrestling, fighting, and all forms of dancing. Good balance is crucial and the benefits of practicing it are innumerable.

Contrary to Wheeler, this author believes that the Greek traveling hoplite teachers, the *hoplomachoi*, taught the skills (in terms of stances and movements) of hoplite fighting, *hoplomachia*, as a Greek version of what we today think of as martial arts.⁶⁹ That is a set of synchronized movements derived from the techniques used in actual combat where the practice of these forms will lead to a better ability in actual combat. This is the basis of all martial arts throughout history and throughout the world. Our sources state clearly that these hoplite teachers staged public displays

⁶⁶ Wheeler, “*Hoplomachia* and the Greek Dances in Arms,” 232; and Louis Rawlings, “Alternative Agonies: Hoplite Martial and Combat Experiences beyond the Phalanx,” in *War and Violence in Ancient Greece*, ed. Hans van Wees (London: Duckworth, 2010), 248. See also Reed, *More than Just a Game*, 26.

⁶⁷ We know that Greeks employed traveling teachers of hoplite drill, called *hoplomachoi*, but exactly what they taught and how is still a mystery. Plato’s *Laches* discusses the usefulness of what these teachers covered (179d–183c). See Wheeler, “*Hoplomachia* and the Greek Dances in Arms.”

⁶⁸ Wheeler, “*Hoplomachia* and the Greek Dances in Arms,” 225–29.

⁶⁹ Wheeler, “*Hoplomachia* and the Greek Dances in Arms,” esp. p. 223.

of their techniques to attract customers and that there were Pyrrhic dance competitions.⁷⁰ Again, this is the same as modern martial arts demonstrations or competitions. *Hoplomachia*, the lessons taught by *hoplomachoi*, were like modern martial arts taught by a sensei in a dojo. The Pyrrhic dances then developed as more public and artistic expressions of the same movements, such as modern choreographed fight sequences or public martial arts demonstrations. *Hoplomachia*, music, dance, and balance were all crucial to the training of Greek men for battle in the hoplite phalanx.

Conclusion

In sum, then, balance is crucial in every kind of battle and in training for it. Soldiers must be able to fight in formation in a hand-to-hand melee on all types of terrain. Dancing was the best way to teach balance to men in a way that was fun and easy. In almost every culture around the world, war dances became part of the male experience. For the Greeks, in particular, it seems that using Pyrrhic dancing to practice and perfect maintaining balance was the most important factor for Greek soldiers even above weapons training to the extent that we have no evidence that there was weapons training at all. Moreover, the traveling *hoplomachoi* may have acted like martial arts sensei in teaching students the forms to learn to improve combat skills and encouraging the students to perfect these skills through participation in both exercises and competitions, just as in modern martial arts. In our reconstruction of ancient Greek history, it is important that we maintain a balanced perspective and seek comparisons between cultures, especially where specific evidence is more limited.

Most cultures employed war dances to help soldiers keep their balance in battle. Martial arts skills also developed independently in most cultures as a way to practice specific techniques or stances, often called *forms*, that soldiers used in combat. Many cultures used music to accompany martial arts practice and encouraged a natural flow between forms

⁷⁰ Plato, *Laws*, 833e; and Plato, *Laches*, 181e–82b. On competitions, see Lysias, *Defence* XXI.1–4.

to perfect footwork and transitions. In time, these flowing movements developed into distinct dances and came to be separated from their martial origins as purely artistic performances. Greece followed this cultural pattern and developed Pyrrhic dances. Rather than continually pursue the theme of Greek exceptionalism, in this case we should accept that Greek society developed the same practices as most cultures around the world. As street fighting in Brazil developed into the dance of capoeira, or the Samurai techniques in Japan developed into aikido, so the hoplite movements in Greece developed into Pyrrhic dancing and now into syrtaki. The one thing that hand-to-hand combat, fighting in the shove of a phalanx, wrestling, boxing, martial arts, dancing, gymnastics, and sport all have in common is that they all require—and their practice improves—balance. The Pyrrhic dance allowed Greek soldiers to perfect their balance and better be able to stay on their feet in the shoving of the phalanx: dance improved balance in the phalanx.

Get to the Point

What Questions Should We Ask about a Spear?

by Sean Manning, PhD

Introduction

Spears are everywhere in ancient texts, art, and sites. In the Iron Age from Ireland to Iran, the spear was the main weapon used when combat was too close to use a bow or sling. Han dynasty soldiers used the *ji* (halberd) and *sha* (sword-staff) alongside the long lance. Late medieval European infantry brandished long axes, halberds, bills, and partisans as well as spears. But in the Iron Age from Ireland to Iran, almost all long staff weapons are simple spears without hooks, crossguards, or other complications. Modern researchers are not as curious about spears as they are about other ancient tools.

One reason for this is the continuing divide between archaeologists and historians in some parts of ancient world studies. The great hoplite debate from 1989 to 2013 was certainly dominated by researchers based in the United States and United Kingdom, but it was also dominated by historians and classicists. It is no surprise that the debate centered texts and art and marginalized artifacts.¹

¹ The publication of Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), which synthesized research before 1914 in Europe with research after 1945 in California, set off a methodological debate: was this “orthodox” school of thought correct to see Greek warfare as basically uniform from 700 to 400 BCE throughout the Aegean Greek world, and should theories be based on Greek generalizations about how wars had been fought in the good old days or the messy details of specific conflicts? The subsequent debate can be followed in Peter Krentz, “Fighting by the Rules: The Invention

But even archaeologists are not as enthusiastic about spears as they are about other objects from the ancient world. German archaeologist Thomas Fischer recently summarized knowledge about spears in the Roman empire as follows:

Among the Roman armament under the Republic and the Empire, as well as the weaponry of all opponents, there was a wealth of different specialized shafted weapons (spears and lances). . . . As a rule, only the iron components of these weapons—the spearheads and butts—are found. . . . These weapon parts can very often not be attributed to either the Romans or their Celtic and Germanic opponents, if the armament cannot be assigned to a clear find context. . . . An overarching study on Roman polearms is still awaited, and one must for now be content with the more general remarks of Bishop and Coulston.²

of the Hoplite Agon,” *Hesperia* 71, no. 1 (2002): 23–39, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2972/hesp.2002.71.1.23>; Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2004); and Donald Kagan and Gregory F. Viggiano, eds., *Men of Bronze: Hoplite Warfare in Ancient Greece* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013). One defender of *The Western Way of War* was reduced to appeals to authority (Kagan and Viggiano, *Men of Bronze*, 269) and another had to rely on studies of skeletons published in 1944 and 1945 and ignored later studies by the same authors to argue that ancient Greek men were very small (Kagan and Viggiano, *Men of Bronze*, 166–68, compare to Geoffrey Kron, “Anthropometry, Physical Anthropology, and the Reconstruction of Ancient Health, Nutrition, and Living Standards,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 54, no. 1 [2005]: 68–83). Since 2013, the most interesting discussions have not been between the “heretics” and the former orthodoxy (e.g., Adam Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite: Arms, Armour and Phalanx Fighting in Archaic and Classical Greece* [Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009]; Roel Konijnendijk, *Classical Greek Tactics: A Cultural History*. Mnemosyne, Supplements History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity, Band 409 [Leiden: Brill, 2018]) but between the victorious “heretics” of the Krentz/van Wees school and younger scholars with backgrounds outside of U.S. and UK classical philology (e.g., the archaeologist’s perspective in Josho Brouwers, *Henchmen of Ares: Warriors and Warfare in Early Greece* [Rotterdam: Karwansaray Publishers, 2013], the considerations of Sicily and Italy in Joshua R. Hall, “The Western Greeks and the ‘Greek Warfare’ Narrative,” in *Brill’s Companion to Greek Land Warfare Beyond the Phalanx*, ed. Roel Konijnendijk, Cezary Kuciewicz, and Matthew Lloyd [Leiden: Brill, 2021], 266–92, or the experiments at the international reenactment event at Plataea in 2022). This broad methodological debate should not be confused with the older and undecided debate about the mechanics of hoplite battle. Scholars with very different understandings of combat mechanics can agree about most aspects of early Greece, but different ways of using sources lead to different understandings of early Greece in general.

² Thomas Fischer, *Army of the Roman Emperors: Archaeology and History* (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 2019), 167–68.

British Roman Army scholars M. C. Bishop and J. C. N. Coulston were just as concise in their handbook of Roman military equipment:

The spear is ubiquitous in any period and notoriously difficult to classify. Some factors, such as the length of shaft, are not normally preserved in the archaeological record, so hypotheses tend to be dependent upon analysis of the head form and size, a process that is dubious to say the least. Depictional evidence is also unreliable in this field. . . . In the end, one has to accept that there is no one satisfactory way of categorizing Roman spearheads.³

Anthony Snodgrass's classic study *Early Greek Armour and Weapons* devotes 25 pages to the spear, but these are almost entirely about the spearhead and spearbutt with a few general remarks about the complete spears in vase paintings.⁴ Because spears are mostly wooden objects and the wooden part rarely survives, archaeologists sometimes feel unable to describe them. An archaeologist might examine hundreds of brooches or tens of thousands of pots, but only excavate a single well-preserved spear in a career. As Fischer implies, archaeologists often value artifacts to the extent to which they can be placed within a typology and attributed to a specific period of a specific archaeological culture.⁵ Spearheads are difficult to classify in this way.

Military historians are more interested in what a spear can do than in assigning it a cultural and chronological label. This chapter asks questions

³ Mike C. Bishop and Jonathan C. Coulston, *Roman Military Equipment: From the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome*, 2d ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 2006), 76.

⁴ Anthony Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1964), 115–39.

⁵ Yvonne L. Inall, "Spoiling for a Fight: Using Spear Typologies to Identify Aspects of Warrior Identity and Fighting Style in Iron Age South Italy," in *Fingerprinting the Iron Age*, ed. Cătălin Nicolae Popa and Simon Stoddart (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 2014), 242–44, discusses previous typologies of spearheads and their limits. Compare to Gianna Reginelli, *Le Mobilier en Bois du Site de La Tène* (Mémoire de license, Université de Neuchâtel, Séminaire d'archéologie préhistorique, Octobre 1998), 73: "Les formes [des fers de lances], très variées, ne constituent pas pour autant des repères chronologiques."

about the attributes of ancient spears that affected their function, drawing on evidence from the broad ancient world to answer them.

What Kind of Wood Was It Made From?

What varieties of wood were spears made from? Spear shafts are placed under great strain as they strike hard targets, parry blows, or are pulled with a falling body. Most Greek writers who describe battles mention spears breaking, especially when used from horseback.⁶ Spears in the field are exposed to heat, cold, and wet, which can cause wood to crack, break, or rot.

While the wooden parts of spears rarely survive, they often leave traces of wood inside sockets or corroded on to them. Someone with the right training who examines them under a microscope can approximately identify the genus of wood. Archaeologists in the British Isles and the Baltic are very interested in examining these traces, while archaeologists in some other countries are not.⁷ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, access to many valuable reports is limited, so most examples referenced are drawn from the United Kingdom and Ireland. Another 18 samples came from France and the Netherlands. Two spears from Greece and one from Spain are excluded because three spears from places with Mediterranean climates is not a very big sample. But knowing what wood was used to make 176 spears in Ireland, Britain, and Gaul from the Bronze Age to the early Anglo-Saxon period reveals some general trends. Sources are divided into three groups: four studies of 97 spears from Britain and Ireland in the Bronze Age and earlier (table 1), nine studies of 39 spears from Britain and Gaul from the Iron Age to the end of Roman rule (table 2), and two studies of 40 spears in Yorkshire from the pre-Roman Iron Age and early

⁶ Victor Davis Hanson, "Hoplite Technology in Phalanx Battle," in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (London: Routledge, 1993), 72, lists ancient Greek sources for infantry and cavalry breaking their spears. Ennius in Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 6.3.3 has "Semper abundantes hastas frangitque quatitque."

⁷ While it is hard to prove a negative, see for example Yvonne L. Inall, "A Typological Assessment of Iron Age Weapons in South Italy" (master's thesis, University of Sydney, March 2009), 76: "Numerous spearheads have been recovered [from southern Italy] with traces of wood preserved in the socket, but I am unaware of any analysis of the organic materials."

Table 1. Wood in spears from Britain, Ireland, and Gaul, to 400 BCE

Location / wood	UK + Ireland (Needham et al.)	UK + Ireland (Coles et al.)	UK + Ireland (Green)	Île-de-France (Mohen)	Total
Ash	17	25	15	7	64
Oak	2	4			6
Elm					0
Beech		1			1
<i>Maloideae</i>	4	2	2	1	9
<i>Prunus</i>		2	1		3
Yew		2			2
Poplar, willow		2			2
Hazel	1	2	1		4
Other	3			1	4
Unknown	2				2
Total	29	40	19	9	97

Sources: see chapter 3 appendix

Anglo-Saxon periods (table 3). For more details, see chapter 3 appendix (p. 84).

Most of the spears in table 1 date to the Bronze Age. Socketed spearheads preserve wood better than spearheads that are tied in place and making a socket requires the sophisticated metalworking skills that marked the Bronze Age. A few date earlier.

Ash

Ash (*fraxinus* sp., classical Greek μελία or βουμέλιος) is a famous wood for spears (figure 1). It is reasonably dense, strong for its weight, springy, and grows tall and straight. About 99 of the 136 spears up to 400 CE are of ash, or about 73 percent of the spears in table 1 and table 2. The Greek and Latin poets mention ash spears (e.g., *Iliad* 5.666; Tyrtæus, frag. 19.13 West; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 5.677), and Pliny the Elder says that ash is the best wood for long spears (Pliny, *Natural History* 16.83 Bostock and Riley

Table 2. Wood in spears from Britain, Ireland, and Gaul, 400 BCE to 400 CE

Location / wood	Lincoln-shire (Field et al.)	La Tène (Vouga)	La Tène (Reginelli)	Essex (Sealey)	Saône Valley (Chabal)	Roman forts (Various)	Total
Ash	5	3	17	1	2	7	35
Oak							0
Elm					1		1
Beech							0
<i>Maloideae</i>							0
<i>Prunus</i>							0
Yew							0
Poplar, willow							0
Hazel						2	2
Other							0
Unknown					1		1
Total	5	3	17	1	4	9	39

Sources: see chapter 3 appendix

= Pliny, *Natural History* 16.103 Mayhoff.)⁸ Ash spears are also mentioned in Anglo-Saxon literature (e.g. *Beowulf* ll. 328–331, *The Battle of Maldon* ll. 43, 230). Theophrastus the natural philosopher discusses the ash tree just before his famous passage on the cornel tree and the Macedonian sarissa (Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* 3.12.1–2). So it is no surprise that from most sites, ash is by far the most common wood used for spears.

Oak, elm, and beech, which are used in some spears from before the Iron Age, have similar properties to ash. They are deciduous trees with broad leaves, grow tall, and have dense, strong, flexible wood. Pliny the Elder says that elm (*sambucus* or *sabucus*) is the best wood for hunting spears (*venabula*: Pliny, *Natural History* 16.73 Bostock/Riley = 16.90 Mayhoff).

⁸There are many different ways of dividing the *Natural History* into chapters.

Figure 1. *Fraxinus excelsior*, European ash tree.



Source: Photo by Alain Bigou, 29 July 2021, care of plantnet.org, under a CC-by-SA license

Cornel and Yew

After ash, ancient historians are likely to think of cornel (*cornus mas*, classical Greek κράνεια). Cornel is a low tree with red berries (figures 2 and 3), which is why it is sometimes called *cornel cherry*, although true cherries are a different genus (*prunus*). Xenophon praised cornel-wood spears (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.4.14, *On Horsemanship* 12.12) and Theophrastus famously says that the longest sarissa is the height of a cornel tree (*Inquiry into Plants* 3.12.2). Cornel and myrtle also feature in Virgil's *Aeneid* when Aeneas wants to gather some branches to shade an altar (iii.22-29). The trees bleed when he tears off branches, and a ghost explains that this grove has grown from the shafts left in the ground when he was murdered with javelins. Obviously, this is not an auspicious place to settle!

Although many ancient texts mention spears of cornel wood, none of the 176 spears examined here are made of it. The closest thing is two very early spears of yew wood. Yew is also a low, bushy tree with hard, dense, springy wood. The Roman poet Grattius mentions hunting spears of yew as well as cornel and myrtle (*Cynegeticon* ll.129, 130). In later times, European yew was a favorite material for bows, and this might explain why the surviving yew spears date early when populations were small and pressure on forests was less.

Cornel wood was not only used for weapons in the ancient world. One nineteenth-century French authority recommends it for fighting canes:

The best sticks for practice, as well as for defense in the street, should be of cornel wood [*en bois de cornouiller*]. That wood which, in industry, is accustomed to be made into the handles of tools, into ladders, and of other objects of which firmness is the key quality, is very hard, sinewy and grainy like a bullrush, of a very great resistance and consequently unbreakable. . . . A cane of cornel wood has a double advantage over a light cane: namely, because of its weight, its small volume and its great resistance, it is an excellent instrument of defense and at the same time it

Figure 2. *Cornus mas*, cornel tree. In spring, this tree has small yellow leaves.



Source: Photo by Tela Botanica—Annick LARBOUILLAT, 9 March 2012, care of plantnet.org, under a CC-by-SA license

constitutes an ideal “exercise machine” for the development of the muscles.⁹

The lack of cornel-wood spears in the data probably reflects the different flora of the British Isles and the Aegean. Once archaeologists examine more traces of wood in spearheads from the Mediterranean, they will probably find some cornel-wood spears.

⁹ Joseph Charlemont, *L'art de la boxe française et de la canne: nouveau traité pratique et théorique* (Paris: à l'Académie de boxe, 1899), 299, chap. 120, author's translation.

Figure 3. The red berries and broad green summer leaves of *cornus mas*, the cornel tree.



Source: Photo by Tela Botanica—J LAUNAY (10 September 2015)
care of plantnet.org, under a CC-by-SA license

Poplar, Willow, and Hazel

We can compare these Irish, British, and Gallic spears (tables 1 and 2) to finds from Yorkshire in the pre-Roman Iron Age and post-Roman Migration Era (table 3). During both periods, it was common to bury people with spears, so archaeologists have many samples of wood to study. These show a remarkable difference. Whereas in our first sample 68 percent of spears are ash, in graves from Yorkshire 60 percent are of poplar (*populus* sp.), willow (*salix* sp., ancient Greek ἰρέα), and hazel (*corylus* sp.). These are all leafy trees that like water and send up many straight shoots of flexible wood (figure 4). The study of the Arras culture treated 10 spears of poplar,

Table 3. Spears from Yorkshire before and after Roman rule

Location / wood	Arras culture	West Heslerton	Total
Ash	2	4	6
Oak			0
Elm			0
Beech			0
Maloideae			0
Prunus			0
Yew			0
Poplar, willow	0–10	5	5–15
Hazel	0–10	9	9–19
Other		3	3
Unknown		7	7
Total	12	28	40

Sources: see chapter 3 appendix

willow, and hazel as a single category, thus the range of numbers shown in table 3 (see chapter 3 appendix for details).

Pliny the Elder says that hazel is a good wood for spears (Pliny, *Natural History* 16.83 Bostock and Riley = Pliny *Natural History* 16.103 Mayhoff), and 6 of the 128 spears from outside Yorkshire are made of poplar, willow, or hazel. But it seems that hazel was much more popular in Yorkshire than in other parts of Britain, Ireland, or Gaul. Did this reflect the availability of materials? Eastern Yorkshire is not known for its forests, although in the Iron Age it had extensive wetlands and perhaps “small stands of mature timber.”¹⁰ Britons in the Roman empire seem to have had more access to imported goods and materials than Britons before or after Roman rule. Or did it reflect different ideas about what made a good spear? Many archaeologists believe that in post-Roman Europe, violence was mostly small-scale and involved more throwing weapons than

¹⁰ Melanie Giles, *A Forged Glamour: Landscape, Identity, and Material Culture in the Iron Age* (Oxford, UK: Windgather Press, 2012), 55.

Figure 4. *Populus tremula*, commonly called poplar, a kind of poplar common in the United Kingdom.



Source: Photo by Kai Best, 9 July 2022, care of plantnet.org, under a CC-by-SA license

clashing shield-walls.¹¹ For a light spear without a long or thick shaft, a straight shoot of willow or hazel would probably be a good choice. Since the pattern holds across the period of Roman rule and the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, it probably does not reflect arbitrary cultural traditions such as beliefs about the mystical properties of different trees.

Comparing table 1 with tables 2 and 3 shows another change. Up to the end of the Bronze Age, 25 of 97 spears are shafted in something other than ash, hazel, poplar, or willow (excluding the 2 spears of unknown wood). From the Iron Age to the end of the Migration Period, only 4 of 79 spears are shafted in another wood (excluding the 8 spears of unknown wood). During the Bronze Age, more surviving spears have shafts of oak and the *maloideae* than of hazel, poplar, or willow, but no spears with shafts of oak or *maloideae* from the Iron Age are known. It appears that from the Iron Age onward, the types of wood used to make spears became more standardized.

Types of Wood: Conclusions

It appears as if the ancients broadly agreed which woods made good spears. But particular woods came in and out of fashion, or were easily available in different parts of the ancient world, and there were many woods that were not ideal but would serve. For example, two *sauroters* from Olympia contained pine wood, which is soft and not very dense but was used in other cultures for single-use weapons such as fire-darts and cavalry lances (see chapter 3 appendix).¹² Pliny and Grattius were right to imply that many different woods were used. The choice of wood tells us about differences in environment, social organization, and intended use for spears. In northern

¹¹ Tania Marguerite Dickinson and Heinrich Härke, *Early Anglo-Saxon Shields*, Archaeologia Monograph 110 (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1992), 55–56; and Guy Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West, 450–900* (London: Routledge, 2003), 165, 167, 207–8. Thanks to Evan Schultheis for a chat about combat in late antiquity.

¹² Emil Kunze and Hans Schleif, 2. *Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia: Winter 1937/38* (Berlin: De Gruyter for Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1938; reprinted Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 103. These finds were discussed in Kevin Rowan de Groote, “How Hoplitēs Wielded Their Dory—All Your Strength Is in Your Spears,” *Ancient Warfare* 12, no. 1 (2018): 34–40.

Britain, poplar, willow, and hazel were more common than ash or yew, so spear-makers could either import hardwood or use local species, which were softer and more flexible. The shift toward local timber in Migration Era Britain was part of a rapid decline in trade and craft specialization as Britain ceased to be part of the Roman empire.

How Was the Wood Processed?

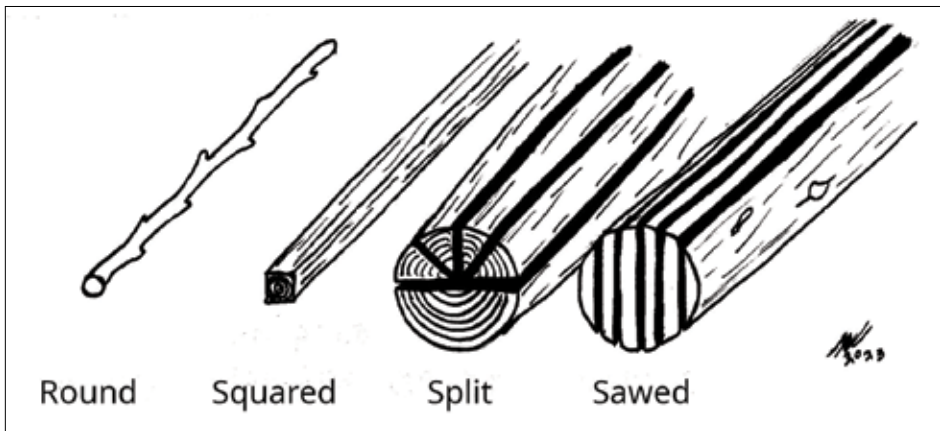
How was wood used for spears processed? Today, trees are usually sawed from end to end to turn them into square-sectioned lumber. This is the cheapest way of turning a tree into lumber with current technology, but ancient technology was different. One common way of turning trees into lumber was to split them with wedges and mauls and then carve the wedges into rectangular-sectioned beams and planks or round-sectioned posts and poles. This preserves the tree's natural grain structure, making the wood stronger, but it increases the amount of waste and requires a great deal of labor. Judging by the rings in the wood, the Roman spears from Carlisle in England were made from sawed or split timber (figure 6).¹³

Another common way was to use the wood in the round—as it grew in the tree. The hunting poet Grattius describes removing the side branches, harvesting the pole, and stripping it of bark (*Cynegeticon* lines 138–49). In the tenth century, Byzantine military authorities recommended giving infantry who would face cataphracts spears called *menaulia* made from oak or cornel saplings. Because the most accessible version mistranslates a key term, it is worth quoting one of these texts:

Their *menaulia* should not be made from timbers squared with an axe [πελεκητά], but from saplings [νεακίων] of oak, cornel, or of the tree called *artzēkidia*, or of another hard wood. If, however, natural grown [αὐτοφυῆ] timbers can not be found, then let these *menaulia* be made of tim-

¹³ Christine Howard-Davis, ed., *The Carlisle Millennium Project*, vol. 2, Lancaster Imprints 15 (Lancaster, UK: Oxford Archaeology North, 2010) fig. 367.

Figure 5. Timber processing methods. Timber is processed by using it in the round, squaring it with an axe or adze, splitting into wedges, or sawing end to end into planks.



Source: Drawing by author

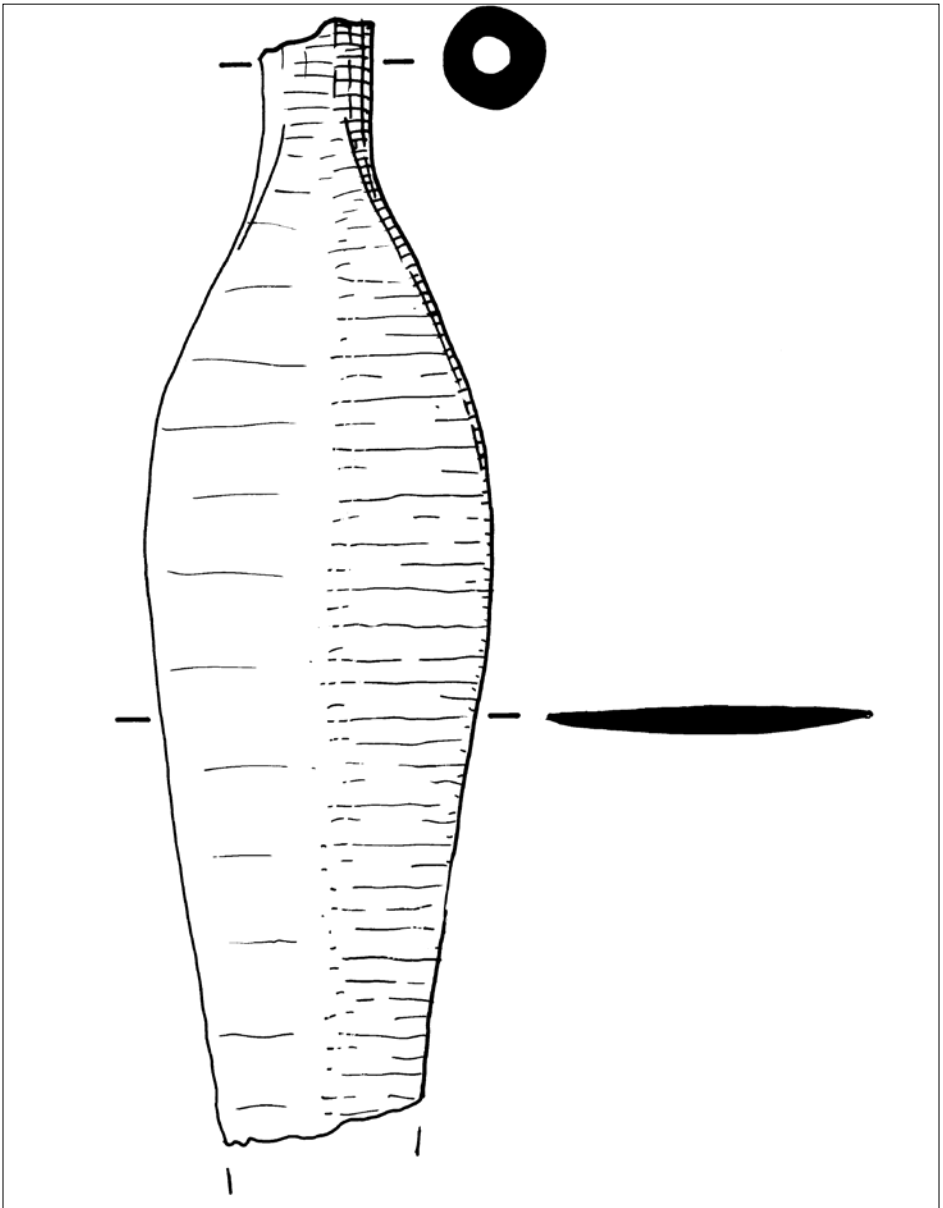
bers squared with an axe, but they must be of hard wood and as thick as the hands can hold.¹⁴

The javelins painted in Alexandrovo Tumulus, Bulgaria (figure 7), are presumably made of round wood due to the knobs on their surfaces.¹⁵ Since the growth rings are not broken, round wood is strong and flexible. Not having to cut or split the tree lengthwise also saves time and sweat (and avoids the danger of felling a large tree). Although some parts of the ancient world had watermills, almost all work in forestry and lumber was

¹⁴ Nikephoros Ouranos, *Taktika*, 56.11/lines 117–22, Eric McGeer, ed., *Sowing the Dragon's Teeth: Byzantine Warfare in the Tenth Century* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995), 94–95, author's translation. For the definition of πελεκητά see Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* 5.5.6 (McGeer's "wood cut into sections" is misleading because trees are almost always cut to length before being turned into timber). For more information on weapons in the eastern Roman empire, see *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* s.v. "Weapons." The traditional English equivalent of πελεκητά is *hewed* or *hewn* but this might not be clear to all readers today. Richard Darrah, "Working Unseasoned Wood," in *Woodworking Techniques before A.D. 1500: Papers Presented to a Symposium in Greenwich in September, 1980, Together with Edited Discussion*, ed. Sean McGrail (Oxford, UK: British Archaeological Reports, 1982), 221–22.

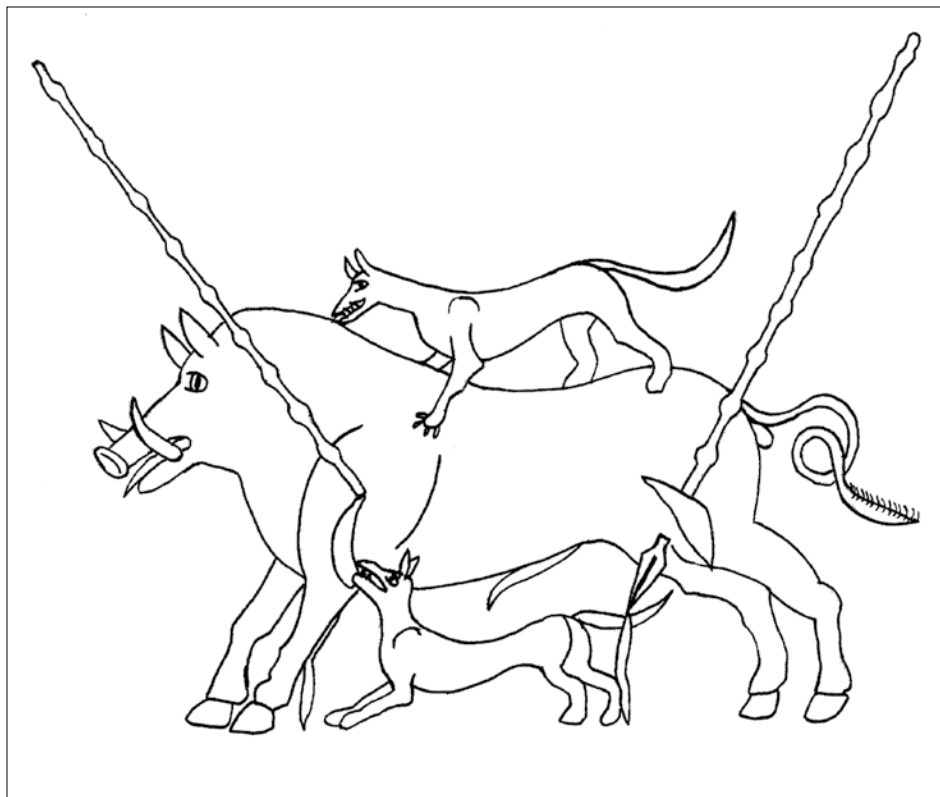
¹⁵ Alexandrovo (or Александрово in the Cyrillic alphabet) was the subject of several Bulgarian publications such as Georgi Kitov, *Александровската гробница* (Varna: Славена / Slavena, 2009). Many color photos are available at <http://www.alexandrovo.com/en> as of 30 November 2022.

Figure 6. Iron spearheads and ferrule, Roman Carlisle. Several of these iron spearheads and ferrule have wood preserved inside the sockets.



Source: Drawing by Adam Parsons for Oxford Archaeology Limited, reprinted with permission from Howard-Davis, Carlisle Millennium Project, vol. 2, fig. 367

Figure 7. Mural of a hunt, Bulgaria. Detail of the frieze of a hunt on the dome of Alexandrovo Tumulus, Bulgaria (fourth century BCE). The full painting shows other game animals, dogs, and hunters on horseback and foot with lances, axes, and a knobby club. The blood dripping from the spear wounds and down the boar's legs is bright red and contrasts with the black boar and tawny and gray dogs.



Source: Drawing by author, 2023

powered by muscle, whether teams of men with axes or teams of oxen hauling logs to a stream.

Different cultures preferred to process trees in different ways. Theophrastus was familiar with the practice of sawing a log lengthwise into timbers (*Inquiry into Plants* 5.5.4, 5.6.3 ed. Hort), whereas the peoples of

Britain after the empire left preferred to split logs into wedges.¹⁶ Giant saws required large amounts of good iron, whereas anyone with a knife, a drill, and an axe could make wooden mallets and wooden wedges.

Long spears may have been made of sawed or split timber from tall trees, whereas shorter spears could easily be made from round wood. It is easier to find short, straight sections of tree small enough to grip than long, straight sections. Because cornel trees rarely have a single straight trunk up to their full height (Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* 3.12.2), it would have been hard to make a 12-cubit-long sarissa out of a 12-cubit-tall cornel tree.¹⁷ As we have seen, the ancients recommended low shrubby trees for short hunting spears more than long war spears.

What Diameter Were the Ends?

What diameter did the spearshaft measure at top and bottom? This is answerable even if the wood is lost, as long as the iron and bronze parts of the spear survive relatively intact. We can measure the internal or external diameter of the socket.

According to Christopher Matthew, large Snodgrass type J spearheads from Olympia average only 18 millimeters (mm) internal diameter (ID).¹⁸ In contrast, butt spikes from the same site have internal diameters from 18 to 25 mm. The famous medium-size spearhead from Vergina has an external socket diameter (ED) of only 19 mm.¹⁹ Pikes from the city arsenal at Lucerne are slightly thicker, especially toward the butt (see table 5). The equipment of hundreds of La Tène culture warriors was deposited at Gournay, France. These also have narrow sockets on the head and wider

¹⁶ When Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* 5.5.6, says that people *τρίζω* timber to make it *σχιστά* or “split / segmented” timber, it is not clear whether he means splitting with wedges or sawing. The verb *τρίζω* does not usually refer to a type of woodworking. When Theophrastus (5.5.4, 5.6.3) says that it is possible to split (*σχιζω*) or saw (*πρίειν*) timbers, does he mean that these are alternative processes, or two names for the same thing? Darrah, “Working Unseasoned Wood,” discusses traditional woodworking techniques in Britain.

¹⁷ Nicholas Victor Sekunda, “The Sarissa,” *Acta Universitatis Lodziensis, Folia Archaeologica* 23 (2001): 24–25.

¹⁸ Christopher Matthew, *Storm of Spears: Understanding the Greek Hoplite at War* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2012), 4–5. His typology is based on Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons*.

¹⁹ Manolis Andronicos, “Sarissa,” *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique* 94 (1970): 98–99. Measuring the scale photograph confirms that Andronicos meant external diameter.

Table 4. Relative diameter of spearheads and sauroters

Source	Nr. Heads	Head ID (mm)	Head ED (mm)	Nr. Ferrules	Sauroter ID (mm)	Sauroter ED (mm)	H:S
Olympia type J	?	18		5	18–25		0.75–1.0
Vergina	1		19				n/a
Gournay	?	15–25		?		25–35	0.6–0.7
Anglo-Saxon	7		20–26	7		17–22	1.18
Luzern Pikes	6		24			30	0.8

Source: Christopher Matthew, Storm of Spears: Understanding the Greek Hoplite at War (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2012), 4–5

sockets or caps on the butt (because some of the butt-spikes were solid and have no socket, just a shank like a nail, the excavators chose to publish the internal diameters of the spearheads but the external diameters of the butts).²⁰ Bruce Edward Blackistone measured spears in site reports from post-Roman Britain. Seven spears with both a head and a butt spike had head external diameters measuring 20–26 mm and ferrule external diameters measuring 17–22 mm.²¹ On these spears, the head usually had a wider socket than the ferrule. The five spear shafts from La Tène in Switzerland are described as 2 centimeters (cm) in diameter.²² Yvonne Inall says that the external diameter of the socket of iron spearheads from pre-Roman southern Italy is usually between 2 and 3 cm.²³ The sockets (*cubos*) of spearheads from pre-Roman Iron Age Iberia are usually 18 to 22 mm

²⁰ Jean-Louis Brunaux and André Rapin, *Gournay II: Boucliers et Lances, Dépôts et Trophées* (Paris: Éditions Errance, 1988), 97, 104–5.

²¹ Bruce Edward Blackistone, “Analysis of Spearheads, Ferrules and Shafts from Migration-Age Anglo-Saxon Burials,” Age of Datini, accessed 30 January 2023, originally posted in Spear Shafts forum thread, Sword Forum International. For details on his sources, see chap. 3 appendix 1.

²² Paul Vouga, *La Tène, Monographie de la station publiée au nom de la commission des fouilles de La Tène* (Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1923), col. 54.

²³ Inall, “Spoiling for a Fight,” 264.

in diameter (whether internal or external is not clear).²⁴ Some pikes from the Lucerne *Zeughaus* (arsenal) (figure 10) are 75 mm in circumference at the base of the head, and 94 mm in circumference at the butt.²⁵ That implies 24 mm diameter at the base of the head and 30 mm at the butt.

In other words, the typical ancient spear had a shaft no wider in diameter than the user's thumb at the head. A spearshaft mainly needs to be strong in compression as it thrusts, so it did not have to be as thick as a halberd or a quarterstaff, which delivers powerful strikes at right angles to the shaft.²⁶ At many sites, spear shafts were usually different sizes at the head and the butt.

A spear shaft that was too thick was harder to drive into a target and tiring to move. A spear shaft that was too thin might bend or break before it did serious damage to the target. We saw that in the tenth century, East Roman military authorities recommended that to face a charge of cataphracts a spear should have a special heavy shaft.²⁷ Barge-poles today are relatively thick, so the type of ancient spear called a barge-pole (Greek *kovτός*, Latin *contus*) may have had a sturdy shaft.

How Does Diameter Vary Between the Ends?

How did the shape of the spear shaft vary from end to end? Many people today present perfectly cylindrical shafts as the default.²⁸ That is only true if you start with a cylindrical dowel. If you make the shaft with an adze and a draw-knife, you can make any shape you like, while if you start with round wood, the shaft will be naturally tapered. A medieval treatise on

²⁴ Fernando Quesada Sanz, *El Armamento Ibérico. Estudio tipológico, geográfico, funcional, social y simbólico de las armas en la Cultura ibérica (siglos VI-I a.C.)* (Montagnac: éditions monique mergoil, 1997), 1:347.

²⁵ Wade Allen, "Polearms," Allen Antiques, accessed 15 October 2022.

²⁶ Kate Anderson, "Slashing and Thrusting with Late Bronze Age Spears: Analysis and Experiment," *Antiquity* 85 (2011): 603–6, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003598X00067983>, found that hewing with ordinary bronze spearheads often caused the shaft to break; compare to the thick shafts of cutting polearms in John Waldman, *Hafted Weapons in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, History of Warfare vol. 31 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 92–94.

²⁷ See section above, How Was the Wood Processed?.

²⁸ See for example, Matthew, *Storm of Spears*, 6–11; and Bardunias and Ray, *Hoplites at War*, 14–16. Both invoke hypothetical "field-expedient" manufacture of replacement shafts by unskilled workers, but the author has not found it harder to make a tapered shaft than a cylindrical shaft with hand tools, and ancient farmers routinely worked wood into vine-props, tool handles, axles, and other implements so were hardly novice woodworkers.

archery mentions that wooden arrow shafts can be given a uniform diameter by forcing them through a ring, but recommends that at least the area where the feathers will go should be shaved thinner.²⁹ Whereas the sockets of spearheads and butt-spikes let us estimate the diameter of the spear shaft at the ends, the shape of the shaft in between can only be known if the wooden part of the spear survives.

Due to closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to good information about the spears from bogs around the Baltic is limited.³⁰ The five spear shafts from La Tène appear to be barrel-shaped, that is, they appear thicker in the middle than at either end. Wade Allen kindly measured some pikes that had been resting in the Lucerne arsenal from the late fifteenth century until he bought them (e.g., table 5). Unlike many staff weapons in museums, the shafts do not appear to have been replaced or shortened after their working life. These pike shafts also have a strong barrel shape, with the thickest part almost 50 percent thicker than the thinnest part and about 70 percent of the way back from the point. This is very close to the point at which Polybius says the front hand gripped a Macedonian sarissa: 10 cubits back on a 14-cubit-long sarissa, or 71 percent of the distance from point to butt (Polybius, *Histories* 18.29.2–4). John Waldman found that European cutting polearms such as halberds tend to be slightly tapered at both ends.³¹

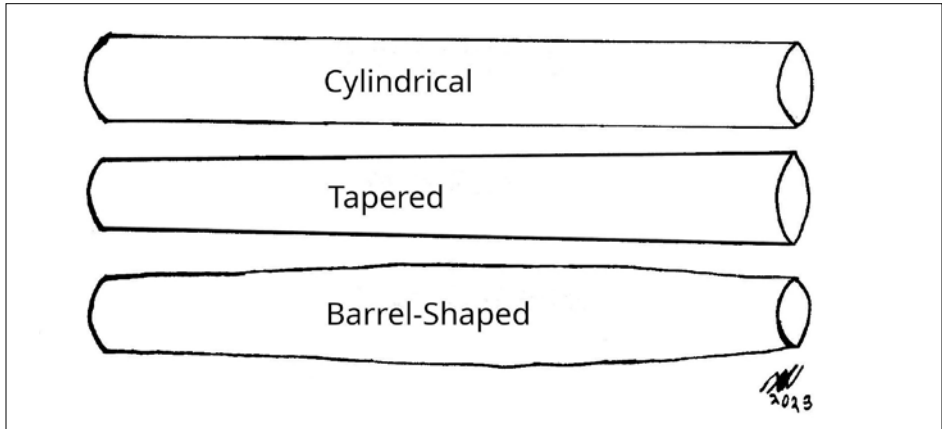
Barrel shapes save mass at the ends where the stress from gravity is greatest, but there are other advantages. People who throw spears say that it is desirable to have the balance at or in front of the middle and that the shaft often breaks just behind the head. A shaft that was thick near the spearhead and thin near the butt would both move the balance forward and maximize strength where the spear came under stress. On the other

²⁹ Nabih Amin Faris and Robert Potter Elmer, *Arab Archery: An Arabic Manuscript of About A.D. 1500* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Legacy Reprints, 2016), 105–6, 118.

³⁰ There are other challenges: the author was unable to clarify an unclear citation about a Viking Age spear because a colleague was busy packing the collection of a museum in Kyiv after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

³¹ Waldman, *Hafted Weapons*, 92–94.

Figure 8. Sketch of arrow and polearm shaft shapes. Some examples are cylindrical (with the same diameter everywhere), but others are tapered (with the greatest diameter at one end) or barrel-shaped (with the greatest diameter somewhere in the middle and both ends smaller).



Source: Drawing by author

hand, it is easier to control a long thrusting spear if the balance is toward the rear. So tapering the shaft to be thicker near the butt is a good choice for a long spear that will not be thrown but thrust.

How Heavy Was the Head?

How much did the spearhead weigh? Iron and bronze were expensive in the ancient world, and controlling weight at the end of a long spear is difficult. Unfortunately, archaeologists rarely publish weights, even for well-preserved artifacts such as stone vessels or swords pulled from thick mud. Thin iron from the ancient world, such as a wide-bladed spearhead, is usually badly corroded or mineralized.

According to Holger Baitinger, the large Snodgrass type J spearheads from Olympia had an average weight of 153 grams.³² The famous medium-

³² Holger Baitinger, *Die Angriffswaffen aus Olympia*, *Olympische Forschungen*, Band 29 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 142–219, as cited in Matthew, *Storm of Spears*, 3.

Table 5. Taper of a 4.5-meter (15-foot) pike from Lucerne (late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, working-life shaft)*

Distance from head (cm)	Circumference (cm)
0	7.5
30	8.0
60	8.5
90	9.3
120	9.7
150	10.0
180	10.0
210	10.0
240	10.0
270	10.4
300	10.8
330	10.7
360	10.4
390	10.3
420	9.9
Butt	9.4

*Note: Measurements begin at the bottom of the socket of the narrow, four-sided spear-head and were performed with a flexible measuring tape (designed for sewing) with a metal cap on the end.

Source: Measurements courtesy of Wade Allen personal collection

size spearhead from Vergina only weighed 97 grams.³³ The larger kind of spearhead from La Tène in Switzerland was about the same length as the Snodgrass type J, and had almost exactly the same weight: 145 grams.³⁴ These large spearheads were 20–30 cm long, whereas the smaller javelin heads from La Tène were 13–20 cm long and an average of 70 grams in

³³ Andronikos, “Sarissa,” 98.
³⁴ Vouga, *La Tène*, vol. 53: “Piques: Les fers que nous faisons rentrer dans cette catégorie ont de 20–30 cm.; leur poids, de 145 grammes en moyenne . . . Javelots: Au premier coup d’œil jeté sur ces fers qui ont de 13 à 20 cm. de longuret pesant en moyenne 70 grammes.”

weight. Of course, most surviving spearheads have lost weight to corrosion and cleaning. However, we can check these measurements against ancient measurements of newly made spearheads. Sometime in or after 545 BCE, two smiths in Sippar delivered a batch of 8 spearheads weighing a total of 4 1/6 Babylonian pounds (BM 61341 = MacGinnis, *Arrows of the Sun*, no. 23).³⁵ The average weight of a spearhead at Sippar would therefore be around 260 grams at the usual estimate of 500 grams to a Babylonian pound. There is no reason to believe that the spearheads from Olympia and La Tène must have weighed much more than this when they were new.

Of course, most ancient cultures had some very large, heavy spears. But most ancient spearheads were relatively light, saving expensive iron and reducing the weight to be controlled at the end of a long pole. Most replicas of ancient arms and armor are 50–100 percent heavier than originals or accurate replicas.³⁶

What Shape Was the Head?

Archaeologists pay a lot of attention to the shape of spearheads. From an engineering perspective, spearheads balance two competing goods. A narrow spike is strong and stiff and so will penetrate deeply. But that narrow spike makes a small hole that is unlikely to damage multiple organs or

³⁵ John MacGinnis, *The Arrows of the Sun: Armed Forces in Sippar in the First Millennium BC*, Babylonische Archive vol. 4 (Dresden: ISLET-Verlag, 2012).

³⁶ Peter Krentz, “A Cup by Douris and the Battle of Marathon,” in *New Perspectives on Ancient Warfare*, ed. Garrett G. Fagan and Matthew Trundle (Leiden: Brill, 2010) 188–97, shows that classical Greek hoplite kit was about half as heavy as armchair estimates or backyard replicas. Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 83, mistakenly trusted that South Asian spearheads that weigh 500–750 grams are good copies of ancient originals. Thomas O. Rover, “The Combat Archaeology of the Fifth-Century BC Kopis: Hoplite Swordsmanship in the Archaic and Classical Periods,” *International Journal of Military History and Historiography* 40, no. 1 (2020): 22, <https://doi.org/10.1163/24683302-20190001>, describes a replica *kopis* that weighed 940 grams but was only 57 cm long, about 50 percent heavier than surviving originals and functional replicas. Reenactor Matthew Amt persuaded Deepeeka in India, a well-known supplier of replica arms and armor, to produce similar-size *kopides* based on a find from Olympia, and these replicas weigh 630 grams, although the weight creeps up if buyers accept overweight products. Anyone involved with reenactment and have-a-bash groups will have watched a series of replicas get lighter as their makers realize that making them big and heavy does not make them more effective or more like originals.

cause rapid bleeding. A wounded opponent may survive to seek medical attention or kill the attacker. A wide, thin blade causes maximum damage to the target, but is more fragile and encounters more resistance, particularly from armored targets. Broader spearheads can be heavier, although they may also spread the same amount of steel as a thick narrow blade thinly (figure 9). As a rule of thumb, shorter spears are more likely to have large, wide heads, while very long spears, such as a Swiss pike (figure 10), tend to have small, narrow heads (e.g., Grattius, *Cynegeticon* 115–20). Long spears with long, wide heads, such as a renaissance partisan, were most often used two-handed and were usually no more than one-and-a-half times as long as their bearer.

While most ancient spearheads have simple, functional shapes, a few are more elaborate, such as wavy-bladed La Tène spearheads or heads with holes pierced in them. Spears such as these might be best understood by considering thought and iconography in addition to the functional aspects in this chapter.

Is There a Ferrule/Butt-Spike?

Modern scholars are very interested in whether spears had iron or bronze cladding on the butt, variously called a ferrule, *sauroter* (Greek σαυρωτήρ), *styrax* (Greek στύραξ), or butt-spike. These were common in many ancient cultures by the last few centuries BCE, such as the Achaemenid empire, classical Greece, and La Tène Europe. To some, the *sauroter* was an essential part of a long spear or pike to be used in a dense line. Specialists in early Greek warfare often say that Greek hoplite spears had a butt-spike

Figure 9. Iron and bone spear points, Hjortspring, Denmark. These spear points are different from one another, but they seem to have been deposited at the same time. Many of the spearheads have a ridge along the long axis to stiffen the blade while keeping the cutting edges as thin and light as possible.



Source: Photo by Lennart Larsen, care of Danmarks Oldtid, Nationalmuseet, photo ID DO-2127, under a CC-by-SA license

Figure 10. Lucerne pike head. After the pikes from Lucerne were sold by the *Zeughaus*, the only intermediate owner was dealer Greg Walter of online shop AntiqueWeaponStore.com. The square-sectioned point would pierce deeply but make a small hole.



Source: Photo by Wade Allen

or that this fitting was “near-universal” on Greek hoplite spears.³⁷ However, art and archaeology indicate that often only a minority of spears for close fighting had them. At the sanctuary at Kalapodi in Greece, which was probably destroyed by Xerxes’s troops, there are 300 spearheads but only 30 *sauroters*.³⁸ At the so-called charnel house at the La Tène culture site of Ribemont-sur-Ancre in France, there were about 129 spearheads and only 22 ferrules buried with the remains of 75–80 men.³⁹ The excavators suggest that these represent a force of two kinds of warriors: about 20 warriors with a spear with a ferrule, a sword, and a shield with bronze or iron parts, and 55–60 combatants with just one or two spears and a shield without metal components. At Olympia, the oldest known offerings of butt-spikes date to the late sixth century BCE.⁴⁰ Older butt-spikes are known from other sites in Greece, but it is after 600 BCE that they appear at most sites in Greece where weapons were dedicated to the gods.⁴¹ Christopher Matthew collected 340 images of hoplites in combat, and of

³⁷ This idea probably spread from the California school: John Kinloch Anderson, *Military Theory and Practice in the Age of Xenophon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 37 (“[Greek hoplite] spears shown in art vary in length . . . with a heavy iron point and a solid metal butt”); Hanson, “Hoplite Technology in Phalanx Battle,” 71 (“The near-universal adoption of a spike added to the butt end of the thrusting spear”), 74 (“The uniform adoption of the butt-spike and the real advantages it brought in the *melée*”); and Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 83 (“At the bottom end of the hoplite spear the butt-spike was attached”). It is now common among researchers who emphasize experience, such as Matthew, *Storm of Spears*, 2; and Paul M. Bardunias and Fred Eugene Ray Jr., *Hoplites at War: A Comprehensive Analysis of Heavy Infantry Combat in the Greek World, 750–100 BCE* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2016), 14. Archaeologists from continental Europe stick much closer to the evidence of excavations and vase paintings, for example, Emil Kunze and Hans Schleif, *Olympische Forschungen*, Band 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1944), 155 (author’s translation): “The number of butt-spikes found in Olympia is much smaller than the number of spearheads. Butt-spikes from this site are much more commonly of bronze than of iron. This indicates first of all that many lances had no butt-spike whatsoever, a reality which also appears in vase painting.”

³⁸ Josho Brouwers, “Warfare and Society in Early Greece: From the Fall of the Mykenaian Palaces to the End of the Persian Wars” (PhD diss., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2010), 62.

³⁹ Paul R. Sealey, *A Late Iron Age Warrior Grave from Kelvedon, Essex* (Colchester, UK: Colchester Museums, 2007), 35, summarizing Thierry Lejars, “Des armes celtiques dans un contexte culturel particulier: le «charnier» de Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Somme),” *Revue archéologique de Picardie*, no. 1–2. Table ronde de Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Somme) les 4 et 5 décembre 1997 (1998), 235; and Jean-Louis Brunaux et al., “Ribemont-sur-Ancre (Somme),” *Gallia*, Tome 56 (1999), 177–283.

⁴⁰ Brouwers, “Warfare and Society in Early Greece,” 58–59 (already noted in Snodgrass, *Early Greek Armour and Weapons*, 133).

⁴¹ Florian Klimscha, “Spearheads, Butt-Spikes and Fighting. A Source-critical Perspective on Late Iron Age Violence Cultures,” in *Waffen—Gewalt—Krieg—Beiträge zur Internationalen Tagung der AG Eisenzeit und des Institut Archeologii Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego—Rzeszów 19.–22. September 2012*, Beiträge zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte Mitteleuropas (BUFM) 79, ed. Stefanie Wefers (Langenweißbach: Verlag Beier und Beran, 2015), 95.

the 60 percent who hold their spears overhand, a majority have no visible reinforcement on the butt of the spear.⁴² There are places and times when *sauroters* were very common, but they do not seem to have been “near-universal” in classical Greece.

Both armchair scholars and skilled spear-users agree that butt-spikes have three main functions.⁴³ First, they allow the spear to be planted in the ground with its point up without the butt cracking or rotting (*Iliad* 10.153). Second, they can be used as a weapon if the shaft breaks or an opponent comes too close to strike with the head.⁴⁴ Third, they can move the point of balance back to allow longer, more accurate thrusts.⁴⁵ There is much less agreement about which function was most important. There is much talk about the butt-spike as a counterweight among hoplite reenactors today, but there does not appear to be any spear-user before the twentieth century who mentioned this function. The evidence suggests that only a minority of spears on ancient Greek battlefields had a *sauroter* and that they were rare in Greece until the sixth century BCE. While images of stabbing with the butt of a spear are exciting, some ancient butt-spikes were not much pointier than the ferrule of a hiking stick today. It would be valuable to have the results of more experiments with long spears with tapered or barrel-shaped shafts and light heads. Warriors in many ancient cultures chose a variety of spears, raising questions about the advantages and disadvantages of the different choices.

⁴² Matthew, *Storm of Spears*, 16, 20–21 (a publication of Matthew’s data would be useful).

⁴³ John Kinloch Anderson, “Hoplite Weapons and Offensive Arms,” in *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience*, ed. Victor Davis Hanson (London: Routledge, 1991), 24; Hanson, “Hoplite Technology in Phalanx Battle,” 71–74; Sealey, *Warrior Grave from Kelvedon*, 10, 11; Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 83; and Matthew, *Storm of Spears*, 146–49.

⁴⁴ Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 2.4.3; Polybius, *Histories* 6.25.9, 11.18.4; Plut. *Life of Aristides* 14.5; Fiore dei Liberi, *Fior di Battaglia*, Ms. Ludwig XV 13 (83.MR.183), J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu, CA, 31r, 31v (miscellaneous weapons v. lance), 39v, 40r (lance v. lance). Hanson, “Hoplite Technology in Phalanx Battle,” 73, alludes to vase paintings and sculptures in which a warrior strikes downward with the butt of a spear, and Anthony Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), 56, interprets square holes in armor as inflicted with the butt of a spear rather than (for example) nails fastening the armor to a post or wall for display.

⁴⁵ Matthew, *Storm of Spears*, 12–14, 20–23; and Bardunias and Ray, *Hoplites at War*, 14–16.

What Was the Overall Length?

Modern historians are often interested in the length of ancient spears. The ancients did not write very much about this, and most of what they did write was about long sarissae or short hunting spears.⁴⁶ People today often use the human body in art as a yardstick, but there are many reasons why artists might expand or contract a long object like a spear to fit the available space. Many Homeric heroes were said to use especially large or heavy weapons, such as Achilles's spear of Pelian ash that was too heavy for Patroclus to wield or the bow of Odysseus that was too stiff for Penelope's suitors to string, and many ancient paintings and sculptures show heroes from Homeric times.⁴⁷ Expectations driven by ancient texts or modern dogma can shape how viewers see or measure ancient spear shafts, and a desire not to contradict authorities has prevented researchers from clearly describing their results.⁴⁸ Traces of spears in graves can give a clue, but it is possible that they were broken to fit inside the grave. Broadly speaking, longer spears give more reach but are harder to control and prone to snagging on trees and buildings (or being caught in the wind!). War spears tend to be longer than hunting spears because animals do not use weapons that extend their reach but do shelter in difficult-to-access overgrown areas.

Two of the longest spears in art from classical Athens are the Achilles Amphora in the Vatican, whose titular hero carries a spear 1.33 times as long as he is tall, and the grave-stele of Panaetius of Hamaxanteia (a horseman with two spears, the longer of which is 1.62 times as long as he

⁴⁶ For example, Xenophon, *Anabasis* 4.7.16; Theophrastus, *Inquiry into Plants* 3.2.11; and Grattius, *Cynegeticon* 147–49. For other ancient statements about the length of the Macedonian sarissa, see Peter Connolly, “Experiments with the Sarissa—The Macedonian Pike and Cavalry Lance—A Functional View,” *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 11 (2000): 104–6; or Richard Taylor, *The Macedonian Phalanx: Equipment, Organization & Tactics from Philip & Alexander to the Roman Conquest* (Barnsley, UK: Pen & Sword, 2020), 30–35, with earlier literature.

⁴⁷ Patroclus cannot use Achilles's spear in *Iliad* 16.140; Aeneas hurls a stone that no man in the poet's time could move in *Iliad* 20.285; compare to the broad, seven-fold shield of Ajax in *Iliad* 11.527 and following.

⁴⁸ Sean Manning, *Armed Force in the Teispid-Achaemenid Empire: Past Approaches, Future Prospects*, *Oriens et Occidens* 32 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2021), 279–82.

is tall, figure 11).⁴⁹ If the warriors were 170 cm (roughly 5 feet 6 inches) tall, the average height of adult males buried in classical Greece, then the spear of Achilles would be 226 cm (about 7 feet 4 inches) long and the spear of Panaetius would be 275 cm (about 9 feet) long.⁵⁰ Specialists in early Greek warfare are often very interested in long, rear-balanced spears, so it is difficult to say how much shorter most spears depicted in Athenian paintings and sculptures are, and it is certainly difficult to say how these compared to real spears.

During the Roman Iron Age, spears and other weapons were often deposited in bogs in Denmark. Most intact wooden shafts were between 230 and 305 cm (7.5 and 10 feet) long.⁵¹ The longest unbroken shaft was no less than 335 cm (about 11 feet) long, the shortest only 50 (1.6 feet). These spears tend to be longer than the spears in Athenian art. Tacitus says that many Germans used “gigantic spears” that were unwieldy (*Annals, Histories* 1.65, 2.14, 2.21, *Historiae* 5.18, cp. *Germania* 6.1), however during the third century CE, Roman and “barbarian” arms and armor became very similar. It is therefore difficult to decide whether most Roman soldiers used spears that were shorter than the spears from Denmark or spears about the same length.

As noted above, spears are not always balanced in the middle. In hand-to-hand combat, a spear with its balance farther back will have longer reach than a similar spear balanced in the middle, good for thrusting but not for throwing, as a spear whose balance is not at or just in front of the middle will usually turn butt-forward when it is thrown. A thrown

⁴⁹Inventory number 16571, Vatican Museum, Vatican City, Italy, and accession number 884, Hellenic National Archaeological Museum of Athens, Greece (measurements author's own based on digital photos). A photograph of the Achilles Amphora is printed as Matthews, *Storm of Spears*, plate 1.

⁵⁰Kron, “Anthropometry,” 72 (based on studies by Lawrence Angel, S. C. Bissel, W. K. Kovacovics, and H. S. Robinson; specialists in Greek warfare may be more familiar with the low estimate from the beginning of Angel's career as cited in Schwartz, *Reinstating the Hoplite*, 98).

⁵¹Bartosz Kontny, “The War as Seen by an Archaeologist. Reconstruction of Barbarian Weapons and Fighting Techniques in the Roman Period Based on the Analysis of Graves Containing Weapons. The Case of the Przemyśl Culture,” *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 16 (2008): 115. Two additional spear shafts from the Roman Iron Age have been found in a grave from Sweden: Kent Andersson, *Göddäker: ett romartida centrum i Uppland* (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museer, 2016).

Figure 11. Stele of Panaetius of Hamaxanteia. One of Panaetius’s spears, on this grave marker held in the collections of the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum in Athens, Greece, is very long and thick at the butt.



Source: Photo courtesy of Gary Lee Todd, PhD, professor of history, Sias University, China

spear can outrange any hand-held weapon. While adopting long spears balanced farther back can give soldiers an advantage in close combat, that encourages opponents to fight them from a distance, such as the Aetolian victory over Athenian hoplites (Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War* 4.29–38), the Athenian victory over Spartan hoplites on the island of Sphacteria (*Peloponnesian War* 4.29–38), or the defeat of the Macedonian phalanx at Magnesia (Appian, *Syrian Wars* 7.35). Each type of spear had advantages in some situations, and when two armies were different, each tried to fight in such a way that its weapons and fighting style had an advantage.

Conclusion

Spears were handmade objects bought by their users or by small units. The spearheads from the Hjortspring boat vary widely in shape, size, and material (figure 9). Even if a group of spears were made to a single pattern, they would vary according to the qualities of the iron, bronze, and wood used for each individual spear. So when we talk about ancient spears, the best we can do is to describe trends and for what type of fighting particular spears were better or worse. A long, rear-balanced spear was a very different weapon than a short, forward-balanced spear, even if their heads were the same length or the same shape. If we can show that warriors at a particular time and place preferred one type of spear, that tells us things about how they intended to use them, even if some warriors from that place and time used different types and no two spears were as alike as two rifles or artillery shells off an assembly line. If we ask more questions about spears and focus on function, they have a great deal to teach us. A better understanding of arms and armor (and combat in general) may even allow progress on stalled debates, such as what happened on battlefields in archaic and classical Greece.

CHAPTER 3 APPENDIX

Wood in Spears

Every attempt to identify ancient wood presents different information and handles uncertainty in different ways. All these studies appear to rely on examining the wood under a microscope and studying patterns such as growth rings and vessels for water (so-called pores). Interpreting these traces is a matter of judgment, and three groups of trees are easy to confuse:

- willow (genus *salix*) is hard to distinguish from poplar (genus *populus*)
- a group that includes apple, pear, medlar, quince, sorb, and hawthorn are difficult to tell apart (the *maloideae* subfamily)
- blackthorn wood is hard to tell apart from its relatives in the genus *prunus*

In tables 1, 2, and 3, these groups are given a single row each, even though some studies distinguish within them. Some sources give the taxonomic name for trees and others use common names (in various languages). The best attempt to give both here has been made, but if only one is in the original source, that is given first.

Wood from two trees of the same genus or even the same species can have different properties depending on their ancestry and the local airs, waters, and places. The information in these studies is useful, even if it is not exact or certain.

Spears from the Baltic are not covered. Reports on this region were not readily available to the author, and the Baltic is ecologically and culturally distant from the areas in which most ancient historians are interested. Two spears from Olympia and one from El Cigarralejo, Spain, are listed

in this appendix but not the tables, since they are the only surviving spears from southern Europe accessible to the author. An article with references to studies of the wood in Bronze Age and early Iron Age spearheads from the Low Countries and southern Germany was published too late for its findings to be included.¹ A study of the wood in Roman shields and spears with the preliminary title “Wood Usages in Roman Weaponry in Gaul (1st–3rd centuries): Findings from the Lyon Urban Cohort Camp” is being prepared by Charles Vuillermine at the Université Marie et Louis Pasteur ED SEPT in Besançon, France.

Thanks to Ivor (*alias* Crispianus), Martin Rundkvist, Martijn A. Wijnhoven, Andrew W., and Roland Warzecha for suggesting publications, and to archaeologist Paul R. Sealey who started the hunt.

Bronze Age and Earlier

Stuart Needham et al. are most interested in carbon dating wood to date the bronze to which it is attached but usually identify the genus of wood in their 26 spearheads and 3 buttspikes.² The spearheads date from roughly 1200–600 BCE.

- 17 ash (*fraxinus* sp.)
- 2 oak (*quercus* sp.)
- 4 assorted *maloideae*
- 1 *corylus* (hazel)
- 1 *acer campestre* (maple)
- 1 *betula* (birch)
- 1 *juncus* (rush)
- 2 unknown wood

¹ V. Gentile, C. J. van Dijk, O. Ter Mors, “Multi-stage Experiments in Bronze Age Spear Combat: Insights on Wear Formation, Trauma, and Combat Contexts,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 170 (2024): 106044, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2024.106044>.

² Stuart Needham et al., “An Independent Chronology for British Bronze Age Metalwork: The Results of the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Programme,” *Archaeological Journal* 154, no. 1 (1997): 61–65, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00665983.1997.11078784>.

J. M. Coles et al. examine 40 spears or traces of spears from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age, mostly the latter.³ Their study does not seem to examine any of the same objects as Needham et al. Where they speak about the wood in a group of spears, the group is treated as one spear.

- 25 ash
- 4 oak (1 of them uncertain)
- 2 hawthorn (*crataegus sp.?*) or pear (*pyrus sp.?*) which are both *maloideae*
- 2 yew (*taxus baccata?*)
- 2 hazel
- 1 poplar
- 1 willow or poplar
- 1 *prunus* (the stone fruits such as cherry and plum)
- 1 blackthorn (presumably *prunus spinosa*, a popular material for walking and fighting sticks in the nineteenth century)⁴
- 1 beech (presumably *fagus sylvatica*)

H. Stephen Green collected publications that Coles et al. also found.⁵ In an appendix, Green lists the materials in 17 bronze spearheads and 2 bronze spear-butts from the Thomas Layton Collection in the Museum of London that were not included in Coles et al.:

- 15 ash (including one butt)
- 2 hawthorn or pear which are both *maloideae*
- 1 hazel
- 1 blackthorn (*prunus spinosa*, a spear-butt)

³J. M. Coles, S. V. E. Heal, and B. J. Orme, "The Use and Character of Wood in Prehistoric Britain and Ireland," *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 44 (December 1978): 25, 34–41.

⁴R. G. Allanson-Winn and C. Phillipps-Wooley, *Broad-Sword and Single-Stick* (London and New York: G. Bell & Sons, 1911), 102–7. These authorities list blackthorn, oak, and hazel as especially common and suitable woods for a fighting stick.

⁵H. Stephen Green, "Late Bronze Age Wooden Hafts from Llyn Fawr and Penwyllt, and a Review of the Evidence for the Selection of Wood for Tool and Weapon Handles in Neolithic and Bronze Age Britain and Ireland," *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 28, no. 1 (1978): 136–41

Jean-Pierre Mohen has some comments on the wood in bronze spearheads from France.⁶ He listed 1 unknown *sorbus* sp. (from Essonne, part of the *maloideae* family, compare to Pliny, *Natural History* 16.83 Bostock and Riley = Pliny, *Natural History* 16.103 Mayhoff), 1 *viburnum lantana* L. the “wayfarer tree” (from Grigny), and 7 *fraxinus excelsior* or ash (2 from Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, 4 from Essonne, 1 from Corbeil).

These examples total 97 spears or butt-spikes from the Bronze Age and earlier.

Pre-Roman Iron Age

Kevin Rowan de Groote reports that an archaic or classical Greek *sauroter* in the Hellenic National Archaeological Museum contains a fragment of pine wood.⁷ This is one of two *sauroters* from Olympia that were examined by Dr. H. Melchior before World War II (inventory numbers B 196 and B 222). Both contained pine wood. Because there is no other data on wood in spears from ancient Greece, it is not included in table 2, but Livy says that fire-javelins called *falarica* had shafts of fir wood (Livy, *History of Rome* 21.8.10), and a few staff weapons from recent times in collections have pine or fir shafts.⁸ Grattius also mentions pine as a suitable wood for hunting spears (*Cynegeticon* 130). Perhaps spears of pine wood were not as rare as they seem.

Excavators examined the wood in five spearheads from an Iron Age causeway at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire.⁹ All five were mature ash (*fraxinus* sp.) that had been split and shaped. Two posts of the causeway were den-

⁶ Jean-Pierre Mohen, *L'âge du bronze dans la région de Paris: catalogue synthétique des collections conservées au Musée des antiquités nationales* (Paris: Editions des Musées Nationaux, 1977), 210.

⁷ Kevin Rowan de Groote, “How Hoplitēs Wielded Their Dory—All Your Strength Is in Your Spears,” *Ancient Warfare* 12, no. 1 (2018): 34–40. De Groote informs the author that he was summarizing Emil Kunze and Hans Schleif, *2. Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Olympia: Winter 1937/38* (Berlin: De Gruyter for Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, 1938; reprinted Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 103.

⁸ Waldman, *Hafted Weapons*, 92–94.

⁹ Naomi Field et al., *Fiskerton: Iron Age Timber Causeway with Iron Age and Roman Votive Offerings* (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 2003), 25, 45.

drochronologically dated to ca. 436–405 BCE, and objects continued to be deposited there into the Roman period.

Paul Vouga examined three (or five—records differ) spear shafts from La Tène in Switzerland and described them as “debarked ash” (*La hampe, d’un diamètre de deux centimètres, est en frêne écorcé, et si régulièrement travaillé qu’au moment de la découverte il paraissait poli*).¹⁰ Since excavation, the shafts have fallen to pieces, but curator Gianna Reginelli and wood specialist Daniel Pillonel examined wood in the sockets of spearheads and butt-spikes from the same site in the 1990s. They counted four spearheads, eight javelin heads, and five ferrules, all containing ash wood (*fraxinus excelsior*) in addition to the two complete spears and one complete javelin described by Vouga and subsequently lost.¹¹

Emeterio Cuadrado Díaz excavated a cemetery of around the fifth or fourth century BCE at El Cigarralejo in Murcia, Spain. One spear shaft was of *espino blanco*, or white hawthorn, (probably meaning *crataegus monogyna*).¹² Because Spain has a different climate than northwest Europe, this spear has been excluded from table 2.

Someone was buried with a spear at Kelvedon, Essex, around 75–25 BCE. Jacqui Watson identified the wood in the socket of the spearhead as ash (*fraxinus sp.*).¹³

These examples total 26 spears from the pre-Roman Iron Age (plus 2 from Greece and 1 from Spain).

¹⁰ Vouga, *La Tène* col. 54; compare to Brunaux and Rapin, *Gournay II*, 88, which says that ash (*frêne*) is the most common material for the shafts of La Tène spears but cites no source.

¹¹ Gianna Reginelli, *Le Mobilier en Bois du Site de La Tène* (Mémoire de license, Université de Neuchâtel, Séminaire d’archéologie préhistorique, Octobre 1998), 75–85. The author thanks professor Dr. Marc-Antoine Kaeser of the Laténium in Switzerland for the reference.

¹² Emeterio Cuadrado Díaz, *La necrópolis ibérica de El Cigarralejo (Mula, Murcia)*, Bibliotheca Praehistorica Hispana, 23 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1987), 86, as cited in Quesada Sanz, *El Armamento Ibérico*, 1:347.

¹³ Sealey, *Warrior Grave from Kelvedon*, 26.

Roman Imperial Period

L. Chabal examined wood associated with weapons of the Roman imperial period in the valley of the Saône River in eastern France.¹⁴ The socket of a pilum (object no. 117) contained ash wood (*fraxinus sp.*). A three-sided ferrule (object 128) contained ash wood (*fraxinus sp.*). The socket of a spear with a long socket and small barbed head (*framea*, object 125) contained an unidentified angiosperm (described as a heavy wood, *bois lourde ou assez lourde*). The socket of a point with a long socket and small barbed head (object 126) contained elm wood (*ulmus minor*).

The shaft embedded in the socket of a spearhead from Roman Carlisle is of ash wood (*fraxinus sp.*).¹⁵ In the attached timber, it seems to be made from a log that was split or sawed lengthwise.

L. Allason-Jones identified the wood in the sockets of two spearheads from the Roman fort at Corbridge as “ash (*fraxinus sp.*) of mature wood.”¹⁶

Harry F. Tagg identified the wood in the socket of a Roman spearhead from Newbridge as “hazel (*corylus avellana*).”¹⁷

The local archaeology service identified the wood in the sockets of five butt-spikes from the courtyard of the *principia* (headquarters) of the Roman fort at Nijmegen in the Netherlands.¹⁸ Four could be identified as *fraxinus sp.* (ash) and one as *corylus sp.* (hazelnut). These spikes may have been mounted on sacred standards or decorative spears associated with a nearby altar or statue. The report also noted which wood was from the trunk and which from branches.

¹⁴ L. Chabal, “Identification botanique et interprétation d’échantillons de bois appartenant à des armes romaines,” in *Du Silex à La Poudre: 4,000 ans d’armement en val de saône: exposition 1990–1991*, ed. L. Bonnamour (Montagnac, France: Éditions Monique Mergoil, 1990), 98–100.

¹⁵ Howard-Davis, *The Carlisle Millennium Project*, 714.

¹⁶ M. C. Bishop and J. N. Dore, eds., *Corbridge: Excavations of the Roman Fort and Town, 1947–1980* (London: Historic Buildings and Monument Commission, 1988), 193, no. 9, 18.

¹⁷ James Curle, ed., *A Roman Frontier Post and Its People: The Fort at Newstead* (Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons for the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1911), 360 table 2, no. 4.

¹⁸ Stephan Weiß-König, “Besondere Schaftspitzen,” *Journal of Roman Military Equipment Studies* 21 (2020): 20.

Four samples from the Saône Valley, 1 from Carlisle, 2 from Corbridge, 1 from Newstead, and 5 from Nijmegen provide 13 samples from the Roman imperial period.

Yorkshire

Ian M. Stead describes spears in graves of the Iron Age Arras culture (ca. 400 BCE–100 CE) in Yorkshire:

Slightly more than half have traces of the shaft surviving as mineralized preserved wood in the socket: a dozen examples were identified (certainly or possibly) and most were from coppiced willow (or poplar) and hazel; two were ash. Many of the sockets are perforated for a rivet or nail to secure them to the shaft.¹⁹

Because these graves contain few artifacts, they are difficult to date within the duration of the Arras culture.

Jacqui Watson of the Ancient Monuments Laboratory examined 28 early Anglo-Saxon spears from West Heslerton in Yorkshire, England.²⁰

- 9 hazel (*corylus avellana*?)
- 5 willow (*salix* sp.) or poplar (*populus* sp.)
- 4 “mature ash” (*fraxinus* sp.)
- 3 alder (*alnus* sp.)
- 7 unknown

¹⁹ Ian M. Stead, *Iron Age Cemeteries in East Yorkshire: Excavations at Burton Fleming, Rudston, Garton-on-the-Wolds, and Kirkburn*, English Heritage Archaeological Report 22 (London: English Heritage in association with British Museum Press, 1991), 75, <https://doi.org/10.5284/1028203>.

²⁰ Christine Haughton and Dominic Powlesland, *West Heslerton: The Anglian Cemetery*, 2 vols. (n.p.: Landscape Research Centre, 1999), 1:124.

Unfortunately, Bruce E. Blackistone does not mention the type of wood in his description of spears from five cemeteries from early Anglo-Saxon Britain.²¹ Blackistone measured scale drawings in the reports on five sites:

- Empingham II, Rutland²²
- Sewerby, Yorkshire²³
- Bifrons, Kent²⁴
- Worthy Park, Kingsworthy²⁵
- Alton, Hampshire²⁶

If we treat “a dozen” as exactly 12, then 12 Arras culture spears and 28 Anglo-Saxon spears provide 40 spears from Yorkshire.

²¹ Bruce Edward Blackistone, “Analysis of Spearheads, Ferrules and Shafts from Migration-Age Anglo-Saxon Burials,” Age of Datini, originally posted in Spear Shafts forum thread, Sword Forum International, accessed 30 January 2023.

²² Jane R. Timby et al., *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Empingham II, Rutland*, Oxbow Monographs 70 (Haver-town, UK: Oxbow Books, 1996).

²³ Susan M. Hirst, *An Anglo-Saxon Inhumation Cemetery at Sewerby, East Yorkshire*, York University Archaeological Publications 4 (York, UK: York University, 1985).

²⁴ David Griffiths and Tanya Dickinson, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History 11* (Bifrons) (Oxford, UK: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2000).

²⁵ Sonia Chadwick Hawkes and Guy Grainger, *The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Worthy Park, Kingsworthy Near Winchester, Hampshire*, Monograph no. 59 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2003).

²⁶ Vera I. Evison, *An Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Alton, Hampshire*, Hampshire Field Club Monograph 4 (n.p.: Hampshire Field Club, 1988).

Pyrrhus's Imprint on Hannibal

by *Fernando López Sánchez, PhD*

Introduction: Similarities between Hannibal and Pyrrhus

Carthaginian general and statesman Hannibal's childhood was deeply immersed in Greek culture and tradition far more than Roman or other ancient historians have acknowledged. One reason for the shroud of mystery that surrounds Hannibal (247–ca. 183 BCE) is that past historians believed him to be simply a Carthaginian, which signifies a major error in Hannibal's personal history.¹ Hannibal had been taught and educated by the Greek scholar Sosylos of Sparta, who accompanied him on his march to Italy, and in addition, he was also influenced greatly in many ways by his knowledge of Alexander, Agathocles, and Pyrrhus.² He considered Pyrrhus (319–272 BCE) the second-greatest general of all time and very possibly used the strategy, tactics, and useful information

¹ According to Cassius Dio (*Histories* frag. 13.54.3): "He was able to manage matters thus because in addition to his natural capacity he was versed in much Punic learning common to his country, and likewise in much Greek learning."

² The Carthaginian general had gathered a small group of trusted confidants including Sosylus of Sparta, his old teacher, and the Sicilian Silenus of Caleacte, who both "lived with him as long as fortune allowed" (Nepos, *Life of Hannibal* 13.3). On the influences of Alexander, Agathocles, and Pyrrhus, see Efreim Zambon, "From Agathocles to Hieron II: The Birth and Development of *Basileia* in Hellenistic Sicily," in *Ancient Tyranny*, ed. Sian Lewis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 82–83, <https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748621255.001.0001>; and Richard Miles, "Hannibal and Propaganda," in *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, ed. Dexter Hoyos (Oxford, UK: Wiley, 2011), 261, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444393712.ch15>.

found in Pyrrhus's now-lost books to help him confront the Romans.³ There is no definitive proof of this, however, and it is also undetermined what has been derived from Carthaginian or Greek sources in the Roman texts relating to Hannibal.⁴ However, Sicily and the Greek culture found on this island definitely had a huge influence on Hannibal.⁵ He was a member of the Barcid family and had learned various practical methods from the Siciliotes, as well—the most important being how to attack in a Hellenistic way: how to employ elephants, master the art of Hellenistic siege warfare (*poliorkia*), strike beautiful Hellenistic-like coins, and even how to construct a sort of Hellenistic kingship (*basileia*), in conjunction with many other things.⁶ Therefore, it would seem strange that Hannibal and the Barcids would have no knowledge or had learned nothing from the books and experiences of Pyrrhus in Sicily and Italy. Nevertheless, historians may be tempted to explain Hannibal's behavior as an argument from silence, since no records exist.⁷ Yet, it is reasonable to examine why events may have happened in the way they occurred. By studying Pyrrhus,

³In the anecdote of a famous meeting in 193 BCE between Scipio and Hannibal, the latter expressed great admiration for Pyrrhus's generalship (Livy, *History of Rome* 35.14.5–12; Appian, *Syrian Wars* 9–10; and Plutarch, *Life of Titus Flamininus* 21). The account is almost certainly spurious. See Maurice Holleaux, *Rome et la conquête de l'Orient: Philippe V et Antiochos le Grand*, Études d'épigraphie et d'histoire grecques, part 2, *Rome, la Macédoine et l'Orient grec*, vol. 5 (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1957), 184–207; and Serge Lancel, *Hannibal*, trans. Antonia Nevill (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 1999), 195. However, it may reflect a tradition that Hannibal possessed knowledge of Pyrrhus's campaigns; see also Livy, *History of Rome* 35.14.5 and Plutarch, *Life of Titus Flamininus* 21.3.

⁴Polybius, for example, is sharply critical of Sosylus of Lacedaemon and of Chaereas; see Sosylus von Lakdaimon, F 176, and Chaereas, F 177, in Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* (Fragments of the Greek Historians; FGRIH), part 2b, Special Histories, Autobiography (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1962), 903–6. He also mentions some other Greek sources, many of whom seem to have been pro-Carthaginian. Most of them are left unnamed.

⁵The dominance of Carthage outside Sicily served mainly to support warfare in this island or to make it possible. There was special significance in the Carthaginian rule in Sicily, the so-called *epikrateia* (the expression also occurs in the Carthaginian-Syracusan treaty of 339/8 BCE; see Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 16.82.3).

⁶Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars* (London: Cassell, 2000), 25–62. Also valuable is Duncan Head, *Armies of the Macedonian and Punic Wars, 359 BCE to 146 BCE* (Sussex, UK: Wargames Research Group, 1982). The use of elephants in land warfare is well discussed by Howard Hayes Scullard, *The Elephant in the Greek and Roman World* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974); John M. Kistler, *War Elephants* (Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2007); and Konstantin Nossov, *War Elephants* (Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2008). See also on combined weaponry Graham Wrightson, "Macedonian Armies and the Perfection of Combined Arms," in *Greece, Macedonia and Persia: Studies in the Social, Political and Military Consequences of Conquest Societies in Honour of Waldemar Heckel*, ed. Timothy Howe, E. Edward Garvin, and Graham Wrightson (Oxford, UK: Oxbow, 2015), 59–68.

⁷Sean Alexander Gentry, "Hannibal's Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation" (PhD diss., Newcastle Upon-Tyne University, 2002), 15.

we can interpret the reason why Hannibal might have adopted a certain strategy and can lay the groundwork for the essential choices he made. It is true that great generals do not, as a rule, repeat what failed beforehand, but the principles of war remain the same even though the way wars are fought change. As their separate yet similar histories unfold, it becomes apparent that Pyrrhus can be a lens through which we can better focus on and comprehend Hannibal.⁸

On the psychological level, in addition to the military and the economic plane, Hannibal's strategy was also successful. The causes and responsibilities for the Second Punic War have been discussed relentlessly, however the case of Pyrrhus entering Italy and Sicily receives much less focus.⁹ The exception, however, has been the true reason of the invitation of two cities, Tarentum and Syracuse, to make Pyrrhus intervene in their wars.¹⁰ More problematic, however, is the question of Hannibal's and Pyrrhus's grasp of good strategy, which includes their plans for the dissolution of the Roman alliance system by vigorous attacks.¹¹ Consequently, the intrinsic superiority of an offensive rather than a defensive strategy greatly diminished Rome's advantage, despite their superior numbers. The charismatic personalities of the two men, Hannibal and Pyrrhus, who faced strikingly familiar scenarios when acting in Italy, practically outweighed the logistics of supplying their armies over long distances and the soli-

⁸ Pedro Barceló, "Punic Politics, Economy and Alliances, 218–201," in *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, 366, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444393712.ch20>: "Hannibal had made a close study of Pyrrhus' campaign in Italy, together with the reasons for his failure. In the end, the king of Epirus had, despite his military superiority to the Romans, suffered a political defeat because he had not managed to draw enough allies to join him. To avoid this, Hannibal did everything he could to build up an Italian front directed against Rome, with its center in Campania, Apulia, and Bruttium."

⁹ Barceló, "Punic Politics, Economy and Alliances, 218–201," 357, takes a good approach on this topic.

¹⁰ Seeking military assistance from Pyrrhus was a joint Italiote decision made under Tarentine leadership; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 13.5. Other ancient sources emphasize that Tarentum acted alone in inviting Pyrrhus, such as Appian, *Samnite History* 7.1–2; and Livy, *Periochae* 12; and Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 22: Ambassadors came to Pyrrhus from the cities of Agrigentum, Syracuse, and Leontini who "begged him to help them to drive out the Carthaginians and rid the island of its tyrants" (Plutarch, 22.1).

¹¹ According to Livy (*History of Rome* 34.60.3; compare with Polybius, *Histories* 3.34.1–5), Hannibal recognized that the key to defeating Rome was to march into Italy and disturb its alliance system, and he appears to have expected his invasion to yield a quick victory rather than a war of attrition. Gentry, "Hannibal's Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation," 108–16.

clarity of the border states. Also important were Hannibal's and Pyrrhus's plans to open second fronts. In Hannibal's case, this involved the invasion of Sardinia, the increased activities in Spain, and the possibility of Philip V of supplementing Hannibal's forces in Italy.¹² For Pyrrhus, this was his projected intervention in Africa, reducing first Carthaginian control over Sicily in Lilybaeum.¹³ Thus, both Hannibal and Pyrrhus must have been confident of a peace agreement on the horizon with Rome, as central Italy was not the principal region to gain, in their perspective, but other more distant regions.¹⁴ In summary, historians can make a theoretical reconsideration of the character of Hannibal by investigating Pyrrhus's general approach to war in Italy and Sicily. This study focuses on an analysis of Hannibal's and Pyrrhus's commands and strategies to prove that both generals made wise strategic choices and astutely balanced political and military deliberations. A new clarity emerges through explaining Hannibal's strategies in the context of Pyrrhus's actions, when the actions and strategies of one are interchanged with the other.

Alternatives after Defeat:

The Barcid and the Agathoclean Experiences

Before discussing the Carthaginian and the Pyrrhic interventions in Italy, it is important to note that Hamilcar Barca's circle of interest, to which Hannibal belonged, was directed toward overseas territories. They sought compensation for the lost possessions in Sicily and Sardinia, which had been surrendered after defeat in the First Punic War (264–241 BCE). The aim was to establish a new area of control (*epikrateia*) in Iberia.¹⁵ An ex-

¹² Gentry, "Hannibal's Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation," 26.

¹³ Gentry, "Hannibal's Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation," 43.

¹⁴ The strategic objective of Hellenistic warfare usually meant compelling an enemy to surrender or seek peace. Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, 156; and Toni Naco del Hoyo, "Roman Politics, Finances and Economy in the Second Punic War," in *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, 386, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444393712.ch21>.

¹⁵ Dexter Hoyos, "Carthage in Africa and Spain, 241–218," in *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, 214–15, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444393712.ch12>.

pedition that began from the city of Gades, allied with Carthage, brought large parts of the valley of the Guadalquivir under Punic control (from 237 BCE on). A “new city” (Cartagena) was founded in Iberia by Hamilcar’s successor Hasdrubal, his son-in-law, and he was acclaimed, circa 228 BCE, “supreme general” (*strategos autokrator* in Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 25.12), “by the whole Iberian people” following his marriage to an Iberian princess. The Carthaginians had truly understood that they needed to change their area of action from the central to the western Mediterranean, after the Romans defeated them in the First Punic War. From Antigonus Monophthalmus or Demetrius Poliorcetes in the east to Agathocles and Pyrrhus in the central Mediterranean, many of the successors to Alexander the Great, the *diadochoi*, since the late fourth century BCE, usually abandoned lost territories to concentrate on more promising new lands.¹⁶ Although ancient and modern historiography has not stressed its frequency, this was a common approach before the Barcid family appropriated it.

By changing preferences from one region to another, the Barcid family could also have learned directly from Sicilian (Agathocles) and southern Italian (Pyrrhus) examples, rather than learning from past, distant *diadochoi* in the east, such as Demetrius Monophthalmus or Antigonus Poliorcetes.¹⁷ Carthaginian coinage began first in Sicily, not in Africa, and Carthaginian mastery of *poliorkia* and Hellenistic-style generalship in practice was also learned in Sicily. The siege of Saguntum in 219 BCE in Iberia, for example, was designed as an assault on a Sicilian city, and it is very significant in this respect that the primary account of the siege is likely to have come from the Sicilian Silenos (Appian, *The Spanish Wars*

¹⁶ Pat Wheatley and Charlotte Dunn, *Demetrius the Besieger* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹⁷ From the end of the fourth century, considerable numbers of Greek mercenaries had fought in Carthage’s armies, and there were close cultural connections. Giovanni Brizzi, “Il culto di Mens e la seconda guerra punica: la funzione di un’astrazione nella lotta ad Annibale,” in *L’Afrique, la Gaule, la Religion à l’époque romaine. Mélanges à la mémoire de Marcel Le Glay*, ed. Yann Le Bohec (Brussels: Latomus, 1994), 512–22; and Emilio Galvagno, “I Sicelioti tra Cartagine e Roma,” in *Greci, Fenici, Romani: interazioni culturali nel Mediterraneo antico*, ed. Sandro Filippo Bondi and Maddalena Vallozza (Viterbo: Università degli studi della Tuscia, 2005), 97–125.

10.39).¹⁸ In other words, several Syracusan leaders had already carried out the Barcid family's celebrated "uniqueness" in understanding the need to replace Sicily and Sardinia in the Mediterranean with another region. Thus, for example, after the peace treaty of 306 BCE brought to an end his campaign against Carthage, Diodorus confirms Agathocles's presence in Italic waters as early as 304 BCE, when he plundered the Lipari Islands (Diodorus, *Library* 20.101.1). Also, a Syracusan army is present in the southern area of Italy before 300 BCE.¹⁹ Importantly, Agathocles managed to conclude the conflict between Lucania and Tarentum during his first year in Italy, satisfying the major objective of his expedition (Diodorus, *Library* 20.104.3). In 295 BCE, a second Agathoclean campaign in southern Italy began with a massive gathering of troops, more than 30,000 soldiers, while at the same time taking his daughter Lanassa to Epirus to be married to Pyrrhus (Diodorus, 21.4; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 9.1; Appian, *Samnite Wars* 11.1). Therefore, the marriage of Lanassa to Pyrrhus needs to be considered in terms of the importance of Corcyra as a port and an important trade link between Syracuse and the Balkans. This provides proof of the complete reorientation of Syracusan politics from Sicily and North Africa to southern Italy after the defeat of Agathocles against Carthage. The threat of this Agathoclean advance in southern Italy was considered so important and decisive that in 291 BCE, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Rome settled a Latin colony at Venusia, above all to hinder this Syracusan advance.²⁰ Of course, Saguntum was not

¹⁸ The Carthaginian attackers here relied on a well-known standard, referred to in Greek as περιτειχισμός. Incidentally, Saguntum occupies an important place among the cities mentioned in Silius Italicus's *Punica*, finding itself alongside centers as Capua or Syracuse. For Silenos and Saguntum, see A. Klotz, *Livius und seine Vorgänger*, vol. 2 (Leipzig-Berlin, 1941), 123. For the "Sicilian" methods used in taking the city of Saguntum, see Miron Wolny, "Siege of Saguntum (219 BCE)—The Ancient Foundation of the Modern Myth," *Klio. Czasopismo poświęcone dziejom Polski i powszechnym* 68, no. 4 (April 2023): s. 3–23, esp. 13–18, <https://doi.org/10.12775/KLIO.2023.028>.

¹⁹ When the Sicilian fleet defeated Cassander at Corcyra in 300 BCE, the Syracusan troops were deployed, along with the Bruttians, in the southern part of Italy (Diodorus, *Library* 21.2–3).

²⁰ Howard Hayes Scullard, *Roman Politics 220–150 BC* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1951), 118, plainly states that Venusia was settled against Agathocles. Decebal Nedu, "Agathocles and the Italic Powers at the Beginning of the 3 Century B.C.," *Revista Pontica*, no. 43 (2010): 48–49, fully agrees with him.

a Roman colony in the 220s BCE, but functioned, like Venusia in Italy against Agathocles, as a type of barrier for the Carthaginians in Iberia.²¹

Pyrrhus, as the rightful heir to Agathocles, was received in a similarly enthusiastic way as Hasdrubal was by the Iberians.²² In the same way that Agathocles had probably planned to continue his dynasty with his own descendants before he died, Pyrrhus, now married to Lanassa, daughter of Agathocles, began to strengthen his own dynasty in the region through appointing his youngest son Helenus as his heir in Sicily, and his second son Alexander as heir to his domains in Italy (Justin, *History of the World* 23.3). This behavior, of course, recalls how Barcids in general, and Hasdrubal in particular, behaved in Iberia. The claim here is that the impulsiveness so characteristic of Hamilcar, Hasdrubal, and Hannibal had nothing uniquely “Barcid” about it but was typical of the Hellenistic *diadochoi* and especially of Agathocles and Pyrrhus in the central Mediterranean. Thus, in the 230s and 220s, as an alternative to the lost territories of Sicily and Sardinia, the Barcid expansion into Iberia seems to have been designed on their Sicilian models. Pyrrhus more specifically became an example of how the Barcids should behave, due to his *basileia* and swift moves from one region to another between 280 and 275 BCE.

A key difference between the two kings can, however, be inferred from the different chronology in which they both lived. Pyrrhus still built his career as if he were one of the Successors (*Diadochoi*) of Alexander. Therefore, he tried to prove himself and his role as legitimate on the field of battle, making a real connection between his claims of kingship and of

²¹ Polybius, *Histories* 3.30.1 says that “many years” before Hannibal’s office, Saguntum made a *deditio in fidem* to Rome. If he is not mistaken, it was probably 228/227 BCE. This leaves aside the vexed question of his muddled account of the relationship between Saguntum in Spain and the Ebro Treaty (Polybius, 3.30.3–4; compare with 3.15.5), for which, see Dexter Hoyos, *Unplanned Wars: The Origins of the First and Second Punic Wars*, Untersuchungen zur Literatur und Geschichte, book 50 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), 150–73.

²² Pyrrhus had married Lanassa, the daughter of Agathocles, tyrant of Syracuse, and as a dowry had received Corcyra and possibly other Ionian islands. Lanassa bore Pyrrhus’s second son, who would become Alexander II. Nicholas Sekunda, *The Army of Pyrrhus of Epirus: 3rd Century BCE* (London: Osprey Men-at-Arms, 2019), 8; and Polybius, *Histories* 7.4.5.

“spear-won-land” (*doriktetos chora*).²³ On the contrary, Hannibal rather belonged to the second (or rather third) generation of general kings after Alexander, the so-called Those Born Later (i.e., descendants, *Epigono*). This later generation, while powerful, was composed of regional dynasts who tried to establish well-delimited territories. This can help to understand why the Barcids at least had concrete success and succeeded in cementing some territorial gains, whereas Pyrrhus’s withdrawal back to Epirus after his campaigns in Italy and Sicily in 275 BCE left him with nothing beyond the Balkans.

Pyrrhus, Hannibal, and the Breaking of Rome’s Ascendancy in Italy

The Greek city of Tarentum on Italy’s southern coast declared war on Rome in 282 BCE, but as the war was ending, the Epirote king was invited to intervene in its affairs in 281 BCE.²⁴ Pyrrhus, the Epirote king, agreed to command the combined troops of Tarentum and other Greek cities in Italy, along with his own troops, which gave Tarentum the backing it needed. In all probability, Pyrrhus’s tactics in Italy intended to cause a rupture in the Roman alliance system by his devastating victories, but not

²³ Diodorus 19.105.4: οὐκέτι γὰρ ὄντος οὐδενὸς τοῦ διαδεξιμένου τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸ λοιπὸν ἕκαστος τῶν κρατούντων ἔθνων ἢ πόλεων βασιλικὰς εἶχεν ἐλπίδας καὶ τὴν ὑφ’ ἑαυτὸν τεταγμένην χώραν εἶχεν ὥσανεὶ τινα βασιλείαν δορίκτη τον (“... each of those who ruled over nations or cities had hopes of royal power and held the territory which had been placed under him as if it were a spear-won kingdom”).

²⁴ Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 13.6.

to destroy Rome or to make her unimportant.²⁵ Pyrrhus probably deduced that he would only need a few defeats for the allied soldiers of Rome to become less willing to lay down their lives for Rome or for the allies to become exhausted from providing and losing troops to sustain their own subjection to Rome.²⁶ Similarly to Pyrrhus, Hannibal hoped to destroy Roman supremacy in Italy. He admired Pyrrhus and had knowledge of his campaigns against the Romans. According to Livy, Hannibal stated that Pyrrhus was so experienced in gaining the confidence of the people that the Italian states would rather be governed by him, a foreign king, than by the Romans, even though they had long been under Roman control.²⁷

Although there is no direct evidence for Hannibal's analysis of the Roman alliance system, no doubt he knew, as Pyrrhus did before, of

²⁵ Ancient sources for the Pyrrhic war against Rome: Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 20.1–11; Appian, *Samnite Wars* 9.1–12.2; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 16.1–26.2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 19.8–20.12; Livy, *Periochae* 12–14; Johannes Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 8.4–6; and Cassius Dio, *Histories* 9–10. Jeff Champion, *Pyrrhus of Epirus* (South Yorkshire, UK: Pen & Sword Military, 2009), 117, emphasizes how “the Romans also set about ensuring the loyalty of their allies (. . . as) they arrested and executed the leaders of the anti-Roman factions (. . . to) ensure that most of the Italian cities remained loyal, or at least neutral” in fear of their network of alliances to disintegrate.” As Champion remarks, the victory won by Pyrrhus at Heraclea “convinced many of the Italian cities who had been watching the turn of events, to commit fully to the cause,” as Cannae did for Hannibal in 216. For Patrick Alan Kent, *A History of the Pyrrhic War* (Abingdon, NY: Routledge Studies in Ancient History, 2020), 135: “The Romans were in a poor position in the winter of 280/279. . . . Italy was a dangerous place, with the only sure means of survival being military power enhanced through military alliances. Pyrrhus’ proposals would have exposed Rome to her enemies once more by undermining her alliance network and creating a rival one.” For Gentry, “Hannibal’s Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation,” 21, 155: “Like Pyrrhus, Hannibal’s initial strategy included the destruction of hegemony in Italy” and “Pyrrhus . . . tried to win over some of Rome’s allies” being the main goal of his war to “cause a break in the Roman Alliance System, by absolute crushing victories.”

²⁶ Hellenistic monarchs frequently promised freedom and autonomy (ἐλευθερία καὶ αὐτονομία) to woo smaller states to their side; on “freedom and autonomy” and similar slogans and propaganda, see Goldsworthy, *The Punic Wars*, 155–56; and Erich S. Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 2 vols. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 132–57.

²⁷ See Livy, *History of Rome* 35.14.9. Walter Ameling, “The Rise of Carthage to 264,” in *A Companion to the Punic Wars*, 50, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444393712.ch3>, highlights the fact that a significant number of allies did in fact defect after Cannae in 216 BCE and continued to defect as late as 213/12 BCE. This speaks against the notion that Hannibal’s foreignness was an insurmountable obstacle. See also Gentry, “Hannibal’s Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation,” 267. Many authors have argued that Hannibal hoped to establish a balance of power in the western Mediterranean by reducing Rome’s hegemony to central Italy. Among them: John F. Lazenby, *Hannibal’s War: A Military History of the Second Punic War* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1978), 85–86; John Briscoe, “The Second Punic War,” *Cambridge Ancient History* 2, no. 8 (1989): 46; John F. Lazenby, “Was Maharbal Right?,” in *The Second Punic War: A Reappraisal*, eds. Tim J. Cornell, Boris Rankov, and Philip Sabin (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1996) 41–42; Lancel, *Hannibal*, 109; and Edmund Groag, *Hannibal als Politiker* (Wien, Austria: Seidel, 1929), 79–96.

Rome's alliances.²⁸ He would certainly have been acquainted with the general pattern in antiquity of subject-alliances, which would have been the principal means by which one city-state established its dominance over others.²⁹ Likewise, he would undoubtedly have been conscious that these unequal alliances tended to be tenuous, unbalanced, and insecure.³⁰ These fragile relationships were intrinsic to the provincialism that was at the center of the value system of city-state culture; subordination of one city to another was observed as an undesired state of affairs.³¹ Whether it was another city-state, a dynastic king, or some other power that controlled a city-state, a revolt would be expected if or when an opportunity presented itself.³² Even though it was under Roman supremacy, the Italian peninsula continued as part of the city-state world, which was a group of related communities that had some type of subject-partner relationship with Rome. The Roman alliance system included Latin colonies and many allied communities that had treaties with Rome.³³ As there were marked language and ethnic divisions, since at the time a man was allowed to have two loyalties—one to his own patria and one to Rome—it was not unreasonable for Pyrrhus or Hannibal to think about provoking an effective

²⁸ Gentry, "Hannibal's Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation," 155.

²⁹ Tim Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000–264 BC)* (London: Routledge, 1995), 364–68.

³⁰ Theodora Hantos, *Das römische Bundesgenossensystem in Italien* (Munich: Beck, 1983) has argued that the Italian states can be grouped according to five patterns of obedience and integration, which Rome applied according to specific circumstances, not as part of a long-term plan to unite Italy but rather to control and dominate the allies.

³¹ John Rich, "Treaties, Allies and the Roman Conquest of Italy," in *War and Peace in Ancient and Medieval History*, ed. Philip de Souza and Jérôme France (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 51–75, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511496301.005>, argues that affairs between Rome and the Italians were widely varied and rather unsystematic.

³² There were in Italy several leagues or confederacies, such as the so-called Samnite, Bruttian, and Etruscan Leagues. A hegemonic power within a federal structure might use the league's resources for its own imperial aims. Such leagues may have led to *more* conflicts rather than fewer. See Hans Beck, "Prologue: Power Politics in Fourth Century Greece," in *Central Greece and the Politics of Power in the Fourth Century BC*, eds. John Buckler and Hans Beck (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1–30.

³³ It has often been assumed that the arrangement of allied states formed part of a project, planned, to unite the peninsula under Roman hegemony, as postulated by K. Julius Beloch, *Campanien: Topographie, Geschichte und Leben der Umgebung Neapels im Alterthum, nebst einem Atlas von Campanien mit beischreibendem Texte* (Berlin: Verlag Von S. Cavalry, 1879). Indeed, it is best to reject the notion of a "strict hierarchy" of alliances.

break on the Roman alliance system.³⁴ This was a truly Greek conception of politics, and it is worth noting that both Hannibal and Pyrrhus respected the rights of their Italian and Sicilian allies to mint their own coins.

Therefore, Rome's advantage could be greatly diminished by the intrinsic superiority of an offensive strategy due to these potential lines of fracture. Pyrrhus's charisma and confidence to open a second front by crossing into Sicily, and with the supervision of activities in Macedonia, exceeded the logistics of providing for his armies over long distances. Hannibal's personality also matched the attraction possessed by Pyrrhus.³⁵ He opened a front in Sardinia, and increased his activities in Spain, while at the same time in Italy he carried out negotiations with Philip V of Macedon and with Syracuse.³⁶ With Hannibal's brothers remaining in Spain facing the Scipios, the promise of rebellion in Sardinia, and the possibility of Philip augmenting his forces in Italy, Hannibal must have been certain that there would soon be a peace treaty with Rome. The same applies to Pyrrhus and his different fronts. And, undoubtedly, he would also have believed in a peace treaty with Rome.

Both Pyrrhus and Hannibal counted on the help of several important cities to assist with their campaigns. Some were ancient cities like Capua, Tarentum, or Syracuse, which were similar in size, prosperity, and potency to Rome. Tarentum, for example, invited Pyrrhus to intervene in its affairs in 281 BCE, and in 213 BCE, Hannibal was asked to do the same by a party of Tarentine citizens.³⁷ In the south, some Syracusans and other cities in Sicily asked Pyrrhus to traverse the Ionian Sea and land on the

³⁴ Nicholas Purcell, "The Creation of the Provincial Landscape: The Roman Impact on Cisalpine Gaul," in *The Early Roman Empire in the West*, eds. Thomas F. C. Blagg and Martin Millett (Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 1990), 10.

³⁵ Gentry, "Hannibal's Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation," 376.

³⁶ Already in 219–218 BCE, Hannibal made military arrangements encompassing Spain, Africa, and Carthage as war with Rome approached (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 25.10.3; and Polybius, *Histories* 3.8.2; 3.33.5–18). Polybius stresses that the war's direction on all fronts lay with Hannibal throughout, though naturally he acted through lieutenants in theaters outside Italy (9.22.1–6).

³⁷ The Tarentine political situation during the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE) bears a strong resemblance to the factionalism and aristocratic rivalry on display at the time of the Pyrrhic invasion. Polybius, *Histories* 8.31.3; and Livy, *History of Rome* 25.10.8. See also Appian, *Hannibal* 32.

island. Pyrrhus also wanted to count on the support of Capua and Naples to halt Rome farther north (Johannes Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 8.4), and Hannibal tried to do the same.³⁸ Hannibal's first tentative propositions to the city of Capua came soon after his resounding victory at Lake Trasimene in 217 BCE, and later, after Capua had been in turmoil with Rome for over a year. Livy states initially that Hannibal marched to Capua after being rejected at Naples (Livy, *History of Rome* 23.2.1), but he later reports that it was Hannibal who was invited by envoys of the Capuans (23.6.5), before he marched to the city (Zonaras, 9.2). According to Livy, a new Italian federation under the nominal leadership of Capua and dominated by Carthage was implemented by Hannibal (Livy, 23.10.2). However, his generosity with the Capuans was not a unique phenomenon. The terms of the treaty that Hannibal signed with the Capuans were substantial and like those that he had forged with Tarentum (Polybius, *Histories* 8.25.2), Locri Epizephyri (Livy, 25.8.8), and the Lucanians (Livy, 24.1.9), which guaranteed that his new allies would exist under their own laws (Livy, 25.16.7). These treaties assured the freedom of these cities, with neither taxes nor other cargoes extorted from them by the Carthaginians. Hannibal's promise of ἐλευθερία (freedom) to these communities is comparable to Pyrrhus's request that the Italiote Greeks be permitted to live under their own laws (Appian, *Samnite Wars* 10.1). In fact, the territories and the strategies Hannibal and Pyrrhus used to attempt to squash Rome were the same.

Apulia was also considered by both men as a rear and secure region to control both the access to Campania and to Latium and to possibly

³⁸ Kent, *A History of the Pyrrhic War*, 99–100, 119n32, on the importance of this city for Pyrrhus and Hannibal alike.

associate Italy with Adriatic politics.³⁹ From there, Pyrrhus was no doubt watching the events that were taking place in Macedonia at the time of the battle of Asculum, when the Galatian invaders of Greece slaughtered the new king, Ptolemy Ceraunus, in early 279 BCE.⁴⁰ From there as well, Cannae as a major battlefield in 216 BCE cannot be detached from Hannibal's intention to intervene in Macedonian politics, which actually happened in 215 BCE.⁴¹

Lastly, both Pyrrhus and Hannibal considered that the fight for Sicily was vital, even more so than defending Capua or Tarentum. In Syracuse, the death of Hicetas in 279 BCE, and the death of Hieronymus in 214 BCE, caused unrest in the island and in both cases, Pyrrhus and Hannibal sought to abuse the situations.⁴² For Pyrrhus, this brought about his *basileia* in Syracuse, which was a direct result of Hicetas's death and Pyrrhus's victory at Heraclea in 280 BCE. For Hannibal, his victory at Cannae gave him the opportunity to attract Syracuse into his camp until the city fell under Roman control in 212 BCE. Hannibal and Pyrrhus effectively viewed Sicily and Syracuse as keys in their military chess games.

Forcing Rome to Sue for Peace

To conquer Rome, Pyrrhus employed tactics that Hannibal would also use. Both believed that a conquest on the battlefield would urge the allies

³⁹ In 279 BCE, Pyrrhus defeated the Romans at Ausculum in Apulia, where he probably hoped to gather more allies. Zonaras (*Annals of Rome* 8.5) claims that he gained many Apulian cities by both force and agreement: some Apulians helped the Romans, but only the Arpians are specified in the sources, perhaps indicating that other Apulian cities either sat out or actively supported Pyrrhus. See Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 20.3.2; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 21.9; Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 8.5. Once Apulia was made safe, he would have the choice of advancing west into Campania, or against Rome itself. Apulia was also very important as base and rear region for Hannibal and for the years 215–210 BCE. Livy, *History of Rome* 26.41.15 compares the Roman victory over Arpi to the capture of Capua and Syracuse.

⁴⁰ Champion, *Pyrrhus*, 203.

⁴¹ The treaty as transmitted by Polybius, signed at the climax of Carthaginian power (215 BCE), is the only document available that gives any kind of insight into Carthage's political intentions. Before leaving New Carthage, he was informed about the human and physical geography of northern Italy (Polybius, *Histories* 3.34, 48). He knew the location of Tarentum and recognized its strategic importance in relation to Macedon (Livy, *History of Rome* 24.23).

⁴² See Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 22.7.2, for the death of Hicetas and Pyrrhus being invited to come to Sicily; Polybius 7.4.1–9 and Livy 24.6.7–9 for the Syracusan revolt and Hieronymus expecting territorial gains in return for his alliance with Hannibal.

of Rome to abandon her and make her negotiate a peace treaty. In the Hellenistic Mediterranean world of Pyrrhus and Hannibal, a defeat such as the ones inflicted on Rome at Heraclea, Cannae, and others would inevitably have resulted in a negotiated peace. Rome, having been brutally defeated in battle, would have been expected to agree to peace terms that involved some concessions and compensation to the victor.

However, the Romans were inflexible in their refusal to negotiate. After Heraclea, Pyrrhus attempted to force Rome to agree to a peace treaty by fighting against Capua, the main city of Campania, to destroy the Roman hold over the region (Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 13.6, 17.5, 18.4).⁴³ Away from the Latin homeland, Campania was the most important area for Rome's power, since it was prosperous and had a large workforce. Also, the principal reason for Rome's prior Samnite wars was to gain control of Campania and its resources. Pyrrhus, having failed in his bid to seize the territory, ultimately elected to attack Rome. He followed the route of the Via Latina because the citizens of Praeneste were ferociously anti-Roman since its city had been taken by them in 338 BCE, with the result that the population of Praeneste surrendered the city to him.⁴⁴ After capturing Praeneste, he marched to within 6 kilometers of Rome but recoiled at an assault on the city, as it was reputed to be impregnable due to the walls having been reinforced in 387 BCE after the Gallic assault and house a strong military base inside.⁴⁵ Pyrrhus now found himself in an awkward military position with three different Roman forces to attack, and therefore he made the decision to go south and try instead to seize Naples, a valuable port.⁴⁶ However, the Romans had cleverly taken prior precau-

⁴³ Plutarch (18.4) states explicitly that the Roman senate considered suing for peace because they had been defeated at Heraclea. According to Plutarch (21.1–4) another round of negotiations may have followed after Ausculum, with Cineas making a second trip to Rome, although this may be a reduplication of the negotiations after Heraclea. See Thomas Robert Shannon Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, 2 vols. (New York: American Philological Society, 1951–52), I, 193; and Mary Lefkowitz, "Pyrrhus' Negotiations with the Romans, 280–275 BCE," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, no. 64 (1959): 147–77.

⁴⁴ Champion, *Pyrrhus*, 148.

⁴⁵ Champion, *Pyrrhus*, 148–50.

⁴⁶ Champion, *Pyrrhus*, 147.

tions against the attack.⁴⁷ Sometime during the winter of 280/279 BCE, and after Pyrrhus had entered winter quarters in Tarentum, a delegation of three ex-consuls from the Roman embassy led by Gaius Fabricius, a consul from two years earlier, approached him.⁴⁸ Pyrrhus expected that this impressive delegation had come with full powers to discuss peace but was quickly disillusioned by Fabricius. The embassy only wished to discuss the release, or exchange, of prisoners. Despite everything and the Greek war conventions, Rome still refused to negotiate peace (Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 20.1–5).

Fifty years later, Hannibal used similar tactics. After the Roman catastrophe at Cannae, he tried to begin where Pyrrhus had left off.⁴⁹ Yet, the Romans still did not desire peace, either in 216 BCE after the battle of Cannae; in 215 BCE, when Macedonia was prepared to enter the war; or in 214 BCE, when Syracuse was allied to the Carthaginians.⁵⁰ No doubt if Naples had agreed to change sides in 216 BCE, other cities of importance would probably have followed suit. If Hannibal had gained this crucial seaport of the dimensions and quality of Naples, he could have either waited for direct support from Carthage or at least opened a naval

⁴⁷ Champion, *Pyrrhus*, 147.

⁴⁸ Dionysius Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 19.13; Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 8.4; Justin, *History of the World* 18.2.6–7; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 20; Appian, *Samnite Wars* 10.4; and Champion, *Pyrrhus*, 126.

⁴⁹ For Gentry, “Hannibal’s Strategies during the Second Carthaginian War with Rome and His Ultimate Goal of Roman Subjugation,” 21, Hannibal’s main goal in his war in Italy was the destruction of Roman hegemony in Italy, something that Pyrrhus also actively searched for but did not achieve. See notes 12 and 32 in this article.

⁵⁰ According to Michael P. Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage: Southern Italy during the Second Punic War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 34–35, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511750830>, and notes 86–88, Hannibal surely imagined that a defeated Rome would accept a downgraded status as power in Italy and the Mediterranean.

base to stretch Rome's resources even more.⁵¹ It was an excellent strategy, and the general balance could have swung inevitably toward Hannibal and Carthage and against Rome. However, despite several attempts by Hannibal, the gates of Naples remained firmly closed, and if he wished to find an alternative seaport as valuable as Naples, he had no option but to move south.⁵²

After Cannae and his failure to gain the strategic port of Naples, Hannibal changed tactics to a defensive stance rather than offensive, designed to weaken the Roman army, at least until reinforcements arrived, possibly by Philip V of Macedon and throughout the Adriatic.⁵³ The reason Hannibal was often near the Adriatic after the battle of Cannae until the battle(s) of Herdonia in 212/210 must be related to the reestablishment of this sea route to non-Roman interests (Livy, *History of Rome* 25.19.1–17, 25.20.1, 25.20.5–7, 26.21.1–10).⁵⁴ When Pyrrhus crossed the Ionian Sea

⁵¹ Livy records three separate attempts to take Naples in 216 BCE: the first is placed before the revolt of Capua (*History of Rome* 23.1.5–10), the second after the Capuan revolt but before his first attempt on Nola (23.14.5–6), and the third after Marcellus arrived at Nola but before Hannibal attacked Nuceria (23.15.1–2). Polybius (*Histories* 3.91.1–2) comments in general on the high quality of ports in Campania; Naples was a strategic port and apparently had a significant fishing industry (Livy, 23.1.6–10, 23.15.1). We learn of one major reinforcement of Hannibal in 215–214 BCE (Livy 23.13, 41, 43, 46), but there may have been other attempts, such as at Pisae in 217 (Polybius, 3.96) and perhaps in 206–205 BCE (Livy, 28.46; and Appian, *War against Hannibal* 54.225–6), while a Punic fleet operated from Tarentum for a while before sailing to Corcyra in support of Philip V's fleet (Livy, 26.20, 39 and 27.15). More serious attempts to join the Italian theater came from Hasdrubal (in 207 BCE) and Mago (205–203 BCE) who arrived in the north with major armies. Support from Carthage was often indirect, for most troops were sent to other theaters, particularly Spain.

⁵² Livy records three separate attempts to take Naples in 216 BCE: before the revolt of Capua (*History of Rome* 23.1.5–10), after the Capuan revolt but before his first attempt on Nola (23.14.5–6) and after Marcellus arrived at Nola (23.15.1–2). The first, reported as well by Zonaras (*Annals of Rome* 9.2), and the second are probably historical. Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage*, 132n135. For Hannibal's desire to gain a port, see Livy 23.1.5, 23.15.1–2, and 23.36.1.

⁵³ Briscoe, "The Second Punic War," 68, divides Roman strategy into three phases: "First, the period of meeting Hannibal in open conflict with the three disasters of the Trebbia, Trasimene, and Cannae. Secondly, the period from Cannae until 205, when Roman policy was fundamentally defensive, and thirdly, the final period of the invasion of Africa, first planned . . . in 218."

⁵⁴ The historicity of the so-called first battle of Herdonia is questionable because the details of the battle are very similar to a second battle near Herdonia, reported by Livy (27.1.3–15) and Appian (*War against Hannibal* 48). If it is historical, then Hannibal's decision to enter Apulia was meant only to relieve the siege of Capua by attacking elsewhere to lure the Romans away (Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 114); if the battle did not occur, then Hannibal did not show himself in Apulia during the 212 campaigning season.

from Epirote lands, his aims were also to protect both the Adriatic and the Ionian Seas from Roman interference.⁵⁵

Philip V of Macedon between Cannae and the Fall of Syracuse: A New Pyrrhus on the Horizon?

Rome became increasingly concerned about Philip's ambitions after he ended the war against the Aetolian League soon after the battle of Lake Trasimene in 217 BCE.⁵⁶ The worried Romans believed it to be too much of a coincidence, given his large fleet that was in the Adriatic and Rome's recent enemy Demetrius of Pharos advising Philip.⁵⁷ Both the circumstances emerging in the first years of his reign and also that Philip was the great-grandson of Pyrrhus are important. In 1924, W. W. Tarn published an article in which he attempted to demonstrate that Philip V of Macedon's mother was the Epirot princess Phthia.⁵⁸ The only reference of Phthia in ancient literature is in Justin's *History of the World* 28.1.1–2, which states that she was the daughter of Alexander, king of Epirus, and of Olympias, and that she became the wife of Demetrius II of Macedon. However, Tarn was precise in that Philip was the son of Phthia, the granddaughter of the famous Pyrrhus of Epirus. Her father was Alexander, Pyrrhus's son by Lanassa, while her mother, Olympias, was the daughter of Pyrrhus by Antigone.⁵⁹ Whatever Philip's plans were, he was the descendant of the man that had crossed the Ionian Sea and fought against the Romans in their own territory.

However, the geostrategic danger was not really about Macedonian extension toward Italy or of an anti-Roman alliance of Carthage and

⁵⁵ Polybius concludes his narrative of the First Illyrian War by stating that Roman envoys visiting the Achaean and Aetolian Confederations, Corinth, and Athens were able to justify Roman military operations across the Adriatic as freeing the Greeks from a terrible menace, "the enemy of all humankind" (*Histories* 2.12.6–8).

⁵⁶ Dexter Hoyos, *Hannibal's Dynasty: Power and Politics in the Western Mediterranean, 247–183 BC* (London: Routledge, 2003), 124.

⁵⁷ Robert Malcolm Errington, "Rome and Greece to 205 BC," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 8, *Rome and the Mediterranean to 133 B.C.* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 94–95, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521234481.005>.

⁵⁸ William Woodthorpe Tarn, "Philip V and Phthia," *Classical Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (1924): 17–23.

⁵⁹ John V. A. Fine, "The Mother of Philip V of Macedon," *Classical Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (April 1934): 99–104.

Macedonia, in which Philip V cannot have been interested, but was more about regional Macedonian expansion toward the Adriatic. Such expansion would have been an attack on Roman Illyria to which Rome could only react with a major war, and this would have been dangerous when already fighting a war against Hannibal. Philip V would have required a powerful ally to stop Rome's extension toward the Balkans or a Roman response to a future invasion of Illyria. He had observed Hannibal's victories and therefore, in the summer of 215 BCE, he sent a delegation to meet him on the Italic peninsula in the hope of an alliance.⁶⁰

Since Hannibal's ambitions were limited to the western Mediterranean, his treaty with Philip V is important. The first term stipulates that Philip defend Hannibal, Carthage, and those living under Carthaginian laws; Utica and all cities and tribes subject to Carthage; plus all cities and tribes in Italy, Cisalpine Gaul, and Liguria, allies of Hannibal at the time of the treaty, in addition to those who would subsequently ally with him (Polybius, *Histories* 7.9.5–6). The second term states that in return, all the equivalent peoples, including those who would enter an alliance with Hannibal “in Italy and the adjacent regions,” would protect Philip, the Macedonians and his allies, the Greeks (Polybius, 7.9.7). The sixth term promises that should Hannibal make peace with the Romans, such a treaty required that they give up control of Corcyra, Apollonia, Epidamnus, Pharos, Dimale, Parthini, and Atitania, and restore to Demetrius of Pharos all his allies now under the dominion of Rome (Polybius, 7.9.12–13). In summary, the treaty allowed the possibility for future Carthaginian expansion under Hannibal's leadership, but it restricted him to the west of

⁶⁰ A treaty between Hannibal and Philip V of Macedon in 215 is preserved in a fragment of Polybius (*Histories* 7.9.2–17). The key terms are found at 7.9.12–15. They guarantee that any peace terms between Hannibal and Rome would include certain protections for Philip, and that in the case of any *subsequent* war with Rome, Philip and Hannibal would help each other. See also Livy, *History of Rome* 23.33.5, 23.33.10–12, 23.34.4; Appian, *Macedonian Wars* 1.1; Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 9.4.2–3; Eutropius, *Abridgement of Roman History* 3.12.3; and Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage*, 35.

the Adriatic Sea. Greece, Macedon, and Illyria were reserved mainly for Philip V and his ally Demetrius.⁶¹

The remainder of the eastern Mediterranean (e.g., Egypt) was not mentioned in the treaty, but Philip had arranged a helpful military diversion for the Punic captain with both men benefitting each other. Firstly, regardless of whether Philip had serious intentions of coming into the war or not, he would still be able to send reinforcements directly to Italy and might bring a diversion to the war through an additional front in Macedonia. In 214 BCE, then again in 213 BCE, Philip invaded Illyria, with some success (Livy, *History of Rome* 24.40.1–6, 24.40.16–17, and 24.44.5). It is unknown if Hannibal, increasingly under pressure by the Romans, ever asked Philip for the promised aid.⁶² However, Livy indicates that Tarentum would have been an appropriate port for a Macedonian disembarkation after Hannibal captured the city in 212 BCE, and there is some evidence by Livy that Syracuse hoped for help while under siege by Rome (Livy, *History of Rome* 25.23.8–9).⁶³ The only ports remaining in Roman control below the Bay of Neapolis before 212 BCE were Brundisium on the Adriatic coast and Rhegium on the Messina Straits. Hannibal, like Pyrrhus in 279 BCE, conducted major maneuvers until 212 BCE (Livy, *History of Rome* 24.17.8 and 20.9–14). Hannibal's first objective was to release the pressure on him in Italy between 216 and 212 BCE, and he achieved this brilliantly throughout his defensive military approach. The possibility of releasing the pressure was due partly to the threat of a new Pyrrhus entering the scenario, one who was a direct descendant of the Epirote.

⁶¹ This fits with Hannibal's treaty with Philip V of Macedon (Polybius, *Histories* 7.9; see also Livy, *History of Rome* 23.33–4), since the alliance protected against this powerful Hellenistic state's entering the war on Rome's side. For additional strategic implications of the treaty, see Fronza, *Between Rome and Carthage*, 47–48.

⁶² Livy, *History of Rome* 24.13.5 says that Hannibal occupied Tarentum (in 213 BCE) with a view to Philip's landing.

⁶³ Lazenby, *Hannibal's War*, 161.

Croton and Bruttium

The fruitless Pyrrhic adventure in the West started to end when the Epirote king left Sicily, and in a similar way, all the difficult calculations that Hannibal carried out in Italy also ended in nothing when Rome achieved a decisive victory at Syracuse in 212/211 BCE.⁶⁴ Another fundamental participant in the Hannibalic game was also put aside by the Roman-Aetolian alliance of 212/211 BCE and the First Macedonian War.⁶⁵ Marseille and later Spain also became prime targets for the Romans from 211 BCE.⁶⁶ The Romans, through experience, understood that the main objective of Pyrrhus was not Rome, and neither was that the true target of Hannibal. The main goal for both generals was to force Rome to sue for peace after their major victories in Heraclea and Cannae.

Between 211 and 207 BCE, the tide of war was turning against Hannibal because he was unable to save Capua. After the catastrophic Punic defeat of the Metauro River in 207 BCE, the Punic general therefore chose to gather all his remaining forces and supporters in Bruttium.⁶⁷ He gave up his other assets in Lucania and Magna Graecia, since they were not strategically important to him and were indefensible against Rome's superior forces. Furthermore, he wanted to reduce his fatalities after losing many of his troops in cities taken by the Romans in previous years. Bruttium, a mostly mountainous region almost totally surrounded by sea, provided Hannibal with an ideal base to spy on the Roman advance and compel the senate to maintain a sizeable army against him. Due to the unceasing attempts of the Romans to stop his army from obtaining access to the Ionian Sea and cutting off his eventual escape to Carthage by

⁶⁴ Augustine, *The City of God* 1.6; Cicero, *Against Verres* 2.2.4; 4.116, 120; Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 26.20.1–2; Livy, *History of Rome* 25.31.8; Orosius, *Histories* 4.17.1; Plutarch, *Life of Marcellus* 21.4; Polybius, *Histories* 9.10; Ioannis Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 2.136–49; Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Words and Deeds* 5.1.4, 8.7.7; and Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 9.5.

⁶⁵ Zanin Manfredi, "Trattato romano-etolico," *Axon* 1, no. 2 (2017): 181–204.

⁶⁶ Fernando López Sánchez, "Dracmas ampuritanas y marsellesas acuñadas para Cartago (218–211/209 a.C.)," *Mainake* 32, no. 1 (2010): 601–17.

⁶⁷ Livy (*History of Rome* 27.51.13) states that in 207 Hannibal concentrated all his forces in Bruttium, because he could not defend all of his scattered allies.

capturing most of Bruttium and western Magna Graecia (Livy, *History of Rome* 29.38.1, 30.19.10), Hannibal had to resort to confine himself to Croton and Petelia (Livy, 30.19.5–9; Appian, *War against Hannibal* 59–61), following for a while the same strategy used by his father, Hamilcar Barca, during the last years of the First Punic War in Sicily, which was trying to contain the grave situation in which the Carthaginians found themselves, reorganizing the Punic defenses, whereas harassing Roman troops with guerrilla tactics—the ones that made precisely that Hamilcar was surnamed Barca (meaning lightning) because of his speed in attack.⁶⁸

Croton and Bruttium were not places without importance, however.⁶⁹ In 324 BCE, when Agathocles of Syracuse started his own political and military career in the area, he took part, accompanied by his brother, in a military expedition organized by Syracuse supporting Croton against the Bruttians. Later, when asked to support Tarentum, he began his Italian campaign in 295 BCE, and, with an enormous amount of troops, occupied Croton and Hipponium and then forced the Lucanians, allies of the Romans, to make peace.⁷⁰ Croton and Bruttium also permitted the marriage of Agathocles's daughter Lanassa to Pyrrhus, thus governing the entire Ionian Sea, by 294 BCE at the latest (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 21.4; Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 9.1; Appian, *Samnite Wars* 11.1). Agathocles rightly believed Croton was the essential trade link between Syracuse, Tarentum, and the Greek-speaking parts of Epirus, and probably the best strategic point of the Ionian Sea.⁷¹ Precisely because of Croton's

⁶⁸ Hannibal captured Consentia, Aufugum, Bergae, Baesidia, Ocrinum, Lymphaeum, Agentanum, Clamptia, Pandosia, and other unimportant cities (*ignobiles aliae civitates* and *multique alii ignobiles populi*). Polybius, *Histories* 1.56 ss; Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 24.5 ss, 25.8; Appian, *War against Hannibal* 2, 3; Appian, *Spanish Wars* 4, 5; Polybius, *Histories* 1.64.6 says Hamilcar was the best general of the First Punic War.

⁶⁹ Kathryn Lomas, *Rome and the Western Greeks, 350 BCE–AD 200: Conquest and Acculturation in Southern Italy* (London: Routledge, 1993), 60–61.

⁷⁰ Justin, *History of the World* 23.1.17: *Ad postremum imploratus Agathocles spe ampliandi regni a Sicilia in Italiam traiecit*. Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 21.4, 21.8; also see Justin, *History of the World* 23.1.3–23.2.2; the Bruttians' insurrection, described in Diodorus Siculus 21.8 immediately after the last Italic expedition of Agathocles might have happened after his death in 289 BCE. Strabo, *Geography* 6.1.5 describes the construction of a harbor by the tyrant at Hipponium.

⁷¹ Plutarch, *Life of Pyrrhus* 9.2; and Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 21.4, 22.8.2. It is also probable that the marriage brought Pyrrhus the isle of Leucas in the Ionian Sea.

fundamental position, when 10 Roman ships sailed past the promontory of Lacinium near Croton, on the opposite side of the gulf, clearly in violation of the previous treaty with Tarentum, the furious Tarantines sank four of the offending Roman ships and a full-scale war with Rome began in 282 BCE, with the Tarantines later asking Pyrrhus to intervene in Italy in 281 BCE.⁷²

Pro-Carthaginian forces captured Croton late in 215 or early 214 BCE when the Bruttians—or more precisely, one contingent of Brutians—seized control of the city with the tacit permission of the Carthaginians.⁷³ The Bruttians' commitment to the Punic war effort was always noteworthy, and Hannibal operated in conjunction with a Bruttian army in Lucania as far north as Beneventum, just like Pyrrhus did in 275 BCE.⁷⁴ According to the military historian Hans Delbrück, Croton's strategic position would have permitted Hannibal to induce Rome to a peace treaty at the very end of the Italian war in return for relinquishing the Punic base in the peninsula.⁷⁵ Also, neither Pyrrhus nor Hannibal did really abandon the south of the peninsula in 275 or in 203 BCE but turned their efforts to the preservation of more important scenarios: Macedonia for Pyrrhus and Africa for Hannibal. For these generals, Italy was never a land of conquest, but rather a distant and fundamentally safe playground to exercise military and political pressure on Rome.⁷⁶

⁷² Appian (*Samnite Wars* 7.1) mentions an "ancient treaty" between Rome and Tarentum that bound the Romans not to sail beyond the Lacinian promontory. The treaty was contravened by a Roman fleet in 282 BCE, providing a *terminus ante quem*, but it may have been signed as early as 330 BCE. See Livy, *History of Rome* 8.17.10.

⁷³ Livy states that only 2,000 citizens inhabited Croton, the population having been greatly reduced because of the Pyrrhic war and "many great disasters" (*multis magnisque cladibus afflictam*). Livy, *History of Rome* 23.30.6, 24.3.1–2; Zonaras (*Annals of Rome* 8.6) suggests that Croton was destroyed during the Pyrrhic war, although this is clearly an exaggeration.

⁷⁴ Livy, *History of Rome* 23.13.3–5, 25.14.11–14, and 25.15.18; and Fronda, *Between Rome and Carthage*, 339. For Polybius (*Histories* 18.28.11) and Justin (*History of the World* 25.5.5), the battle was a draw.

⁷⁵ Hans Delbrück, *Geschichte der Kriegskunst im Rahmen der politischen Geschichte, I Teil: Das Altertum* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1964), 403.

⁷⁶ "Neither of them were successful and Hannibal failed to learn from Pyrrhus' mistakes. Press your advantages and don't let Rome off the hook with armistices and periods of recovery. Hannibal was there for longer, but he succeeded in as little as Pyrrhus. At least Pyrrhus could return to a whole kingdom. Hannibal returned to the complete defeat of his homeland and the loss of Spain. Hannibal was a complete disaster!" Graham Wrightson, personal correspondence with author.

“Now by Menaces, Now by Hope, All with the Threat of War”

Three Missions by Two Prominent
Roman Ambassadors in the Unipolar
World of the 160s BCE

by Benjamin Scolnic, PhD

When we think about the Roman Empire and the issues of war and peace, we picture an incredibly militaristic, brutal nation that conquered much of the world that was known to it. This is an accurate characterization, but we will turn here to a point in time before Rome set out on its empire-building, to the 160s BCE. Rome was content with victories over its rivals, Carthage and the Seleucid and Macedonian kingdoms. It was, following the recent work of Pierre-Luc Brisson, a unipolar power that presided over its part of the world without conquering it.¹ A unipolar power can exert its will with soft power (persuasion, alli-

¹ Pierre-Luc Brisson, *Le moment unipolaire: Rome et la Méditerranée hellénistique (188–146 A.C.)*, Suppléments francophones de la revue *Phoenix* 2 (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv36tpj7s>.

ances, “friendship,” negotiation) and without war.² Despite the prevailing view that Rome did not have a foreign policy toward the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms, this paper holds that Rome did have an active and successful foreign policy in the eastern Mediterranean. Rome sent ambassadors rather than armies and took hostages rather than cities. This chapter studies three missions by one or both of two Roman ambassadors, Gaius Popillius Laenas and Gnaeus Octavius, in 170/169, 168, and 163/2 BCE, to Greece, Egypt, and Syria, respectively, that used both conciliatory techniques and inexpensive intimidation to accomplish Rome’s foreign policy goals.

The Mission of Octavius in 163/62 BCE

The first mission under examination is that of the Roman legate Octavius and two other ambassadors to Antioch in 163/62 BCE, during which the envoys burned the Seleucid fleet and hamstringed the elephants (Polybius, *Histories* 31.2.9–11; Appian, *Syrian Wars* 8.46).³ In late 164 BCE, the Seleucid king Antiochus IV died, and his young son Antiochus V succeeded him. Lysias, who had served as chief minister under the late king, now ruled the kingdom. There was a rival claimant to the throne: Antiochus V’s cousin Demetrios, son of Seleukos IV (who had ruled from 187, when his father Antiochus III died, until 175, when he was assassinated), and older brother of the boy-king Antiochus (who ruled at least in name from 175–170/169, when he too was assassinated). Demetrios appeared before the Roman Senate, asking to be released from his hostage-ship that was based on a stipulation of the treaty between Rome and Antiochus III after the former defeated the latter at the battle of Magnesia in late 190, so that he could return to Antioch and assume what he saw as his rightful position as king. The Senate refused, according to Polybius, even though they

²Recently, the most important proponent of this theory, Erich Gruen, restated the position at the Seleukid Lecture Series in “The Treaty between Rome and the Jews: *Cui Bono?*,” 16 February 2022. The author’s response to this lecture and Gruen’s gracious interest in the author’s phrase “inexpensive intimidation,” led to this paper.

³For the incident, see *Papyrus Herculanensis* 1044 col. 9, 1ff; and Italo Gallo, *Frammenti Biografici da Papiri* (Roma: Edizione dell’Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1980), 115–17.

were moved by Demetrios's appeal, because they preferred the 9-year-old Antiochus V to the 23-year-old Demetrios:

Their public decision was to keep Demetrios in Rome and help to establish on the throne the surviving child of Antiochus IV. The senate acted thus, in my opinion, because they were suspicious of a king in the prime of life like Demetrios and thought that the youth and incapacity of the boy who had succeeded to the throne would serve their purpose better (Polybius, 31.2.6–7).⁴

Notice the phrase “would serve their purpose better.” The Senate acted from a policy to keep the Seleucid kingdom from becoming a threat to Rome as it had been under the ambitious reign of Antiochus III. A weak Seleucid ruler would serve their purpose well. This, according to Polybius, explains why the Senate would not release Demetrios. Demetrios understood the Senate's motives and emphasized his loyalty to Rome:

When he had spoken at considerable length in this sense and especially appealed to his hearers by saying that Rome was his fatherland and his nurse, that the sons of the senators were all like brothers to him and the senators themselves like fathers, since he had come to Rome when quite an infant and was now twenty-three years of age (Polybius, 31.2.5.5).

One can suggest that Polybius, who was directly involved in this situation as Demetrios's friend and counselor, could not be objective. If we consider the possible positions of the senators, it may be that some were sympathetic and wanted to send Demetrios home, and that others preferred to keep him as a card to play in the future if they should want to use him,

⁴ All translations of Polybius are from *Polybius: The Histories—Books 28–39*, trans. W. R. Paton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

but neither sentiment shows disinterest in the affairs of the Seleucid kingdom. The uncertainty or disunity among the senators is indicated by the fact that even though they rejected Demetrios's plea, they did agree on a mission to see if the king they were leaving in place, Antiochus V, suited Rome's purpose. Here again is Polybius:

For they at once named as legates Gnaeus Octavius, Spurius Lucretius, and Lucius Aurelius and dispatched them to Syria to manage the affairs of that kingdom as the senate determined, there being no one likely to oppose their orders, since the king was a child and the principal people were only too glad that the government had not been put in the hands of Demetrios, as they had been almost certain it would be. Octavius and his colleagues thereupon left, *with orders in the first place to burn the decked warships, next to hamstring the elephants, and by every means to cripple the royal power.* They were also ordered to look into the affairs of Macedonia; for the Macedonians, being unaccustomed to democratic and parliamentary government, were quarrelling among themselves. The legates also had to report on the condition of Galatia and the kingdom of Ariarathes, and shortly afterwards they received a dispatch from the senate ordering them to do all in their power to reconcile the kings in Alexandria (Polybius, 31.2.9–11).⁵

It seems clear enough that Octavius acted according to his orders. Yet, this mission has been seen as a peaceful embassy derailed by the actions of the envoy “who had considerably exceeded his official brief.”⁶

⁵ Emphasis added. According to Polybius, the Senate assumes that the people of Syria dreaded the return of Demetrios and so would acquiesce to anything that Rome did. It is not clear why this was the Senate's assumption, unless they thought the populace was happy with the status quo.

⁶ Peter Green, *Alexander to Actium: The Historical Evolution of the Hellenistic Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 437.

The Event as an “Aberration”

Erich Gruen thinks that Octavius acted on his own and says that “the act came with stunning suddenness—and defies explanation. What needs stress is that Octavius’s outburst was an aberration, rather than representative of Roman policy.”⁷ The fact that there was no reprisal after he was assassinated in Antioch is taken as a major example of Rome’s disinterest and lack of a foreign policy in the eastern Mediterranean. In a recent paper, Gruen describes the incident as follows:

In 163, Rome sent a delegation, headed by a certain Cn. Octavius, to the east which called in at Syria among other places. There they exercised authority in seemingly unequivocal terms. On instruction of the senate, according to Polybius, Octavius and his colleagues ordered the destruction of the Seleucid fleet and the hamstringing of the elephants, thereby to undermine the royal power in Syria. This shocking event triggered a dramatic response. Indignation and rage in Syria resulted in the death of Octavius at the hands of an assassin, Leptines of Laodicea. . . . Octavius was not carrying out any considered or sustained senatorial policy, and his death did not derail any long-term Roman interests in the area—such as they were. Ad hoc decisions were the rule rather than the exception.⁸

Four issues jump out from these statements: Was Octavius important or just a random diplomat? Was Syria just one of the places to be visited on this mission? Did Octavius act on his own? What does this incident tell us about Roman foreign policy or the lack thereof?

⁷ Erich Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 664.

⁸ Erich Gruen, “The Treaty Between Rome and the Jews: Cui Bono?” (Seleukid Lecture Series III, Winter/Spring 2022, 16 February 2022), 14, 18.

“A Certain Cn. Octavius”

As quoted above, Gruen states: “In 163, Rome sent a delegation, headed by a certain Cn. Octavius, to the east which called in at Syria among other places.” By calling him “a certain Cn. Octavius,” Gruen implies that Octavius was just another Roman politician whom we know nothing else about. This diminishes Octavius and the importance of the mission.

It is true that Octavius had relatively humble origins. He was from the plebeian gens Octavia, the grandson of a quaestor ca. 230 BCE named Gnaeus Octavius Ruhus and the son of the Gnaeus Octavius who fought in the Second Punic War in 205.⁹ In the winter of 170, Octavius and Gaius Popillius Laenas (who at the Day of Eleusis two years later was the dramatic Roman legate who drew a literal line in the sand that the Seleucids could not cross), were sent as envoys to Greece to enforce a Senate decree. After a successful negotiation with the Achaeans at Aegium, where the Roman ambassadors assured friendship, the reception in Aetolia did not go as well and they insisted on hostages. At Thyrium, the envoys monitored a debate between groups of Acarnanians over war with the Macedonians (Livy, *History of Rome* 43.17). In 170 BCE, Argos honored Octavius for his friendship.¹⁰ In 168, Octavius served as praetor and was given control of the Roman fleet in the Third Macedonian War (Livy, 43.17). After the history-making victory at Pydna over the Macedonians, Octavius led the Roman fleet to Samothrace in pursuit of the fleeing king, Perseus. Livy describes how Octavius “was attempting to entice the king to surrender now by menaces, now by hope, while the threat of force was imminent” (Livy, 45.4.5).

Perseus surrendered to Octavius and was brought to the overall Roman commander Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus at Amphipolis (Livy, 45.33–35). In 167, Octavius transported the spoils from the Mace-

⁹ Leena Pietilä-Castrén, “The Ancestry and Career of Cn. Octavius, COS 165 BC,” *Arctos, Acta Philologica Fennica* 18 (1984): 75–92.

¹⁰ Robert K. Sherk, ed. and trans., *Rome and the Greek East to the Death of Augustus*, Translated Documents of Greece and Rome (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 22–23.

donian War and received a triumph: “This triumph was unadorned with prisoners or spoils. Octavius presented to each of the soldiers seventy-five denarii, to the pilots of the ships twice as much, and to the captains, four times the amount” (Livy, 45.47.4). Using his share of spoils from the war, Octavius built a house on the Palatine Hill, a great status symbol.¹¹ In 165, he was elected consul with Titus Manlius Torquatus.¹² It was at this time that Octavius also built the lavish Porticus Octavia to commemorate the naval victory over Perseus. Octavius certainly had a brilliant career, rising from nowhere to become a general and consul in 165 and creating a distinguished dynasty. In dealing with foreign kings and leaders, he could be either amicable or threatening, as the situation required. To refer to him as “a certain Cn. Octavius” is to diminish his importance and the importance of the mission.

“Called in at Syria among Other Places”

By saying that the delegation was sent “to the east which called in at Syria among other places,” Gruen makes it sound as if the mission was just “dropping in” to Syria just as it was dropping in to other places on its route (Macedonia, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Egypt). We have Polybius’s testimony about the successful mission to Cappadocia that was an earlier leg of the same mission. At that stop in Cappadocia, according to Polybius, the embassy received encouragement and offers of military assistance from King Ariarathes IV for what they were going to do to the Seleucid king (Polybius, 31.3). Clearly, Ariarathes IV knew what the mission was primarily about and offered an army to fulfill it. Octavius did not think that he needed an army. Ariarathes surely had his own motives, and we must pause to reflect on them, because they may be more important than is usually thought.

¹¹ Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* II.1.

¹² T. Robert S. Broughton, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic* (New York: American Philological Association, 1951), 438.

It is important to appreciate the intensity of diplomatic activity between Rome and the kings of Cappadocia in a short period of time. Other envoys under Marcus Junius had been sent to settle the dispute between the Gauls (the Trocmi) and Ariarathes IV. The Gauls, who had failed to annex any part of Cappadocia, tried to discredit Ariarathes IV. The king won the ambassadors' approval, and they went back to Rome (Polybius, 31.3).

The new delegation of Octavius arrived and again went over his disputes with the Gauls, but now Ariarathes IV had a different response. He told them that he would acquiesce in anything they wanted concerning the Gauls but went on to a different subject: Syria.

He directed the rest of his remarks to the state of Syria, being aware that Octavius and his colleagues were going thither. He pointed out to them the unsettled state of the kingdom and the unprincipled character of the men at the head of affairs there; and added that he would escort them with an army and remain on the watch for all emergencies, until they returned from Syria in safety. Gnaeus and his colleagues acknowledged the king's kindness and zeal, but said that for the present they did not need the escort. On a future occasion, however, if need should arise, they would let him know without delay, for they considered him as one of the true friends of Rome (Polybius, 31.8).

It is interesting that after defending Cappadocia against the Gauls and winning a dispute with them, Ariarathes IV was willing to acquiesce about the Gauls. Why? As long as Antiochus IV was alive, Ariarathes IV cared about his dispute with the Gauls. But once Antiochus died, he had a much bigger agenda: the Seleucid empire.

The Roman envoys had come back to the Senate with a good report, and Ariarathes IV disparaged Lysias to Octavius. Then, when Ariarathes IV died, his son Mithridates succeeded him, whose mother, Antiochis,

was the sister of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV. The new king, who went by the regnal name Ariarathes V, sent envoys to Rome in late 164/163.¹³ Primed by the first envoys, the Senate welcomed Ariarathes V's ambassadors warmly. When Ariarathes V succeeded to the throne, he also did something else: he sent his mother and sister to Antioch. If Antiochis was the queen-mother of her legitimate son Ariarathes V, why did she leave? Did she go back to Antioch because she was not honored by her son, the king of Cappadocia? It is possible that she was in the bad graces of her son and that she was banished. It does seem that Antiochis was a controversial queen.¹⁴ She could not have children at first and covered her infertility by somehow pawning off two illegitimate sons, Ariarathes and Orophernes, on her husband Ariarathes IV (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 31.19.7). But she went on to bear three legitimate children with Ariarathes IV, including Stratonike, who married Eumenes II of Pergamon, then his successor/brother Attalus II, and the son known as Mithridates before his accession to the throne as Ariarathes V. If she had been in the bad graces of anyone, it would have been with Ariarathes IV, but he never dismissed her for her falsehoods. There is no question about Ariarathes V's legitimacy when Livy mentions his arrival in 172 in Rome (Livy, 42.19). Still, the kind of personality who could pretend to bear two children would be an interesting force in court politics. She seems to have had real power that she used in Ariarathes V's interests, because, if the report of Diodorus is correct, she sent her imposter children away, one to Rome and the other to Ionia, to give her legitimate son a clear path to the throne (Diodorus Siculus 31.9.7).

Antiochis did not leave Cappadocia for Antioch because of some tension with her son. Later, Ariarathes V asked for her body back (and that

¹³ For the date see Polybius, 31.3; and F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 3, *Commentary on Books XIX–XL* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 35 and 468.

¹⁴ Antiochis, daughter of Antiochus III, is married to Ariarathes IV, who becomes an ally of her father against Rome at the battle of Magnesia in 190 (Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 31.19.6; Appian, *Syrian Wars* 5; Livy, *History of Rome* 37.31.4). Magnesia, however, changes everything, and the Cappadocians must pay a huge tribute to Rome. Ariarathes sued for peace in 188, which he obtained on favorable terms.

of her daughter, his sister), so it does not seem like there was any estrangement (Polybius, 31.7).¹⁵ If there was no tension, then Antiochis likely had political motives in returning to the Seleucid court at Antioch. Perhaps she went back to Antioch for apolitical reasons, but then, when her brother Antiochus IV was killed, she saw an opportunity to gain power by becoming regent for her nephew (she was the aunt of both Antiochus V and Demetrios). Perhaps, she may have wanted to marry her daughter to the young Antiochus V and cement her power over both monarchies.¹⁶

Lysias clearly was concerned about this, because soon after the news of the death of Antiochus IV, in 163/162 BCE, he had Antiochis and her daughter killed.¹⁷ This shows the threat posed by rival claimants to Antiochus V, represented chiefly by his cousin Demetrios in Rome, but perhaps also including Antiochis, the last surviving child of Antiochus III the Great.

Antiochis certainly came from a fascinating family. Her older brother Antiochus had been heir to the throne and was a military hero at Panion in eastern Thrace in 200 (Polybius 28.1.2–3, 28.20.6–10). Her sister Laodike may have been the Seleucid queen and the wife of one or more of her brothers, Antiochus, Seleukos IV, and Antiochus IV. Her brother Seleukos IV succeeded her father to the throne (Appian, 45). Her sister Kleopatra Syra became the powerful queen of the Ptolemaic empire (Polybius 18.51.10, 28.20.9; Livy 33.40.3, 35.13.4; Appian, 3.13, 5.18). Her brother Antiochus IV became king after the death of her brother Seleukos (Appian, 45). And now she, perhaps the only remaining child of Antiochus III, may have seen her opportunity.

Lysias's actions, however, took care of any such ambitions. Demetrios likely pointed out Lysias's dynastic murders of his cousins to friendly senators. And Ariarathes V, like his father previously, was anxious to tell

¹⁵ Welles suggests that she or her daughter may have been Antiochus IV's mistress, mentioned in *2 Maccabees* 4.30: "Meanwhile, there was a revolt in the Cilician cities of Tarsus and Mallus, because the king had given those cities to Antiochis, his mistress" (C. B. Welles, "Hellenistic Tarsus," *MUSJ* 38 [1962]: 49–52).

¹⁶ Graham Wrightson suggested this in reading an earlier draft of this paper.

¹⁷ While Polybius blames the deaths on Lysias, his friendship with Demetrios may have skewed his attitude.

the Romans about Lysias's actions, in this case murdering his mother. The Romans would not fail to see the point. The murder of Antiochus showed Lysias's strength and purpose in acting against Roman allies, exactly the type of person the Romans did not want to see at the head of the Seleucid empire. This would have raised concerns about Lysias among the Romans, and Octavius had already heard terrible things about Lysias from the point of view of his allies in Cappadocia. He had his mission and his orders, and he had been strongly encouraged by a key ally. Now he knew whom he would need to confront in Antioch.

Did Octavius Act on His Own?

Did Octavius act on senatorial orders when he hamstringed or killed the elephants and burned the ships? If the answer is no, as Gruen thinks, we cannot learn anything about what the Senate was attempting to do when it authorized the mission. Gruen's notion that Octavius was a lone wolf, however, clashes with Polybius's and Appian's explicit descriptions of his orders:

Octavius and his colleagues thereupon left, *with orders in the first place* to burn the decked warships, next to hamstring the elephants, and by every means to cripple the royal power (Polybius, 31.2.11).

Learning that there were many elephants in Syria and more ships than had been allowed to Antiochus in the treaty, they (the Senate) sent ambassadors thither, *to kill the elephants and burn the ships* (Appian, 46).

And here is Cicero:

For having been sent by the senate to investigate the dispositions of kings and of free nations, and especially to forbid the grandson of king Antiochos, the one who had carried on war against our forefathers, *to maintain fleets and to keep*

elephants, he was slain at Laodikeia, in the gymnasium, by a man of the name of Leptines (Cicero, *Philippics* 9.4).

If one accepts Gruen's view of this event, it was just an isolated incident that has little to tell us. Peter Green also dismisses Polybius's testimony, saying that Polybius wanted to make Rome look worse by blaming the Senate for these terrible instructions, and that Zonaras was right when he said that Octavius decided to do this on the spot.¹⁸ Green seems to mean that Zonaras emphasized the spontaneity of Octavius's actions on seeing the elephants and triremes. If one looks at Zonaras's statement, however, one may come to a different conclusion:

Antiochos subsequently died, leaving the kingdom to a child of the same name, whom the Romans confirmed in possession of it and to whom they sent three men ostensibly to act as his guardians, as he was very young. The commissioners, on finding elephants and triremes contrary to the compact, ordered the elephants all to be slain and administered everything else in the interest of Rome (Johannes Zonaras, *Annals of Rome* 9.25).

Zonaras does not say that Octavius and his colleagues did anything on their own. Zonaras says that the legates were going to be the new king's guardians and control all his actions. They did these other things because what they found was contrary to the treaty they had been sent to enforce. The embassy fulfilled its assignment.

Octavius was not a lone wolf; he fulfilled the explicit wishes of the Senate and thereby, as Walbank and McDonald say, reinforced the provisions of the Treaty of Apamea (188 BCE), or reinforced the general

¹⁸ Green, *Alexander to Actium*, 844n13.

Roman policy of keeping the Seleucids in a submissive position.¹⁹ One should disagree with Gruen and Green and maintain that Octavius and the others did what they were mandated to do. Rome felt that it needed to reassert its control over the Seleucid kingship because it was unsure about what the young Antiochus V and his regent Lysias might do. The Roman mission was sent at a particular time for a particular purpose: to show who was in political control. The mission was meant to be demonstrative, violent, powerful, and symbolic. The elephant was *the* symbol of Seleucid might, as Paul Kosmin reminds us in *The Land of the Elephant Kings*.²⁰ The anchor, representing naval might, was a second symbol of the kingdom's power, as Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides demonstrates in a chapter of the first volume of the *Seleucid Perspectives* series, and the symbolism would have been clear to everyone.²¹ Octavius did not undermine the purpose of the mission. He fulfilled the mission.

The Assassination and Rome's Lack of Response

Gruen states that since the Senate did not execute the assassin, they were not responsible for Octavius's actions. Polybius's account is supplemented by the corresponding passage in Appian, who states:

Learning that there were many elephants in Syria and more ships than had been allowed to Antiochos in the treaty, they (the Senate) sent ambassadors thither, to kill the elephants and burn the ships. It was a pitiful sight, the killing of these gentle and rare beasts and the burning of the ships, and a certain Leptines of Laodikeia was so exas-

¹⁹ A. H. McDonald and F. W. Walbank, "The Treaty of Apamea (188 B.C.): The Naval Clauses," *Journal of Roman Studies* 59 (1969): 30–39, <https://doi.org/10.2307/299844>. Rome left Antiochus III with some naval shipping for the purpose of local defense but restricted warships to limit his means of military movement by sea.

²⁰ Paul J. Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); and Nicholas Sekunda, *The Army of Pyrrhus of Epirus: 3rd Century BC* (London: Osprey Men-at-Arms, 2019).

²¹ Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides, "The King-Ship of the Seleukids: An Alternative Paradigm for the Anchor Symbol," in *Seleukid Ideology: Creation, Reception and Response*, eds. Altay Coşkun and Richard Wenghofer (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2023), 61–92.

perated by the sight that he stabbed Gnaeus Octavius, the chief of this embassy, while he was anointing himself in the gymnasium, and Lysias buried him.²²

Octavius was assassinated at the gymnasium at Laodicea by the Syrian Leptines. Appian seems to side with Leptines; perhaps Appian, though he knew Octavius was fulfilling his mandate, was drawn into the horror of the violent actions. As opposed to Appian, Cicero makes it clear that Octavius did what he was supposed to do.

There was a violent reaction to Octavius's actions not from the Seleucid king but from his subjects. The people were no doubt shocked. They might have thought that their kingdom was independent and thriving and not under the control of Rome and subject to its restrictions. The people in the Seleucid street, represented by Leptines, may have been angry; the actions were humiliating and destructive and the idea that a few ambassadors could destroy these great resources and sources of pride was infuriating. While there is a focus on what Leptines did, the focus should be on what Lysias did not do. Lysias and Antiochus V did not speak or act against the Romans. Just like Antiochus IV had submitted to the Roman legate at the Day of Eleusis, so did his son. Uriel Rappaport has argued that Lysias's diplomacy and governing style seems to have been based more on *realpolitik*, on power and on practical considerations, rather than on ideology.²³ This kind of politician does not seem to be the type to rouse

²² Appian, *The Foreign Wars*, trans. Horace White (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1988), 46. Polybius's treatment of this is missing, but he alludes to it in 31.11.1. It is curious that Polybius, who soon refers to the murder of Octavius, would not tell us how it happened. It is possible that in moving a section about Antiochus IV's death, which is also out of place, the description of the murder of Octavius fell out.

²³ Compare with Uriel Rappaport, "Lysias—An Outstanding Seleucid Politician," in *Studies in Josephus and the Varieties of Ancient Judaism*, Louis H. Feldman Jubilee Volume, eds. Shaye J. D. Cohen and Joshua J. Schwartz (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), 169–76. Instead of placing our focus on the child Antiochus V, we need to understand the precarious situation that Lysias faced. 166/165 BCE: Lysias is appointed. When Antiochus IV sets out from Antioch on an expedition to the eastern satrapies; he appoints Lysias as regent of the government and guardian of Antiochus's son, the future Antiochus V in Antioch. After Judas Maccabeus defeats several of Lysias's generals at the Battle of Emmaus in 165, Lysias himself leads a larger army in 164 and fights the inconclusive battle of Beth Zur, 164 BCE: Antiochus IV dies in Elymais (Polybius, 31.11). Antiochus Eupator V succeeds him, with Lysias as regent. But the transition is not smooth; the vultures are gathering. Lysias must return to Antioch to ensure that a rival, Philip, does not become regent.

the rabble against Roman officials, a dangerous move at best. Indeed, Lysias honorably buried Octavius.²⁴

The Aftermath

Gruen writes:

Stunning though that episode must have been, the sequel was still more astonishing, and quite revealing. . . . But one can say at least this much: if Octavius' harsh and brutal actions in Syria had actually carried out considered senatorial policy, the forbearance of Rome with regard to his murder would be quite inexplicable.²⁵

Gruen is right that the lack of reprisal for Octavius's murder is surprising but not inexplicable. There are plausible explanations. Lysias sent delegates to Rome. When Demetrios became king, he sent Leptines and a very expensive crown of gold pieces to Rome (Polybius, 31,33.5, 32.2.1–3). The Seleucid rulers remained submissive. A different explanation as to why Rome did not execute the assassin is that Demetrios saw the assassination as another opportunity to convince the Senate to let him seek his kingship, but Rome did not want to encourage his ambition, and executing the assassin would have been taken as a condemnation of Antiochus V and Lysias, whom they wanted to retain power, at least for a time (Polybius, 32.13). The Senate's understanding of the usefulness of the assassination to Demetrios was correct. When the Senate turned down Demetrios's request to be installed as king, despite the assassination of Octavius, Demetrios escaped and used the assassination himself in the Seleucid empire as a political rallying cry against Lysias, falsely claiming that Rome had sent

²⁴ Sources are split on who was responsible for the assassination, with some indicating it was a single assassin and the others seeing that the assassin was just the point man for the Syrian mob that had been aroused to rage by Lysias. According to Polybius, Appian, and Cicero, just one individual, not a mob aroused by Lysias, is responsible for the assassination. But in Julius Obsequens, *On Prodigies* 15 and in Zonaras, it was Lysias who incited the populace to kill Octavius.

²⁵ Gruen, "The Treaty Between Rome and the Jews: Cui Bono?," 14.

him to avenge that murder (Zonaras, 9.25). Polybius may be correct that the Senate felt no pressure to do anything about the murder of Octavius.

The Treaty of Apamea

The mission seems to be based on the knowledge that the Seleucid king had warships and elephants, both of which had been prohibited by the Treaty of Apamea (188 BCE), under which Demetrius was a hostage in Rome (Polybius, 21.42; Livy, 38.38; Appian, 38f).

We come to a debate in recent Seleucid scholarship: Was the Treaty of Apamea of 188 still in force in 163?²⁶ If it was, Octavius was merely enforcing the treaty. If not, did he act on his own? Let us review some basic facts about the severe peace provisions in the treaty that was imposed on Antiochus III after the Romans inflicted defeats on him at Thermopylae in central Greece (191 BCE) and near Magnesia in western Asia Minor (190) and then assess whether they remained in place for his successors. The treaty stated that Antiochus III must abandon Europe altogether and all of Asia on the western side of the Taurus; pay the war indemnity of 15,000 Euboic talents, 500 to be paid when the negotiations began in 189 BCE, 2,500 to be paid once the Senate ratified the peace, and the remaining 12,000 to be paid in annual installments of 1,000 talents to be delivered in Rome; surrender all his current elephants, and keep no elephants in the future; retain only 10 ships, and those ships were not to sail any further west of Cape Sarpedonium in Cilicia; and give 20 hostages,

²⁶ Those who think that the terms of Apamea were no longer valid or binding after Antiochus III's death include E. Paltiel, "The Treaty of Apamea and the Later Seleucids," *Antichthon* 13 (1979): 30–41, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S006647740000263X>; J. D. Grainger, *Great Power Diplomacy in the Hellenistic World* (London: Routledge, 2015), 193; Mitchell John Elvidge, "Seleukos IV Philopator" (master's thesis, University of Waterloo, ON, 2017), 18–42; and Sekunda, *The Army of Pyrrhus of Epirus: 3rd Century BC*. For different views, see K. Ehling, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der späten Seleukiden (164–63 v. Chr.), Vom Tode des Antiochos IV. bis zur Einrichtung der Provinz Syria unter Pompeius* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008), 121; and Germain Payen, "L'influence seleucide sur les dynasties anatoliennes apres le traite d'Apamee," in *Rome and the Seleucid East: Selected Papers from Seleucid Study Day V, Brussels, 21–23 August 2015*, Collection Latomus, 360, ed. Altay Coşkun and David Engels (Leuven: Peeters, 2016): 279–308. For the author's previous view (now modified), see Benjamin Scolnic, "Reading Backwards: Antiochos IV and His Relationship with Rome," in *Rome and the Seleucid East: Selected Papers from Seleucid Study Day V, Brussels, 21–23 August 2015*, 217–54. The author will draw closer to the position of Altay Coşkun and David Engels, "Report on the Seleucid Study Day V: Rome and the Seleucid East," *H/Soz/Kult*, 16 December 2015, who differentiate between legal and political implications.

whom the consul would select. The first-prize hostage was the king's son, the future Antiochus IV. He eventually would be replaced by the oldest son of Seleukos IV, Demetrios.²⁷

While Octavius may have only been enforcing the stipulations of the peace treaty of Apamea, several scholars insist that the treaty was no longer in force in the time of Antiochus IV.²⁸ They distinguish between a contract that was legally binding for Antiochus III and political choices made in subsequent generations and that there were no longer "treaty violations" as such. Altay Coşkun states: "It needs to be pointed out that this was no longer binding: it had defined the condition for peace and friendship with Antiochus III in 188, but did not legally oblige his successors."²⁹

We can assess whether the Seleucid successors to Antiochus III operated within the provisions of the treaty. Certainly, two of the stipulations were not complied with over time: the limitations on ships and the prohibition on elephants. By 163, Seleucid kings had possessed warships and elephants for a long time. Antiochus IV had warships; he won a naval battle at Pelusium in the conquest of Egypt and used his fleet at Cyprus (Livy, 44.19.9, 45.11). Antiochus left Alexandria with his fleet in 168.³⁰ The Romans had known all about the Seleucid elephants.³¹ Forty-two elephants took part in Antiochus IV's Daphne procession in 166, and he even gave elephants from Africa and India to Rome for the war against

²⁷ The Romans did not take possession of any areas of Greece or Asia Minor. They were content to create a network of allies and vassals and continue to watch development in these regions.

²⁸ Altay Coşkun, "Epilogue: Rome, the Seleucid East and the Disintegration of the Largest of the Successor Kingdoms in the 2nd Century BC," in *Rome and the East: Selected Papers from Study Day V, Brussels, 21–23 August 2015*, Collection Latomus, 360, eds. Altay Coşkun and David Engels (Leuven: Peeters, 2019), 469; Paltiel, "The Treaty of Apamea and the Later Seleucids"; Grainger, *Great Power Diplomacy in the Hellenistic World*, 193; and Elvidge, "Seleukos IV Philopator," 18–42.

²⁹ Coşkun, "Epilogue: Rome, the Seleucid East and the Disintegration of the Largest of the Successor Kingdoms in the 2nd Century BC," 469.

³⁰ See J. D. Ray, *The Archive of Hor* (London: Egyptian Exploration Society, 1976).

³¹ Sekunda, *The Army of Pyrrhus of Epirus: 3rd Century BC*. Gaetano De Sanctis, *Storia de Romana*, vol. 4, part 1, *La fondazione dell'Impero: dalla battaglia di Naraggara alla battaglia di Pidna* (Milano-Torino: La Nuova Italia, 1923), 3, 113 states: "di far eseguire gli articoli del trattato concluso dopo la battaglia di Magnesia, concernenti le navi e gli elefanti da guerra che Antioco Epifane, con la tacita tolleranza del senato romano, aveva dimenticati." But why did the Senate tolerate this and look the other way? The author appreciates De Sanctis's general theme that Rome's policy of hidden domination caused uncertainty and instability and eventually led to a policy of open domination.

Perseus (Polybius, 30.25.11; Polyaeus, *Strategems* 4.21). It is interesting to note that Lysias's second expedition to Judaea in 162 included war elephants that were important in his gaining a major victory over the Maccabees at the Battle of Beth-Zechariah.³²

The Romans knew that the warships and elephants were there; why was it only now that the senators acted? What had changed? The king. The Senate accepted the elephants and ships while Antiochus IV was alive, because he had proved most dramatically at the Day of Eleusis in 168, when he aborted a successful invasion of Egypt, and said that he would follow the dictates of Rome. This is not to say that the Senate was not suspicious of Antiochus IV and that they did not monitor his activity. Indeed, they thought that his humiliation by Rome on the Day of Eleusis might have made him hostile. After the famous procession at Daphne at which Antiochus displayed his military might, the Roman legates came to see for themselves:

Shortly after the end of the games Tiberius Gracchus and the other legates arrived in the quality of inspectors. Antiochus, however, was so adroit and courteous when he met them that Tiberius and his colleagues, far from acquiring any real suspicion about him or detecting anything indicative of disaffection due to what had happened at Alexandria, even discredited those who said anything of the kind, owing to their exceedingly kind reception: for in addition to other favours he even gave up his palace to them, and very nearly gave up his crown to them as well, so far his demeanour went, although his real feelings were not so, but quite the reverse (Polybius, 30.27).

Shortly after the games ended, a Roman mission arrived with the mandate of inspectors and certainly saw the elephants and ships; they would have

³² *1 Maccabees* 6.28–47; Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* 12.9; Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* 1.1–41–46.

been hard to miss. The diplomats had a peaceful visit and there were no warnings of any kind. If they were looking for any disaffection Antiochus felt toward Rome, they did not find any hard feelings whatsoever. Antiochus IV once again showed his loyalty and satisfied the Roman inspectors. Antiochus IV had maintained a positive relationship with Rome during the years he was in control of the Seleucid kingdom, which was from the autumn of 175 to his death in 164. In the Third Macedonian War between Rome and Macedonia in 169, Perseus had sought Antiochus's assistance, but the latter instead reassured Rome of his support (Livy, 42.29). The Romans never had any kind of conflict with Antiochus IV as long as he lived.

Still, of the five provisions, three remained in place after the death of Antiochus III.

- **Indemnity:** There is an interesting discussion about whether the payments that should have been completed by 175 had been interrupted or delayed and were still being paid in 165, as we see in 2 *Maccabees* 8.36. The money might have been late in coming, but it was still due until the terms of the treaty were met.³³
- **Hostages:** This is why Demetrios was still in Rome. Demetrios succeeded none other than his uncle Antiochus IV as lead hostage to Rome under one of the provisions, which means that the hostage stipulation was still in place during the Seat debate in 164.
- **Borders:** The Seleucids were not allowed to cross the Taurus, as we see when Seleukos IV turned his whole army around so as not to transgress this line (Diodorus Siculus, 29.10.15).

The borders held and, in a way, were expanded to Egypt. That is, there was no stipulation that Antiochus III could not invade Egypt, but when Antiochus IV did invade and conquer and the Romans became concerned,

³³ Livy (42.6.6–12) shows that Rome did not insist on timely payment of the tribute prescribed by the treaty, which may suggest that there was a certain understanding with Antiochus. For the discussion, see Peter Franz Mittag, *Antiochos IV. Epiphanes: Eine politische Biographie* (Berlin: Akademie, 2006), 99f.; Elvidge, "Seleukos IV Philopator," 48f.; Daniel R. Schwartz, 2 *Maccabees* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 544f.; and Coşkun and Engels, *Rome and the East: Selected Papers from Study Day V, Brussels, 21–23 August 2015*, 462–68.

they confronted him with an act of inexpensive intimidation at Eleusis. He then complied with this huge expansion of the conditions to which his father had agreed. There was a new line drawn by Rome that had not been mentioned in the treaty of Apamea with Antiochus III, and it was literally in the sands of Egypt.

Perhaps the question about the longevity of the Treaty of Apamea is too literal. Rather, the question is whether the subservient relationship of the Seleucids to Rome was still in place. The treaty was just a document spelling out the details of a large principle: “You must listen to us.” It did not matter that some of the restrictions had been ignored while Antiochus IV was in charge, because he had proved his subservience. So even if the treaty as such was not legally current because it had been made with a king who had been dead for 24 years, the power of Rome articulated in the treaty was manifest indeed. The Seleucid defeat at the Battle of Magnesia was truly traumatic, and the Seleucid empire was never the same. And for those 27 years up until the death of Antiochus IV, reinforced by the defeat of the Antigonids in 168 at Pydna, the Seleucids had understood the point: Never provoke Rome.

Returning to the embassy of Octavius, according to Polybios, the Senate learned about Antiochus V’s military strength and sent an embassy to deal with it. Yet it is fair to assume that Antiochus V had not built up his elephants and ships immediately after his succession. A new king, even a child king under the control of a regent, could do things with the warships and elephants that already existed that would be problematic for Rome. The Senate was consistent: the Seleucids should have a weak or deferential ruler and they had to make sure the new one and his advisors got the point.

Was Octavius’s Mission to Antioch a Success?

The mission should be seen as very successful. The results are striking: the destruction of the Seleucid fleet and the hamstringing of the elephants destroyed some of the kingdom’s most precious military resources and

reinforced Rome's dominance. The action revealed the submissiveness of King Antiochus V and his chief minister, Lysias, who did not respond or revolt despite the humiliating demonstration of their powerlessness. This submissiveness was then demonstrated by the next king, Demetrius, who might have been suspect in that he had escaped from being held hostage in Rome, against the explicit dictates of the Senate, but who sent gifts to Rome expressing his loyalty (Polybius, 32.2). If we examine the purpose of the mission—putting the new Seleucid ruler in his place—we see that it was achieved. If we examine the cost involved, the life of an envoy is very inexpensive. Rome would not go to war, at huge expense, when the lone wolf was not Octavius but Leptines, the assassin, and he was insignificant. All that mattered was Seleucid submission and the fact that the kingdom stayed in its part of the world and accepted its subordinate position to Rome.

Perhaps a different Senate at a different time in a different context would have cared about the outrage of the assassination of their envoy. But the Senate at that moment decided that they were not going to go to war over one ambassador who died, like so many others, in the service of Rome; many had died for much less. It was the price of doing business. Octavius had followed his mandate and served notice of Rome's dominance. There was no need to impose sanctions.

The mission objective was to investigate the intentions of the new Seleucid child-king and, if warranted, intimidate him and diminish his warmaking capabilities. The result was achieved at the low cost of one ambassador.

This incident can be taken as an example of a pattern of inexpensive intimidation. Every mission, every threat, even every expression of friendship, was inexpensive and economical. Rome did not need a permanent foreign corps, for this would cost money on a permanent basis. It did not always need to send forth a huge army at great expense. It could simply lay down verbal markers for the future, no more costly than putting wooden tokens on the map, with the ever-looming threat of Rome's full military

might on the horizon if its demands were not met. So little ventured and very often so much gained; missions could be astonishingly productive for so little expense and so little effort.

The Implications for the Idea of Roman Foreign Policy

Gruen states that such episodes require “us to reconsider an even more basic conception that underlies almost all discussions of this subject: i.e. the very notion of a Roman foreign policy. We assume that they must have had one.”³⁴ There is general agreement that the Senate did not seem to have a long-term goal of conquering and did not have clear intentions about dealing with the Seleucid kingdom.

However, there *was* a foreign policy toward the Seleucid kingdom: the Seleucids should stay in their own, very substantial area; they should not come past the Taurus Mountains; they should not conquer Egypt; and they must show obeisance to Rome. And the Senate had basic principles: trust only those you can completely control; keep your enemies close and your friends closer; and protect Rome.

Rome’s lack of response to the assassination of Octavius is not so strange if one considers these policies and principles. The senators were not so enraged that they would consider this incident to be a reason to fight a very expensive war. They might have mourned the loss of Octavius, but he had died acting on a mission for Rome, like so many soldiers of Rome before him. They would keep the assassin; perhaps they would use this event in some way in the future, a rationale for some future action. The Seleucids kept coming to Rome, one delegation after another, the second one with a gold crown in hand, and so the Senators could see their obeisance. The senators had what they wanted when Antiochus IV was on the throne, but they did not care who was next on the throne—Antiochus V or Demetrius or someone else—as long as that king followed their dictates and did not make an incursion in the direction of Rome’s interests

³⁴ Gruen, “The Treaty Between Rome and the Jews: Cui Bono?,” 15.

as their grandfather Antiochus III had done. The senators did not want to conquer Syria, but they did monitor events there. They did indeed have a policy, and that policy was intact.

For Rome, there were a great many variables; all the nations and peoples of interest had constant changes of leadership. The terms *friend* and *enemy* had a very short lifespan. In Rome, with its republican model of constantly changing leaders, the Senate maintained maximum flexibility and could be nimble enough to decide and later change its mind. The Senate at that moment may not have known what it was going to do in the future, and it did not need to. The Romans knew, to use a modern cliché, that they had the winning hand. They could discard this card or add another one from the deck, but they had the cards they needed to win. If someone called their hand, they would put their cards on the table and be all in. Then it would be time for war.

Hostages were cards to play. Antiochus IV was a card the Senate played with great skill. Demetrius was a card to play, if the senators so chose. The splitting of the Seleucid dynasty into two competing royal lineages from the two sons of Antiochus III (Seleucus IV and Antiochus IV), whether it was Rome's conscious doing or not, had great potential to create conflicts that could prove crucial in the weakening of the kingdom.

Gruen states that "Rome's attention to the East was unsteady and intermittent" and that "informal rather than formal relationships predominated."³⁵ He claims the fact that there was no foreign service, no professional corps of envoys, shows their lack of interest. Since there was no corps of foreign professionals, "there could be no overall and coherent 'foreign policy'."³⁶ His example is that Laenas never received another posting to the east. This is true, but he already had one with Octavius in 170 to Greece. And Octavius, as detailed above, had a distinguished record of foreign service. At any rate, foreign policies do not necessarily require a

³⁵ Gruen, *The Hellenistic World and the Coming of Rome*, 10.

³⁶ Gruen, "The Treaty Between Rome and the Jews: Cui Bono?," 18.

permanent corps of ambassadors. Such a corps would go against the idea of rotating leaders so that no one became too powerful. A permanent envoy to another kingdom might use that kingdom as a base for his own ambitions.

A little bullying by a few ambassadors could accomplish what was needed. Send a ship to the beach in Alexandria, have an envoy draw a line in the sand, and stop Antiochus IV from the conquest of Egypt. A ship, a legate, and a staff are all one needs. Just as Rome acted against Antiochus V in the incident of the hamstrung elephants, so it acted against Demetrius in 162. Rome conferred a political relationship on the Judaeans who had been so rebellious against the Seleucid kingdom (*1 Maccabees* 8.17; and Flavius Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 12.417–19). Before this, Rome had not been in touch with the Judaeans during Antiochus IV's reign. A treaty or a letter could become a card to be played in years to come.

Rome was happy to dispatch overbearing and arrogant senators to the different lands and peoples in its orbit. Haughtiness was not just a function of obnoxious individuals, it was a policy statement. Arrogance could be successful, but it could also infuriate and cause rebellion.³⁷ In the case of Octavius, his arrogance may have led to his death, but it did not cause a rebellion. It succeeded in making the point, one that was fully grasped by Lysias and his child-king, and by the man who would be king shortly afterward, Demetrius. He would return from Rome against the Senate's wishes, have his child cousin and Lysias killed, and pledge his loyalty to Rome.

Inexpensive intimidation kept the Seleucid kingdom right where Rome wanted it. Roman power after Magnesia and then Pydna was not in the form of standing garrisons or patrolling fleets, or in sending ambassadors or embassies; it was in the threat of invasion, a force field of rhetoric

³⁷ Gaius Stern, in personal correspondence, has provided the author a list for the latter. He calls Teutoburger Wald the best example (Tacitus, *Annals* 1:60–62) but mentions the rebellions in Gaul in the 50s BCE, when the Gauls united against the Romans in 55 and again in 52 BCE under Vercingetorix. Caesar forgets to mention Roman arrogance as a cause (Julius Caesar, *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, 7.4).

and symbolic action. Thus, if an arrogant senator got himself killed for hamstringing elephants and burning ships, that was a small price to pay. In some important international situations and relationships, inexpensive intimidation was all that Rome needed to keep the world at bay before it ever thought about conquering the world.

Runaways Running Away

Strategies of Slave Flight and Revolt in Ancient Rome

by Aaron L. Beek, PhD

Even in a modern society that properly recognizes Roman slavery as reprehensible, one can see occasional touches that suggest enslaved people should have risen up *en masse* against their oppressors. In part, the *fugitivi* made a rational choice.

This chapter discusses four interrelated categories: employing armed slaves as household bodyguards; outright slave revolts; arming slaves or former slaves for military service; and *fugitivi*—the runaways. The first three are dealt with in somewhat lesser detail, while the main focus is on the fourth, but these roles intertwine and thus matters that seemed initially straightforward become complicated. Even in a situation in which enslaved people had both the weapons and training to fight effectively, there are exceedingly few examples of violent rebellions with successful outcomes, while the success rate of flight, although difficult to know with any certainty, was far higher.¹

Over the centuries, the Romans passed numerous laws governing slavery, some protecting the limited rights of slaves, others delimiting their

¹ Keith R. Bradley, “Slaves and the Conspiracy of Catiline,” *Classical Philology* 73, no. 4 (1978): 334, <https://doi.org/10.1086/366452>, suggests this “fugitivism” was endemic in the late republic along with the rise of the *latifundia* system.

proper behavior, and still others finding inventive punishments for violations of laws. It should be noted, however, that the Romans had a strong tendency to search for external provocateurs as instigators of slave unrest. Nevertheless, for the core areas focused on here, most categories of concerns over the activities of the enslaved population remained stable for centuries.

Household Bodyguards

While various laws existed for limiting the ability of enslaved people to carry weapons, this was often observed more in the breach. Enslaved people in rural areas were expected to need weapons to fend off both wild animals and robbers, yet fears abounded that this would allow the unfree population to run off and become bandits themselves.² Accordingly, legislation that aimed to ban slaves from carrying weapons did more to limit the weapons allowed.³ Nevertheless, Roman citizens could and did expect their domestic slaves to provide an armed defense, such as in the conflict between Publius Fabius and Marcus Tullius described in the *Pro Tullio* (Cicero, 21–25).⁴ Similarly, Cicero recounts an episode in Sicily where domestic slaves were injured in an attempted abduction (Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.67) and another in which Verres employed slave labor as enforcers (*In Verrem*, 3.55, 3.75). It should be recognized, of course, that legislation was

²This need for self-defense and legislation to limit it can be seen in the debates over the servile wars in Sicily.

³This sort of “sword-control” legislation was reasonably common for localities in antiquity, existing in both Athens and Rome. People were expected not to bring arms to public debates, and this was enforced. Famously, Thucydides remarked that the regular carrying of swords was an old-fashioned custom from when things were rougher, and the Athenians were the first of the Greeks to give it up (*The Peloponnesian War* 6.1–3). Other examples include Syracuse (which banned weapons in the agora, and the law’s author, Diocles, committed suicide on accidentally breaking it [Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 13.33]), Catana (where the same tale is told of that city’s lawgiver, Charondas [Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 12.19, and Valerius Maximus, *Nine Books of Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 6.5.4]), and Epidamnus (where pirates evade the restriction by hiding weapons in water-jars [Polybius, *Histories* 2.9). The situation in Rome was more complex and variable. The *lex de vi* quoted in Justinian’s *Digest* (48.6.1–2) is likely a ban on the stockpiling of arms rather than simply possessing weapons (see also 48.4.4).

⁴See also A. W. Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence: A Historian’s Companion* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 69–70, for details of this case.

repeatedly introduced in Rome against this sort of conduct as well.⁵ The jurist Marcianus relates numerous “edge cases” in book 14 of his *Institutes*, which is to say that the basic legal principle remained that arming household slaves was normal in most circumstances as long as they were not employed for illegitimate activity.⁶

Perhaps the most compelling account, however, is the infamous *Senatus Consultum Silanianum*, a decree of 10 CE that held that all adult slaves were legally culpable for the death of their masters if they were at home when their master was killed.⁷ This not only served as a defense against violence from the enslaved, it also instituted an additional motivating factor to protect masters from outside violence as well. By also including a provision that provided freedom to a slave who solved the mystery of their owner’s death, this law clearly sought a certain amount of acceptance or buy-in from the enslaved it governed. Whether it achieved that acceptance in widespread practice is debatable, but we do have examples of individuals achieving freedom in this way.

Beyond legal cases, we may also trade in expectations. Here also, we may consider Tacitus describing the household of the infamous Piso, who, when accused of magically murdering Germanicus, retreated to a place in Cilicia and armed his and his wife’s slaves against an expected assault (Tacitus, *Annals* 2.81). Similarly, we can look at the case of Lepida (20

⁵ Cicero notes such a law, the *lex Aquilia*, in 11–12 of *Pro Tullio*. Properly speaking, the *lex Aquilia* provides for recompense in such a situation rather than forbids this act, yet curbing violence by armed household slaves was surely part of the goal. Conversely, the Roman state was continuing to establish state control over violence, so some of this legislation may have been aimed not only at curbing violence by enslaved people but also restricting the potential power of landowners with large households. The later *lex Julia* prohibited slaves under arms (Marcianus, *Institutes* 14 = Justinian, *Digest* 48.6.3), however, this law was specifically engaged to limit public violence, revolt, and intimidation, and did not technically apply to the private sphere.

⁶ Some (an inexhaustive list) of those illegitimate activities include: intervention in public affairs (Justinian, *Digest* 48.6.3), obtaining or recovering property (*Digest* 48.8.3.4), or retrieving shipwrecked property (*Digest* 48.8.3.4). Moreover, while slaveowners could defend their slaves in court, they were not obliged to (*Digest* 48.1.9–14, 48.2.5, 48.2.12–13). Conversely, slaveowners were liable in cases involving the *lex Julia* (*Digest* 48.2.12.4). This general principle was reaffirmed in the Theodosian Code; see for example *Codex Theodosianus* 16.4.5.

⁷ Noel Lenski, “Violence and the Roman Slave,” in *The Topography of Violence in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Werner Riess and Garrett G. Fagan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 287. See also Justinian, *Digest* 29.5.1–27.

CE), whose slaves were held in custody lest they break her free (*Annals*, 3.22–23). This expectation of violence from slaves is not immediately dismissed as illegitimate. Cases like these suggest that at least in the late republic and early empire, there was an expectation that the unfree members of the household would violently defend free members of the household.

Freedmen as Soldiers

In both the Greek and Roman world, the enslaved populace was seen as military manpower of last resort, though some places made more use of it than others. In the Greek world, we have such examples as the Athenians at Arginusae, or the Chians more generally, offering enslaved people freedom in exchange for service as rowers.⁸ Though we sometimes see slaves impressed into duty as soldiers, it is rarely on the open battlefield such as is asserted at Marathon (Herodotus, *Histories* 7.15.7), but more commonly for manning the walls in a siege such as in Diodorus (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 18), or hurling heavy objects at soldiers who have broken into the city as we see in Livy (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 5.21.9).⁹ We are, however, presented with such examples of battlefield use both in the Punic Wars, where Livy recounts that a small army of volunteer slaves (the *volones*) was promised freedom for fighting Hannibal, and also in the Social War, where Diodorus tells us that the Marsi put together a last-ditch force of 20,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry by freeing slaves.¹⁰ In the former case, Livy follows this band in some detail, ascribing their successes to Gracchus and their failures to their servile nature. Such desperate measures

⁸ Peter Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 45–46, citing *Thucydides* 8.15.2. Even though Thucydides argues *against* Chian slave-rowers, Hunt argues that some connection is undeniable.

⁹ It has been noted early and repeatedly that the Athenians strenuously avoided this option during the Peloponnesian War up until the final years (a policy that Thucydides approved and Xenophon did not). See Rachel L. Sargent, “The Use of Slaves by the Athenians in Warfare,” *Classical Philology* 22, no. 2 (April 1927): 266.

¹⁰ See Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 22.57, for the initial recruitment of the *volones*, though they reappear periodically in books 22–24. For an extensive discussion of the former, see Karl-Wilhelm Welwei, *Unfreie im Antiken Kriegsdienst*, vol. 3 (Wiesbaden: Verlag nicht ermittelbar, 1988), 5–18. See Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 37.3, for the Marsi. Appian also tells us that Hannibal armed slaves in southern Italy and used them as garrison troops (Appian, *War against Hannibal* 9.57), while his brother Hasdrubal did purchase slaves as rowers in Spain (Appian, *Punic Wars* 2.9).

were undertaken again by Augustus and Marcus Aurelius.¹¹ Battlefield employment of freed slaves nevertheless remained a rarity.

If we refocus away from the recruits in many cases, this category can be conflated with the previous category of the household to provide some additional examples in passing. In 170 BCE, an eminent Abderite named Python, held the walls of Abdera against the Romans' ally, Eumenes of Pergamum, by dint of his 200-strong household force—until Eumenes bribed him (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca* 30.6.1).¹² Xenophon asserted that the Athenians should adopt a policy of arming their mine slaves in event of foreign invasion (Xenophon, *Vectigalia* 4.4.1–2). The social impetus for a slave to defend their master held even during war, though it is also apparent that warfare also brought opportunities for flight, escape, and desertion.¹³ In some cases, however, slaves who fled were captured and sold by the enemy forces.¹⁴

Certainly, in the Greek sphere, and presumably in the Roman, unfree soldiers were a source for military labor—the digging, hauling, mending, and preparing necessary to keep an army moving forward. We see glimpses of this in New Comedy: where in Menander, Plautus, and Terence alike, a fear is raised that the young man will have to become a mercenary soldier and the stock clever slave will be forced to follow him—that is, to carry the gear (Plautus, *Trinummus* 599).¹⁵

¹¹ For example, see Dio Cassius, *Histories* 55.26, and *Scriptores Historia Augusta* (*Life of Marcus Aurelius*) 21 (where the practice is explicitly modeled on the republican precedent of the *volones*).

¹² Unusually, neither the Pergamenes nor the Romans later punished him for this, though the ensuing sack of the city was apparently harsh even by Roman standards (see also Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 43.4, part of a string of protests against Roman harshness).

¹³ We should separate these. It is apparent that there were very many slaves who did not flee to escape slavery altogether but rather temporarily removing themselves from the conflict, as a strategy of avoiding labor as well as danger. See Peter Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 142, for a discussion of this “wandering” strategy in peacetime. We should also distinguish between those who took the opportunity simply to leave and those who saw a conflict as an opportunity to join the attackers and strike back at their enslavers.

¹⁴ Cicero, in a digression from a translation of Aristotle (*Topica*, 8) implies that captured slaves were to be included in the law of *postliminium*, which seems clearly a diversion from the Greek practice. The ensuing discussion, however, was etymological rather than jurisprudential.

¹⁵ This fear echoes a similar one in the *Perikeiromene* of Menander and the regrets of Xanthias in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes. Complaints of baggage-carrying are frequent in the comedies, but obviously not all can be linked to military roles.

STASIMUS: [*ibit...*] *latrocinatum, aut in Asiam aut in Ciliciam*

He'll go to some place, either to Asia or to Cilicia . . .
to serve as a mercenary.

Are these slaves to be recognized as part of the camp followers? It has been argued elsewhere (compare Beek 2015 with Spiedel 1999) that they are, and thus regularly carry arms and wear armor on campaign; even if not normally expected to fight on the battlefield, they may present the enemy with the impression of greater numbers.¹⁶ In some circumstances, these unfree soldiers are functionally part of their owner's military service and seem to identify with it. In the example above, the slave seems to have no inkling for the possibility that his soon-to-be-impooverished master might sell him, while the soldiers' servants often seem more invested in their master's reputation than the soldier is.¹⁷

In practical terms, it has long been the subject of some debate whether these unfree soldiers also took up roles of skirmishers, mixing into the somewhat unclear mob of *psiloi*, or marching close behind the infantry to hurl stones and darts from cover. This seems to have been the case with the Spartan helots, but the evidence is far less clear for other states. The fictional Harpax in the *Pseudolus* (Plautus, 655) is said to snatch defeated foes from the battleline, suggesting another military-adjacent role for unfree soldiers.¹⁸

¹⁶ Aaron L. Beek, "Freelance Warfare and Illegitimacy: The Historians' Portrayal of Bandits, Pirates, Mercenaries and Politicians" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2015); Michael P. Speidel, "The Soldiers' Servants," *Ancient Society* 20 (1999): 239–40. See also Aaron L. Beek, "Soldiers, Marriage, and the Impedimenta" (conference paper, Warfare in the Ancient World International Conference, 23 June 2023; and forthcoming in publication) for the role of enslaved individuals in the baggage train.

¹⁷ This is well evidenced in Menander, which frequently features the soldiers' servants and subordinates defending their master's desires (and more effectively than their master). Though it is outside the proper scope of this inquiry, one notes also in Demosthenes, *Against Conon* 4, the assumption that young men of a proper class in Classical Athens would have slave assistants even on field maneuvers and in training.

¹⁸ Harpax is clearly the slave of the Macedonian soldier, yet (allegedly) fights alongside him and even participates in the enslaving or ransoming of others. While this episode depicts no real event, we should be cautious about disbelieving it as a realistic event.

Fugitives in Slave Revolts

Very briefly, it may surprise few readers that the instigators of the Servile wars in Sicily and southern Italy (135–132 BCE, 104–100 BCE, and 73–71 BCE) sought to recruit more slaves to their cause, focusing in particular on the rural slaves of Italian farms.¹⁹ But perhaps less famous is the issue of recruiting slaves in civil wars of the late republic.

In Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*, for example, a number of the men who fall with Catiline at the end of Sallust's work are armed in what some might consider a more servile fashion, with hunting spears and javelins rather than true military equipment:

Sed ex omni copia circiter pars quarta erat militaribus armis instructa; ceteri, ut quemque casus armaverat, sparos aut lanceas, alii praeacutas sudis portabant.

But out of the whole mass, only about a quarter were furnished with military-grade weapons, the rest, as chance had armed each of them, with hunting spears or javelins, others were carrying sharpened stakes.²⁰

Are these fallen then the *fugitivi* whom Cicero repeatedly asserts Catiline to be recruiting? Sallust says no:

Interea servitia repudiabat, quoniam generis initio ad eum magnae copiae concurrebant, opibus coniurationis fretus, simul alienum suis rationibus existumans videri causam civium cum servis fugitivis communicavisse.

Meanwhile, he kept rejecting the slave-class, the sort of folk from which a great mass were running to him from the very beginning; he was relying on the strength of his conspiracy and at the same time reckoning it was contrary to his own movement's principles to appear to be sharing

¹⁹ In particular, shepherds and other herdsmen. See Diodorus, *Library* 34–35 F10–25, 36.2; and Plutarch, *Crassus* 9.3.

²⁰ Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 56.

the same goals as fugitive slaves (Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 56).

As Keith R. Bradley pointed out, H. H. Scullard accepts Catiline's recruitment of slaves essentially without question, while Erich S. Gruen essentially finds it to be unquestionably mere polemic.²¹ One may split the difference, seeing Catiline and his supporters taking their own compromise position: freeing their own households for this purpose while avoiding recruiting *fugitivi* from other households.

That is, running away to join a civil war army openly was not generally a viable strategy for the *fugitivi*. But then again, these were circumstances in which a slave might pose as a freedman in the hopes that the recruiters would not look too closely. Laws existed against such posing, but it was clearly in the interest of few to question the status of would-be recruits.

Nor was this exclusively a Roman issue. The sixth-century Sicilian tyrant Phalaris of Acragas was said to have seized Acragas and to have established a tyranny through arming and freeing the city slaves (Polyaenus, *Stratagems* 5.1.1). The Idumaeans were similarly said to enlist fugitive slaves of the Jews to bolster their ranks. And most famously, the Spartans at Decelea encouraged Athenian slaves to desert to them.²² Peace treaties allowed that *fugitivi* might flee to the other side, and thus often had provisions to restore the enslaved.²³

²¹ H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 BC to AD 68* (London: Routledge, 1970), 113; and Erich S. Gruen, *The Last Generation of the Roman Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 416–33, as cited in Keith R. Bradley, "Slaves and the Conspiracy of Catiline," *Classical Philology* 73, no. 4 (1978): 329.

²² The sources remain unclear as to what happened with those who took the Spartans' offer. Modern opinions range from them being immediately resold or simply sent off to being hired as rowers for the Spartans' new fleet. See Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians*, 110–15, for discussion and further bibliography.

²³ See Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians*, 107–9, noting that Thucydides and Aristophanes reference this issue only obliquely prior to the Spartans at Decelea, but complaints about Thebes and Megara accepting runaways persisted. See also Welwei, *Unfreie im Antiken Kriegsdienst*, vol. 1, 178–79 (150 for Decelea).

Fugitives in Polemic

Another complicating factor is polemic employed to delegitimize politicians by accusing them of employing runaways. Besides the actions of Catiline, Cicero repeatedly warns of bands of armed slaves mustering to the side of illegitimate power-graspers. He implies that Verres uses slaves to loot temples for him (Cicero, *Verrine Orations* 2.4.94, compare with 2.2.27, 2.4.99), that Sextus Aebutius rallies armed slaves to enforce his will and seize a farm (ca. 70) (Cicero, *Against Caecilius* 20–28), against Piso (Cicero, *Against Piso* 9–11, 15, 23), against Antony (Cicero, *Philippics* 2.36, esp. 4.6), and the other usual suspects.²⁴ For Cicero, the act of arming slaves (even one's own slaves) was akin to banditry.²⁵

Similar accusations were lodged in Rome against Sextus Pompey: that he was not simply opposed to Octavian but was raising armies of fugitive slaves who would take up arms against the empire.²⁶ This case is even more problematic than the earlier one because many of the supporters of Sextus Pompey had their property seized and turned over to the state for auction. Like the case of Catiline, it would not be hard to envision Pompey's supporters offering freedom in a bid to reclaim land.

In any case, this evidence of the late republic remains useful background for understanding the Augustan changes.²⁷ Since fear of slave revolts and uprising and even proto-abolition movements abounded, Augustus emphasized stability through introducing new limits. Augustus issued laws limiting the ability to execute slaves at will, likely not as a humanitarian measure but as a pragmatic, economic matter due to a relative

²⁴ Notice Antony's allegation of Cicero doing the same (*Philippics* 2.6). See also Beek, "Freelance Warfare and Illegitimacy," 181–84, for Cicero linking this slave-freeing to banditry.

²⁵ The rhetorical link between banditry and freeing slaves is reasonably common in the late republic and deserves fuller treatment. See Aaron L. Beek, "The Pirate Connection: Roman Politics, Servile Wars, and the East," *TAPA* 146, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 114–15, for this argument in connection with the Servile Wars.

²⁶ This claim of Octavian's is referenced not only in the *Res Gestae* (25) but also alluded to in Vergil, *Aeneid* 6.612–613. See also Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History* 2.73–74 (who confirms it); Appian, *Civil Wars* 5.72 (who asserts only that Sextus agreed not to allow fugitives to flee to Sicily in the future); and see also 5.131, where Octavian rescinds the mass manumissions previously granted.

²⁷ For further detail on the manumission changes under Augustus, see Kathleen M. T. Atkinson, "Purpose of the Manumission Laws of Augustus," *Irish Jurist* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1966): 356–74. For an extensive treatment of slaves and Pompey see Welwei, *Unfrei im Antiken Kriegsdienst*, vol. 3, 142–44.

shortage in the enslaved population. We should understand his limits on manumission similarly, creating a new paradigm: to free some slaves was benign, but to free too many was feckless.

Strategies of Resistance

Studies of slave resistance tend to focus on violent resistance, on the enslaved murdering their enslavers, on revolts, on the Servile Wars, or on flight to foreign armies. This is understandable for the modern historian. But we must remember that if an enslaved person's goal is simply to become free, running away is the clearest and most effective strategy in antiquity, for a number of reasons already touched on in passing. Antiquity's lack of identification made it a simple enough process (not necessarily *easy*, but fairly simple) for *fugitivi* to blend in with other impoverished peoples, if only they could manage the initial escape. As with much of our ancient evidence for slavery, the discoveries lie in the negative—slave collars or tattoos for past runaways, formal petitions to officials to aid the search, even bitter remarks from former masters—both in literature and inscribed. The state obligation to assist the slave owner in finding the fugitives (rather than simply enforcing rights) was a development of the empire, not the republic. The Roman government's search was not a passive one, as we can tell from documents in Roman Egypt, but it had limitations. Neither was it particularly long-lasting, nor did it tend to cross over provincial spheres of influence. Moreover, the hodgepodge overarching organization of towns, territories, and jurisdictions combined to such a degree that some towns had developed a reputation for not being particularly assiduous in responding to Roman inquiries—most notably in the late republic is the case of Cicero's Pindenissum. Yet, little is said about the strategies enslaved people used to escape, even if most of the evidence

we have concerns the strategies of the searchers. To this last category one might profitably add flight by freedwomen fleeing their spouses.²⁸

Despite ancient literature's implication that hard-working slaves could be freed in less than 10 years (e.g., Cicero, *Philippics* 8.32), it has long been acknowledged that this claim was a gross exaggeration likely meant to increase compliance. A rather more realistic, though still very hazy, estimate might be: 25 percent of slaves achieved some form of manumission within 20 years of trying in the first century.²⁹ Moreover, manumission rates were far lower in more rural districts than in Rome itself, a factor that surely contributed to the phenomenon of rural enslaved people responding at far higher rates to join the revolts of the Servile Wars or the small bandit armies that periodically ranged Italy. Even where evidence was found that an enslaved person has done the ostensibly right things to be freed, we have also accounts of masters and officials looking the other way and dishonoring the implicit agreement.³⁰

Owners of runaways might even try to quickly sell those *fugitivi*, to hand off the problem. The intricacies of the Fabian law (Justinian, *Digest* 48.15) emphasizing differences between kidnapping, theft, and fraud clearly show familiarity with a wide range of scenarios. Obviously, the implicit understanding is that people would buy and sell slaves or estates complete with slaves without being in the presence of those individuals. The “wandering slave” in this case could be bought and sold, but the fugitive slave had to be apprehended first. Nevertheless, it is also clear from

²⁸ It should be noted here that unlike other Roman women, a woman who had been freed on condition of marriage did not have the right of divorce.

²⁹ The Romans' belief may have been rooted in an observation that there are frighteningly few examples of slaves over the age of 40. Most had died, escaped, or been manumitted by this time. Conversely, here we are overreliant on the highly skilled portion of the enslaved population, more likely to be manumitted and also additionally, more likely to be recognized in an epitaph while still enslaved. The evidence does not indicate that most slaves employed for basic labor in farming or mining (a large proportion!) had much hope of freedom. Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, “The Regularity of Manumission at Rome,” *Classical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1985): 163. See also Ross Samson, “Rural Slavery, Inscriptions, Archaeology, and Marx: A Response to Ramsay MacMullen's ‘Late Roman Slavery,’” *Historia* 38, no. 1 (1989): 100–1, estimating 20 percent.

³⁰ This, strangely enough, was the only circumstance under which a slave could initiate legal action against their owner on their own behalf (Justinian, *Digest* 48.10.7), though Marcianus later allows they could also initiate a claim on the state's behalf (*Digest* 48.12.1). See also *Digest* 48.18.14.

the law that some cases of “runaways” were in fact abductions by thieves or bandits with the intent to resell them, muddying the none-too-clear waters.

The use of severe punishments for runaways is an obvious intended deterrent to flight, and the role of the imperial bureaucracy and magistracies in enforcing ownership was key to this. Even though we have numerous authors from Seneca to Apuleius to Marcus Aurelius criticizing harsh treatment of slaves, the fundamental structure of the empire reinforced the status quo. Even where incremental changes ameliorating the lives of slaves made their way into law, the ability of owners to seek redress in Roman law far outweighed the ability of their slaves to hold their owners to their minimal requirements. In other words, the system of slavery in the empire served to dehumanize systematically even as a few individuals strove to (re)humanize the system.³¹ One of the triggering features of one of the Servile Wars was perhaps when the governor Nerva promised to investigate claims of illegitimate enslaving and then backtracked.³² Nevertheless, there are a few strategies fugitives employ in the Roman Empire to increase success in flight and take advantage of certain structural issues of the empire.

Though it is frequently reported that free Romans feared slaves learning just how numerous they were, their ubiquity was no major secret, and slaves went everywhere and were sent everywhere. And while slave dress was often presented as nonidentifying, that is, nothing marks a slave as distinctly different in appearance from a poor free individual, such slave dress was also seen as an effective way to hide. Numerous aristocrats managed to sneak in or out of places disguised as slaves, either through pitiful

³¹ It is perhaps a perennial surprise that none of the authors arguing in favor of a more benign treatment of slaves and those arguing against the act of enslaving extended their logic to anything really resembling the abolition of slavery—the focus was on amelioration rather than abolition. For detailed discussion, see Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³² There were numerous claims by slaves that they had been captured from territory allied with Rome and sold into slavery, which contravened Roman law. For the possibility that many of these were captured during the Seleucid civil wars, see Beek, “The Pirate Connection,” 101–18.

clothing or through painting a fake tattoo or scars.³³ As Deborah Kamen has reported, many slaves, particularly “bad” ones, were intentionally marked with distinguishing marks, whether whip scars, shackle marks, tattoos, or even collars.³⁴

Accordingly, for an enslaved person bent on escape, a change of clothing might be key, all the more so since the owner, seeking official redress from imperial officials, would have circulated a name and description, a proto-wanted poster. A fugitive bent on escape might link up with a party of travelers inclined to welcome another traveler to ward off bandits. Signifying features, such as tattoos, scars, or brands, would need to be hidden by the fugitive. Again, we see evidence of this requirement mostly in the negative: Martial’s advice *splenia tolle, leges* “to look under the bandages,” or the warning in Aëtius about medical tattoo removal—make sure the freedman is actually free before commencing surgery (Martial, *Epigrammata* 2.29.9–10; and Aetius, *Books on Medicine* 8.12).³⁵ Other individuals resorted to prayer, and we even have dedications to Asclepius in thanks for successful removal of *stigmata* (Epidaurus, *Inscriptiones Graecae* IV² 1.121.48–54.).³⁶ Other techniques included strategically placed hairstyles, disguising scars as other scars or tattoos as other tattoos, and various medical remedies.³⁷ While such marks of slavery were difficult to remove, many strategies of removing or hiding these marks appeared. The surviving texts, of course, are in the forms of warnings for what to look for, aimed at the slaveholders of elite society, again indicating that detection fell on the

³³ Deborah Kamen, “A Corpus of Inscriptions: Representing Slave Marks in Antiquity,” in *The Good, the Bad, and the Altered: Toward a Method of Identifying Recut and Typologically Irregular Roman Imperial Portraits*, vol. 55, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, eds. Vernon Hyde Minor and Brian A. Curran (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 2010), 100, <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.4528838>.

³⁴ See Kamen, “A Corpus of Inscriptions: Representing Slave Marks in Antiquity,” for extensive details on the variety of markings. Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery*, 203; Jennifer Trimble, “The Zoninus Collar and the Archaeology of Roman Slavery,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 120, no. 3 (2016): 447–72, <https://doi.org/10.3764/aja.120.3.0447>; and D. L. Thurmond, “Some Roman Slave Collars in CIL,” *Athenaeum* 82 (1994): 492–93, point out that the sudden increase in collars in late antiquity may stem from a Christian prohibition against intentionally disfiguring slaves.

³⁵ See also Kamen, “A Corpus of Inscriptions: Representing Slave Marks in Antiquity,” 104.

³⁶ See Kamen, “A Corpus of Inscriptions: Representing Slave Marks in Antiquity,” 106, for discussion.

³⁷ Kamen, “A Corpus of Inscriptions: Representing Slave Marks in Antiquity,” 104–7, and throughout for further details.

individual as much as the state. One key observation is that most of the described examples to hide previous identity are of individuals who have made their initial escape successfully and seek rather *continued* freedom.

While Roman laws surely favored the owner, it is also apparent that if the fugitive made their initial escape, many owners found continued pursuit a lost cause. We have examples of owners bemoaning their fugitives, but in most cases, the owners were principally bemoaning what the fugitives took with them as they escaped. In Cicero's case, the fugitive fled with a valuable book, and in one inscription, a man complains that the runaway took away his wife with him.³⁸

Of course, a potential runaway might prefer to find a place of refuge at the outset. Cicero's example of Pindenissum is mentioned already, but a number of foreign communities are accused by Romans as accepting and refusing to return slaves, such as the Ligurians, Thracians, and Galatians, likewise the cities of Cilicia and Corsica in particular were seen as lax in checking for ownership.³⁹ This sort of fleeing to a receptive haven was apparently typical, and by the authorities' harsh reactions, we may surmise it tended to be effective. Erstwhile owners might seek oracular help, only to be told "no" in most cases.⁴⁰ Both in the republic and empire, Roman authorities endeavored to quell this tendency. Imperial laws mandated those caught assisting a fugitive became financially liable (Justinian, *Digest* 48.3.14.7).⁴¹ This was no one-off law, but a clear extension of laws forbidding people from aiding other groups, such as deserters. Per a letter

³⁸ Inscription on altar to Junia Procula, CIL 6.20905, Le Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy. The man, one Marcus Junius Euphrosynus, made the unusual choice of recording this event on the back of their daughter's tombstone. While two additional fugitives are mentioned, the free/unfree status of the instigator, a certain Zosimus, is not clear. While prayers to the gods and magic curses may have been unusual methods for stopping runaways, this was not unique; for a Greek example see D. R. Jordan, "A Survey of Greek Defixiones Not Included in the Special Corpora," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 26, no. 2 (1985), as cited in Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery*, 151.

³⁹ Just as running away can be encoded as a form of resistance, we may posit this lack of cooperation to be rooted in another form of subversive resistance by Roman subjects.

⁴⁰ Dan-el Padilla Peralta, "Slave Religiosity in the Roman Middle Republic," *Classical Antiquity* 36, no. 2 (2017): 356–57, <https://doi.org/10.1525/ca.2017.36.2.317>.

⁴¹ Although this was also an edge case. See 47.2.36, where "advising" someone to run away was merely "bad advice" and thus not legally culpable.

of Constantine, runaways who crossed over to barbarians even received a special torture.⁴²

There were also a few specifically ex-slave communities. For examples, consider the Carthaginian ex-slaves suppressed by Rome in 198 BCE, or the legend that the city of Ephesus was founded by fugitive slaves from Chios (Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita* 32.26 for the former; and Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 88 [265] for the latter).⁴³ Former slaves could also find refuge among bandit groups. This path to recruitment was noted by Bulla Felix (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 77.10), saying, “Feed your slaves so that they don’t become bandits.” Similar events were noted with the “revolt” of Maternus and lent credence by both by the jurist Ulpian and by practices displayed in the Greek novels. This path held another danger: even though bandits or pirates might see runaways as potential recruits, they might also see them as potential income, so fleeing to bandits voluntarily was a gamble.⁴⁴

In Egypt, the documentary evidence suggests that runaway slaves might try to blend in when in particular districts, but more often they seemed to try to stow away aboard ships to get out of Egypt altogether (at least in the eyes of the administrators sending messages to each other). While different provincial administrators did communicate to each other on the topic of runaways when they thought necessary, for the runaway, changing provincial boundaries and thereby jurisdictions seems to have been a goal that would permit a more successful flight. In this way, the fugitives could manipulate the organization of the empire against itself.

This chapter argues the flight of enslaved people is understudied as a resistance strategy, further argues that historical referents to fugitives

⁴² See also *Codex Theodosianus* 3.4.1, also on fugitives, 5.17.

⁴³ Lenski, “Violence and the Roman Slave,” 294 for the seizure of Setia. Note: the tidbit from Athenaeus was attached to the origin of the slave trade.

⁴⁴ While the evidence that piracy provided a significant quantity of slaves to the Roman economy is quite debatable, it is strongly implied that the slave trade generally provided a very high proportion of the pirates’ economy. It should also be noted that in the late republic and early empire frequently the people whom the pirates sold into slavery had been captured from *latifundia*. Previously free people tended to be ransomed.

often mix categories—often intentionally—and delineates some of the strategies employed: changing their appearances, finding havens disinclined to extradite, joining bandit gangs, travelling in groups appearing to have business, and crossing provincial jurisdictions.

“Anime tribolate, se potete, datevi in viaggio pace e buon piacere”¹

Traveling the Mercenary-Infested Borderlands
of the Holy Roman Empire and the
Kingdom of France, 1360–1370

by Ölbei Tamás, PhD

The so-called New Military History broadens the scope of examining the invasions and campaigns of late medieval armies by considering their intricate effects on local society. This approach is particularly beneficial to researchers when ample sources exist to realistically depict the impact of these invasions and campaigns on the people of the era, thereby drawing the reader closer to the daily lives and challenges faced by contemporaries. In the fourteenth century, as today, individuals undertook journeys of varying lengths. The arrival of mercenary companies during the Hundred Years’ War in previously unscathed regions precipitated comprehensive changes in all aspects of life, including travel. This chapter

¹“Afflicted souls, if you can, give yourself in your journey peace and good comfort,” in Matteo Villani, *Cronica di Matteo Villani, a miglior lezione ridotta coll’ aiuto de’ testi a penna*, ed. Ignazio Moutier (Florence: Il Magheri, 1826), vol. 5, book 11, chap. 1, 142, as cited and translated by Louis Green, *Chronicle into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History in Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 85.

explores the evolving customs, the new adversities encountered by travelers, and the corresponding responses in the mid-fourteenth century along the frontiers of the kingdom of France and the Holy Roman Empire.

By the mid-fourteenth century, mercenaries had become a dominant, inescapable factor in late medieval warfare. A significant part of the peoples of Europe had experienced their presence and had daily encounters, which profoundly changed their mindset and sense of security, as the many examples found in the different European archives and chronicles show. The Treaty of Brétigny (8 May 1360) did not bring peace to the frontiers of the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of France, but war.² The border provinces of Barrois, Champagne, the two Burgundies, and Lorraine were largely saved from the mercenaries of the Hundred Years' War, who first appeared in the region in the wake of Edward III's army just before the peace in 1360.³ The enduring presence of mercenary companies as a result of Edward III's campaign marked a significant shift in the sociopolitical landscape of the frontier regions.⁴ Travel was an important aspect of coexistence, as the local population had found a safe haven in fortified towns and castles when mercenaries were permanently in the area. The roads of the fourteenth century were not deserted; many people traveled them for a wide variety of reasons: some traveled for official reasons as members of embassies, to attend a trial, to meet the emperor, or to visit the papal court in Avignon.⁵ Many merchants frequented the border region, as it was here that the famous Champagne fairs were held. Others traveled

² Ölbéi Tamás, "Crusading Companies in the 1365th Year of Our Lord," *East Central Europe* 47 (2020): 67–88.

³ Ölbéi Tamás, "The Importance of River Valleys in the Overall Strategy of the Mercenary Companies 1357–1366," *British Journal for Military History* 8, no. 3 (2022): 17–37, <https://doi.org/10.25602/GOLD.bjmh.v8i3.1642>.

⁴ On the late medieval use of the term *mercenary*, see Françoise Lainé, "Gens d'armes 'savoynards' guerroyant en Gascogne en 1338–1341 des alliés du roi de France," in *Routiers et mercenaires pendant la guerre de Cent ans. Hommage à Jonathan Sumption*, eds. Pépin Guilhem, Bériac-Lainé Françoise et Boutouille Frédéric (Bordeaux: Ausonius, 2015), 239–56; John France, "Introduction," in *Mercenaries and Paid Men: The Mercenary Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. John France (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1–15; and Kelly DeVries, "Medieval Mercenaries: Methodology, Definition and Problems," in *Mercenaries and Paid Men*, 43–60.

⁵ Valérie Toureille, *Crime et Châtiment au Moyen Age* (Paris: Seuil, 2013), loc. 1. 2229, e-book; and Emil Werunsky, *Geschichte Kaiser Karls IV und Seiner Zeit*, vol. 3. (Innsbruck: Druck und Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1892), 219–21.

across the border on private business, like Petrarch, on sightseeing trips to Cologne and Paris.⁶

In the middle of the fourteenth century, traveling in complete peace was more of an illusion than a reality in the frontier region. Travelers were threatened by many dangers, but some dared to travel hundreds of kilometers through territories controlled by mercenaries to reach their destinations and recounted their journeys in letters or poems. They were the lucky ones. In particular, two Italian poets provided authentic accounts: Petrarch, who crossed the border just after King Edward III's campaign and witnessed with dismay the devastation caused by the English army, and Fazio degli Uberti, who had traveled from Normandy to Paris a few years earlier. The two descriptions are remarkably similar, and both speak of abandoned and burnt-out towns. "I saw the land burnt and devastated," writes Fazio degli Uberti in *Il Dittamondo*, while Petrarch paints a similar picture of the border region, writing, "Everywhere you turn, there is loneliness, mourning, ruin: the fields are horrible, the houses are abandoned and deserted."⁷ It is particularly interesting to note that Fazio degli Uberti traveled through a region that had been devastated for decades, while Petrarch's description of the frontier was written in 1360, when the mercenary companies had only been there for a year.⁸

Even the most powerful were not immune. While Emperor Charles IV was on his way to Avignon, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, wanted to join him with his entourage in the spring of 1365.⁹ However, Seguin de Badefol, one of the most important mercenary captains of the period, wanted to set a trap for the duke, as news of this trip spread quickly.¹⁰

⁶ Francesco Petrarca, *Lettere di Francesco Petrarca: delle cose familiari libri ventiquattro: lettere varie libro unico*, vol. 4, ed. Giuseppe Fracassetti (Firenze: Successori le Monnier, 1866), 478–79.

⁷ Fazio degli Uberti, *Il Dittamondo* (Milano: Giovanni Silvestri, 1826), 330; and Petrarcha, *Lettere di Francesco Petrarca*, 478–79.

⁸ Kenneth Alan Fowler, "Henry of Grosmont, First Duke of Lancaster, 1310–1361" (PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1961), 809–17.

⁹ Ölbei Tamás, "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy: Reconnaissance, Spying on Mercenaries and Crusaders," *Imago temporis: medium Aevum* 14 (2020): 297–321.

¹⁰ Siméon Luce, ed., *Chroniques de J. Froissart*, vol. 6, 1360–1366 (Paris: V. Jules Renourd, 1876), 62.

Thomas de Voudenay and Guillaume de Choiseul, lords of Aigremont, warned the duke of the danger.¹¹ The payment to Lienart, a messenger on foot, informs us that a trap designed by Seguin de Badefol was ready.¹² Although the duke had left with a large contingent, he had to change the planned route because the companies were on the lookout. In a letter from Thoissei dated 10 June, the duke was informed that the mercenary company of the occupied town of Anse was guarding two roads. To avoid surprise, the ducal garrisons were to keep a day-and-night watch on the ramparts of the towns in the bailliage of Chalon, and they had to prevent the enemy from crossing the bailliage.¹³

Konrad the Painter

Following his meeting with Pope Urban V, Charles IV returned from Avignon to the Holy Roman Empire, where he was met with the considerable surprise of encountering nearly 20,000 crusader mercenaries led by Arnaud de Cervole. Remarkably, the ink had scarcely dried on the plans devised by Urban V and Charles IV in Avignon, which aimed to eliminate the mercenary companies that were paralyzing the French kingdom. The mercenaries under Arnaud de Cervole were supposed to cross the Rhine at Strasbourg and then proceed along the Danube valley toward Hungary. However, these mercenaries had such a notorious reputation within the Empire, and particularly in Alsace, that when they appeared before the walls of Strasbourg, engaging in numerous atrocities and acts of destruction in line with their infamous conduct, the city's citizens had no intention of allowing them entry.¹⁴ Consequently, the Alsatians held Charles IV responsible for the damages incurred, leading to the brink of open

¹¹ Compte de Dimanche Vitel, receveur général du duché de Bourgogne dans le Bailliage de Châlon, B 1417, f. 36v., Archives départementales de Côte d'Or (ADCO), Dijon, France.

¹² Compte de Girard de Longchamps, B 3567, f. 15r, ADCO, Dijon, France.

¹³ Ernest Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois; d'après des documents inédits: Philippe le Hardi 1363–1380*, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1909), 159.

¹⁴ Ölbei Tamás, "Crusading Companies in the 1365th Year of Our Lord," 67–88.

armed conflict. The discontent was vociferously expressed and ultimately reached the ears of the monarch.¹⁵

The case of Konrad von Soest, a painter from Strasbourg, illustrates from the outset the complex changes in the lives of individuals and communities that accompanied the arrival of mercenaries. For Konrad, it meant the possibility of a loan and taking a beating by one of the most illustrious people of his time. He also suffered the loss of his horse and, by his own admission at least, did his city a great service.¹⁶ For the Strasbourg city council, it was a matter of avoiding the emperor's wrath.

At the end of 1375, Konrad needed money and asked the city officials of Strasbourg for a loan. The date may not be coincidental, as this was the second appearance of the hated routiers in Alsace, meaning that the city and province were in imminent danger.¹⁷ However, this was not the invasion led by the Earl of Bredford, Enguerrand VII, the last sire de Coucy in 1375.¹⁸ Rather, it was Konrad's role in the events of 10 years earlier that he cited to justify the legitimacy of the loan requested.¹⁹ Charles IV was deeply offended when he heard that the citizens of Strasbourg were blaming him for the appearance of the mercenaries and planned to take revenge on the city. The opportunity came when a delegation from the city council was on its way to meet the emperor. Then came the important moment for Konrad, who painted in the emperor's presence and witnessed Charles IV's conversation. In his letter requesting the loan, the painter recalled the events:

¹⁵ Ölbei Tamás, "Crusading Companies in the 1365th Year of Our Lord," 86.

¹⁶ "Der Maler Konrad an den Meister und den Rat zu Straßburg: bittet in Ansehung seiner geleisteten Dienste um ein Darlehen" (Ende 1375 oder später.), in Hans Witte and Georg Wolfram, eds., *Urkunden und Akten der Stadt Strassburg: Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, vol. 5/2 (Strassburg: Verlag von Karl J. Trübner, 1895), 900, no. 1238.

¹⁷ Maurice Prou, *Étude sur les relations politiques du pape Urbain V avec les rois de France, Jean II et Charles V (1362–1370)* (Paris: F. Vieweg, Libraire-Éditeur, 1888); Pièces Justificatives LVII. Urbain V sollicite d'Edouard, duc d'Aquitaine et prince de Galles, une lettre de rémission en faveur de Seguin de Badefol et de ses complices, 16 July 1365, 132–33.

¹⁸ Jules Finot, *Recherches sur les incursions des Anglais et des grandes compagnies dans la duché et le comté de Bourgogne a la fin du XIV^e siècle* (Vesoul: Typographie de A Suchaux, 1874), 113.

¹⁹ Witte and Wolfram, *Urkunden und Akten der Stadt Strassburg: Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, vol. 5/2, 900, no. 1238.

I first warned you when you were in conflict with the Emperor, when he came from Avignon and had to pass with you from the Rhine to the city, but would not eat with you, and it was then that he was above all your enemy. Shortly afterwards, when you went to Selz and wanted to speak to the Emperor, he sat down in the tower of Selz, and I painted before him in that same tower. When he saw you dismount, I heard him say to von Megdeburg: «Are the Strasbourgeois arriving?» And von Megdeburg replied, «Yes, sir.» [Charles IV]: «Then send for all the carpenters to cut wood for the gallows». Then von Megdeburg said, «Sir, what do you mean?» [Charles IV]: «I want to hang the emperor Heilman of Strasbourg and all those who were with him on the Rhine, who armed themselves bravely, who marched against me in an unworthy manner and who turned me away from the Rhine towards the city with them.» This speech terrified me. . . . I climbed down the tower. . . . I ran to the inn. . . . There I found a man called Hesse Proger, and I said to him: «Will not you report me if I warn the people of Strasbourg of a danger? And he swore to me with his hand. Then I told him what I had heard from the Emperor. . . . I fled to the tower. And as God gloriously willed that the watchman should not see me enter or leave, at that hour the Emperor saw you turn your heads and go home. He then said to von Megdeburg, «Tell me, who warned the people of Strasbourg?» He replied, «Sir, you know very well that I have been here with you all this time». The Emperor then said: «So it was the painter's ser-

vant who did it», and he grabbed me by the hair, dragged me under the window and beat me very badly.²⁰

Nevertheless, the painter's adventures did not end there. Even after this missed opportunity, the emperor did not give up his plan to take revenge on the people of Strasbourg. Therefore, he convened a secret council of his closest confidants to plan in detail their punishment. He prepared to hang the members of the town council from the highest possible points.²¹ The painter, who had heard the meeting in the emperor's tent, wanted to inform the people of Strasbourg of the imminent danger personally. In doing so, he risked his life and property, as he had to travel from the emperor's camp to Strasbourg through the territory occupied by the mercenaries:

And when I heard this among the tents, that he set himself this goal for so short a time, I . . . mounted my horse, as if to lead him to water, and pursued my horse to you, to the city. . . . then about four Frenchmen pursued me to the white tower and took my horse and all my possessions. I then completed my journey on foot and found the district magistrate on Saint-Michel hill . . . I told him everything I had learned.²²

The loss of the horse must have been particularly painful for Konrad, because in the years 1350–60, the price of a good saddle horse in the border region fluctuated between 5 and 25 francs.²³ After the failure of the emperor's personal vendetta, the people of Strasbourg took satisfaction from

²⁰ Witte and Wolfram, *Urkunden und Akten der Stadt Strassburg: Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, vol. 5/2, 900, no. 1238.

²¹ Witte and Wolfram, *Urkunden und Akten der Stadt Strassburg: Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, vol. 5/2, 900, no. 1238.

²² Witte and Wolfram, *Urkunden und Akten der Stadt Strassburg: Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, vol. 5/2, 900, no. 1238.

²³ Françoise Piponnier, "Le Bourguignon et son cheval dans les inventaires après décès (XIIIe–XVe siècles)," in *Le cheval au Moyen Âge*, ed. Élisabeth Lorans (Tours: Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017), 79–90.

this and brought the conflict to a political level. They entrusted the bishop of Speyer with the task of mediation, who drafted a letter to the people of Strasbourg setting out the emperor's grievances against the city. The townsfolk had accused the emperor of having personally acted in favor of the mercenaries: "You have claimed that with his will and advice he allowed this English crowd to penetrate the Alsace country."²⁴

As this is the only surviving contemporary reference, it is impossible to prove the authenticity of the story, but it is assumed that Konrad may have been writing the truth to the Strasbourg council, as he was asking for a loan for services rendered to the city. It seems that the appearance of the mercenaries aroused such emotions, even in a loyal city like Strasbourg, that the council was on the verge of armed rebellion.²⁵

"I am accursed to rob in that thief's company."²⁶

Dangers Awaiting the Travelers

In any case, in this environment, it was easy for travelers to find themselves in the situation of Konrad the painter, who only had to cover a relatively short distance—50 km—through a territory occupied by the companies, and yet he lost everything. Two examples from Burgundy show that his case is not unique and that it was dangerous to travel even a short distance without taking precautions: in January 1364, the castle of Arconcey was taken by a Breton company and the Auxonne region was threatened.²⁷ The Duke of Touraine ordered the lords, *bailli*, and captains of the local castles to guard their fortresses day and night and to assemble with their hosts to face the imminent threat.²⁸ Many, like Geoffroi du Bochet, arrived

²⁴ "Bischof Lambrecht von Speyer an Straßburg: der Kaiser führe Klage wegen ungerechter gegen ihn erhobener Beschuldigungen bezüglich der Engländer, wegen der Pfahlbürger und wegen eines neuen Breuschzolls, er habe deshalb einen Tag nach Nürnberg angesetzt," (6 January 1366, Prague), in Witte and Wolfram, *Urkunden und Akten der Stadt Strassburg: Politische Urkunden von 1332 bis 1380*, vol. 5/2, 547, no. 701.

²⁵ However, the emperor had used a more intimate address and tone in his previous letters to the city council.

²⁶ Barbara Mowat et al., eds., Act 2, Scene 2, in *Henry IV*, by William Shakespeare (Washington, DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, n.d.), 58.

²⁷ *Compte de Dimanche Vitel, receveur pour le Roi B 1416*, f. 41r-v, ADCO, Dijon, France.

²⁸ *Compte de Dimanche Vitel, receveur pour le Roi*. *Bailli* translates to bailiff, and was a ruler's administrative representative.

late because the companies had intercepted seven of the messengers.²⁹ A messenger's job was so dangerous that sometimes no one delivered a letter, no matter how important it was.³⁰ This happened after the companies hired by Charles the Bad had taken La Charité and threatened Burgundy from the west, while the troops led by Jean de Neufchâtel attacked from the east.³¹ The captains of La Charité's neighboring castles, such as Pierre Lalemand, lord of Saint-Seine-sur-Vingeanne, could find no one to take the letter "for the fear of the men-at-arms in the country."³² In 1364, the war of succession was raging in Burgundy: skirmishes at La Charité led to the occupation of Villaines-les-Prévôtes. Travel in the region became dangerous, especially for envoys. Henri Le Monnoyer, the bearer of a message for Henri de Vienne, was captured, robbed, tortured, and left with fatal wounds.³³ Simon Christophe, captain of the Château de Champagne in Burgundy, did not dare leave Troyes because of the situation around Villaines-les-Prévôtes.³⁴ It was precisely to avoid such situations that the messages received by the duke on 24 August 1364 from the *bailli* of Dijon were essential. They indicated which roads were controlled by the enemy and which could be used.³⁵

Last-minute information on the whereabouts of the companies was essential for anyone setting off on a journey. Envoys from Avignon traveling to the frontier were informed in advance of the whereabouts of company members. In 1362, the envoy Henri de Tonges spent eight days in a fortified village in the Comtat Venaissin, because he had been informed in good time of the arrival of bands of soldiers.³⁶ For travelers in the Comtat

²⁹ Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois*, 75.

³⁰ Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois*, 82.

³¹ Compte de Dimanche Vitel, receveur général du duché de Bourgogne dans le Bailliage de Châlon, ADCO B 1417, f. 43v.

³² Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois*, 82.

³³ Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois*, 154.

³⁴ Petit, *Ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois*, 154.

³⁵ Compte de Dimanche Vitel, receveur général du duché de Bourgogne dans le Bailliage de Châlon.

³⁶ Anne-Marie Hayez, "Les courriers des papes d'Avignon sous Innocent VI et Urbain V (1352–1370)," in *La circulation des nouvelles au Moyen Âge: Actes des Congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'enseignement supérieur public, La circulation des nouvelles au Moyen-Âge*, 24^e congrès, Avignon (1993): 49–92.

Venaissin, it was relatively easy to find fortified villages to settle in, as from 1357, with the arrival of Arnaud de Cervole, the local population had hastened to fortify the villages.³⁷

When defenses fell apart and the companies took control of an area, the roads were often deserted because fear was one of the primary feelings experienced by people in regions infested by the companies. A company that participated in the crusade led by Arnaude de Cervole came to prévôté de Baigneux-les-Juifs on 10 June 1364 and stayed until 26 May 1365, under the famous Arnaud de Tallebardon's leadership.³⁸ Thiébault le Nains was the prévôt (provost) who reported to the Duke of Burgundy:

Item, that the Sunday before the Bordes [23 February 1365], the Navarrese came to Villene-les-Prevostés. And still there are the ones who devastate the country, take people, livestock and food, and cause perdition from day to day and nobody wants to take leave from the said prévôté, there are a great many who mutilate legs, ears, and have never worked, and they came to loot the fair of the Saturday before Lent, in particular causing great damage to the above: nobody dares to leave the castle, in the whole area there is no fortress where one can be held back or take refuge.³⁹

Travelers could be confronted with danger that was not aimed at them personally but that affected them. They were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, like the people of the Bishop of Chartres who were traveling from Avignon to Lyon. Jean, lord of Saint-Trivier in Dombes in the empire, a knight, was captured and imprisoned by Seguin de Bade-

³⁷ Valérie Toureille et al., *Guerre et société 1270–1480* (Neuilly: Atlande, 2013), 61; and Germain Butaud, “Villages et villageois du Comtat Venaissin en temps de guerre (milieu xive-début xve siècle),” in *Les villageois: Face à la guerre (XIV^e-XVIII^e siècle)*, ed. Christian Desplat (Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2002), 55.

³⁸ Fonds Colombet, Colombet 48, ADCO, Dijon, France, as cited in Anatole de Charmasse, *Note sur le passage et le séjour des grandes compagnies dans la prévôté de Baigneux-les-Juifs en 1364 et 1365* (Paris/Autuns: Dejussieu Père et fils, 1881), note 9.

³⁹ ADCO Fonds Colombet, Colombet 48.

fol's company when he was traveling from one of his castles to Lyon in 1364. Jean chained with three pairs of irons and suffered for a long time in prison. To regain his freedom, Jean agreed to pay a high ransom. He had already paid a large part of this sum, but he had to leave his son as a hostage in the hands of the enemies. His son remained imprisoned until Candlemas (2 February). Once freed, Jean set out to take revenge on the members of the company. However, by an unfortunate mistake, Jean's men arrested and imprisoned some of the Bishop of Chartres's people on their way back from Avignon. However, as soon as they realized that they were the bishop's men, they immediately released them and returned everything they had taken from them.⁴⁰

Jean then attempted to travel safely to Lyon to obtain his son's release. However, the prévôt of Mâcon, due to the events mentioned above, tried to arrest him and confiscated silverware in a house in Lyon belonging to Jean, and even his son's lands in the kingdom. These confiscations were carried out without Jean or his son being able to object. Jean, who had always been loyal to the kingdom, humbly asked for the charges against him to be lifted. He stressed that he had loyally served the kingdom, as well as his lord and father, during the wars in which his brother had lost his life. He declared that he was ready and willing to continue serving according to his abilities. Jean had somehow managed to pacify the situation and had reached an agreement with the royal council.⁴¹

The Cost of Traveling

Of course, if a border lord or important official had a big enough entourage, they did not need to fear the threat of companies, and they could take advantage of the journey to settle scores with the mercenaries who had chosen the wrong place as a base for their raids. These fortified buildings, known as fortified houses, depending on the source, proved powerless in

⁴⁰ Georges Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans: Les Tards-Venus en Lyonnais, Forez & Beaujolais, 1356–1369* (Lyon: Vitte & Perrussel, 1886), 146–48.

⁴¹ Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 146–48.

the face of a real attack.⁴² Their capacity was limited to a small company of 50–100 armed men. The mercenaries themselves could be caught off guard, even in extreme circumstances, such as near Lyon and in the Dauphiné region, on the border with Savoy, during the events surrounding the Battle of Brignais in 1362.⁴³ In Raul de Louppy's account of his return from negotiations with Amadeus VI, the Count of Savoy, he made a diversion to the island of Cremau, where a small company had seized the stronghold of Aute Pierre, owned by Camus de Chenay. From there, they pillaged the region. The small fortress was stormed and occupied by members of the governor's entourage, while the criminals were punished.⁴⁴

Raul de Louppy's captivating narrative clearly shows what it meant to have an adequate sum of money for traveling in the first half of the 1360s. These expenses, by their very nature, are accompanied by meticulous justifications as to the reason for the journey and, where applicable, the increase in the allowance due to the threat of the companies. Between 1361 and 1367, the governor regularly traveled to Avignon, Grenoble, Romans, La-Côte-Saint-André, Paris, Lyon, and other destinations. An average journey, unless the destination was a distant place such as Paris, took two weeks, with a cavalry of between 20 and 32 horses.⁴⁵ This cost Raul de Louppy 200–300 florins per passage. When there was an imminent threat, as is often reported in the accounts when the companies occupied Burgundy, the escort became even more important, sometimes it was even doubled, which naturally led to a proportional increase in travel costs.⁴⁶ In 1363, the financial situation of the crown was so precarious that when John the Good, King of France, arrived in Avignon, Raul de Louppy found himself obliged to lend the king the sum of 3,789 florins

⁴² Ulysse Chevalier, ed., *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369* (Romans: Imprimerie R. Sibilat André, 1886), 21–22, no. 64.

⁴³ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 21–22, no. 64.

⁴⁴ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 21–22, no. 64.

⁴⁵ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 16–17, no. 6; 29, no. 71; 31, no. 73; 33, no. 75.

⁴⁶ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 17–18, no. 62; 19–20, no. 63.

for his expenses.⁴⁷ The journey became truly perilous in the mid-1360s, when Seguin de Badefol captured Anse in 1364. The roads to Lyon had become dangerous because “[Seguin de Badefol] had occupied the fortress of Anse, which every day he & his people endeavoured to burden & damage the said city of Lyon & wage war, for which the whole country was in great peril.”⁴⁸ For this reason, the governor’s escort in Lyon was always larger; for example, at the beginning of 1365, it amounted to 43 horses.⁴⁹

How to Travel Safely

Different solutions, therefore, had to be found for those who wished to use the road. Some believed that by paying a mercenary captain for safe conduct, they could cross the territory under their control in complete safety. After the occupation of Anse by Seguin de Badefol, in the name of Charles II, the king of Navarre issued a safe conduct.⁵⁰ If someone wanted to travel in peace in the region, they had to ask one of Badefol’s secretaries for a pass issued in the name of the captain of Anse and marked with his seal. All for a tidy sum. Such a *sauf et seur conduit* was given to “Maistres Richert, Doien de Besantzon, and Estienne de Sauzet, vicars of reverend father in God” in 1365.⁵¹ It sets out the exact conditions under which they passed through the territory controlled by the Margot. In this case, it concerns a maximum of 20 horses, 20 persons on horseback, and 5 valets on foot. Orders were given to the members of the Margot that the holder of the pass and his escort are not to be troubled until the expiration of the duration of the pass.⁵²

However, the possession of such safe-conduct passes also carried its own dangers, although not from the point of view of the companies, but

⁴⁷ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 50, no. 110.

⁴⁸ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 56, no. 120.

⁴⁹ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 57, no. 121.

⁵⁰ Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 107.

⁵¹ Bernard Descroix, *Seguin de Badefol: “ce fils d’iniquité” qui fit trembler Anse et la France entière* (Lyon: Société d’archéologie du Beaujolais, 1985), 53. *Sauf et seur conduit* = safe and sure conduct.

⁵² Descroix, *Seguin de Badefol*, 53.

rather because the local authorities suspected that the safe-conduct holder was conspiring with the companies. The consequences for the safe-conduct holder were as serious as if he had fallen into the hands of the companies. Guyon Pevrier de Cove traveled from Avignon to Lyon on the Rhône in 1358. The guards criticized Guyon for not being loyal to France, arguing that he had a safe-conduct pass issued by the English rather than the French.⁵³ As a result, they put him in prison, where he remained for around seven weeks. The people, intent on killing him, were nevertheless restrained by Guyon, who requested an enquiry in his defense. As part of this enquiry, Guyon took the initiative of representing himself, before being handed over to the lieutenant of the bailliage of Mâcon, at the latter's request. This lieutenant then summoned the judge, the prévôt, the public prosecutor, and the other officers of the city of Lyon, inviting them to testify against Guyon and to present all the evidence gathered. He specified that their failure to attend on the agreed date would result in Guyon's release. However, neither these individuals nor any others turned up.⁵⁴ The lieutenant decided to release Guyon from prison by giving him until the day after Saint-Rémi's Day (1 October), on pain of being found guilty of banishment and confiscation of his property, to come back for his trial.⁵⁵ However, Guyon was unable to meet this deadline due to the enemy having occupied the region, which made travel impossible. Faced with this situation, Guyon pleaded his case to Charles, emphasizing his good reputation and his loyalty to his lord and the king. Given these circumstances, Charles, acting on his special grace and his royal authority, decided to remit and forgive Guyon for the abovementioned acts.⁵⁶

Nevertheless, safe-conducts were not only issued to citizens by the companies, but they were also provided by the local authorities to certain mercenaries when they had to act as part of an official mission. This is why

⁵³ Letters of remission granted by Charles, regent, to Guyon Pevrier, 23 June 1359, in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 262–64.

⁵⁴ Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 262–64.

⁵⁵ Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 262–64.

⁵⁶ Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 262–64.

Arnaud de Cervole received such a letter on 8 July 1365 when he arrived with the crusaders at Strasbourg to meet Charles IV, who, as Konrad tells us, was also stationed in the vicinity of the city with his large entourage.⁵⁷

One form of safe travel in mercenary-occupied territory was to hire mercenaries to escort you. It was enough to hire mercenaries with high rank and reputation in the companies and then the destination could be reached with great safety. An example of this is the case of two mercenaries from the early 1360s, preserved in a rare, unpublished source in the Lille archives.

Two Bretons arrived in Nevers at the same time, one the lieutenant of the captain of l'Arche, the other the *connétable* of the Flory garrison.⁵⁸ The two Bretons arrived in the town accompanied by two nobles, Nicole de Lignes and Madame de la Marche, who had welcomed the mercenaries, who held relatively high positions in the company hierarchy, so that they could move around the region in complete safety. They were paid quite a lot for this: 240 francs in total.⁵⁹ The two Bretons were allowed to enter the town on condition that they left the next morning, but they stayed despite their promise, causing some confusion, with residents claiming that they were behaving suspiciously as they roamed the town. While the Bretons were in the town, their companions left the Château d'Arche for a *chevauchée* and captured men, goods, and livestock in the area around Nevers.⁶⁰ Then, led by the *prévôt*, the inhabitants went to the house of Madame de la Marche, where the two *routiers* stayed, and, despite the vehement protests of the noblewoman, caught the Bretons and imprisoned them.⁶¹ Madame de La Marche later wrote numerous letters of protest

⁵⁷ Correspondance relative à l'invasion dite des Anglais en Alsace et en Allemagne survenue à la suite de dissensions entre les maisons d'Autriche et de Coucy, au sujet de la succession de la princesse Catherine, sœur du duc Léopold, AA 81, f. 50, Archives de la Ville et l'Eurométropole de Strasbourg.

⁵⁸ *Connétable* = high-ranking officer in the companies.

⁵⁹ Mémoire pour le comte de Flandre touchant les dégâts que les gens de guerre faisaient au pays de Nevers, Donzy, B 757, no. 8060, Archives départementales du Nord.

⁶⁰ *Chevauchée* = a destructive military raid conducted primarily by cavalry that focused on pillaging and destroying enemy territory to weaken the enemy's economy and morale.

⁶¹ In the Middle Ages, a *prévôt* was an agent of the king or a lord, exercising financial, judicial, administrative, and military powers. *Larousse*, s.v. "*prévôt*."

to the governor about the captured mercenaries, but without success. The inhabitants, recognizing the two Bretons, drew up a long list of the crimes they had committed, including murder and looting. Naturally, the garrison of the two castles could not let this pass without warning and they shouted to the town of Nevers that “they would fight the country harder than they had done” because they feared that two of their officers would be executed. However, Nevers’s suffering was not over. The future Charles V, then still Duke of Normandy, wrote a letter to the *bailli* of Saint Père le Moustier, among others, because his father, John II, who had just been released, was on his way to Avignon and had asked the duke to find a solution to the mercenary problem. The prince’s letter revealed that it had been invented to combat the companies that were destroying parts of “the country of the Langue d’Oÿl, who had taken several fortresses and were still taking others day by day; pillaging, robing, ravaging and gasting [terrorizing] the flat country.” He therefore held a council meeting with the barons and nobles of the country and those in charge in Paris, and decided to raise a new army to fight the companies. In order to do this, funds had to be found by all means “in each diocese of your bailliage for the aid ordered for the deliverance of our said lord.” In addition to the government delegates, the local residents also delegated two people to coordinate the collection of taxes. What looked good on paper turned out to be very different in practice, at least for the people of Nevers. The *bailli*, without consulting anyone, set about collecting taxes with draconian rigor on the basis of his own ideas. For those unable or unwilling to pay the tax, they might lose their property. The people of Nevers pleaded and protested to the bailliage that the presence of companies and their previous burdens would prevent them from paying the tax imposed on them, but the *bailli* turned a deaf ear.⁶²

⁶² Mémoire poul le comte de Flandre touchant les dégât que les gens de guerre faisaient au pays de Nevers, Donzy.

It is not clear from the source what happened to the two captured Bretons, or how much tax the *bailli* was able to collect, but it is clear that coexistence with the mercenaries was a complex issue and that many different relationships intertwined between the people of Nevers and the mercenaries. Although it is clear from the source that the basis of the relationship was a system of mutual hostility, there were always other interests at play such as, in this case, the liaison between the two nobles who used the two Bretons to ensure their safe passage through the countryside.

Traveling Mercenaries

The mercenaries not only faced the same dangers as other travelers but also carried their burdensome legacy with them. In this respect, they differ from the examples discussed so far, because what happened to the mercenaries on the road could be considered explicitly, if preferred, an occupational hazard. Contemporary letters of remission, allow the background to be presented to explain what happened to the soldiers of adventure after they were sent on their journey.

For Gieffroy Charpi, the voyage was literally a life-threatening venture, as he was spying for mercenary companies. In 1362, just before the Battle of Brignais (6 April 1362), the dame of Chauceris caught him, accompanied by four female companions, because Gieffroy was sent to Burgundy to gain information on the state of the duchy.⁶³ He appeared to be acting suspiciously and was therefore interrogated. Under torture, he confessed that he had worked for the companies. According to his confession he was forced to travel with the companies and during his voyage he committed petty crimes, such as theft. The dame of Chauceris had judiciary power to administer high, middle, and low justice; thus, she beheaded Gieffroy Charpi and hanged his headless body on a tree.⁶⁴

⁶³ Lettre de rémission pour la dame de Chauceris, in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 68; and Pièces Justificatives 38, in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 291–93.

⁶⁴ Lettre de rémission pour la dame de Chauceris, in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 68; and Pièces Justificatives 38, in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 291–93.

Another associate of the great companies who visited Saint-Paul-en-Jarez at the same time as Gieffroy Charpi was not much luckier. Here, the citizens captured the traveling spy of the *routiers*, who was measuring the height of the town walls with a rope. The enraged inhabitants threw him over the walls into the bottom of the ditch, where he broke his neck.⁶⁵

As in the case of the mercenary who measured the height of the city wall, the danger for Jean Doublet and his companions was not the journey but arriving in the wrong place at the wrong time. Jean Doublet was just one member of a company that completely wiped out the royal army at Brignais. However, during the battle, he had the opportunity to capture Gérart de Toury, Marshal of Burgundy, whom he let go without ransoming in order to obtain a pardon for his previous crimes, which he obtained from King John. But he was unlucky, because when he arrived in Lyon with a royal officer and five of his companions a year later, on 13 March 1363, the inhabitants who recognized him were so full of hatred for the *routiers* that they paid no attention to his newfound immunity. They captured Jean and the others and the Chapter of Lyon condemned him and they were all hanged or drowned.⁶⁶

John Harleston and the Sire of Hohrappoltstein

For English mercenary captain John Harleston and his companions, however, it was the wrong choice of route and underestimating the determination of their ancient adversary that led to years of suffering in an Alsatian dungeon. By the mid-fourteenth century, the border aristocracy possessed estates and family ties in both the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of France. This only served to reinforce the fact that the border lords could not be left out of the events of the Hundred Years' War in eastern France, and that they suffered the consequences in the same way as their

⁶⁵ Fonds du chapitre métropolitain. arm. Laban vol.1, n. 5, Archives départementales du Rhône et de la métropole de Lyon; Descroix, *Seguin de Badefol*, 33; Lettres de rémission accordées au Chaptitre de Lyon, pour une exécution sommaire à Saint-Paul-en-Jarez in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 68; and Pièces Justificatives 37, in Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 289–91.

⁶⁶ Guigue, *Récits de la guerre de cent ans*, 317–19.

French contemporaries did.⁶⁷ Thus, Edward III's campaign on the border in 1359–60 had the same effect on the Alsatian lords. A blood feud developed during the campaign between an English mercenary captain and a powerful Alsatian lord, which influenced the lives of many in the border region and led to the destruction of a number of settlements in Burgundy, Lorraine, and Champagne. The beautifully picturesque town of Ribeauvillé (Rappoltswiler in medieval times) lies at the foot of the Vosges Mountains, which run parallel to the Rhine. The town is ideally situated near Colmar, between the gentle slopes covered by Alsace's famous vineyards. One of the three castles above the town is Hohrappoltstein Castle (Haut-Ribeaupierre), which guards the entrance to Strengbach. The castle belonged to Bruno von Rappoltstein in the mid-fourteenth century. Bruno von Rappoltstein acquired a number of lands in Burgundy and Champagne through his marriage to Jeanne de Blamont, Lady of Magnières.⁶⁸ Through this marriage, he became involved in the sphere of influence of the Burgundian court and in the quarrel with John Harleston, which had already been going on for several decades.⁶⁹

In the winter of 1360, John Harleston looted and burned everything in northern Burgundy. During the English raids in Burgundy, Bruno captured Harleston, but he had to release the English captain because Harleston's company had captured 160 nobles and commoners from the town of Schexye.⁷⁰ At Saint-Urbain, the companies used the church as a simple stable. During his meals, John Harleston placed on his table around a hundred chalices stolen from numerous monasteries.⁷¹ According to one

⁶⁷ Ölbei, "Crusading Companies in the 1365th Year of Our Lord," 67–88.

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Carter, "Bruno von Rappoltstein: Power Relationships in Later Medieval Alsace" (PhD diss., Durham University, UK, 2007).

⁶⁹ Carter, "Bruno von Rappoltstein," 48.

⁷⁰ Karl Albrecht, ed., *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500. Quellen zur geschichte der ehemaligen herrschaft Rappoltstein im Elsass*, vol. 2 (Colmar: Buchdruckerei von Eglinsdörfer und Waldmeyer 1894), no. 246, 204–5. Bruno, lord of Hohen Rappoltstein, justifies himself (to the master and council of Strasbourg?) regarding the capture of the English knight John Harleston. Geoffrey Grill, "Les Grandes Compagnies en Lorraine et en Alsace de La Paix de Bretigny à la Mort de Charles V (1370–1380)," *Société académique du Bas-Rhin pour le progrès des Sciences, des Lettres, des Arts et de la vie économique Bulletin*, vol. 25–126 (Strasbourg: 2006), 58.

⁷¹ Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500*, 204–5, no. 246.

witness, John Harleston offered to make a toast with one of the chalices. Horrified at the idea of committing such a sacrilege, the man refused and asked for another glass.⁷² After his release, Harleston attacked the lands of the Sire of Rappoltstein. According to the testimony of Bruno von Rappoltstein, Harleston:⁷³

with his own men and assistants, he caused me great damage in the Duchy of Burgundy, in the village of Runtinye, which comes from German-Roman imperial lands, and which is part of the inheritance I received from my late wife, worth 5056 francs, and he beat to death four of my men, who were men of good reputation. Without demolishing the monastery, he seized the holy relic, burnt the village—no one can estimate the damage caused. It also caused further damage to two other villages, Buschey and Buschen, also in Burgundy. These are also part of the German-Roman Imperial Lands, which I inherited from my late wife. In addition, he burnt down the villages and [killed] four of my men of good reputation, the damage amounting to 80 francs, not including losses that we do not know about. He caused me further damage in the county of Champagne, at Humbescort, to the value of 2019 francs in the form of small livestock and furniture, taken by him and his servant, not counting the fire and the 8 men they beat to death, drowned in water or hung from trees. He and his servants also caused me damage at Urvil, by Marne, in the county of Champagne, to the value of 7406 francs, not counting the damage caused by the burning of the village and the church and the men they beat to death there, and they broke a man's teeth, and then there are the four wom-

⁷² Grill, "Les Grandes Compagnies en Lorraine et en Alsace de La Paix de Bretigny à la Mort de Charles V (1370–1380)," 63.

⁷³ Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500*, 204–5, no. 246.

en and maidens they raped, held captive and took with them. Because of him, I suffered further damage at Ruffier, in Champagne, to the value of 390 francs, as a result of taxation, looting, all of which was added to other losses, and he beat 5 of my men to death. In total, the damage caused amounts to 15,022 francs and the murder of 24 of my men, in addition to all the other losses, as can be seen above.⁷⁴

Nine years later, in 1369, the political situation changed radically: Edward was old, and his famous son the Black Prince was ill and paralyzed. Following the Treaty of Brétigny, Charles V consolidated his treasury and was able to launch one or more armies. He thus regained the initiative and could begin the reconquest of the lost French territories.⁷⁵ The most ambitious project of 1369 was to set sail for the English coast.⁷⁶ Charles V's brother, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, also took part in this adventure, as did Bruno von Rappoltstein. However, because of John of Gaunt's famous ride, the embarkation was canceled and the troops were diverted to follow the English Army, but Charles V forbade the French to engage in any pitched battles.⁷⁷ Bruno von Rappoltstein was ordered to go to Abeuille. During this mission, the Sire of Rappoltstein was captured near Abeuille with numerous men and sent to Calais.⁷⁸

Bruno von Rappoltstein was able to take revenge on John Harleston 15 years after his capture, when in 1384 Harleston, on his way to Rome as part of a pilgrimage, had the misfortune to choose to cross Alsace, even though he had a letter of safe conduct signed and issued by Przemyslaus I, Duke of Cieszyn, in the name of Wenceslaus IV, valid throughout the

⁷⁴ Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500*, 204–5, no. 246.

⁷⁵ Philippe Contamine, *La guerre de Cent Ans* (Paris: P.U.F. 1968), 57–58.

⁷⁶ Jonathan Sumption, *The Hundred Years War*, vol. 3, *Divided Houses* (London: Faber & Faber, 2009), loc. 1. 887, e-book.

⁷⁷ Amable Guillaume Prosper de Barante, *Histoire des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois 1364–1477* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1826), 30.

⁷⁸ Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500*, 41, no. 63.

Holy Roman Empire.⁷⁹ He traveled with his three companions, Thomas Klenobe, Thomas Eremy, and a priest called Wilhelm Kaneter. When Bruno learned of Harleston's existence, he did not hesitate to seize the opportunity and capture the pilgrims. They were held at Haut-Ribeaupierre castle, far from any help and with no real chance of escape. The captives had no choice but to sign the letter of 11 July 1384, in which they agreed to the conditions dictated by Bruno and undertook to pay a hefty ransom of 30,000 francs.⁸⁰ Although Richard II, King of England, had pleaded on their behalf at the Council of Strasbourg, and Wenceslaus IV, King of Rome, Pope Urban VI, the Dukes of Lorraine and Luxembourg, and Cieszyn had also sent letters to the city, it took five long years to obtain the release of the English prisoners.⁸¹

Conclusion

With the advent of the companies on the border between the Holy Roman Empire and the kingdom of France, travel changed completely. It became more dangerous, more expensive, more uncertain and required more thorough preparation. Nevertheless, many people traveled, often across Europe from north to south or from west to east. As we have seen, not only the journey but also the arrival was often fraught with danger and unforeseen consequences, as in the case of Jean Doublet or the two mercenaries who arrived in Nevers. The case of John Harleston illustrates that possession of the correct documents did not guarantee safety without careful consideration of one's travel route. Furthermore, John Harleston's experience exemplifies how pilgrimage was a common motivation for long-distance travel during the Middle Ages. It is also interesting that he undertook this long journey with a small party, and we are also told that he had prepared the journey by obtaining a letter of marque, and that when

⁷⁹ Carter, "Bruno von Rappoltstein," 69.

⁸⁰ Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500*, 197–98, no. 234.

⁸¹ Albrecht, *Rappoltsteinisches Urkundenbuch, 759–1500*, 203–4, no. 245; and Carter, "Bruno von Rappoltstein," 76.

Bruno of Rappoltstein ignored this, very serious forces mobilized in his favor.⁸²

The same caution can be observed if the traveler wanted to cover a much shorter distance in an area controlled by mercenaries. There were a number of safe solutions available to the traveler, provided they had enough money: a larger private escort, a pass from the mercenary captain controlling the region, or hiring a mercenary from one of the companies with a good reputation, whose word the others would take or who scared them enough not to harass the traveler.

Raul de Louppy's account book shows that the cost of travel roughly doubled in proportion to the increase in the number of escorts. Of course, this was not automatic, as the destination of the journey was an important factor. In the case of Raul de Louppy, for example, if he wanted to go to Lyon, he would have needed more escorts than if he had taken a safer route.⁸³ Those who could not do this, either by setting out with a sufficient number of escorts or by providing a service such as that of a messenger, where the journey could not be postponed or even exchanged for money, literally risked their lives when they had to set out.

Often the safest option was to postpone the voyage, as Simon Christophe, captain of the Château de Champagne in Burgundy, did. Perhaps the most important lesson is that the man of the age demonstrated his adaptability to changed circumstances, that they learned from their initial mistakes, and, circumstances permitting, set out on the road confident that they would reach their destination safely.

⁸² Carter, "Bruno von Rappoltstein," 74–75.

⁸³ Chevalier, *Comptes de Louppy, gouverneur du Dauphiné de 1361 à 1369*, 56, no. 120.

The British Quest of the Masculine in the Feminine Orient

Tracing the Development of Gurkha Recruitment
and Discourse in the British Indian Army

by *Diptangshu Dutta Gupta*

Introduction: Hammer of the Empire

According to the proponents of the Old Cambridge School like John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, the British came to acquire their empire through an “absent mind.”¹ The British initially came to trade in South Asia. The Indian potentates and people of their rivalries and interests promoted the English East India Company. The advent of British imperialism in Bengal offers examples in the 1750s when merchants and court members turned against the nawabi ruler of Bengal by supporting

¹ Both Gallagher and Robinson assert that expansion of the British Empire came through as an “absent mind.” The nineteenth century was divided into imperialism and anti-imperialism. These authors show that there was a paradox regarding the expansion of Britain’s imperial rule. This contradiction arises even if we confine our attention to the formal empire, as the orthodox viewpoint would force us to do. But if we look beyond into the regions of informal empire, then the difficulties become overwhelming. Since imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, Britain’s expansion in these informal areas were mostly economic and commercial in nature. So, whenever there is an economic or commercial weakness, power was imperialistically used to adjust the conditions. See John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1–15. Also see Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

the East India Company, due to their shared interests with the company.² The reluctant traders went on to become the builders of an empire. The British traders went on to acquire political power in India only when their commercial interests were threatened by the ruling nawabs in Bengal. The Bengal nawabi were one of the many successive states that consequently developed in the Indian subcontinent in the wake of the decline of the Mughal Empire.³ P. J. Marshall argues that there was a lack of proper communication between the court of directors of the company in London and the company servants in India.⁴ It is the latter who took the matter into their hands as their trade interests were threatened, which this author believes was a risk factor they pursued, to conquer their future empire due to the political void that came up with the Mughal decline and the formation of regional polities in the eighteenth century. Gallagher and Robinson point out that deployment of force only becomes a necessity to adjust economic needs. This was the norm for the formation of an in-

² With the accession of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah as the ruler of Bengal nawabi (not to be confused with Sultanate), there was already a disaffected faction at the nawab's court, consisting of merchants, bankers, financiers, and powerful zamindars, like the Jagat Seth brothers, Mahtab Rai and Swarup Chand, Raja Janki Ram, Rai Durlabh, Raja Ram Narain, and Raja Manik Chand, who felt threatened by the assertion of independence by a young nawab enthusiastically trying to reorder the balance of power in his court. There was also a natural communion of interests between the Indian mercantile community and the European traders, as many of the Indian merchants were operating in collaboration with the English company and private traders, acting as their *dadani* merchants supplying them textiles from the interior in exchange for advances or *dadan*. See Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2004), 43.

³ The Bengal nawabi came to be founded as a regional polity by Murshid Quli Khan (ruled 1713–27), who was sent as a *subedar* (provincial governor) by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb with instructions to augment the region's revenue collection as substantial economic contribution came to the imperial treasury from Bengal. The capital of the Bengal nawabi was at Murshidabad. With the growing power and independence of the nawabs, Bengal asserted its independence from Delhi under the Mughals by the 1740s. See Lakshmi Subramanian, *History of India, 1707–1857* (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2012), 23–25.

⁴ P. J. Marshall, "The British in Asia: Trade to Dominion, 1700–1765," in *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 2, *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. P. J. Marshall and Alaine Low (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998), 496–500.

formal empire, until the realization of a formal empire building sets from mid-eighteenth century onward.⁵

This paper, dealing with both primary and secondary sources, explores the orientalist project of the English in the recruitment of the British Indian Army (henceforth BIA), which was met with their discovery of the masculine Occident counterpart. It also examines how this maintained Anglo-Nepalese relations. Furthermore, a brief review of Nepali literature and songs show the alternate reality of Gurkha martialism.

The British entered into a commercial pact with the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar in Delhi, where a *firman* (royal Islamic administrative decree in Persian) was issued by the latter in 1717, which allowed the English East India Company to reside and carry out their company trade in Bengal without paying taxes, but in return they would have to pay an annual amount of 3,000 rupees to Delhi.⁶ The concession to the English through this *firman* put them at an equal advantage to compete with the Dutch and the French in the Indian Ocean trade.⁷ The outbreak of the War of the Austrian Succession in Europe in 1740 brought in hostilities between the

⁵ However, the only exception is the United States. Although commercial and capital penetration tended to lead to political cooperation and hegemony, there are striking exceptions. In the United States, British business turned the cotton South into a colonial economy, and the British investor hoped to do the same with the Midwest. But the political strength of the country stood in his way. It was impossible to stop American industrialization, and the industrialized sections successfully campaigned for tariffs, despite the opposition of those sections that depended on the British trade connection. In the same way, American political strength thwarted British attempts to establish Texas, Mexico, and Central America as informal dependencies. Again, China's case offers an interesting scenario. The crumbling Chinese economy in the 1850s did not allow the British to thrive commercially, let alone politically. In India, it was the opposite due to its flourishing economy. Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," 10.

⁶ The grant made by Emperor Farrukhsiyar to the company was further made possible by the efforts of the surgeon William Hamilton, who accompanied John Surman's mission to Delhi from Bengal in 1715. Hamilton cured the emperor from a disease the treatment of which he was resisting for a long time. See Samaren Roy, *Calcutta: Society and Change 1690–1990* (Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2005), 28–29.

⁷ In 1690, Emperor Aurangzeb's *firman* had already granted the British the right to duty-free trade in Bengal in return for an annual payment of Rs. 3,000. This was followed with the foundation of the city of Calcutta (now Kolkata in West Bengal, India) in 1690 and its subsequent fortification in 1696, which were followed by the grant of *zamindari* (tax collection) rights in three villages of Kalikata, Sutanuti, and Gobindapur two years later. The fortification of Calcutta came as a direct challenge to the sovereignty of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah, which was one reason the nawab invaded and stormed Calcutta in 1756. See Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, 42. Bengal was a rich province, producing silk and cotton cloth for export in great quantities. From the 1720s, shipments through Calcutta usually amounted to at least half of the Indian cargoes. See Marshall, "The British in Asia," 420.

English and the French companies to India.⁸ The vigilant Nazim nawabs of Bengal, however, caught attention for the misuse of this *firman* when company officials started carrying out their personal trade under the company's name by evading the payment of taxes.⁹ Simultaneously, the big *zamindars* (landed magnates) in Bengal, who by the eighteenth century constituted a distinct feature of Bengal's (socioeconomic) history, also came under the pressure of the Bengal nawabs.¹⁰ The antagonism toward the ruling nawabs would finally culminate in the defeat of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah and fall of the Bengal nawabi by the combined efforts of the company, *zamindars*, and other potentates of Bengal at the Battle of Plassey in 1757 near Murshidabad (now in West Bengal, India).¹¹ Steadily gaining a foothold in Bengal, the company then expanded its dominions in the subcontinent, which witnessed the different wars the company fought against the successive states of the Mughals.¹²

From the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries the company was in the steady process of their colonial empire formation in India (see figure 1). But to maintain an empire requires law and force. The British had enforced the rule of law by the late eighteenth century but military force requires personnel and discipline. The British were a minority in terms of military force since the days of Plassey in 1757. Moreover, they required time to adjust themselves in this foreign environment. The colonizers now had to rely on recruiting the natives into their army in order to expand their foothold in the subcontinent. This is how the British Indian Army was formed, an army of collaboration of the Indians and the British—the

⁸ This resulted in the Anglo-French rivalry wars in India. Bengal, by the eighteenth century, had become very important for the company trade on the eastern coast of India as compared to the western coast of India. Around 60 percent of imports from Asia entered through the Bengal coast.

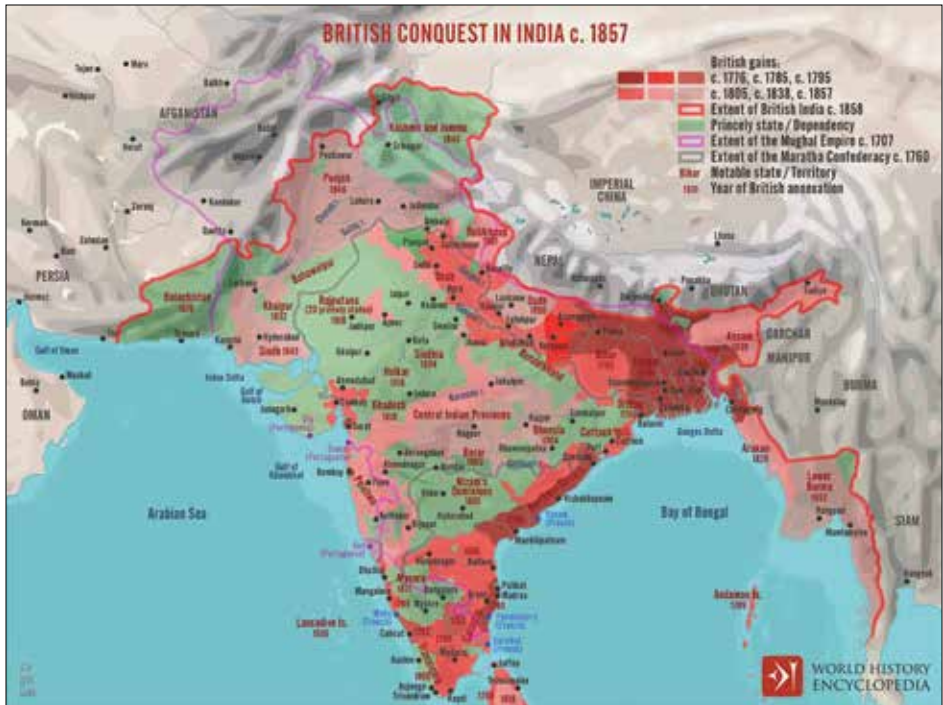
⁹ Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, 42–44.

¹⁰ P. J. Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead, Eastern India 1740–1828*, vol. 2, New Cambridge History of India (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 58.

¹¹ See Subramanian, *History of India*, 49–58; Marshall, *Bengal: The British Bridgehead*, 70–92; and Marshall, “The British in Asia,” 492–93.

¹² For the different wars the company fought against the Marathas, Jats, Sikhs, the state of Mysore, and Awadh, see Subramanian, *History of India*, 47–83.

Figure 1. India in 1857. British India and its three administrative presidencies. Bengal presidency—capital: Calcutta (now Kolkata). Bombay presidency—capital: Bombay (now Mumbai). Madras presidency—capital: Madras (now Chennai). Note: Calcutta was the capital of entirety of British India from the 1780s–1911.



Source: Simeon Netchev from World History Encyclopedia, s.v.
“Map of the British Conquest in India, ca. 1857”

“hammer of the empire.”¹³ Nevertheless, the Sepoy Army, as it was called, remains marginal in Indian historiography because they have been dealt within the context of major events such as the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny (also

¹³ The author learned this phrase during Dr. Kaushik Roy’s lectures during a post-graduation course.

known as the Indian Rebellion of 1857) and not on its own.¹⁴ However, the role of armed forces in the construction of colonial authority is not entirely overlooked in the British imperial historiography.¹⁵ The South Asians, precisely, the Indians fought on behalf of the British against the Indians for the empire. The Sepoy Army was built for policing the Indians and the British in India as well as the non-Indian British in Britain's overseas colonies and as an Imperial Reserve during the two World Wars.¹⁶

But to secure a large empire, recruiting natives into the BIA was of utmost importance. Therefore one has to enquire about the recruitment and the methodology associated with it. Prior to the advent of (the Western model of) nationalism, India was largely divided on the lines of caste, religion, ethnicity and language.¹⁷ Recruitment of the natives into the BIA was a challenge and an adventure. This brings us to the notion of martial race theory found in the literature and ethnographic reports of military authors, which was a determining factor in recruitment. These survey reports and writings were a creation of orientalist scholarship. Orientalist writing on South Asia, as Inden suggests, places exclusive stress on difference.¹⁸ This knowledge dictates the power relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The Orient is projected as feminine (by the Occident) who needs an agency to represent itself. This is where the Occident or the West

¹⁴ Sepoys have not been directly dealt with by any of the schools of Indian historiography, because in most of the cases they have been dealt within the context of 1857 Sepoy Mutiny or 1857 Great Rebellion. However Kaushik Roy's work shows that the warfare of the eighteenth century, which were limited wars, later became people's wars in the nineteenth century during the 1857 Rebellion, which he terms a People's War. The distinction between armed forces and civilians dissolves by the nineteenth century, as citizens became soldiers. Sabyasachi Dasgupta's work deals with the mutiny of the sepoys as an act of repudiation against the English East India Company and the traditional ruling class of India. Dasgupta, taking up the case of the Bengal Army, shows that despite having a strong link with the peasant society, the sepoys possessed a distinct autonomous identity that did not represent the autonomy of the people. See Kaushik Roy, "The Beginning of People's War in India," in *1857: Essays from Economic and Political Weekly* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2008), 135–60; and Sabyasachi Dasgupta, "The Rebel Army in 1857: At the Vanguard of the War of Independence or a Tyranny of Arms?," in *1857: Essays from Economic and Political Weekly*, 161–76.

¹⁵ Kaushik Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj: Recruitment and the Mechanics of Command in the Sepoy Army, 1859–1913* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2008), 17.

¹⁶ G. J. Bryant, "Pacification in the Early British Raj, 1755–85," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 14 (1985): 3–19.

¹⁷ For a detailed discussion on the emergence of Indian Nationalism, see Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition*, 184–91.

¹⁸ Ronald Inden, "Orientalist Constructions of India," *Modern Asian Studies* 20, no. 3 (1986): 402.

steps in to produce a genre of literature and knowledge that “dichotomises and essentialises” in its portrayal of others and in doing so, functions as an element of (colonial or neocolonial) domination.¹⁹

Now among the Western scholars, Indian warfare and its history is understood through two broader approaches: first, the social determinist approach; and second, the culturalist approach. The former school is led by scholars such as Stephen Peter Rosen, whose book, *Societies and Military Power*, deals with the impact of caste on military organization, the result of which was the successive defeats of the internally fragmented Indian armies at the hands of the external invaders in premodern India.²⁰ The culturalist school, which divides global military culture broadly into Western and non-Western ways of warfare, sees Indian warfare characterized by treacheries and skirmishes where (private) warfare was practiced by a particular small group of people or war bands owing to their (*ksatriya*) caste identity.²¹ Wars and state sovereignty were characterized by the Hindu concept of *dharma* and the Islamic concept of *fitna*, which is now understood as cultural uniqueness of Asian states in this present age.²² Due to the overemphasis on religious concepts such as in the *Vedas* and the epics (the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*) on the Indian paradigm of warfare, technology has taken a side-line in its emphasis on non-Western (Indian)

¹⁹ J. Clifford, “Review of Said’s *Orientalism*,” *History and Theory* (1980): 216.

²⁰ Stephen Peter Rosen, “Military Effectiveness: Why Society Matters,” *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 5–31; and Stephen Peter Rosen, *Societies and Military Power: India and Its Armies* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

²¹ Kaushik Roy, *Warfare in Pre-British India—1500 BCE to 1740 CE* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015), 2–3.

²² The British scholars and officers writing on Indian history during the colonial period argued that racial incapability of the Indians in particular and the Asians in general prevented them from constructing rationally bureaucratic, hierarchically organized military forces. These British scholars and officers constituted the imperialist and orientalist schools of history. Treachery, subterfuge, and deceit inherent in the Asian/Indian character prevented the emergence of centralized states and bureaucratic military force in the non-Western regions. It was the British who introduced a unitary sovereignty in place of a divisive sovereignty in South Asia. Therefore, a divisive/segmentary state at best had a loose, disorganized military incapable of conducting decisive sieges and battle. In the present age of political correctness, racial incapability of the Asians/Indians has been transformed as a case of cultural uniqueness of the Indians. See Roy, *Warfare in Pre-British India*, 2. For a detailed debate on this matter see Hermann Kulke, ed., *The State in India: 1000–1700* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010). Regarding discussion on the Segmentary State Model see Burton Stein, *A History of India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

warfare, causing it to be frozen in time.²³ Both dharma and fitna are cultural and religious concepts and constructions. Dharma and fitna resulted in *bheda* (divide and rule), and the fourfold caste system of Hindu society caused fragmentation of political authority.²⁴ All these resulted in stagnation in the techniques and technology of warfare in the subcontinent, showing no proper development of a state until the British arrived in the eighteenth century and developed a strong polity, a demilitarized society, and an armed force capable of conducting decisive battles and sieges.²⁵ Premodern warfare in India, to the culturalists, was much influenced by religious dictums and hence technological advances were rare, because in the West, technology was the driving factor for which Western warfare had successively gone through military evolutions with subsequent military revolutions at certain stages of history. To briefly explain this, it is important to understand the concept of military revolution in Western Europe. The idea of military revolution in European warfare was introduced by Geoffrey Parker, who saw technological changes causing revolutionary effects in the nature of European warfare.²⁶ But the concept or notion of military revolution varies from time to time in different societies according to different scholars.²⁷ Moreover, scholars believe that premodern regimes collapsed in India due to the absence of a Western military revolution.²⁸ Rather they attune themselves to the idea of military evolu-

²³ Brigadier G. D. Bakshi, *The Indian Art of War: The Mahabharata Paradigm, Quest for an Indian Strategic Culture* (New Delhi: Sharada Publishing House, 2002); and Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battles in Classical Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

²⁴ Roy, *Warfare in Pre-British India*, 2.

²⁵ Kaushik Roy, "Historiographical Survey of the Writings on Indian Military History," in *Approaches to History: Essays in Indian Historiography*, ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (Delhi: Primus, 2011), 119–57; and Roy, *Warfare in Pre-British India*, 2–3.

²⁶ Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²⁷ Roy, *Warfare in Pre-British India*, 4.

²⁸ Jos J. L. Gommans and Dirk H. A. Kolff, "Introduction: Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia, 1000–1800 AD," in *Warfare and Weaponry in South Asia: 1000–1800*, ed. Jos J. L. Gommans and Dirk H. A. Kolff (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1–42; and Stewart N. Gordon, "Symbolic and Structural Constraints on the Adoption of European-Style Military Technologies in the Eighteenth Century," in *Rethinking Early Modern India*, ed. Richard B. Barnett (New Delhi: Manohar, 2002), 155–78.

tion, Jeremy Black being one of the important proponents to this idea.²⁹ This military evolution can be understood as formation of small clusters of revolution in military affairs (RMA) happening over a period of time leading to a military revolution.³⁰ The Europeans had a cultural shock when they properly settled on founding their colonial empire in India.

South Asian martialism differed in context from what it was in Europe. The regimental system was an outcome of the military revolution of the West in sixteenth-century Europe.³¹ The regimental system was an effective method to organize the army, which was then introduced in South Asia, and subsequently to the entire world as colonialism spread all over the globe. Its linear ancestry can be traced to Roman legions and later in the Byzantine Empire.³² The British, by introducing the regimental system in India, created a cohesive bond that was absent in Mughal *Mansabdari* armies.³³ This is because the Mughal princes, unlike the regimental officers, lacked a direct bond with their troops. Therefore we also see at times these Mughal chieftains were the ones who revolted and declared

²⁹ For a detailed discussion on Military Evolution, see Jeremy Black, "A Military Revolution? A 1660–1792 Perspective," in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (New York: Routledge, 2018), 95–114.

³⁰ Historians see the idea of military revolution as proposed by Geoffrey Parker (what Clifford J. Rogers puts within the historical context of Early-Modern and Modern Europe from circa 1000 CE onwards) were actually mini-military revolutions. For Rogers, see Clifford J. Rogers, "The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War," in Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate*, 55–93. These small military revolutions are better termed as military technical revolution (MTR) and revolution in military affairs (RMA). The concept of RMA became more popular in the 1990s. See Williamson Murray and MacGregor Knox, "Thinking about Revolutions in Warfare," in *The Dynamics of Military Revolution: 1300–2050*, ed. MacGregor Knox and Williamson Murray (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12. Actually Rogers's sudden and successive Western European military revolutions are merely RMAs. See Roy, *Warfare in Pre-British India*, 4–5. See also Murray and Knox, "Thinking about Revolutions in Warfare," 12–13.

³¹ Kaushik Roy, "The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859–1913," *War in History* 8, no. 2 (2001): 128.

³² It reemerged in Europe with the Nassau brothers' reforms and the Spanish *tercio* was the last step in the transformation of legions to regiments. See Geoffrey Parker, "The 'Military Revolution, 1560–1660'—a Myth," in Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate*, 37–54; Michael Roberts, "The Military Revolution: 1560–1660," in Rogers, *The Military Revolution Debate*, 13–35.

³³ Roy, "The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army," 129.

independence from the Mughals.³⁴ It was the Mughal chieftains who recruited, trained, and remunerated the soldiers.³⁵ After the failure of caste ideology to recruit the Indians into the BIA (what the culturalists propose), the British aimed to create a regimental ethos through *esprit de race*, where racial identities became the norm for creating regimental ethos and cohesion.³⁶ With ascription of racial identity in a regiment, the British finally created the multiethnic regiment system in colonial India, whose direct descendant is the modern Army of Independent India.³⁷

Power manifests itself in yet another sense as well: like Western social scientists, modern British military authors control completely the texts they produce.³⁸ Clifford Geertz writes on the ability of anthropologists to persuade others to take what they say seriously, rather than their actual understanding of facts and concepts, depends largely on their capacity to convince readers that they have truly “been there.”³⁹ The recruitment and importance of the Gurkhas, what I term “the Shield and the Sword of the British Indian Army,” needs to be critically understood in between the martial race theory and the sociopolitical contexts of those times. There are two approaches to this theory: the nationalist approach and the functionalist perspective. The nationalist approach believes the martial

³⁴ The Mansabdari system was an administrative and military system that was introduced by Mughal emperor Jalaluddin Akbar in 1571. Under this system an official can be in charge of either or both in military and administrative departments. These chieftains were officials who were known as Mansabdars. They were granted ranks or *mansabs*. Apart from their administrative duties they were also responsible for training and maintaining the allotted number of troops under them. Some princes of the Mughal imperial household held the position of *mansabs*, but in most cases the chieftains were kings and rulers of (regional) polities who accepted Mughal suzerainty.

³⁵ William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls: Its Organization and Administration* (New Delhi: South Asia Books, 1998), 3–61.

³⁶ Unlike the Weberian notion of sovereignty, South Asian sovereignty depended on concepts such as religion and culture during the formative stages of the nationalist independence movement. Therefore, due to the absence of Weberian sovereignty, the British found it difficult to construct regiments based on nationalist or patriotic affiliation and therefore endorsed elements of caste to construct regiments. This project continued until it backfired when Purbhoyas revolted and later again with the 1857 mutiny. See Roy, “The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army,” 129.

³⁷ Sanjay Badri-Maharaj, *Kargil 1999: South Asia's First Post-Nuclear Conflict* (Warwick, UK: Helion, 2020), 8.

³⁸ Paul Rainbow, “Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-modernity in Anthropology,” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

³⁹ Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 4–5.

race ideology was the principal component geared toward the internal consolidation of the colonial order. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Krishan Murari Lal Saxena, and Chander S. Sundaram all presume that the martial race ideology was intended to prevent the growth of nationalism in India for furthering colonial hegemony. As stated earlier, the Indians fought for the British against the Indians for the empire. Scholars like Chaudhuri believe that the Sepoy Army was used for guarding India against the Indians, while Saxena believes that recruitment was guided by the policy of *Divide et Impera* or Divide and Rule, as the various martial groups balanced each other in the war machine, and after the 1857 Mutiny, the army's main function was to ensure internal security.⁴⁰ Sundaram showed that even though natives made up the bulk of the BIA, only a marginal section of these natives could become officers while the British held the positions of power.⁴¹ Therefore, even if the British preferred some communities and clans as warrior clans to recruit them in the BIA, the general orientalist perception existed that the leadership of armed forces can only be realized under the Europeans. The Gurkhas were not an exception to this.

Even if the British favored recruiting Gurkhas in the army, particularly when their recruitment doubled after the Mutiny of 1857, British officers still formed the leadership of the Gurkha regiments. This was clear in the statement of Lord Roberts, the commander in chief of the Madras and later of the Bengal Presidencies' armies at the end of the nineteenth century, when he articulated that "native officers can never take the place

⁴⁰ Chaudhuri attempts a comparison between the metropolitan and the colonial military establishments. Since the BIA was used to guard and police the Indians from uprising against the colonial state, the recruited armies needed to be loyal and serve for a long period unlike short service enlistment which was prevalent in Europe. See Nirad C. Chaudhuri, "The Martial Races of India," *Modern Review* 48, no. 1 (1930): 41–51. See also Krishan Murari Lal Saxena, *The Military System of India: 1850–1900* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1974).

⁴¹ Chandar S. Sundaram, "Preventing 'Idleness': The Maharaja of Cooch Behar's Proposal for Officer Commissions in the British Army for the Sons of Indian Princes and Gentlemen, 1897–98," *South Asia* 17, no. 1 (1995): 115–30; and Chandar S. Sundaram, "'Martial' Indian Aristocrats and the Military System of the Raj: The Imperial Cadet Corps, 1900–14," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (1997): 415–39.

of British officers. . . . Eastern races, however brave and accustomed to war, do not possess the qualities that go to make good leaders of men.”⁴²

The Conquest of Kathmandu Valley

Who are the Gurkhas and how did they arrive in Nepal? The ancestors of these people were Indian immigrants, mostly princes from Rajputana and their numerous followers who fled their country in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to escape Muslim domination.⁴³ The immigrants made the Nepalese hills their new home; they trained the fierce local population in arms and raised troops. In 1743, Prithvinarayan Shah ascended the throne of Gorkha Kingdom (adjacent to the Malla Kingdom) and launched the state on more than 30 years of unceasing war and expansion until he conquered the whole territory between Gorkha in the west and the river Tista in Sikkim in the east (see figure 2). On 29 September 1768, he sneaked into Kathmandu and ambushed Jaya Prakash Malla's troops.⁴⁴ Nepal, by the time the power of the ruling Mallas was waning, had become politically fragmented and acquired a feudal economy.⁴⁵ In 1787, Prithvinarayan invaded and besieged the Kathmandu Valley. The Gorkha royal family initially was poor and Prithvinarayan needed money to fund the conquest of the rich Kathmandu Valley.⁴⁶ He brought some significant changes that aided his conquest significantly. This included recruiting people of different ethnic and tribal backgrounds, especially the Khas, Magars, and Gurungs, transforming these peasants into warriors.⁴⁷

⁴² Field Marshal Frederick Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-In-Chief*, vols. 1 and 2 (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1897), 444.

⁴³ Vansittart states that the progress of Muhammadanism (Muslim rule) in India drove fresh refugees to Nepalese mountains. See Eden Vansittart, *Gurkhas: Handbooks for the Indian Army* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1906), 10–11, 67–68 (the chapter on Thakurs and Khas).

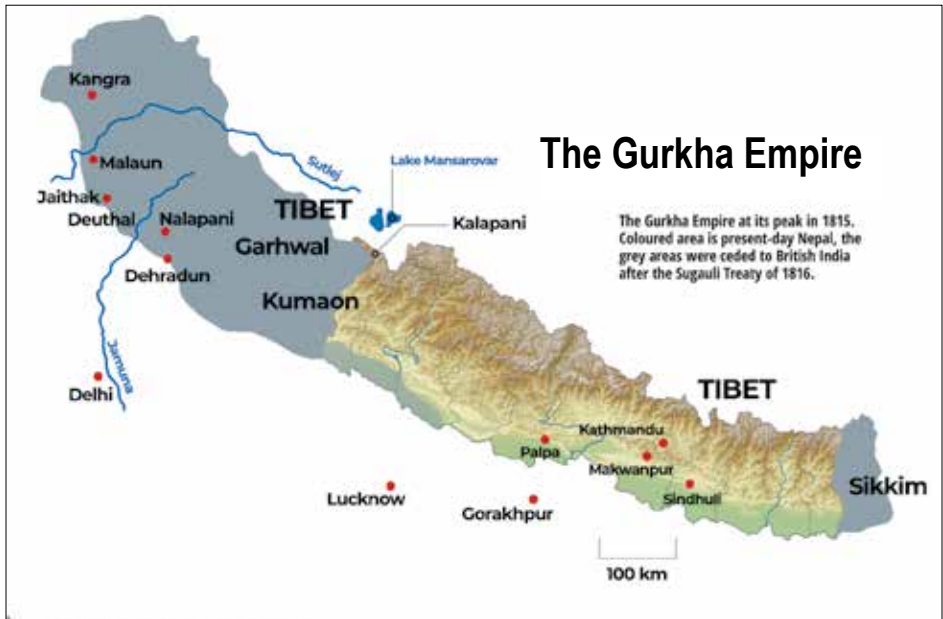
⁴⁴ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 28.

⁴⁵ The centralized power of the Mallas had already collapsed by the time Prithvinarayan was preparing for his conquest. Each of the city-states of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhatgaon (now Bhaktapur) had a separate ruler. The Malla kinsmen were too absorbed in internal rivalry to pay much attention to the danger from outside. Both Prithvinarayan and his father were driven out by the rajah or king of Kathmandu, Jaya Prakash Malla, from the Kathmandu Valley. The feudal and slave economy and the political fragmented state of Nepal that time had already started disrupting the trade routes from India to Tibet.

⁴⁶ Tony Gould, *Imperial Warriors: Britain and the Gurkhas* (London: Endeavour Press, 2017), chap. 1.

⁴⁷ Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

Figure 2. Nepal during its expansionist phase of the Anglo-Nepalese Wars.



Source: Nepali Times, *public domain*

He introduced the *jagirdari* system by appropriating lands to military generals and officers for their exceptional service.⁴⁸ These lands were the *terai* regions, which by the nineteenth century had become the “granary of Nepal,” generating a substantial amount of the Nepalese economy.⁴⁹ The introduction of European firearms into the Gurkha army was another major factor in the swift takeover of the Kathmandu Valley.⁵⁰ Prithvinarayan appreciated and encouraged these modern and advanced military tactics

⁴⁸ The jagirdari system was a source of land revenue in the Mughal Empire in medieval India. Under this system, the empire, as it expanded its borders and territories, granted fertile lands or *jagirs* to military officials in exchange for their services. The military officials who came to own *jagirs* were known as *jagirdars*, who were responsible for collecting revenue from the assigned lands and maintaining law and order within their territories. Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

⁴⁹ Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

⁵⁰ Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

and weapons, enabling him to modernize his army, but he was staunchly against inclusion of Europeans into Gurkha armies.

By the late eighteenth century, there were two distinct bodies of armed soldiers in India, the first being the royal or king's army, which were British throughout, and the second the Indian army, which until the mid-nineteenth century was the army of the East India Company and was three times the size of the king's force. This Indian Army had three separate native armies, one at each of the three presidencies of Madras (in the south), Bombay (in the west), and Bengal (in the east and north).⁵¹ In 1814, the Bengal Army was the largest among the three.⁵² The high standard of loyalty and discipline inculcated in such large bodies of South Asians by a tiny group of British officers was an object of pride and a habitual theme of self-congratulation. But by the time of the Nepal War, complacency had outlived its justification. Serious flaws had begun to endanger the structure behind the variegated and impressive façade.⁵³ The army that was set up by Robert Clive (see figure 3) in 1757 had expanded by the early nineteenth century.⁵⁴ What Clive had formed to protect the company's seaboard trading posts in Bengal, comprised only of a few hundred *sepoys*, grew into an army of 68,000 men primarily because of increasing the number of Indians as opposed to Europeans.⁵⁵ Modernization of the native army happened under subsequent governors from Clive to Warren Hastings (not to be confused with Lord Moira [see figure 4], the Marquis of Hastings in the Anglo-Nepalese War) to Cornwallis.⁵⁶ The

⁵¹ Lionel Caplan, "Bravest of the Brave": Representations of 'the Gurkha' in British Military Writings," *Modern Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (1991): 574.

⁵² John Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal: John Company at War* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1974), 90.

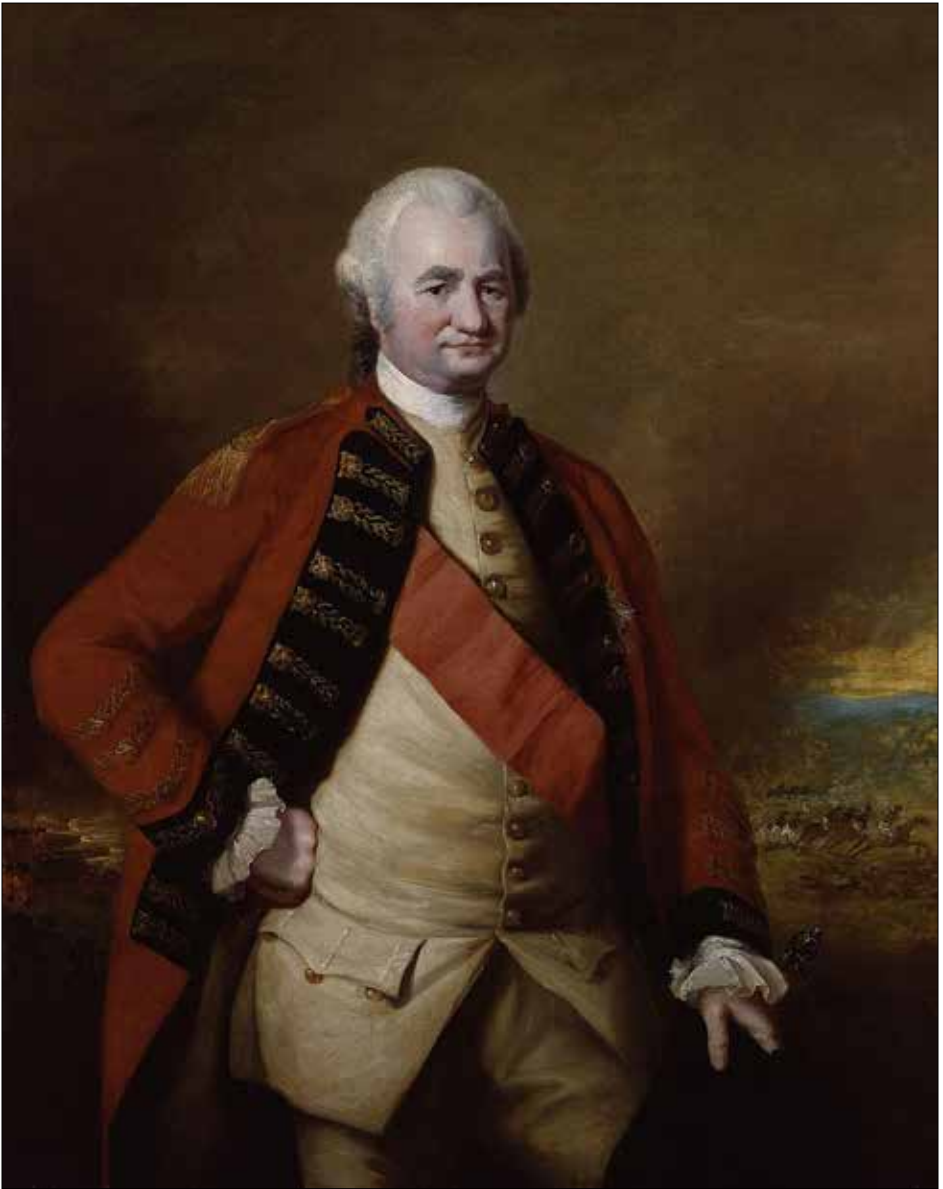
⁵³ Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal*, 90–124.

⁵⁴ Even P. J. Marshall too terms Clive as "a hesitant empire-builder." See Marshall, "The British in Asia," 500.

⁵⁵ Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal*, 90.

⁵⁶ When Clive had reorganized the army in 1765, he balanced a battalion of European infantry against every seven battalions of sepoys, and in 1786 Cornwallis (who introduced the Permanent Settlement system in Bengal), convinced that the European contingent was "the foundation upon which all [the company's] power and dominion in this country must in many possible cases stand or fall." He insisted on increasing the proportion to one to every six, which means that the total of the company's European infantry was to about 6,000 men. These six single-battalion regiments had been reduced to three in 1796 and later to two; and in 1814 only one of these was serving in Bengal. Meanwhile, the 24 native infantry battalions of 1765 had risen to 54. The European foot artillery had remained constant at three battalions. See Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal*, 90–91.

Figure 3. *Robert Clive, 1st Baron Clive*, by Nathaniel Dance. Clive was the first governor-general of Bengal presidency and the one who defeated the last Bengal nawab, Siraj-ud-Daulah, at Plassey in 1757.



Source: National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 39. via Wikimedia Commons

Figure 4. Francis Edward Rawdon-Hastings, 2d Earl of Moira, later 1st Marquess of Hastings (9 December 1754–28 November 1826), attributed to Martin Archer Shee. He was the governor-general of India from 1813–23.



Source: National Gallery of Ireland, NGI 194. via Wikimedia Commons

regular Bengal Army, on the eve of the Nepal War, amounted to roughly 68,250 men of all ranks, of which the European corps accounted for about 3,200.⁵⁷ But with expansion came flaws such as disloyalty that threatened military cohesion. Therefore, the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 came as a lesson to the English.

The English saw the people of the plains as effeminate and untrustworthy, especially sepoys of the plains, lacking both body strength and

⁵⁷ Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal*, 91.

Figure 5. *Assemblage of Ghoorkhas*, 1815, by James Baillie Fraser (1783–1856). He traveled through Nepal and the Himalayas in 1815 during the time of the Anglo-Nepalese War.



Source: National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1978-08-23-1

bravery.⁵⁸ The Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814–16 led the British to officially “discover” the Gurkhas.⁵⁹ Figure 5 shows Fraser’s painting of Gurkhas assembling for the Anglo-Nepalese War. The British found their masculine character, characterized by their martialism. Prior to that, Gurkha resistance to the British was noticed in Prithvinarayan’s attempts to dissuade the Tibetan and Bhutanese authorities from entertaining the company’s projects (after the trade route from Bengal to Tibet via Nepal was closed due to the Shah conquest of the Kathmandu Valley and Nepal in 1768–

⁵⁸ Carnaticus, “General View of Our Indian Army,” *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register* 11, no. 65 (1821): 429.

⁵⁹ Caplan, “‘Bravest of the Brave’,” 576.

69).⁶⁰ This had already shown the king's distaste for the company, who only supported his enemies like the former ruling Mallas to protect the routes for their commercial interests. The Kathmandu Valley was central to the trade routes going from Bengal to Tibet, and during the commercial blockade imposed by Nepal on the company the latter had found an alternative route via Bhutan.⁶¹ Prithvinarayan, regarded as the Father of Modern Nepal, in his *Divyo Upadesh* (Nepali: दवियोपदेश, or Divine Exhortation) addressed: "This country is like a gourd between two rocks. Maintain a treaty of friendship with the emperor of China. Keep also a treaty of friendship with the emperor of the southern sea (the Company)." ⁶² What is common to both Nepal and Bhutan this time is that both ensured a policy of balancing British India and Tibet, at times provoking

⁶⁰ The policy that Prithvinarayan exercised was to keep the mighty neighbors at an equal arm's length, but while the Himalayas provided a natural barrier to the north and Peking was remote and reluctant to act, it is the geographical proximity of the British and their interest to trade with Tibet that made the company an unfriendly neighbor. See Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1. The British actually aimed for establishing political hegemony in Tibet through the formation of protectorate states in Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. This was a long foreign policy of the British in India and its materialization only happened in the Younghusband expedition in 1903–4, which was sent by Viceroy Lord Curzon. In October 1901, a Russian Buriat named Agnev Dorjiev was conducting the first Russian diplomatic mission with Tibet. See Julie Marshall, *Britain and Tibet 1765–1947* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005), 302–4. To prevent the growing Russian influence in Tibet, Curzon came up with the Forward Policy to form a chain of protectorates in the Himalayan states. See N. Ram, "Sikkim Story: Protection to Absorption," *Social Scientist* 3, no. 2 (1974): 63–64.

⁶¹ This was George Bogle's mission to Bhutan in 1774. He was accompanied by the surgeon Alexander Hamilton. Bogle had developed close relations with the Panchen Lama (the next important head of state after the Dalai Lama) at Shigatse. Alastair Lamb has edited a version of Bogle and Hamilton's writings. Bogle's mission to Tibet via Bhutan opened the European doors to the Tibetan Buddhist World and Court Culture. See Alastair Lamb, ed., *Bhutan and Tibet: The Travels of George Bogle and Alexander Hamilton 1774–1777, Letters, Journals and Memoranda*, vol. 1 (Hertingfordbury, UK: Roxford Books, 2002).

⁶² The *country* here refers to Nepal. See Ludwig F. Stiller, *Prithvinarayan Shah in the Light of Dibya Upadesh* (Ranchi: Catholic Press, 1968), 42.

one against the other.⁶³ The company, at the request of Jaya Prakash Malla, even sent an expedition in 1767 under Major George Kinloch, to forestall the Gurkha conquest of the Nepal by Prithvinarayan. The British sent an expeditionary force of 2,500 men under Kinloch through the terai zones during the heavy monsoon seasons.⁶⁴ The army, even before facing the Gorkha army, succumbed to natural obstacles: the monsoons and *aul* fever (a particularly virulent form of malaria).⁶⁵ Although a second expedition was about to be sent to support Kinloch, the plan was later called off.⁶⁶ Therefore, Kinloch was defeated and was forced to return to the foothills. Unaware of the natural obstacles combined with the command of warfare in terai zones the Gorkha army had, this was an important and an embar-

⁶³ In 1792, when China feared that Nepal might expand its borders into Tibet (then China's vassal state), China sent an army into Nepal under Bahadur Shah, Prithwi Narayan's younger son, who acted as regent during his nephew's (and Prithwi Narayan's grandson, Rana Bahadur's) minority, appealed to the governor-general for help. The governor-general was already requested before by the Dalai Lama not to help the Gurkhas and was anxious to avoid a confrontation with the Chinese, and the governor-general then compromised by sending Captain Kirkpatrick as mediator. But the war was over before Kirkpatrick arrived and the Gorkhas had agreed to pay tribute in the form of a quinquennial embassy to Peking. Later, Nepal tried to gain Chinese help against the British in India. This was unsuccessful, as Nepal had previously tried to provoke the British against China. See Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1. With the closure of trans-Himalayan trade from India to Tibet via Nepal, the East India Company government in Calcutta sent George Bogle to Tibet via Bhutan in 1774. He was particularly instructed to acquire specimens of the goat that provided the wool for the famous shawls of Kashmir and of the Himalayan yak, used in Europe to make lace. The governor-general of Bengal, Warren Hastings, in this way wanted to bypass the blockade caused by the Gurkhas after the expedition by Kinloch to Nepal failed. But this was the time when a succession dispute emerged in the North Bengal kingdom of Cooch Behar (now the district of Cooch Behar in West Bengal, India) and at the same time the Bhutanese had attacked Cooch Behar. The king of Cooch Behar sought help of Calcutta and Captain Jones was sent for a Bhutanese expedition. Unlike in Nepal with Kinloch, the Jones-led expedition to Bhutan, after a long struggle, was successful in April 1773. Bhutan sought Tibet's help, as both are bound by a similar ethnological background, as Pemble argues. And finally the Panchen Lama established cordial relations with the British. The Panchen Lama had sent a letter to Governor-General Hastings in Calcutta along with rich gifts that included sheets of Russian gilt leather, talents of gold and silver, bulses of gold dust, bags of musk, Tibetan woollen cloth, and Chinese silk. Bogle also was sent back to Calcutta with a large host of traders and merchants from Tibet. See Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal*, 55–56.

⁶⁴ A committee was set up under Dr. Rumbold who was entrusted to launch and regulate the course of expedition. See Saphalya Amatya, "British Diplomacy and Its Various Mission in Nepal from 1767 to 1799," *Ancient Nepal*, no. 6 (January 1969): 1.

⁶⁵ Only a third of Kinloch's men returned to India with him. Dr. A. Campbell, assistant surgeon at the residency in Kathmandu during the 1830s, argued that the failure of Kinloch's expedition was the result of lack of information about the natural geography of those regions in the early days of British rule in India. See Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

⁶⁶ With the failure of the first expedition, Rumbold considered sending a second expedition with more troops and equipment that included a battalion consisting of five or six companies and some artillery before it could undertake the relief of the Malla rajas (kings) of Nepal. But the Select Committee later postponed the relief expedition after considerations. See Amatya, "British Diplomacy and Its Various Mission in Nepal," 1–2.

raising event in the company conquest of India in the eighteenth century. This defeat would be a starting point of a series of tug of war of Gorkha (i.e., the Gorkha kingdom) resistance to the British that would only end in 1816 with the Anglo-Nepalese War, after which the British perception to view the Gurkhas as superior to other South Asian natives would finally take a proper shape.

A rudimentary idea of Gurkha martialism was already known to the British since the days of the Gurkha conquest of the valley. It was only after the rigorous clashes in the Anglo-Nepalese Wars, particularly after the fall of Maloun, that the company realized how the Gurkhas were brave and martially trained.⁶⁷ The world of the Himalayas was not properly known to the Europeans until the later reports and surveys of colonial officials, starting with Samuel Davis, Samuel Turner, George Bogle, and then Buchanan Hamilton, and followed by the regimental historians of the colonial period.⁶⁸ One must understand that India, where a tropical climate is prevalent and considered unsuitable for European acclimatization, the Europeans were struck by fascination with the Himalayan climate and vegetation. For example, John Forbes Royle, a company surgeon, in his study of the Himalayas in Kashmir, was amazed to see the changing vegetation as he ascended the Himalayas and commented, “The plants of India disappear, and we are delighted at finding the increase in number

⁶⁷ Nepal was regarded by many English merchants as a region of opulence, and the East India Company wanted Nepal's rice, butter, spices, oil-seeds, timber, drugs, dyes and gold (which was actually Tibetan gold). In turn the company sold English and India-made cloth, sugar, salt and other produce to the Nepalis. See Caplan, “‘Bravest of the Brave,’” 576.

⁶⁸ The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries witnessed the advent of European travelers and ethnographers in the Himalayas. Although political agenda was the ulterior motive of the company to establish its hegemony in the Himalayan kingdoms and Tibet, for these travelers and ethnographers, the Himalayas were places for respite to acclimatize in a climate similar to Europe. Many travelers and naturalists went out to India during the colonial period, among them Robert Kyd, William Roxburgh, William Griffith, John Forbes Royle, Brian Hodgson, James Baillie Fraser, and Joseph Dalton Hooker were notables who made their travels in different parts of country and went to the Himalayas. To understand about the observations and perceptions of these naturalists and travellers, see Mohammed Sohrabuddin, “Construction of the ‘Himalayas’: European Naturalists and the Oriental Mountains,” in *Force of Nature: Essays on History and Politics of Environment*, ed. Sajal Nag (New York: Routledge, 2018), 87–108.

and variety of those belonging to the European genera.”⁶⁹ The martial race theory takes up a momentum with the expansion of knowledge of the British on different tribes of Nepal like the Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Rai, and Limbu, who were known for their valiant character and unquestioned loyalty in military service.

The Colonial-Military Project of a Masculine Rhetoric

Eden Vansittart, in his handbook of 1906 (figure 6), articulated the brave and fearsome Gurkha martialism in the Anglo-Nepalese War: “Throughout the war the Gurkhas displayed the most conspicuous gallantry.”⁷⁰ Hamilton was the first European to refer to Nepal’s “martial tribes” (figure 6), while B. H. Hodgson, who was at the British residency in Kathmandu, urged the recruitment of Gurkhas into the BIA and labeled particular groups as “martial classes” (figure 7).⁷¹ The notion of Gurkhas as a martial race developed fully toward the end of the nineteenth century.⁷² The British therefore ascribed importance and identities to different tribes and communities as per the requirement of the colonial state, which supported the nationalist approach, and the British policy of Divide and Rule to inhibit native nationalism. On the other hand, spokespersons of the functionalist perspective, such as Cohen, Omissi, and Mason, stated that this ideology existed earlier in Indian society; Cohen attributed it to militarism among the landed gentry.⁷³ In contrast, Mason attributed militarism to *kshatriyas* as a caste associated with military occupation in precolonial

⁶⁹ As quoted in David Arnold, *Science, Technology and Medicine in Colonial India* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 53.

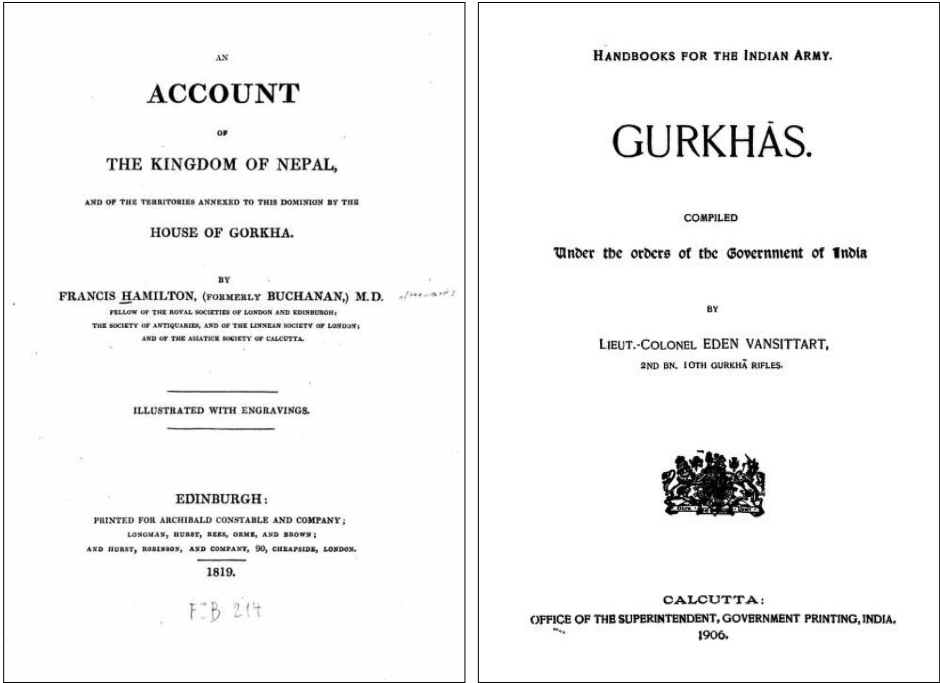
⁷⁰ In his handbook, Vansittart appreciates Gurkha martialism through this statement during the Anglo-Nepalese War. See Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 34.

⁷¹ Francis Hamilton, *An Account on the Kingdom of Nepal and the Territories Annexed to this Dominion by the House of Gorkha* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1819), 19; and B. H. Hodgson, “Origin and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society* 11 (1833): 220.

⁷² Lionel Caplan, “‘Martial Gurkhas: The Persistence of a British Military Discourse on ‘Race’,” in *War and Society in Colonial India*, ed. Kaushik Roy (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 228–29.

⁷³ Stephen Philip Cohen, *The Indian Army: Its Contribution to the Development of a Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

Figure 6. Cover pages of survey report by Hamilton (1819) (left) and handbook by Vansittart (1906) (right).



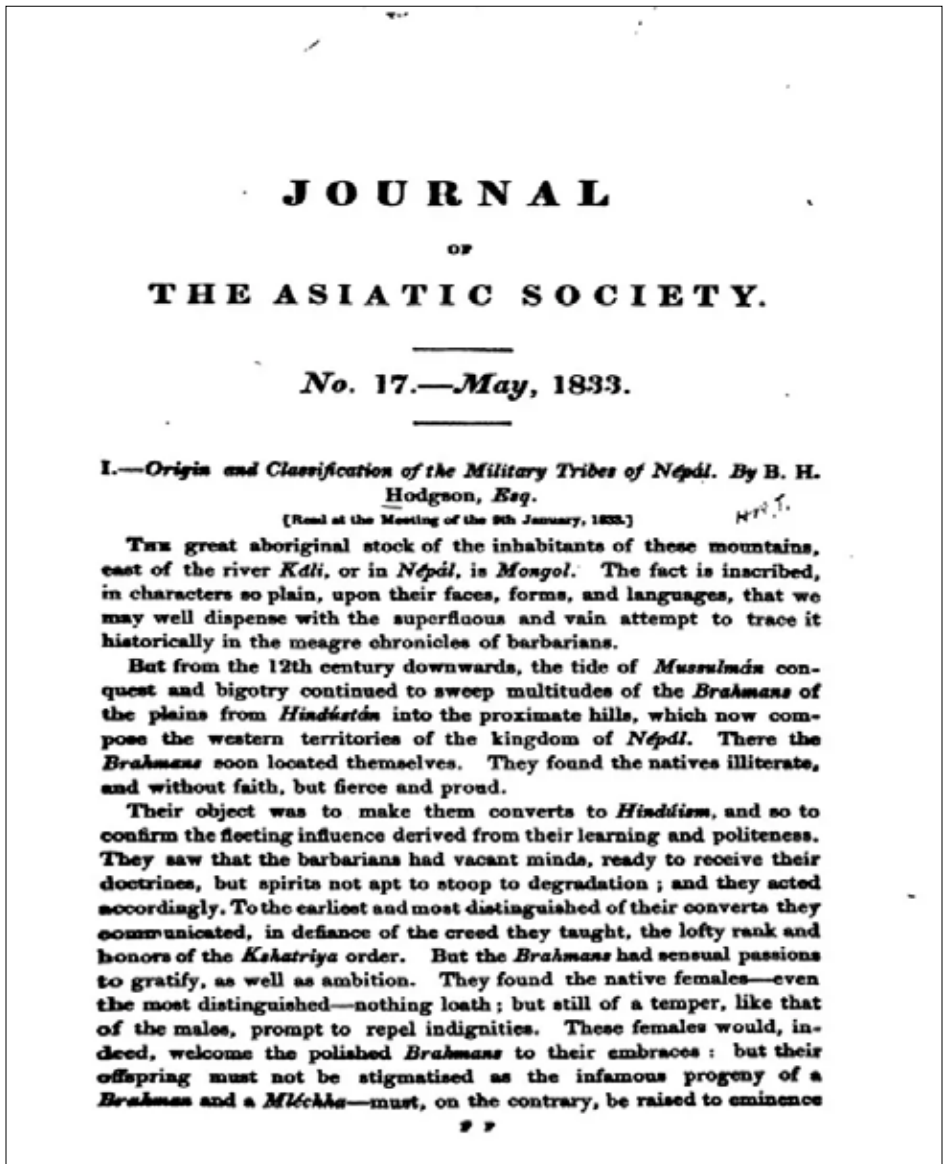
Source: *Archive.org*

India.⁷⁴ Omissi showed that the categorization of tribes by the British colonial state during recruitment was an experiment to identify which were the true and loyal allies to the British that would enable them to sustain the raj.⁷⁵ It can be seen as a potential experiment of categorization to identify tribes and communities known for their martialism that would enable the orientalist to identify “the masculine tribes in the feminine orient.” The rhetoric of martiality embraced an idealized notion of masculinity.

⁷⁴ Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974).

⁷⁵ David Omissi, “‘Martial Races’: Ethnicity and Security in Colonial India, 1858–1939,” *War and Society* 9, no. 1 (1991): 1–27.

Figure 7. Front page of the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, with an article titled “Origin and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal” by B. H. Hodgson (1833).



Source: Archive.org

The race theory ideology stood on the notion that martial races possess masculine qualities that nonmartial races lack. Perhaps the first evidence of the Gurkhas as a virile martial race known to the British can be traced to the Anglo-Nepalese War in the famous anecdote on the siege of the fort of Jythak.⁷⁶ It focuses on a British officer, Lieutenant Frederick Young, who later came to be regarded as the “father” of the Brigade of Gurkhas. Lieutenant Young, at the head of some 2,000 native Indian troops, was sent to intercept a force of Nepalese soldiers on their way to relieve the besieged Nepalese Fort at Jythak. Although there were only 200 of them, the Nepalese attacked and dispersed the larger group under the British. Young and several of his officer colleagues found themselves alone, their own native troops having fled in disarray. They looked up and saw the Nepalese soldiers surrounding them. The Nepalese asked Young: “Why did you not run away too?” Young looked at them with his “fearless Irish eyes,” and answered: “I have not come so far in order to run away. I came to stop.” With that he sat down. This won the hearts of these “merry men of the Nepalese hills” who replied: “Ah, you are brave men. We could serve under men like you.” Lieutenant Young was then taken captive, and the Nepalese treated him well and taught him their language. This story is quite common in books about the Gurkhas.⁷⁷ But what needs to be noted is the virility and fearlessness of the Gurkha warriors that captured the eyes of the British, who were disappointed with the “effeminate” sepoys of the plains. Vansittart also records the bravery shown by Gurkha women in this war: “During the assaults on the fort, women were seen hurling stones, and undauntedly exposing themselves; and several of their dead bodies and one wounded, were subsequently found amidst the ruins of the fort.”⁷⁸ The notion of masculinity, therefore, was a key feature in martialism.

⁷⁶ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 35.

⁷⁷ Caplan, “‘Bravest of the Brave,’” 579–80; David Bolt, *Gurkhas* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1967), 60; E. Bishop, *Better to Die: The Story of the Gurkhas* (London: New English Library, 1976), 26–27; and Francis Toker, *Gorkha: The Story of the Gurkhas of Nepal* (London: Constable, 1957), 86.

⁷⁸ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 35.

Orientalist scholarship has tended to portray Hinduism as a religion that was itself effeminate in character and that succumbed to the barbaric and masculine Islamic conquests, resulting in a despotic form of governance in South Asia.⁷⁹ Hinduism exemplified a mentality favoring passions over reason and will, “the two inevitable components of world-ordering rationality.”⁸⁰ But we must remember that the practice of Hinduism in Nepal was different from that on the Indian plains.⁸¹ Even if Nepal has a Buddhist population, Nepalese society was moving toward Hinduism at that time, and Roy says that the British decided to “Hinduize” the Gurkhas instead of encouraging Buddhism because Gurkhas lacked a uniform religion.⁸² The British thus created Hill Hinduism to give the Gurkhas a separate identity status different from North India.⁸³ Even Vansittart in 1915 also mentions Hinduism as the “fashionable religion” in Nepal and generalizes the Gurkhas as Hindus.⁸⁴ MacMunn also regarded Limbus and Rais as aboriginal Newaris, recently including them in the Gurkha category.⁸⁵ He further comments that the Gurkhas’s “lack of interest in Brahminical holiness and in anti-British intrigue and hatred, is the despair of those subtle brains who fish in troubled waters (here, people of the plains), and who would sow discord at any price.”⁸⁶ This Hill Hinduism was projected by the British in their writings as more liberal and masculine. Seema Alavi writes that Prithvinarayan used the Hinduism of North

⁷⁹ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj*, part 3, vol. 2, New Cambridge History of India (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1–27.

⁸⁰ Ronald Inden, *Imagining India* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 85–89.

⁸¹ This is to say the Hindu religious faith and practice differed between mainland India and Nepal, despite their shared belief systems. Vansittart comments that the “descendants (of the Nepalese) refused to be hampered by all the bigotry and prejudices of Brahmanical Law.” He moreover relates the Hindus of the Himalayas as Protestants and Hindus of the Plains as Roman Catholics. See Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 11.

⁸² Roy, “The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army,” 134.

⁸³ The Gurkha community, which is an amalgamation of six tribes, had no uniform religion. Now regimental cohesion and community feeling needed to be created on the basis of religion because of the absence of nationalism, therefore the British encouraged the Hinduization of the Nepali society. The Khas were strict Hindus, whereas the Magars and Gurungs were sluggish in practice of Hinduism, and the Limbus were Buddhists. Roy, “The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army,” 133–34.

⁸⁴ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1915 ed., 47.

⁸⁵ George MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1932), 193–94.

⁸⁶ MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, 199.

India to provide a *kshatriya* identity to his tribal soldiers.⁸⁷ Therefore, not only did he transform the peasantry and the tribal society into a warrior clan but also legitimized his claim like Indian kings to be the rightful ruler of the Kathmandu Valley and subsequently the whole of Nepal.

To forge closer relations with the Gurkhas, the British participated in indigenous customs and traditions. Vansittart in 1906 mentioned how the Gurkhas worshipped martial and epidemic deities like Deorali, Devī, and Candi.⁸⁸ He mentions that in March 1889, a Gurkha woman had died of cholera in the Gorakhpur recruiting depot where he was posted. All the Gurkha officers and noncommissioned officers created a fund to purchase fowls, pigeons, and goats for a sacrificial ceremony in the name of the goddess. Even Vansittart and other recruiting officers contributed to this fund, encouraging a closer European participation in Gurkha traditions.⁸⁹

Masculinity came to be associated with martial races to whom doors for joining military service are always open.⁹⁰ These notions of gender constructions enabled the creation of a martial culture among the communities of Nepal from where the British developed a general perception that Nepal was a military state. Here, the role of the British military authors was both anthropological and a military one. Caplan has emphasized the stylistic traits and rhetorical features of the Gurkha texts so that it can be adequately interrogated in their particular sociomilitary contexts.⁹¹ South Asian military atmosphere was different before the British introduced the regiment system, so these military authors, vis-à-vis officials, after keen observation, created a conducive environment to fit the martial Gurkhas within the regimental system. The literary devices employed in these texts artfully portrayed the relationship between the officers and the Gurkhas

⁸⁷ Seema Alavi, *The Sepoys and the Company: Tradition and Transition in North India, 1770–1830* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6–7, 264–90.

⁸⁸ An epithet of the Hindu Mother and Martial Goddess Durgā.

⁸⁹ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 54–55.

⁹⁰ Caplan, “‘Martial Gurkhas,’” 232–36.

⁹¹ Lionel Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen: “Gurkhas” in the Western Imagination* (Lalitpur, Nepal: Himal Books, 2003), 2.

and how the latter was ideally represented in the former's writings. Burke sees this representation as "mysteries of courtship" between persons of unequal class or rank, where such styles transcended such inequalities, while Tuan sees such relationship as characterized by both dominance and affection that shows the exercise of power, which has the special effect of transforming inferiors into cherished "pets."⁹²

R. G. Leonard, in his handbook for the Ministry of Defence, notes that Nepalese youth "look down on a man without military experience," while J. P. Cross insists that "soldiering is seen as the one honourable profession open to the Gurkhas of Nepal, especially when under the British."⁹³ R. G. Leonard's book was the recent of the five editions of the first officially printed handbook on the Gurkhas in 1883.⁹⁴ The colonial and orientalist project of writing recruitment manuals was a long process, as these were followed by ethnographic surveys by English recruiters in different parts of Nepal and North India. Every British resident who was a recruiter, surveyor, or even a military official added their respective observations of what they understood from their notion of (colonial) enlightenment.⁹⁵ These additions and observations by new residents on the former ones constituted a long historical colonial project before it was codified by the early twentieth century as "authoritative manuals for recruitment," especially during the world wars, when these manuals came to be highly circulated among European military officials.

⁹² Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969); and Yi-Fu Tuan, *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

⁹³ R. G. Leonard, *Nepal and the Gurkhas* (London: for the Ministry of Defence, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965), 48; and John Philip Cross, *In Gurkha Company: The British Army Gurkhas, 1948 to the Present* (London: Arms and Armour Press, 1986), 7.

⁹⁴ Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen*, 9.

⁹⁵ The notion of enlightenment when it enters the Orient through colonization becomes *colonial enlightenment*. Partha Chatterjee raises this argument on colonial enlightenment while questioning the notion of modernity as proposed by Benedict Anderson. Anderson shows that the postcolonial world (nation states of Asia and Africa) are the perpetual consumers of modernity. To Chatterjee, Europe and America have not only written the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation but also anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery. As a result, imaginations of postcolonial states still remain colonized. See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 5.

European writings on the Gurkhas mostly were authored by officials who had spent their time in India and rendered service leading Gurkha troops in war and peace (for example, Lord Roberts, who served with the Gurkhas for a long time and had become colonel of the 5th Gurkhas at the age of 82).⁹⁶ But at times, there are authors who write about the Gurkhas occasionally involving what Geertz calls “incorrigible assertions,” when ethnographers embellish their writings with a high factual description of a time, a place, informants, and so on, even though the ethnographers physically were not there.⁹⁷ Caplan shows that such incorrigible assertions also existed in Gurkha writings. For example, when J. P. Cross reviewed the work of Byron Farwell, where the latter never served in the brigade, Cross comments, “In this review I shall endeavour to compare what the author has written with what I know to be true, having myself served with Gurkhas for 38 years.”⁹⁸

Taken together with masculinity is loyalty, another feature that forms the core metric in recruiting Gurkhas from remote places and young boys from regiments. MacMunn, an early twentieth-century proponent of the martial race theory, notes the importance and the government policy of recruiting line boys from regiments, earlier practiced in the Bombay and Madras regiments. He states that “if born of a Ghurka mother he has for one generation at least most of the warlike traits of his father. Sucking in the regiment tradition he makes an extremely smart soldier. . . . The Governmental policy of encouraging Gurkha colonies near the regimental stations does to a certain extent postulate their employment.”⁹⁹ The general concern was that men may possess strength and strong physique but not the “blood” where martialism is an innate culture.

Cynthia Enloe argues that the purpose of this concept of martial race is to flag a particular community as somehow inherently inclined toward

⁹⁶ Caplan, *Warrior Gentlemen*, 12–13.

⁹⁷ Geertz, *Works and Lives*, 5.

⁹⁸ Byron Farwell, *The Gurkhas* (London: Allen Lane, 1984); and John Philip Cross, review of *The Gurkhas* by Byron Farwell, *Strategic Studies* 3 (1985): 168.

⁹⁹ MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, 199–200.

military occupations; it possesses some special characteristic embedded in its physical make-up, i.e., in its blood.¹⁰⁰ The British obsession with Gurkha recruitments after 1857 in the BIA (as the Gurkhas had been keeping on assisting the British in strategic wars) has been identified by Enloe as “Gurkha syndrome.”¹⁰¹ To her, “Building militaries has been, in part, an ethnographic enterprise.”¹⁰² Hence in Vansittart’s and MacMunn’s handbooks, communities were divided along the lines of race and martial skills. By the beginning of the twentieth century, as recruitment became heavily concentrated on the Gurkha communities, the proliferation of tribes and their designation as martial races starts to feature in survey reports. This shaped the metrics and parameters of army recruitment. When Vansittart took up the post of district recruiting officer (DRO) for Gurkhas at Gorakhpur (in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh), he was fulsome in his praise for the operations established by his predecessor (Captain C. Chevenix-Trench).¹⁰³ But he emphasized the necessity of further investments to secure the flow of recruits. Having secured the support of Lord Roberts, the commander in chief and the British resident at Nepal, Vansittart was allocated Rs. 5,000 to aid his operations and a deputy and medical officer were appointed to assist him at Gorakhpur.¹⁰⁴ Vansittart’s account of his first year as recruiting officer reported significant returns on these investments. He attributed the success of the operations in part to his introduction of a “rewards system” in which Nepalese recruiters were offered financial incentives according to the stature and quality of the “specimens” that they produced.¹⁰⁵ The usage of the term *specimen* shows how the Eu-

¹⁰⁰ C. H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1980), 39.

¹⁰¹ This consists in labeling a group as martial, usually remote from the center both in the geographical and politico-economic senses. Moreover, the perfect martial race is an ethnic group that produces men who are both martial and loyal. This, says Enloe, is at the heart of the “Gurkha syndrome.”

¹⁰² Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*, 28.

¹⁰³ The first officer to serve in the new depot was Captain C. Chevenix-Trench, who oversaw recruiting operations at Gorakhpur from 1886–88. Chevenix-Trench had previously been on special recruiting duty in earlier years. Vansittart was actually the first officer styled DRO for Gurkhas.

¹⁰⁴ Gavin Rand, “Bravest of the Brave”: The Making and Re-Making of ‘the Gurkhas,’ 1857–2009” (unpublished proceedings of Northampton History Seminar, University of Greenwich, UK, 2011), 21.

¹⁰⁵ Rand, “‘Bravest of the Brave,’” 10–11.

ropeans through their writings exoticized the Other.¹⁰⁶ He identified four causes to explain the success of the recruiting operations: the support of the Nepalese durbar, the active support of the resident, the introduction of rewards, and the better working of the recruiting system.

According to Vansittart, the British resident at Nepal brought a good deal of pressure to bear upon the durbar, and it was this pressure, he believed, that caused the Nepalese authorities to be more accommodating of British recruiting strategy. He even suggested the government to establish a recruiting depot in Kathmandu, after Gorakhpur, for effective recruitment.¹⁰⁷ The codification of tribal race, caste, and physical and intellectual attributes of the Nepalese in these handbooks were widely distributed in regiments for recruitment manuals. These handbooks not only shaped the discourse of martial races but also complicate the theory on the other hand.¹⁰⁸ The British thus ensured the balanced recruitment formula, which was the core aspect of the egalitarian recruitment lobby's ideology.¹⁰⁹ This came into effect after 1857 to prevent mutiny in the Bengal Army. This supports the nationalist approach, which intended to prevent the growth of nationalism in India.¹¹⁰ The British were apprehensive to recruit men from the *babu* and intelligentsia sphere, who were infamous for their seditious activities.¹¹¹ The exoticization of the Gurkhas in orientalist writings shows the representation of the Gurkhas as one of the beloved and trustworthy natives to the British.

Martial races were broadly divided on the lines of two categories: the upper caste and lower caste. The upper castes constituted the Thakuris and Chettris. The lower castes constituted the tribal population of Nepal

¹⁰⁶ R. M. Keesing, "Exotic Readings of Cultural Texts," *Current Anthropology* 30 (1989): 459–79.

¹⁰⁷ Vansittart recommended centering recruiting operations around the British residency in Kathmandu, citing the central location of the residency, as well as highlighting the effective transport links and other benefits to be derived from relocating operations to Kathmandu. See Rand, "Bravest of the Brave," 21.

¹⁰⁸ Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj*, 120–40.

¹⁰⁹ Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj*, 120–40.

¹¹⁰ Roy, *Brown Warriors of the Raj*, 35–36.

¹¹¹ Field Marshal Frederick Roberts, *Forty-One Years in India: From Subaltern to Commander-in-Chief*, vol. 2 (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1897), 383.

like the Magars and Gurungs, who resided in western and central remote parts of Nepal.¹¹² Gurungs are found in Kaski, Parbat, Syangja, Lamjung, Tanahu, Manang, and Gorkha districts of western Nepal where they were agro-pastoralists by profession.¹¹³ Their gradual involvement in the Gurkha army under the Nepalese Durbar made them into settled pastoralists as they were rewarded with fertile *jagir* lands of the *terai* region.¹¹⁴ Magars, according to Vansittart, are found from Sarda in the west to Michi in the east.¹¹⁵ Another cause of migration of the Gurkhas into the BIA is to gain the exposure and merit of serving in the British Army, which was the largest employer in colonial South Asia and consumed a huge chunk of the government's revenue.¹¹⁶

Nepal lost major portions of the *terai* region of some 7,000 square miles to British India following the conclusion of the war of 1814–16 with the 1816 Treaty of Sagauli.¹¹⁷ The need to access these *terai* regions could only be fulfilled by the Gurkhas after 1816 with their service in the BIA. Land was central to the historical development of Nepal.¹¹⁸ It is also interesting that proper foreign relations between the British and the Nepali Durbar was founded on the need to access the lost *terai* lands in

¹¹² The Brahmanical construction rationalized Gurung history and social structure to fit caste-hierarchical norms, and it was used in the nineteenth century by Rana Prime Ministers to adjudicate social conflict between the *Char Jat* and the *Sorah Jat* Gurungs. See Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1915 ed., 77; Donald A. Messerschmidt, "Social Status, Conflict and Change in a Gurung Community of Nepal" (PhD diss., University of Oregon, 1974), 19. The distinctive structural feature of Gurung society is its dual organization into two hierarchical and endogamous strata or sub-tribes called *Char Jat* (Nepali: 4 clans) and the *Sorah Jat* (Nepali: 16 clans). Sorah Jat is an inclusive term for all Gurung clans who are not in the higher ranked *Char Jat*. See T. A. Ragsdale, "Gurungs, Goorkhalis, Gurkhas: Speculations on a Nepalese Ethno-History," *CNAS Journal* 17, no. 1 (1990): 2. See also Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 77–91.

¹¹³ Ragsdale, "Gurungs, Goorkhalis, Gurkhas," 1–2.

¹¹⁴ Ragsdale, "Gurungs, Goorkhalis, Gurkhas," 9–10; and Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 9.

¹¹⁵ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 84.

¹¹⁶ T. A. Heathcote, *The Military in British India: The Development of British Land Forces in South Asia 1600–1947* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 241.

¹¹⁷ After some initial successes against the company's forces, the war resulted in Nepal's loss of most its *terai* regions, approximately one-third of its existing territory. Some 7,000 square miles were ceded to the company by the Treaty of Sagauli, which concluded hostilities. The *terai* was a major source of government revenue and provided the lands granted in pensions and rewards to military leaders and administrators for loyalty and service to the monarch. The company's appropriation of this land was thus a direct threat to the future of Nepal's noble families and the unity of the kingdom. See Ludwig F. Stiller, *The Silent Cry: The People of Nepal 1816–1839* (Kathmandu, Nepal: Sahayogi Prakashan, 1976), 49.

¹¹⁸ Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

return for supplying Gurkha men into the BIA. The regiments for Limbu and Rai, tribes from eastern Nepal, came to be formed between 1894 and 1913 for the first time.

In a section on “Warlike Races of Nepal” of his 1906 handbook, Vansittart states:

There are also some Limbus, Rais, and Sunwars to be found in most of our Gurkha regiments, and numbers of them are yearly enlisted into the various Military Police Battalions of Assam and Burma. Experience gained in Sikkim, Burma and elsewhere, would prove Limbus, Rais, and Sunwars to be excellent soldiers, and the prejudice which formerly existed against them, would rightly to be dying out rapidly. A few Nagarkotis (Newars) are also found in most of our regiments. Murmis (Lamas) also have been enlisted in fairly large numbers in Military Police Battalions.¹¹⁹

The first Gurkha regiments to be formed were the ones who succumbed to the concluding battles of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814–16. The war prisoners were organized into three battalions: the First and Second Nasiri (or Nusseree) Battalions (figure 9), and the Sirmoor Battalion (figure 8). A fourth battalion was formed from the Gorakhpur hill regiments and was restyled the Kumaon Provincial Battalion.¹²⁰ The Sirmoor Battalion had the distinction of being the first of these new units to see action in British service, during the Mahratta (Anglo-Maratha) War of 1817. In 1824, the units received new and rather less interesting titles: the First and Second Nasiri Battalions becoming the Fifth and Sixth Local Battalions, and the Sirmoor and Kumaon Battalions becoming the Eighth and Ninth Local Battalions.¹²¹ The Nusseree Battalion was located in the Simla Hills

¹¹⁹ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 9.

¹²⁰ J. B. R. Nicholson, *The Gurkha Rifles* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1974), 6.

¹²¹ In 1826, the Fifth and Sixth Local Battalions were reformed as a single unit with the new title of Fourth Local Battalion. Likewise, the Eighth Local Battalion became Sixth (Sirmoor) Local Battalion and the Ninth Battalion became the Seventh (Kumaon) Local Battalion. Nicholson, *The Gurkha Rifles*, 9–10.

Figure 8. Indian Mutiny veterans the 2d (Prince of Wales' Own) Gurkha Regiment, ca. 1880s. At the time of the 1857 mutiny, during which they played a leading role in the siege and capture of Delhi, it was known as the Sirmoor Battalion. The Sirmoor Battalion suffered 327 casualties out of a total strength of 490, including 8 of their 9 British officers, during the mutiny.



Source: Photo by Fred Bremmer, National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1985-07-27-1

(now in Himachal Pradesh, India), Kumaon and Malaun Battalions in the Punjab Hills, and Sirmoor Battalion in Dehra Dun (now in Uttarakhand, India).¹²²

The relationship between the martial Gurkhas and the British officers was one of respect and professionalism. Figure 10 shows Viceroy Wavell presenting the Victoria Cross to a Gurkha soldier in 1945. British exchanges with the Gurkhas were on two levels: political and military. Both of these were interdependent of each other. From a military perspective,

¹²² MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, 196.

Figure 9. The Nusseree Battalion (later 1st Gurkha Rifles) in 1857. Its regimental motto was “*Kafar Hunu Bhandu Marnu Ramro*” (Better to die than live like a coward). The British officer depicted is Capt Alexander Bagot (1822–74).



Source: Photo by Felice Beato (1825–1907), National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1959-09-109-1

the relation between Gurkha forces and the British was of reciprocity. Both the Gurkha officer (here the Gurkha officer means those who commanded the royal armies of Nepal) and the British officer (commanding Gurkha regiments in the British Army) are essentially alike. In one early text, we are told that the Gurkha displays a “chivalrous courtesy altogether unusual in the East.”¹²³ This shows the British excitement to come across

¹²³ H. Pearse, “The Goorkha Soldier (as an enemy and as a friend),” *Macmillan's Magazine*, vol. 78 (1898): 229.

Figure 10. Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell, the Viceroy of India, presents the Victoria Cross to a Gurkha soldier, 19 December 1945. Wavell had been appointed viceroy in 1943. His mandate in India was to maintain political stability during the war, and he remained in the post until he was replaced by Lord Mountbatten of Burma in 1947 at a time of India's partition and independence.



Source: Photo by Capt Roy Wiltshire, Indian Army Review, National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1990-08-65-62

a martial race as masculine as the Occident. The Gurkha is said to possess the “dogged characteristic of the Britisher . . . taciturn by nature, brave and loyal to a degree.”¹²⁴ Furthermore the Gurkha soldier holds his drink “like the gentleman he is.”¹²⁵ Toker mentions that both the Gurkha and the British officers are “honest and incorruptible.”¹²⁶ Both have a keen sense of humor and an appreciation of sarcasm, although in the case of the Gurkha it is his “Mongolian strain” which is responsible for his “proverbial good humour.”¹²⁷ MacMunn says “they [Gurkhas] can live up to the acme of the British cachet for smartness and turn out, while they will play happily at drilling each other for hours at a time.”¹²⁸ This can be accounted for in the Gurkhas, according to Duncan Forbes, by the fact that they are (like the British?) “freehold yeomen farmers,” which breeds in them a “spirit of independence.”¹²⁹

An example from the Anglo-Nepalese War shows the mutual respect both had for each other. James Fraser had observed when Captain Charles Showers lost his life after killing a Gurkha officer in single-handed combat that his body was returned to the English camp under David Ochterlony.¹³⁰ Likewise, Ochterlony, who is credited for starting the recruitment of the Gurkhas in the BIA, returned the Gurkha officer Bhakti Thapa’s body wrapped in a shawl to Malaon.¹³¹ Both the Gurkha and the British officers died, what the writings show, through a heroic act of combat. Unlike the army of the plains, whom the British denigrated as feminine and nonmartial, the Gurkhas were a self-reflection of the British. The representation of the self is substantiated by the representation of the Orient. But the British were positively biased toward the Gurkhas when compared to rest

¹²⁴ Bolt, *Gurkhas*, 91.

¹²⁵ Leonard, *Nepal and the Gurkhas*, 47.

¹²⁶ Toker, *Gorkha*, 122.

¹²⁷ W. B. Northey and C. J. Morris, *The Gurkhas: Their Manners, Customs and Country* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head, 1928), 96–97.

¹²⁸ MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, 199.

¹²⁹ Duncan Forbes, *Johnny Gurkha* (London: Robert Hale, 1964), 55.

¹³⁰ Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

¹³¹ Gould, *Imperial Warriors*, chap. 1.

of the South Asians. The British likely considered the Gurkhas and the Pathans the only masculine martial race in the whole of South Asia. Vansittart attributes an orientalist explanation behind Gurkha martialism and its sustained character. He writes:

The original purity of their soil [here, Nepalese soil] had never been sullied by the foot of a Mahomedan [Muslim] conqueror. Morally, therefore, as well as physically, they looked, and they, to this day, still look, upon themselves, as superior to any of the plains men. These feelings induced a proud independence and energy of character almost unknown in other parts of India.¹³²

Enloe postulated two strands to contextualize the concept of Martial Race Theory.¹³³ First was the idea that martialism was an innate quality inherited from forefathers through blood and genetics. Vansittart, in his 1915 handbook, wrote on Magars and Gurungs:

The Magars of Eastern Nepal are, in my opinion, with a few exceptions, very much inferior to those of Central Nepal, in physique, appearance, and in all respects. . . . I give no list and take absolutely no notice of such corrupted names of Magar clans and tribes. . . . Central Nepal is the real, original, and actual home of the Magars and Gurungs.¹³⁴

The decline of martiality can be attributed to migration, when the blood gets contaminated. Hence, the remotest place houses the pure martial tribes, who are known for their innocence and remarkable bravery, the hot spots for army recruitment. Vansittart, therefore, writes on the Magars,

¹³² Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1906 ed., 11. Bracketed inputs are author's.

¹³³ Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers*, 39.

¹³⁴ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1915 ed., 86.

“But their proper habitat is west of the Nepal valley, and there undoubtedly the best and purest Magars are found to this day in large numbers.”¹³⁵

Second was climate, another factor that determined martialism. The discourse on race has been considerably influenced by climate, evident from the writings of Montesquieu in the eighteenth-century Age of Enlightenment, who says in *The Spirit of Laws*:

People are therefore more vigorous in cold climates. . . .

This superiority of strength must produce various effects; for instance, a greater boldness, that is, more courage; a greater sense of superiority, that is, less desire of revenge; a greater opinion of security, that is, more frankness, less suspicion, policy, and cunning.¹³⁶

Later, he writes: “The Indians are naturally a pusillanimous people: even the children of Europeans, born in India, lose the courage peculiar to their own climate.”¹³⁷ In the light of this statement, MacMunn articulates, “Prolonged years of varying religions on their adherents, of early marriage, of premature brides, and juvenile eroticism, of a thousand years of malaria and hook-worm, and other ills of neglected sanitation in a hot climate, and the deteriorating effect of aeons of tropical sun on races that were once white and lived in uplands and on cool steppes” as explanations for the lack of martial aptitude among people of the plains.¹³⁸

Young Manpower Diplomacy, Cordial Diplomatic Relations

Gurkha recruitment governed the politics and diplomacy between British India and Nepal. As discussed earlier, relations developed between Calcutta and Kathmandu on an official and diplomatic basis when the Nepalese durbar wanted to retrieve their lost *terai* lands. The East In-

¹³⁵ Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, 1915 ed., 82.

¹³⁶ “Of the Difference of Men in Different Climates,” in M. de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, bk. 14, vol. 2 (London: T. Evans/W. Davis, 1777), 255, via Online Library of Liberty.

¹³⁷ “Contradiction in the Tempers of Some Southern Nations,” in Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, bk. 16, 257.

¹³⁸ MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, 2.

dia Company's appropriation of the economically fertile and revenue-generating *terai* lands after the Anglo-Nepalese War came as a direct threat to the future of Nepal's noble families and durbar.¹³⁹ The company, to prevent further incursions and a possible alliance of the Gurkhas with the Sikhs, declared that the frontiers of Nepal should be restricted to the hills and all *terai* regions should come under the company's jurisdiction.¹⁴⁰ The Nepalese prime minister, Jang Bahadur Rana, led a force of 10,000 soldiers aiding the East India Company in the 1857 mutiny. As a result, some 7,000 square kilometers of land were returned out of good gesture and reward.¹⁴¹ The forceful application of an idea of Weberian sovereignty, which characterizes the notion of an "ideal state" in the West, where the exercise of powers was restricted to borders that delineated one state from other, was one reason behind the war the British fought with Nepal and also other princely states. The notion of a state in South Asia is very different from that in the West. Therefore, despite the British wanting to delay the war (because of the ongoing Anglo-Maratha Wars and the fear of antagonizing the Chinese), the implementation of borders over the fertile, tax-generating *terai* villages was perceived by the Nepali durbar as an encroachment into Nepali territory.¹⁴² The transfer of lands to the British caused Gurkha generals to switch loyalties away from other independent

¹³⁹ Stiller, *The Silent Cry*, 49.

¹⁴⁰ Ludwig F. Stiller, *The Rise of the House of Gorkha: A Study in the Unification of Nepal 1768–1816* (New Delhi: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1973), 328.

¹⁴¹ This was more because "their value did not justify the expense of maintaining British authority there." Stiller, *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*, 332.

¹⁴² K. C. Chaudhuri, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations: From the Earliest Times of the British Rule in India till the Gurkha War* (Calcutta: Modern Book Agency, 1960), 140. The EIC thought that Kathmandu was a vassal like the Tibetans under the Chinese Chi'ing Emperors. See Leo E. Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepal War: 1814–1816," in *Indian History Conference, Proceedings of the Twenty-fourth Session—Delhi, 1961*, ed. S. P. Sen (Calcutta: Lalchand, Roy & Co., 1963), 209. Stiller says the Nepalese were "concerned with the control of villages, which waxed or waned according to the military strength and vigour of the ruling dynasty . . . boundary lines followed from the history of western diplomacy and drew their meaning from maps and lines drawn on map." See Stiller, *The Silent Cry*, 220–21. Also see R. Burghart, "The Formation of the Concept of the Nation-State in Nepal," *Journal of Asian Studies* 44 (1984): 114–15.

Indian states, rendering service to the British in order to access the *terai* lands for their survival.¹⁴³

The British obsession with Gurkha martialism and masculinity resulted in the Gurkhas becoming the key diplomatic currency between British India and Nepal. Mary Des Chene has shown how the recruitment of the Gurkhas as a diplomatic currency completely erased their independent voice, affecting their fate in places like Hong Kong and Malaysia, all of which are outside South Asia.¹⁴⁴ The exchange of Nepalese military help to the British against the *terai* lands in the 1857 mutiny was the first substantial exchange of a commodity that would set a *modus operandi* for obtaining Gurkhas consistently over time, mostly in the world wars.¹⁴⁵ Gurkha loyalty is taken for granted, and they are assumed automatically to support the political projects and share the attitudes of the British authorities. None of these authors thinks to question the propriety of using Gurkha troops in politically sensitive situations, especially where Kathmandu itself may be embarrassed.¹⁴⁶

Hodgson argued in the private reports he sent to the government that given the presence of Gurkha martial ethos and their large-scale recruitment in the BIA, the company could disperse the Nepalese threat throughout the rest of the British Indian territories.¹⁴⁷ The Nepalese government, from 1815–85, saw Gurkha recruitment as a threat to Nepal's national security, while from 1914–45 it used the Gurkha recruitment to have Nepal's sovereignty legally formalized by Britain.¹⁴⁸ The British did not obtain a formal agreement with Nepal for their recruitment of

¹⁴³ Mary Des Chene, "Relics of Empire: A Cultural History of the Gurkhas" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1991).

¹⁴⁴ Figure 19 shows a Gurkha soldier showing his gilded *khukri* scabbard in Malaysia. This was the time when they were fighting off the Malayan Emergency (1948–60). Mary Des Chene, "Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences: Gorkhas as Diplomatic Currency," *South Asia Bulletin Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 13, no. 1 and 2 (1993): 67–80.

¹⁴⁵ Des Chene, "Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences," 69.

¹⁴⁶ Caplan, " 'Bravest of the Brave,' " 588.

¹⁴⁷ Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, "Recruitment of the Gurkhas in the Indian Army, 1814–1877," *Journal of the United Service Institution of India* 94 (1963): 143–53. Also see Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, "Political Relations between India and Nepal, 1877–1923" (PhD diss., University of London, 1968).

¹⁴⁸ Des Chene, "Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences," 68.

Gurkhas until they were leaving India in 1947.¹⁴⁹ The martial race theory may have ceased in the postwar years, but this codified principle of the handbooks has become a dogma in the general population. Mason states that it is through the efforts, writings, and articulation of notions by Lord Roberts and MacMunn that “formulated and codified the principle [of martiality] into a dogma.”¹⁵⁰ Following their remarkable service after 1816, Britain recognized Nepal’s sovereignty in 1923 through a treaty at a time when other Indian princely states were still enjoying paramountcy of the colonial state.¹⁵¹ This was the 1923 Treaty of Friendship between Nepal and British India (figure 11). The India Office inserted a clause to establish the British right to recruit Gorkhas by stating that “it is after all, mainly because of the Gurkha element in the army that we value the friendship of Nepal.”¹⁵²

An archival report shows that the Consulate of Nepal in Delhi was founded in 1936 (figure 12).¹⁵³ The status of the Nepalese representative in India (whose counterpart was the British resident in Kathmandu) changed to that of a consul-general.¹⁵⁴ The change of status came soon after the recognition of Nepalese sovereignty by Britain. Diplomatic exchanges further intensified during the world wars when the Ranas sold off their citizens to British military service each time. Diplomatic exchanges happened on the basis of “mutual concessions.”¹⁵⁵ Just prior to the First World War, the Ranas were very quick to declare that “the whole military resources of Nepal are at His Majesty’s disposal.”¹⁵⁶ In the Second

¹⁴⁹ Des Chene, “Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences,” 68.

¹⁵⁰ Mason, *A Matter of Honour*, 349.

¹⁵¹ Ragsdale, “Gurungs, Goorkhalis, Gurkhas,” 13.

¹⁵² Sir Arthur Hirtzel, undersecretary of State for India, as quoted in Asad Husain, *British India’s Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal, 1857–1947* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 207.

¹⁵³ “New Delhi-Land-Building of Nepalese Consulate Allotment,” Department of Health, Education and Lands, Government of India, 1936, file no. 1936-FILE-NO-40-2, National Archives of India, New Delhi.

¹⁵⁴ The Public Works Department of Delhi at that time informed the Nepalese government that a plot of 6.1 acres was available in Princes Palace of Delhi, whereas the requirements of the Nepalese government are 12 acres. “New Delhi-Land-Building of Nepalese Consulate Allotment.”

¹⁵⁵ Des Chene, “Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences,” 70–71.

¹⁵⁶ Resident to the Secretary, GOI, Foreign and Political Department Secret Internal, September 1914, as quoted in Husain, *British India’s Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal*, 184.

Figure 11. British Envoy to Nepal William O'Connor and Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher Rana after signing the Friendship Treaty on 21 December 1923.



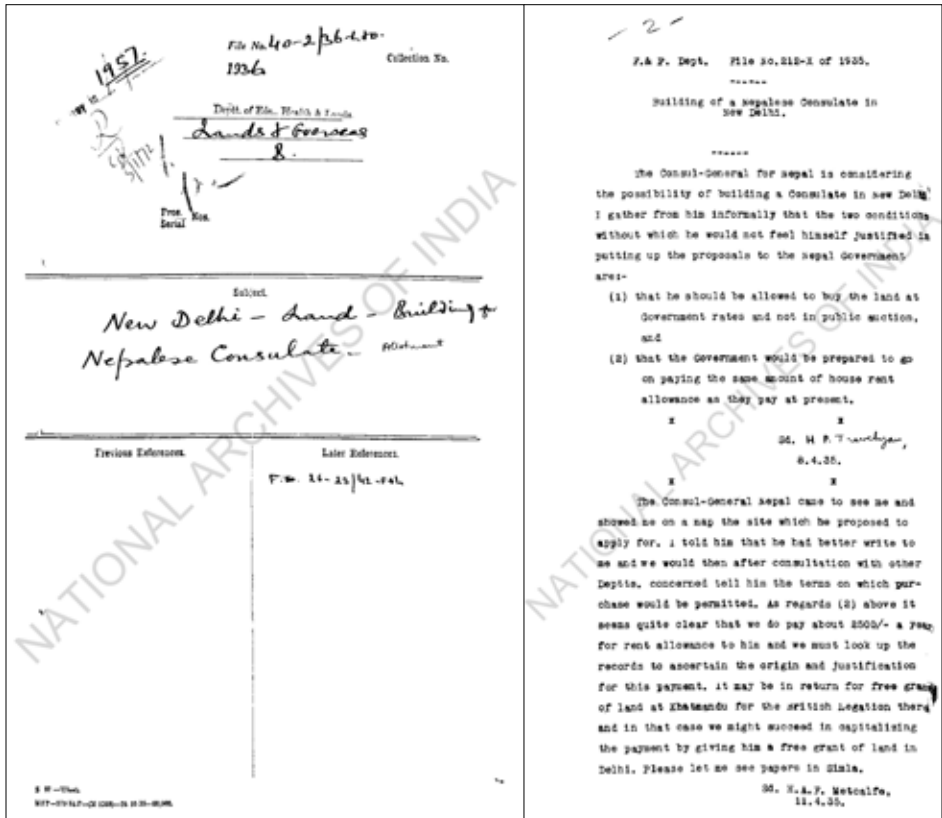
Source: Nepali Times archives

World War, more than 124,000 Gurkhas were recruited by the British.¹⁵⁷ Des Chene shows that the capitalization of the Nepalese citizens when lobbied by the Ranas by making them join the BIA was a constant source of income for Nepal from Britain and was also a way to consistently get hold of the *terai* zones.¹⁵⁸ This is better termed as *Gurkha capitalization*. But amid and underneath all these diplomatic exchanges, the Gurkhas experienced an identity crisis. This is well reflected by a brief review of Ne-

¹⁵⁷Des Chene, "Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences," 71.

¹⁵⁸Des Chene, "Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences," 72–73.

Figure 12. Frontispiece (left) and a folio (right) from the archival report “Building of a Nepalese Consulate in New Delhi.”



Source: National Archives of India, New Delhi, via Abhilekh Patal Portal, file no. 1936-FILE-NO-40-2

pali literature and songs, which reveals a contradictory rhetoric of what is generally espoused in the orientalist literature by British military authors. Nepali novels, short stories, poems, and songs about Gurkha soldiers show sufferings, identity crises, and hardships faced by them.¹⁵⁹ A true independent agency of the Gurkhas expressing what they felt and their perception

¹⁵⁹ Nagendra Bahadur Bhandari, “Representations of the Gurkhas (Lahures) in Modernist Narratives,” *Unity Journal* 2 (2021): 154.

of their military service is truly revealed in these vernacular sources. First, they were ascribed a community identity on the grounds of martial race theory by the British, and second, they were used by the ruling Ranas as diplomatic tokens with the British both as a source of state income and in recognition of Nepal's sovereignty.

In some Nepali writings the Gurkhas are portrayed as unpatriotic due to their allegiance and service in the foreign army (the BIA).¹⁶⁰ Folk ballads and songs composed by Gandharva/Gaaine (the singing caste), who are the singers and musicians of Nepal, reflect the pain and the agony of the Gurkha community when their youth went to wars.¹⁶¹ They are also portrayed as irresponsible men for their indifference to their family members and morally corrupted for their licentious attitude to females.¹⁶² For example, a popular ballad named "*Aamali Sodhlin ni*" (Mother May Ask) shows the presence of grief and sadness of the Gurkhas when they are in action in foreign battlefields. It also deals with the possibility of death of the soldier at any moment in the foreign land, and the news of that death may take months to reach family members living in the remote hills of Nepal.¹⁶³ Human emotions of pathos, misery, and separation from motherland comes to light in these Nepali writings. The ballad "*Aamali Sodhlin ni*" goes like this:

Hey barai

Mother, don't weep over me. If I live,

I will send you a photo. Look what fate has in store for me.

¹⁶⁰ Bhandari, "Representations of the Gurkhas (Lahures) in Modernist Narratives," 157.

¹⁶¹ Some examples of songs are: "*Gaai Palyo Banaiko Bhaglai, Chhora Palyo Germanko Dharwalai*" (I raised the cow for the tiger of the jungle, and so were my sons in the battle with the Germans), and "*Lahureko Relimai Feshanai Ramro, Rato Rumal Relimai Khukuri Bhireko*" (The fashion of Lahures makes my dear so lovely, with a red handkerchief for my love and sporting a kukri). For more such other examples on Gurkha folk songs, see Gurung, *Ayo Gorkhali*, chap. 21.

¹⁶² Bhandari, "Representations of the Gurkhas (Lahures) in Modernist Narratives," 156.

¹⁶³ Bhandari, "Representations of the Gurkhas (Lahures) in Modernist Narratives."

My karma is dark . . . In the markets of Batauli. There isn't a stamp worth four paisa. The household head is dead. But no one at home knows.¹⁶⁴

Songs also criticize the Nepalese government's policies of forcing the Gurkhas to be recruited by the British as mercenaries. Bhupi Sherchan's poem "*Titara, Battai, Bhakku ko Rango ka Shantna haru patri*" (To the Children of Partridges, Quails and Sacrificial Oxen) critiques the mercenary nature of the Gurkhas, who are treated as mere oxen for their pointless sacrifice in wars. The poet condemns:

Unselfishly they died,
Meaninglessly, quite pointlessly,
Partridges, quails, oxen to slaughter,
Adding their yes to strangers' agreements,
Awaking to strangers' applause and slogans,
Drunk on the dregs of strangers' beer,
Crying "the Gorkhalis have come"
But becoming merely oxen,
Tumbling headfirst into war.¹⁶⁵

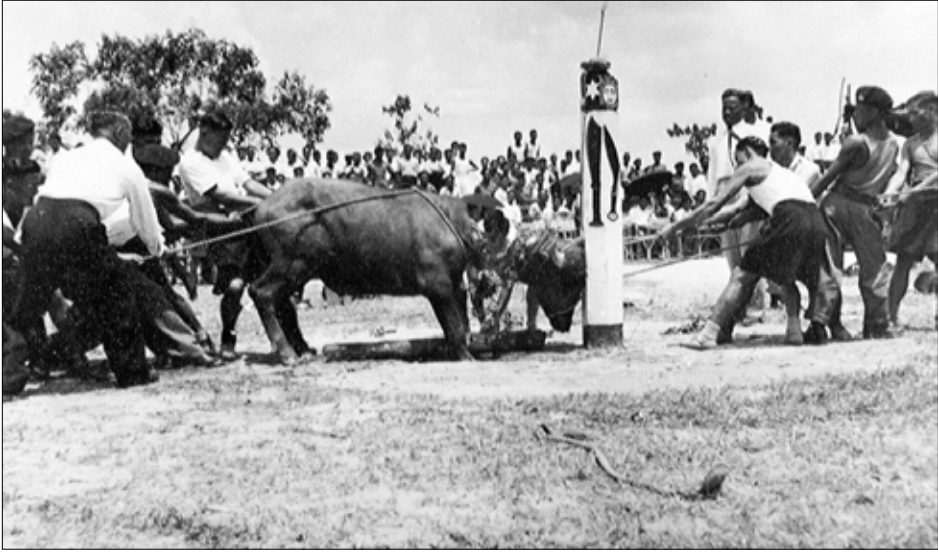
Economic and diplomatic exchanges superseded caste taboos. Before the onset of the First World War, the Rana prime minister of Nepal, Chandra Shumsher, arranged a special ritual that would provide the Gurkhas a religious cover so that after crossing the *kala pani* (or ocean waters) to fight on behalf of the British in Europe, they would be saved from losing their caste status.¹⁶⁶ This ritual is known as *Paani Patia*, which was arranged by the prime minister under the *raḡ guru* (chief royal priest), who is the supreme religious authority in Nepal. This came as a huge relief to the Brit-

¹⁶⁴ Weena Pun, "Lahure Laments," *HIMAL South Asian* 29, no. 7 (2016).

¹⁶⁵ Bhupi Sherchan, *Ghumne Mech Mathi Andho Manchhe* (Nepal: Sajha Prakashan, 1983), 62.

¹⁶⁶ Bishop, *Better to Die*, 79.

Figure 13. Vijayadashami celebrations by the 2d Gurkha Battalion, 10th Princess Mary's Own Gurkha Rifles, Majidee Barracks, Malaya, 1958.



Source: National Army Museum, London, accession no. 2000-09-143-2

ish.¹⁶⁷ The world wars provided a good opportunity to the global political and military audience to become familiar with the English rhetoric on Gurkha martialism and masculinity. The message drafted by Lord Roberts (who was 82 by then) on 12 November 1914 to the 2d/3d Gurkhas in action at Neuve Chapelle against the German forces (figure 16), shows that the rhetoric of masculine martiality was so deeply entrenched in the BIA that it was used to keep the spirits high even when they were on the defensive at the western front in the First World War.¹⁶⁸

The diplomatic relations between British India and Nepal at times became dicey regarding repatriations of Gurkha soldiers serving on behalf of the BIA in foreign lands. Because a Gurkha soldier is not an Indian native but a Nepali native, it is up to the Nepalese government to start negotia-

¹⁶⁷Tim I. Gurung, *Ayo Gorkhali: A History of the Gurkhas* (Chennai: Westland Publications, 2020), chapter 6.

¹⁶⁸Bishop, *Better to Die*, 75.

tions with the other state to repatriate its soldier. Britain was apprehensive of the fact that if the Ranas were made to establish diplomatic missions even in England, this could endanger the monopoly Britain enjoyed over the Nepalese Gurkhas.¹⁶⁹ One government statement says, “This slight opening of the Nepalese door might encourage foreign powers to endeavor to get the door opened a little wider so as to admit others than ourselves to Kathmandu.”¹⁷⁰ An archival report from 1923 (figures 14 and 15), the same year when Britain recognized Nepalese sovereignty with their Friendship Treaty, concerns the proposed repatriation from Chiang Mai in Siam (now Thailand) of a destitute Gurkha named Jelamal, who apparently died later in 1923 in a hospital in Nakawn Lampang in Siam (figure 14).¹⁷¹ It is interesting to note the entire negotiation between the British and the Siamese consul-generals in Chiang Mai. Among many letters exchanged between the two authorities, one letter dated 28 September 1922 shows (before Jelama’s death) that he was desperate to return to Nepal and was transferred to an asylum as he was showing signs of violence and mental unrest. This shows what Gurkha soldiers, like most ordinary soldiers, often went through after the violence of war. They suffered traumatic symptoms that could neither be found in oriental writings nor Nepali folk songs. But a statement from the report dated 29 April 1922 shows that the British envoy at the Nepali Durbar tried to trace Jelama’s place in the village of Dingla (in Nepal) and his brother Dhan Bahadur in Darjeeling (now in West Bengal, India). Interestingly, a statement comes from the same report (figure 15, both left and right images):

The residence of the man in India cannot be traced, and besides, he is not apparently a *British* Indian subject; it is therefore for consideration whether his repatriation should

¹⁶⁹ Des Chene, “Soldiers, Sovereignty and Silences,” 71.

¹⁷⁰ Davis Bray, Foreign and Political Department, India, to J. C. Walton, Secretary, Political Department, India Office, 5 December 1929, as quoted in Husain, *British India’s Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal*, 214.

¹⁷¹ “Proposed Repatriation from Siam of a Destitute Gurkha Named Jelamal. Report of His Death in Hospital at Nakawn Lampang,” Foreign and Political Department, Government of India, 1923, file no. 1071-G, National Archives of India.

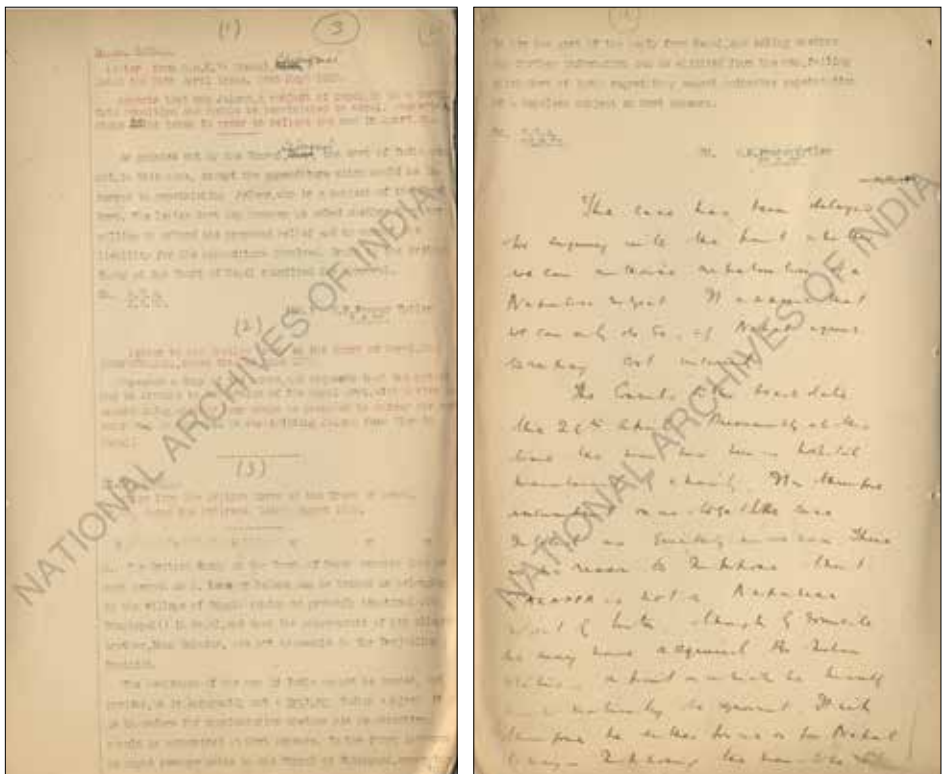
Figure 14. Frontispiece from the archival report of the Frontier and Political Department report “Proposed Repatriation of a Gurkha named Jelamal from Chiang Mai.”

Source: National Archives of India, New Delhi, via Abhilekh Patal Portal, file no. 1071-G

be authorised at Govt [here, British-Indian government] expense. In the first instance we might perhaps write to the Consul at Chiengmai, conveying to him the gist of the reply from Nepal, and asking whether any further information can be elicited from the man [here, Jelamal] failing which Govt of India regret they cannot authorise repatriation of a Nepalese subject at Govt expense.¹⁷²

¹⁷²“Proposed Repatriation from Siam of a Destitute Gurkha Named Jelamal. Report of His Death in Hospital at Nakawn Lampang,” emphasis original.

Figure 15. Second (left) and third (right) folios from the archival report of the Frontier and Political Department report “Proposed Repatriation of a Gurkha named Jelamal from Chiang Mai.”



Source: National Archives of India, New Delhi, via Abbilekh Patal Portal, file No: 1071-G

The statement above breaks the myth that the British fascination for the Gurkhas was suitable as long as the Gurkhas provided them with meritorious service and loyalty. Yet, it also shows the responsibility out of fear that Britain had to negotiate on behalf of Nepal globally so as to keep Anglo-Nepalese relations as private as possible.

Figure 16. Gurkha soldiers of the Meerut Division armed with fixed bayonets and *khukri* knives push on through recently captured German positions during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915.



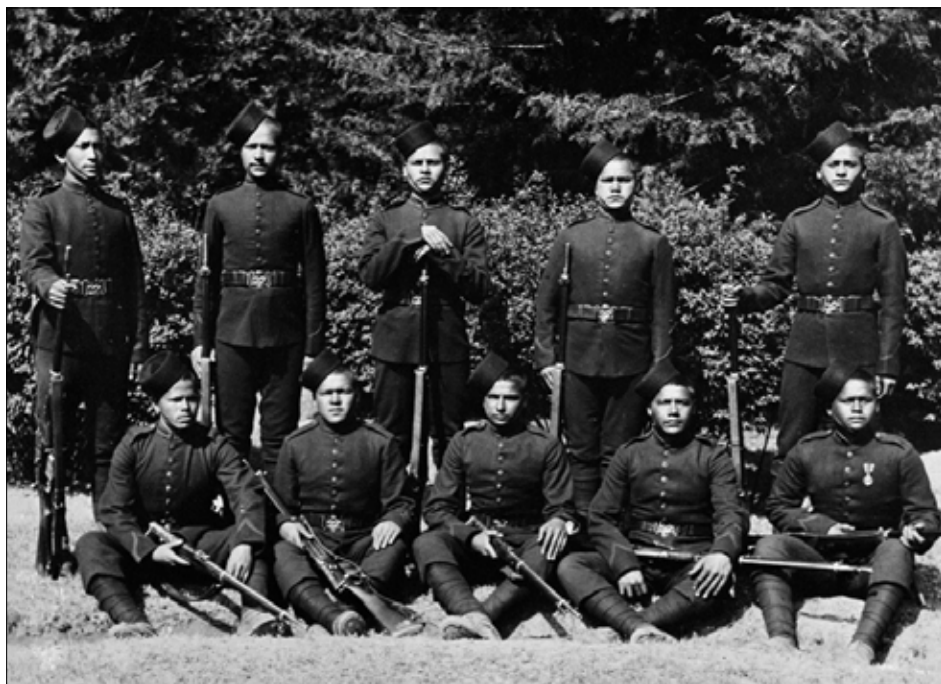
Source: National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1972-08-67-1-22

Figure 17. Original artwork from the illustrations in Maj G. F. MacMunn's "Armies of India" (1911) showing members of the 39th Garhwal Rifles, based in Uttarakhand.



Source: Watercolor by Maj Alfred Crowdy Lovett (1862–1919), 1908, National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1953-02-41-1

Figure 18. A photograph of members of the 39th Garhwal Rifles in 1909. The British were so impressed by their martial qualities that in 1887 they raised a separate Garhwal regiment.



Source: Photo by David Henry Drake-Brockman, National Army Museum, London, accession no. 1960-02-110-3-81

Conclusion

The Gurkhas constituted an important organ in the British Indian Army. The history and patterns of their recruitment offers a glimpse of how the British solidified their rule in South Asia and elsewhere through the deployment of Gurkha troops. The orientalist perception of the Gurkhas was not a sporadic one, rather the conflicts the Gurkhas and the English East India Company faced since the days of early colonial rule rather shaped the orientalist perception and the diplomacy between Nepal and the British. Likewise, an alternative history also comes out when orientalist writings are juxtaposed with Nepali writings—the reality of their identity crisis and a lack of an independent agency is revealed. While ar-

Figure 19. A Gurkha soldier showing a gilded *kukri* scabbard in Malaysia, 1953, during the Malayan Emergency.



Source: Harrison Forman Collection, AGSL Digital Photo Archive—Asia and Middle East

chival reports like the repatriation of Gurkha soldiers outside South Asia shows another striking reality that affected their lives and fate forever—something that is unavailable in both orientalist and Nepali folk writings. The Gurkha recruitment also highlights another important fact: the politics of manpower diplomacy between two states, where Nepal's sovereignty depended on supplying Gurkha men to the BIA even at the cost of their lives. Due to the omnipresent martial ethos that was articulated among different communities of Nepal and the BIA being a source of employment and opportunities, the Ranas found it quite easier to send their men to the BIA.

The Occident, portrayed as the masculine, sees the Gurkhas differently from the conventionally feminine Orient. It is the military aspect (and service) of the Gurkhas that has led their entire race to be masculinized in colonial discourse. Had the Gurkhas not been militarily active, they would have been discriminated against and relegated to inferior status like the army of the plains in these colonial reports and orientalist writings. Therefore, Caplan sees the Gurkha literature as orientalist in opposition to the Westernized military bearing of Gurkha soldiers.¹⁷³ The Gurkhas have passed the test of imperial historiography in order to be admired in history as the only masculine warriors of South Asia of the effeminate Orient. This has satiated the British quest to find its masculine other equivalent to its own excellence, though not fully, in order to dominate the feminine mass of the rest of colonized India.

¹⁷³ Caplan, “‘Bravest of the Brave,’” 594.

Pierre Koenig as a Symbol of Free France's War Aims

by Benjamin F. Jones, PhD

One of the most revealing but underappreciated issues in the study of guerrillas is explaining their strategic aims and intent. The Second World War clouds the issue further as the myriad of guerrilla movements are often ignored while scholarly and popular interest tends to focus on conventional forces. This chapter highlights a French general, Marie-Pierre Koenig, who should be more well known because his actions explain the aims of Free France (a government in exile), an entity often misunderstood. Caught in a situation where he was a regular officer placed in the rare role of leading irregular guerrillas, Koenig's actions reveal much about Free France and the nature of its guerrilla war during World War II.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed a French general to command American, British, and French special forces for Operation Overlord in 1944. Such a situation is so peculiar it has not been repeated: no U.S. special operations forces since have been placed under the command and control of a foreign officer. Nevertheless, Eisenhower sought to have a French general command his unconventional warfare campaign in France, one that would succeed or fail due to the actions of the French Maquis—guerrilla resistance bands. But having a French general command the Maquis within the Allied command structure also provided a venue for any such leader to assert his nation's aims, despite not being recognized by

the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. As John Sweets has argued, Free France's war aims were threefold. First to defeat Germany; second, to avoid the Allies establishing a military government of France as they were doing in Italy; and third, to punish the French who had collaborated with the enemy.¹ As shown below, General Koenig, a remarkably underappreciated personality, demonstrates all three of those wartime aims with his actions between April 1944 and April 1945. Understanding what he did illuminates Free France's aims.

Eisenhower's June 1944 top secret directive allowed Koenig clear national latitude when in its second paragraph it granted the opportunity to notify Eisenhower if any directive conflicted with the "French Committee of National Liberation."² While still unrecognized as France's government, it is clear that two weeks after the Allied invasion of France, the Allied commander recognized the committee, led by Charles de Gaulle, for its sovereignty over liberated France, even if the American and British governments at the time did not. As shown below, Koenig certainly exercised his opportunities to show the committee's sovereignty, even when it dramatically lowered the effectiveness of the Allied special operations units. The loss of such effectiveness was a price Koenig and de Gaulle and perhaps Eisenhower were willing to pay so that France's sovereignty could emerge before the war concluded.

A *guerrilla*, in common usage, refers to a person fighting for a cause despite not having a recognized political government empowering them

¹ John F. Sweets, *The Politics of Resistance in France: A History of the Mouvements Unis de la Resistance* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976).

² "Designation of the Commander of the French Forces of the Interior," 23 June 1944, Command and Control of the French Forces of the Interior, SHAEF SGS, Dwight D. Eisenhower (DDE) Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

to do so.³ In this instance, the guerrillas are the French resistance fighters frequently referred to as the *Maquis*. They got this name from the Corsican scrub brush that grew like a weed and hard to eradicate.⁴ By the end of 1942, the name stuck to many of the young men hiding from the forced labor draft, the *Relève*, imposed by Philippe Pétain's collaborationist government.⁵ As A. L. Funk and John Sweets have pointed out, the rising numbers of Maquis by late 1942 were driven by the unpopular labor draft as well the loss of national prestige Pétain suffered when he announced the draft and then the Allies invaded North Africa. While the foot soldiers of the Maquis were appearing, the primary political resistance groups inside France were in clandestine talks attempting to design and organize a national-level resistance.⁶ In the end, the dozen or so regional groups, along with the external Free French resistance being organized by de Gaulle, all agreed in their threefold political aims. These were to push the Germans out of France, to punish the collaborators, and to avoid an Allied military government.⁷ This last point is key to understanding de Gaulle's actions and the resistance's behavior in relation to the British and Americans. While the resistance needed British and American support, it was deeply suspicious of their intentions regarding postwar France and sought to

³ The literature on guerrilla warfare is rich and fascinating, if confusing. The term *guerrilla* comes to us from Spanish, where it means *small war* or *those who fight in small combat actions behind enemy lines*. The term leapt into English usage during British campaigns in Spain during the war against Napoléon. To most military leaders in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, small wars were small-unit actions behind the lines, as defined in Guillaume Le Blond, "Small War," *Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. Benjamin Jones (Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2010), accessed 3 December 2024. Originally published as "Petite-guerre," *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 12 (Paris, 1765), 466. Not long after the publication of this very definition, political ideologies began to impute meaning within revolutionary movements and those who fought them. So, it should be understood that guerrilla wars are a method chosen by nations who seek to gain an advantage to disrupt their enemy with small teams of highly specialized units, but guerilla wars are also fought by non-nation states seeking to achieve their political aims. In the case of Koenig and the Free French (members of Free France), both meanings fit their purposes.

⁴ History of E. M. F. I. (État Major des Forces Francaises de l'Inteirieur), 1944, HS 7/126, British National Archives (BNA), Kew, UK, 3.

⁵ See H. R. Kedward, *In Search of the Maquis: Rural Resistance in Southern France, 1942–1944* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶ Sweets, *The Politics of the Resistance in France*. Sweets's work is often overlooked but it is still the most concise work on this issue.

⁷ A. L. Funk, *Charles de Gaulle: The Crucial Years, 1943–44* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959); and Sweets, *The Politics of the Resistance in France*, 1976.

maintain their own freedom of action.⁸ Thus, the Free French were caught in a web in which they believed they must act as if they had sovereignty while not actually having any, and they must insist on being able to have a foreign policy and military freedom of action, while their policies and freedom of action depended on the British and Americans. So, the salient point for the Free French became how to develop the talk of sovereignty into the walk of sovereignty. That task would be borne largely by de Gaulle, but key others would support that grand task.⁹ Marie Pierre Koenig was one of the other leaders who is often overlooked, but the events in which he participated and his actions and reactions to them clearly illuminate Free France's three aims. He helped guide, plan, and then command the Maquis, and he assisted in punishing collaborators, quite dramatically; but mostly, he was a key player in avoiding an Allied occupation of France.¹⁰

The Allies were designing their own guerrilla forces too. These guerrillas would definitely be under Allied political control, but they would use guerrilla warfare methods to link up with the Maquis, with the goal of bringing them into Allied operational intent.¹¹ Allied guerrilla forces were largely molded by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) and the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS). These two nations cooperated to create three-man Jedburgh teams for the purpose of liaison with the Maquis behind enemy lines.¹² Major General Colin Gubbins, who pushed this concept, and his SOE planners initially saw Jedburghs being used to replace SOE agents arrested by the Germans once the invasion began.¹³ The timing of the teams' deployment to France in support of Operation Overlord became a source of bitter disagreement between the

⁸ Benjamin F. Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas: The Jedburghs, the Maquis, and the Liberation of France* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 54–79.

⁹ Julian Jackson, *De Gaulle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 279–309.

¹⁰ Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, 112–69; and Charles L. Robertson, *When Roosevelt Planned to Govern France* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

¹¹ Peter Wilkinson, *Foreign Fields: The Story of an SOE Operative* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997), 128.

¹² Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, 22–53.

¹³ Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, 31.

Jedburgh veterans and those who commanded them.¹⁴ As discussed below, much of that blame during the war fell unfairly on Koenig in particular and the Free French in general.

Koenig's Background

As the Second World War began, then-major Koenig played a role in the contingent the French had deployed to Norway as an officer in the 13th Demi-Brigade of the French Foreign Legion (DBFL). In 1940, the 13th DBFL landed at Brest on 16 June, the day the government fell. Shortly thereafter, Koenig made his way to Britain. He was involved in the planning and operations for the Dakar expedition and was a lieutenant colonel by the end of 1940. Taking part in operations alongside the British in Egypt, he made his mark in early 1942 at Bir Hakeim where he refused a surrender offer and broke out of German general Erwin Rommel's encirclement. The 13th DBFL's hold and then fighting escape from Bir Hakeim made him famous, as it was the first time a French force had held their own against German troops. Its impact on de Gaulle and conversations occurring at the time with British prime minister Winston Churchill were assisted by this action on the battlefield. It made Koenig famous around the world, and if the French resistance newspapers are any indication, the interior resistance turned him into a hero due to his leadership at Bir Hakeim.¹⁵

A real hero is what the interior French resistance needed. In the spring of 1944, Koenig had risen to lieutenant general and de Gaulle appointed him as the commander of the Free French in the United Kingdom.¹⁶ On 19 April, General Walter Bedell Smith, General Eisenhower's chief of staff, met with Koenig and expressed Eisenhower's wishes that Koenig be brought into the Allied organization. He was, in effect, a subordinate

¹⁴ Joe De Francesco (French Jedburgh) in discussion with the author, 2 March 1999.

¹⁵ Jackson, *De Gaulle*, 224; and "Marie Pierre Koenig (1898–1970)," Francois Broche and Jean Francois Marraicciole, eds., *Dictionnaire de la France Libre* (Paris: Bouquins, 2010), 833–34.

¹⁶ Jackson, *De Gaulle*, 305.

commander of forces similar to American and British commanders who led combat forces.¹⁷ Eisenhower also wanted to include Koenig in the special operations planning “well in advance to their being committed to these operations.”¹⁸

Confusing Allied Authorities but Clear Free French Goals

This appointment was premature, as Eisenhower had secured approval from Roosevelt to deal with the Free French only as long as they also dealt with other French resistance groups.¹⁹ The fact that there were no other French resistance groups was a reality seemingly lost on Roosevelt. As John Sweets has noted, “Roosevelt pigheadedly maintained his refusal to recognize de Gaulle’s government until two months after the liberation of Paris.”²⁰ Nevertheless, Eisenhower had an invasion to plan and on 8 May he approved the Special Forces Headquarters Overlord Annex regarding the use of the resistance.²¹ SFHQ, as it was called, was to direct controlled acts of sabotage, delay the enemy reserves, and organize widespread lightly armed French guerrillas operating in the enemy’s rear areas to be coordinated by the British SOE and American OSS officers already in place, clandestinely, in France.²² Koenig’s Free French had their own plans, which were quite detailed and contained many variations based on conditions and target sets such as railroads and communications lines.²³ The first Allied-Free French planning conference that got down to any level of detail was on 20 May, at Finchampstead, west of London. There, all the special operations planners agreed on Koenig commanding not

¹⁷ SHAEF SGS Records, 381 France: French Participation in OVERLORD, box 6, reel 52, frame 217, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

¹⁸ Folder 3, Butcher Diary, Pre-Presidential Papers, 22 April 1944, 1219, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

¹⁹ Franklin D. Roosevelt Guidance, Butcher Dairy, 22 April 1944, Pre-Presidential Papers, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

²⁰ Sweets, *The Politics of Resistance in France*, 206.

²¹ Jones, *Eisenhower’s Guerrillas*, 119.

²² Overlord Joint Administrative Plan for Operation Overlord—Joint Operations plan for US Forces—Operation Overlord, SHAEF SGS Records, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

²³ *European Theater of Operations, The French Forces of the Interior* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Photoduplication Service, United States Army, 1977), microfilm, part 1, chap. 1, 73–79.

only the Free French in the United Kingdom and France, but also that he would command the UK-U.S. Special Forces Headquarters, as it was to coordinate the Maquis and the Free French regional military delegates commanding different French geographic areas.²⁴ These Free French delegates had deployed from late 1943 to the spring of 1944, and were, in Koenig's and de Gaulle's minds, the real military commanders in the field for the Free French.²⁵ At Koenig's suggestions, they also designated Brittany, central France, the Morvan, and the Vosges regions as priorities for air-dropped weapons and Jedburgh teams.²⁶ Koenig insisted that the Morvan, southeast of Paris, be one of the priorities and that the region become a place from which future raids could be staged against German lines of communications.²⁷

Involving Koenig at this point began to have repercussions. First, confusion set in as the British and U.S. staff officers inevitably wondered how the French staff officers would fit into things, and whose plans would actually be turned into orders. Second, the French seem to have realized—or perhaps were thinking all along—that they could use the Allied Special Forces teams not as liaisons from SFHQ to the Maquis but as their command links to their regional military delegates. On 31 May, Bedell Smith told Koenig that “those dropped with the role of making contact with Resistance groups should be under your command.”²⁸ Gubbins had trained the Jedburghs to be liaisons, not commanders. This remained true, but Koenig and the Free French may have now realized these teams, which comprised French officers as well, as Eisenhower approved links to conduct their independent national aims. De Gaulle and Koenig would not view British and American agents and commando teams acting unilat-

²⁴ “Conference Meeting Minutes,” 20 May 1944, HS 6/607, BNA, Kew, UK.

²⁵ Olivier Wieviorka, *The French Resistance*, trans. Jane Marie Todd (London: Harvard University Press, 2016), 332–35.

²⁶ “Conference Meeting Minutes,” 20 May 1944.

²⁷ “Conference Meeting Minutes,” 20 May 1944.

²⁸ To General Koenig, 31 May 1944, folder 2 of 2, frame 862, Command and Control of French Forces of the Interior, SHAEF SGS Records, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

erally under SOE and OSS operations in the same way. For example, de Gaulle's expulsion of British SOE operatives from France in August and September 1944 made clear he did not tolerate unilateral British involvement in France.²⁹ Due to Roosevelt and de Gaulle's festering relationship, Eisenhower was not able to make this relationship publicly official. As the summer wore on, it became clear that the French would seek to diminish SOE and OSS unilateral activity in France. The postwar occupation issue was the rub for the French, and they paid attention to this. However, the British and the Americans failed to appreciate it in the same way and therefore failed to understand the coming tensions that would emerge between Koenig and most especially the SOE.

The great unknown in all this was how active and effective the Maquis would be. De Gaulle and Koenig wanted to activate the resistance only as needed so that they could husband their resources for key engagements. On 5 April, de Gaulle signed an order to maintain a guerrilla-style strategy and only attack or maintain contact with the enemy when it was advantageous to do so. In early June, they sought some clarity from the Supreme Allied Command on this question and received the stunning response that yes, all maximum effort everywhere must be done. Koenig sat in stunned silence when hearing this from Eisenhower's chief of staff.³⁰ The Operation Overlord planners hoped it would mislead the Germans, but they also felt that whatever the resistance could do, it would not amount to much, so perhaps the request for a maximum effort would yield only a whimper. Therefore, on 6 June, General Koenig sent out General Order No. 1 to the resistance saying the Free French's mission was to fight.³¹ But he was careful to remind the Maquis to do so in a prudent and effective way, attempting to split the difference. Those with arms were to remain available as directed and those unarmed were to remain in contact with

²⁹ "Report of Captain Lake, DIGGER Circuit," 27 September 1944, HS 6/574, BNA, Kew, 4.

³⁰ Wieviorka, *The French Resistance*, 354.

³¹ 3 AG 2, Archives Nationales, Paris, France.

their commanders to receive weapons and training when arms arrived.³² In other words, whether they had arms or not, they were to wait until directed to fight.³³

Koenig's order was more for inspiration than action. However, his authority within the alliance remained unclear in the minds at SFHQ. While it seems on the surface that Koenig could simply become the commander of the SFHQ, it was more complicated than that, as its portfolio of operations was grander than just France. Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force ran guerrilla warfare in every country in its theater.³⁴ Placing a French general in charge of every nation's resistance would not be wise. The compromise finally crafted was that the staff section from SFHQ running French operations would be separately assigned to the headquarters of the French Forces of the Interior and Koenig, while the rest of SFHQ continued with their work in other nations.³⁵ This immediately presented some fundamental problems. Koenig's units were now going into the thick of combat each day, yet Koenig was still building the machinery of his staff while key members grew to distrust one another, including British brigadier Eric Mockler-Ferryman. The staff performed such crucial tasks as managing the radio communications and scheduling the air drops from multiple air fields in the United Kingdom and North Africa to dozens of drop zones inside France.³⁶ The British and Americans continued to do these things, with the American commander, Colonel Joseph F. Haskell, managing the air drops done by the U.S. Army Air Forces and Mockler-Ferryman attempting to manage the Royal Air Force's capacity to do the same. In the month of June and into the first part of July,

³² 3 AG 2, Archives Nationale, Paris, France.

³³ "Ordre No. 1" de General Koenig a DMN, DMZ, DMRs et Massingham, 3 AG 2 473, Archives Nationale, Paris, France.

³⁴ Monthly Progress Reports to COSSAC and SHAEF, September 1943 to December 1944, SHAEF, SGS Files, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS. All these reports detail land, sea, and air special operations activity for the theater of operations.

³⁵ "Designation of the Commander of the French Forces of the Interior," 23 June 1944, Command and Control of the French Forces of the Interior, SHAEF, SGS Files, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

³⁶ AIR Series Records 20/8011, BNA, Kew, UK.

only 16 Jedburgh teams, and two French Special Air Service groups were deployed to France.³⁷ Such modest activity could be managed while the staff sorted itself out. Finally, on 23 June, General Eisenhower announced to his superiors and subordinates that Koenig was now equivalent to any Allied commander serving under him in the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force.³⁸ When General Marshall received this word, he asked that it be publicly announced at once.³⁹ So, something that had been in the works since late April and should have been easy to instigate took until the end of June to materialize, at least on paper, but even then was still not yet complete in practice.

Nevertheless, Eisenhower needed someone to command the Maquis. For example, just one or two days after D-Day, Eisenhower had an unexpected problem on his hands. The numbers of French Maquis going into general uprising against the Germans surprised the Allies but also provoked the great worry that they would suffer far too great a loss and that they would then be unavailable when the Allied forces needed them. Koenig sought to do something about it, and on 10 June, the French Forces of the Interior leaders in France received Koenig's telegram message telling them, "Currently impossible to provide normal resupply weapons and ammunition you limit at the maximum guerillas [*sic*] action when it is possible."⁴⁰ This order was enforced by the Free French military delegates and Jedburgh teams deployed to France, who then attempted to keep the Maquis with them at bay.⁴¹ The order to go over to guerrilla warfare in Brittany did not arrive until 3 August and in other areas did not arrive

³⁷ Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, appendix 2.

³⁸ "Designation of the Commander of the French Forces of the Interior," 23 June 1944, Command and Control of the French Forces of Interior, SHAEF SGS, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

³⁹ AGWAR FROM MARSHALL to ETOUSA, SHAEF SGS, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

⁴⁰ ELLIPSE telegrams, 3 AJ 2 562, Archives Nationale, Paris, France; emphasis removed for clarity.

⁴¹ History of the E. M. F. F. I. (Etat Major des Forces Francaises de l'Intérieur), 1944, HS 7/126, BNA, Kew, UK, part 3, 14–17. This report describes the open warfare that EMFFI directed to occur beginning in a rolling fashion from 3 August to 17 August based on conditions around the country. The German response to Operation Dragoon and the southern landings provided a great deal of German activity of lesser equipped forces racing to get to Germany, and thus more opportunity for the resistance to attack them.

until after the Allied invasion of southern France and Adolf Hitler's subsequent order to withdraw.⁴²

As the invasion forces broke out of the Normandy region and slowly moved deeper into France, General Koenig attempted to take firm command of so much of this unconventional war planned and resourced by the British and Americans. Free French political rivalries along with personal desires also brought about a churn within his own planning staff in London, with the experienced officers being rotated to North Africa, put on lists to parachute into France, or shifted to other positions. The most glaring example of this is when Colonel Andre Dewavrin, de Gaulle's own intelligence director, parachuted into France as second in command of a strike force.⁴³ Koenig's ability to effectively run a highly complex series of operations diminished so dramatically and suddenly that the special forces in France noticed the exact moment things had changed, saying in one of the final reports, "What went wrong at the end of June?"⁴⁴ The unprofessional interactions between Mockler-Ferryman and the French resulted in teams deploying without the planners providing the codes and transmission times. The fighting and arguing among the one- and two-star generals got so fierce that by the first week of July, Eisenhower's chief of staff wrote in the margins of a memo describing it all, "Let's not have a childish squabble."⁴⁵ The squabble resulted in events in the field not happening as needed. Teams in combat zones came up on the communication net to broadcast only to have no one in the United Kingdom listening, and in some cases, when they were listening, if it was not encrypted in French, but English, it was ignored.⁴⁶

⁴² Team GILES Report, HS 6 515, BNA, Kew, UK.

⁴³ Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, 218–20; "Note pour M. Le Colonel Vernon chef de L'E.M.F.F.I.," 14.6.1944, No. S 365 CDT Lejeune, BCRA Correspondence; "Operations Order no. 14," 1–4; and "Troops in Finistere, Annex C," 3 AG 2 462, Archives Nationale, Paris, France.

⁴⁴ Verveine Mission Report, 1944, as quoted in M. R. D. Foot, *The SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France 1940–1944* (London, UK: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1966), 385.

⁴⁵ No. D478/FILA, Subject – F. F. I. Hq. 5 July 1944, Command and Control of the French Forces of the Interior, SHAEF SGS, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

⁴⁶ Team Alexander Report, HS 6 474, BNA, Kew, UK.

But the complexity was only mounting. The pace of Jedburgh team deployments and other special missions increased in late July and early August.⁴⁷ As the Operation Overlord forces in Normandy and northern France sought to link up with the Operation Dragoon landing forces invading southern France, the French had other issues on their plate. The area southeast of Paris that Koenig wished to make a redoubt to support harassing operations as the Allied forces linked up from the separate D-Day landing zones proved to be the most important location requiring Maquis support. However, the confusion in Koenig's staff caused the mismanagement of resources, and the British and Americans underappreciated and subsequently underresourced that area earlier, which proved to be Koenig's undoing. Two of the most glaring instances of confusion were when the U.S. Third Army wanted the Loire bridges destroyed while the French-led Special Forces headquarters in London ordered them to be persevered. They soon reversed themselves and as a Jedburgh team was preparing to blow them up, a German force beat them to it. This led a British Jedburgh to joke that all this was "presumably satisfying [to] everyone."⁴⁸ Similarly, several days later, when the front in eastern France was rapidly shifting eastward, Jedburgh Team Henry parachuted into newly gained friendly territory. They radioed to London, "You know don't you, that the area was overrun before we arrived."⁴⁹ Much of this may not have mattered. While the French did not rise in numbers large enough to push the Germans out by themselves, they did rise in numbers large enough to keep the Allies from asserting control of France.⁵⁰

With Paris convulsing in its late August liberation, getting the French capital firmly back in French hands became vital. On 25 August, de Gaulle appointed Koenig to be the military governor of Paris. After the war, he became known for that position alone since the Allied guerrilla warfare re-

⁴⁷ Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, annex 2.

⁴⁸ Team ISAAC, HS 6/366, BNA, Kew, UK, 11.

⁴⁹ "Telegrams de Region D," Fonds du Ziegler, 1 K 374, Carnont 9 Fishier 3 SHAT, Vincennes, France.

⁵⁰ See chap. 6 in Robertson, *When Roosevelt Planned to Govern France*; and Sweets, *The Politics of the Resistance in France*, 209–13.

mained classified until the early 1970s, after Koenig's death. At the end of September 1944, Koenig sent dozens more Jedburgh teams into France.⁵¹ These teams' late arrival drove such great dissatisfaction with the Jedburgh plan that after the war that the SOE laid it at Koenig's feet. In a letter to historian M. R. D. Foot, who would write the official history *The SOE in France*, Gubbins blamed Koenig for the misuse of the Jedburgh teams. He told Foot that the Jedburghs "had been absolutely wasted by not being pushed in at once."⁵² That may be true, but there were more guerrillas on the ground than just the Jedburghs. The Maquis were the ones Eisenhower thought would or would not be modestly effective. He knew that neither an American from Kansas nor a British major general would be the best commander of French irregulars, so while it cost him Jedburgh team effectiveness, having Koenig in his headquarters bought him the Maquis, who were surprisingly and sufficiently effective in securing at least one of the Free French war aims of not being subjected to an Allied military government for France. Furthermore, as the air drop of arms increased over the summer of 1944, the Maquis began to matter more. Estimates vary, but Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force documents and Eisenhower's own comments indicated armed French resistance strength was over 114,000 guerrillas.⁵³ Such a force, when the fighting was over, if there was any fighting to be done in any given village or town, meant that de Gaulle had at least some capacity for setting up a civil government again. By late August, as one American OSS officer remarked after the war, "No mention whatsoever was made of British participation of personnel in connection with the resistance matters discussed. This would

⁵¹ Jones, *Eisenhower's Guerrillas*, annex 2.

⁵² Gubbins to Foot, 31 January 1964, 1–2, Gubbins papers 3/2/57, IWM, as quoted in A. R. B. Linderman's *Rediscovering Irregular Warfare: Colin Gubbins and the Origins of Britain's Special Operations Executive* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016).

⁵³ SHAEF G-2 Memo, "MF/GBI/OI/180," 25 November 1944, France, vol. 3, French Resistances Groups, reel 52, frame 396, SHAEF SGS Records, DDE Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

have been unthinkable only eighteen months earlier.”⁵⁴ All of this enabled the Free French aim of avoiding an Allied occupation of France.

One of Koenig’s last wartime actions is also representative of French war aims. In April 1945, as the war was coming to a close and the Germans were preparing their last stand around Berlin, word came that Philippe Pétain, the leader of the collaborationist French government, wished to return to France. Arrangements were made to meet him at the Swiss border. General Koenig led the provisional government’s delegation. As the elderly former leader of France got out of the car, he recognized Koenig, who had begun the war as a captain. Pétain extended his hand but “coldly Koenig appeared not to see the hand or the Marshal either.” The military guard did not render a salute, presumably under orders by Koenig not to do so.⁵⁵ Koenig later wrote to a friend that arresting the 90-year-old First World War hero and Second World War collaborator was one the most painful moments in his career.⁵⁶

The self-inflicted confusion (some might call it a syndrome) that was brought about by the fluid command situation is still part of France’s trauma.⁵⁷ With the commemoration of the Allied invasion’s 80th year, President Emmanuel Macron sought to memorialize one of the French Special Air Service battles as a scene of national memory by highlighting their role and recognizing the sacrifice of two veterans who were there. Participating veterans and their children noted that this was the first time a national leader had done so.⁵⁸

The reasons Eisenhower wanted a French general in charge of his guerrillas can reveal, once they are understood, more about what French

⁵⁴ “Letter to R. Harris Smith,” 14 April 1971, Paul van der Stricht Papers, folder 1, Hoover Institutions Archives, Stanford, CA.

⁵⁵ United Press, “Pétain Returns to Face Treason Charge,” *Salt Lake (UT) Tribune*, 27 April 1945, 7, via Newspapers.com.

⁵⁶ Julian Jackson, *France on Trial: The Case of Marshal Pétain* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2023), 44.

⁵⁷ Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁵⁸ Catherine Porter and Ségolène Le Stradic, “The D-Day Battle France Chose to Forget. Until Now,” *New York Times*, 5 June 2024.

war aims were and how they pursued them. Specifically, they wanted to push the Germans out of France, punish the collaborators, and avoid an Allied military government of France. General Marie-Pierre Koenig's actions demonstrate each of these goals. First, by serving as the commander of Allied special forces and leading the French resistance we see him working to eject the German Army from France. By asserting control of the guerrilla war as he maneuvered the British and Americans out of the French driver's seat, he also asserted French sovereignty. He did this also by taking on the job of being the military governor of Paris, the nation's capital, where he worked to buttress the emerging French government. By his arrest of Pétain, we see him punishing the collaborators. In his actions, this little-known French general serves as a means to understanding and a window to viewing the Free French war aims.

CHAPTER 10

Civilians at War

The Italian Population in the Second World War,
1940–1943

by Rocco Melegari, PhD

On 25 July 1943 and in the days that followed, large crowds of Italian civilians flooded the streets, rejoicing at Benito Mussolini's demise. As *Il Duce* of Italy, Mussolini had ruled the country and its fortunes for more than 20 years, leading the empire back "to the fatal hills of Rome" and Italy to its "rightful place" among the world powers. That same *Il Duce* was now overthrown amid the jubilation of the Italian people.¹ The photographs and films of crowds scraping away lictor beams from the facades of public buildings, throwing Mussolini's busts out of windows, and cheering the king and head of government, Pietro Badoglio, dominated the public narrative about the regime's fall for decades.²

The elation of the Italian people on 25 July holds profound significance, especially when compared with the mass euphoria observed during other pivotal moments in the history of Fascist Italy, such as 9 May 1936

¹ Speech for the proclamation of the empire, 9 May 1936, as quoted in Benito Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, vol. 10, *Scritti e discorsi dell'impero (Novembre 1935–4 Novembre 1936)* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1936).

² *Il 25 luglio 1943: la nomina a primo ministro e segretario di Stato del maresciallo d'Italia Pietro Badoglio; manifestazioni spontanee per celebrare la caduta del fascismo*, 25–26 luglio 1943, filmato D007502, Archivio Storico dell'Istituto Luce, Rome. The literature on 25 July is extensive. Here, we refer to the study by Emilio Gentile, *25 luglio 1943* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2020), a fundamental work for an analysis free from mythicizations and false narratives.

and 10 June 1940. If the widespread celebration of the regime's key successes cannot be solely attributed to propaganda mobilization or coercion, then neither should the demonstrations on 25 July be dismissed as mere expressions of relief at the end of the dictatorship. Moreover, these demonstrations should not be narrowly interpreted as political, as if originating from a conscious anti-Fascist sentiment.³

Historiography has amply illustrated how popular manifestations reflected the profound paradigm shift Italy underwent with and during the Second World War. The civilian population had come to see events in stark contrast to the bellicose propaganda of the previous two decades.⁴ To fully comprehend the significance attributed to the fall of *Il Duce*, this chapter examines the civilian population's perception of the war's loss, drawing on existing literature and referencing sources from the Central State Archive and published diaries. This analysis will highlight that, to accurately assess the public's reaction to 25 July, we must first consider the people's wartime experiences in light of three interrelated aspects: the illusion of the war's brevity, the disruption of everyday normalcy, and the shift in social reference points.⁵

“War Anti-Fascism”: The Experience of the Second World War and the Paradigm Shift

When Italy entered the conflict in June 1940, victory seemed within reach. The declaration of war was met with significantly more enthusiasm than

³ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il duce*, vol. 1, *Gli anni del consenso (1929–1936)* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974); and Simona Colarizi, *L'opinione degli italiani sotto il regime, 1929–1943* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2009).

⁴ Nicola Labanca, “Studiare le vittime civili di guerra,” in *Città sotto le bombe. Per una storia delle vittime civili di guerra (1940–1945)*, ed. Nicola Labanca (Milan: Unicopli, 2018), 9–34; and Fabio De Ninno, *Civili nella guerra totale 1940–1945. Una storia complessa* (Milan: Unicopli, 2019). See also the contributions collected in *L'Italia in guerra 1940–43*, ed. Bruna Micheletti and Pier Paolo Poggio (Brescia: Annali della Fondazione Luigi Micheletti, 1990–91); and Giorgio Bocca, *Storia d'Italia nella guerra fascista 1940–1943* (Bari: Laterza, 1969). In the last decade, international historiography has highlighted the importance of studies on societies at war, as demonstrated by the works collected in *The Cambridge History of the Second World War*, 3 vol., ed. John Ferris et al. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁵ Luca Baldissara, *Italia 1943. La guerra continua* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2023); and Nicola Gallerano, Luigi Ganapini, and Massimo Legnani, eds., *L'Italia dei quarantacinque giorni. Studio e documenti* (Milan: INSMLI, 1969).

the earlier declaration of nonbelligerence in September 1939.⁶ During 1941, the hopes of a short war and the illusion of quick and great victories were shattered. The defeats in North Africa and Greece, the loss of the empire, and the involvement of the Soviet Union and the United States of America made it evident that victory was neither obvious nor imminent. Several factors contributed to dissolving civil society's illusory sense of a brief war: economic constraints, deprivations, and hunger, which had already affected daily life in the months leading up to the conflict between 1939 and 1940.⁷

One of the factors that most severely impacted the lives of civilians and destroyed any illusion of the country's ability to win the war was the bombings, particularly during the raiding season between the autumn of 1942 and the spring of 1943. Anglo-American airstrikes were almost undisturbed, with no active defense system, a lack of anti-aircraft and fighter aircraft, and a chronic shortage of shelters.⁸ The ineffectiveness in defending civilians tragically underscored the regime's inability to protect the population. The National Fascist Party's (PNF) shortcomings were further exposed by its failure to manage the displaced population in such precarious circumstances.⁹ Alongside the approximately 60,000 casualties of the air raids, the debris also buried any remaining "consent" toward the party, which many believed was no longer able to meet the needs of the devastated cities. In addition to generating deep fatigue toward the conflict and undermining people's confidence, the defeats in North Africa and Russia

⁶ Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini l'alleato*, vol. 1, *L'Italia in guerra (1940–1943)*, bk. 1, *Dalla guerra «breve» alla guerra lunga* (Turin: Einaudi, 1990).

⁷ Miriam Mafai, *Pane nero. Donne e vita quotidiana nella seconda guerra mondiale* (Rome: Ediesse, 2008).

⁸ Claudia Baldoli, "Il fallimento militare del regime: la guerra e i bombardamenti," in *Il fascismo italiano. Storia e interpretazioni*, ed. Giulia Albanese (Rome: Carocci, 2021), 69–92.

⁹ Claudia Baldoli, "Il regime e la minaccia dall'aria"; and Marco Gioannini, "Bombardare l'Italia. Le strategie alleate e le vittime civili," both in *I bombardamenti aerei sull'Italia. Politica, Stato e società (1939–1945)*, ed. Nicola Labanca (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012), 101–16, 79–98; Costantino Di Sante, *Area bombing. I bombardamenti anglo-americani sull'Italia durante la Seconda guerra mondiale* (Pistoia: ISRPt Editore, 2022); Richard Overy, *The Bombing War: Europe, 1939–1945* (London: Penguin Books, 2013); and Andrew Barros and Martin Thomas, eds., *The Civilianization of War: The Changing Civil–Military Divide, 1914–2014* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108643542>.

and heavy bombing of the homeland dramatically exposed Italy's inability to win the war.

It is interesting to compare the language of propaganda, encapsulated in the famous slogan "Victory, We will win!," with the words of those who endured the harshness of the air raids. The writer Luciano Bianciardi described the raid on Foggia on 22 July 1943 as follows:

Around the Incis Palace, there were many corpses. . . . I felt my stomach twisting, I could no longer continue: I begged my companions to spare me that infamous work and took charge of keeping the curious away. I hadn't been afraid of dying, but I couldn't bear to touch the dead. That death, in its most brutal and obscene incarnation, hurt me. . . . With seventeen corpses, the wagon was full and hastened down the dilapidated streets. Ten soldiers stayed close to one another, their eyes fixed forward so as not to see, while I stood on the step. People shouted at us to stop, to take them away, and they retreated in horror when they saw that infamous load. At the cemetery, there was a lot of work for unloading. . . . Then the work was over; we cleaned the wagon as best we could (or rather, they did) and headed back to the city. As soon as we came down, in place of the dead, the mass of the living came up, as a whole.¹⁰

The squalor of war crushed the normalcy of daily life, standing in stark contrast to Fascist rhetoric. The bombings and the dramatic destruction of cities, along with the deprivations, highlighted the enormous abyss between fascist propaganda and reality. Facing death "in its most brutal and

¹⁰ Luciano Bianciardi, "Diari di guerra. 1944-46," in *L'antimeridiano. Tutte le opere, volume primo, Saggi e romanzi, racconti, diari giovanili*, ed. Luciano Bianciardi (Milan: Isbn edizioni, 2005), 1980-82. Translation is author's own.

obscene incarnation,” with no defenses, became an ever-present and ubiquitous element in the lives of civilians involved in the conflict.¹¹

Pietro Cavallo’s studies have highlighted the paradigm shift experienced by civilians during the war.¹² Fascist propaganda had, from the start, portrayed the conflict as a means to achieve the justice that Italy was “naturally” entitled to, an outcome intrinsic to the fulfilment of fascist history. This was a language already used during the Ethiopian War when the country faced “the abject corporate siege of fifty-two states.”¹³ In this sense, the conflict was propagandized as the necessary means to obtain said natural justice, positioning Italy, despite its lack of resources, to confront the “plutocratic and reactionary democracies of the West” through the wealth of its Fascist faith.¹⁴ During the pivotal period of 1942–43, the realization that the war had been lost and that the sacrifices that were still necessary would not result in victory grew among the populace, originating, among other factors, also from several serious defeats at the front. Despite press attempts to downplay the extent of the retreat, it was becoming increasingly apparent to everyone that the war fronts were drawing ever closer to national soil. In the first two years of the war, Italian soldiers were deployed to France, the Balkans, Russia, and Africa. At the juncture of 1942–43, coinciding with the great bombing season (November 1942–July 1943), the defeats at El Alamein, Egypt (5 November 1942), and Stalingrad (2 February 1943), followed by the landing in Sicily, clearly demonstrated that the conflict had turned into a defensive war against an

¹¹ Bianciardi, “Diari di guerra,” 1981.

¹² Pietro Cavallo, *Italiani in guerra. Sentimenti e immagini dal 1940 al 1943* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1997).

¹³ The expression was taken up by Mussolini in his speech of 10 June 1940. See “Popolo Italiano! Corri Alle Armi . . .,” in Benito Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, ed. Duilio Susmel and Edoardo Susmel, vol. 29 (Florence: La Fenice, 1959), 403–5; Adolfo Mignemi, ed., *Sì e no padroni del mondo. Etiopia, 1935–1936. Immagine e consenso per un impero* (Novara: Istituto Storico della Resistenza in provincia di Novara, 1982); Adolfo Mignemi, ed., *Immagine coordinata per un impero. Etiopia 1935–1936* (Turin: Gruppo editoriale Forma, 1984); and Petra Terhoeven, *Oro alla patria: donne, guerra e propaganda nella giornata della Fede fascista*, trans. Marco Cupellaro (Bologna: il Mulino, 2006).

¹⁴ A frequent expression in Fascist rhetoric. “Popolo Italiano! Corri Alle Armi . . .,” 403–5.

enemy too powerful to be defeated.¹⁵ If the swashbuckling “Victory, We will win!” of June 1940 had found wide approval and enthusiasm, Carlo Scorza’s impotent “Resist, and We Will Resist!” of July 1943 only accentuated the tragic circumstances in which Italy was now trapped.¹⁶

Wartime turned civilians’ lives upside down, igniting the destruction of habits and patterns of behavior. Studies on Italian epistolary dedicated to the Second World War, particularly diary research, have highlighted how wartime, conceptualized as collective trauma, led to a profound change in the meaning of day-to-day life and one’s relationship with the community and the state.¹⁷ War disrupted the normalcy of everyday life, plunging individuals into continuous encounters with death in a context dramatically different from peacetime. Death had become an inescapable and inexorable companion, an aspect that would later radicalize during the period 1943–45.¹⁸

Giovanni De Luna’s studies on the Turin case revealed how much the spaces had expanded. The increasingly difficult connections made the cities feel much farther apart, turning them into real “small separate worlds,” both a product and symbol of the changed social space.¹⁹ A ruined space, “tarnished” by war, served as the backdrop to a day-to-day existence that starkly differed from peacetime, governed by ubiquitous fear, deeply linked to death and hunger, which once again threaded dangerously through society. For this reason, to understand the radical change in Italian society, and the erosion of social relations, it is necessary to examine the period

¹⁵ Andrea Santangelo, *La battaglia di El Alamein* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2020); Maria Teresa Giusti, *La campagna di Russia 1941–1943* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2016); and Thomas Schlemmer, *Die Italiener an der Ostfront 1941/43. Dokumente zu Mussolinis Krieg gegen die Sowjetunion* (Oldenbourg: Verlag, München, 2005).

¹⁶ Oreste Del Buono, *Eia, Eia, Eia, Alalà! La stampa italiana sotto il fascismo 1919/1943* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1971), 471.

¹⁷ Antonio Gibelli, “L’epistolografia popolare tra Prima e Seconda guerra mondiale,” in *Italia 1939–1945. Storia e memoria*, ed. Anna Lisa Carlotti (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1996), 3–19; Patrizia Gabrielli, *Scenari di guerra, parole di donne. Diari e memorie nell’Italia della seconda guerra mondiale* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007); and Luigi Ganapini, *Voci dalla guerra civile. Italiani nel 1943–1945* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2012).

¹⁸ See Lutz Klinkhammer on the Parma case: Lutz Klinkhammer, “Una città sotto l’occupazione tedesca: il caso di Parma,” *Storia e Documenti*, no. 5 (1999): 43–60.

¹⁹ Giovanni De Luna, “A Torino, durante la guerra . . . Le coordinate dell’esistenza collettiva,” in *Donne e uomini nelle guerre mondiali*, ed. Anna Bravo (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1991), 57–95.

from 1940 to 1943. Like a sinking river carving out day-to-day life, the deprivations suffered during the war created deep furrows between people and, above all, between the general population and institutions. The latter proved unprepared to manage wartime society. Faced with the institutional “vacuum,” alternative social practices replaced norms that had existed for 20 years. Consider the mass rallies, relatively frequent in the early years of the war, when people protested against the increased cost of groceries and demanded better supplies of scarce provisions. These were almost exclusively led by women, proving how deeply the war affected family structures and altered social dynamics.²⁰ The absence of warring fathers and husbands reshaped the interaction between women and the public, leading to a new perspective on life within the societal context. Even the workers’ walk-outs of spring 1943, emerging from a context of profound difficulty caused by air raids and food shortages, highlighted the rediscovery of social practices like striking, which had been dormant for some time.²¹ The way people viewed their lives had fundamentally changed. The conflict served as a laboratory of civil change, with radical transformations impacting everyone in varying ways and intensities, while also highlighting glaring social injustices.²² The memory of Luciana Chiari Pirastu, who lived in Parma during the war, is emblematic of the experiences of many during the 1940–43 period:

In the city, both flour and pasta were subject to severe rationing. There was also the problem of distribution, which occurred occasionally at some points of sale without notice, forcing people to stand guard to know when the goods would arrive. At this point, the housewife had to get in line for bread, flour, and oil, which might be distributed at

²⁰ Anna Bravo and Anna Maria Bruzzone, *In guerra senza armi. Storie di donne. 1940–1945* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1995).

²¹ Marcello Flores and Nicola Gallerano, *Sul Pci. Una interpretazione storica* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1992); and Tim Mason, “The Turin Strikes of March 1943,” in *Nazism, Fascism, and the Working Class*, ed. Tim Mason (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 274–94, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511622328.009>.

²² Bravo and Bruzzone, *In guerra senza armi*.

different times. People queued for tobacco, too. I remember, as a smoker myself, lining up for one or two packs of national cigarettes that I shared with my mother.

Warfare had altered our daily habits and was starting to take its toll on us. The constant scramble for food made us especially anxious, usually leading to a light meal and empty stomachs.²³

The war that penetrated everyday life and weighed dramatically on the lives of civilians resulted in a new perception of the state. With the harsh deprivations, mourning, and defeats at the front, the sense of identity between the homeland and the community was collapsing. This is evident from the many letters from soldiers at the front, especially during the most dramatic junctures of the war, where homeland or a sense of fighting for the good of the country were no longer viable reasons for prolonged suffering. It was rather the family—their mothers, children, and wives—that provided their motivation. Many ceased to salute the Duce, instead turning to the king or the pope as reference points in the peace process. The founding core had shifted: soldiers were no longer fighting for the glory of the homeland but rather for their survival and return to their families. This shift indicates how many Italian soldiers perceived the war: as a natural cataclysm to be passively accepted rather than as a political event.²⁴

Between 1940 and 1943, society thus experienced a significant separation from Fascism. This detachment did not stem from a critically developed political conscience but rather from the destruction wrought by war. The reality, certainty, narrative, and symbolism of fascism had perished beneath the rubble. The process of building new collective identities had begun, a process that would be prolonged and exacerbated by the experience

²³ Luciana Chiari Pirastu, *Nella mente e nel cuore. Ricordi della lotta per la libertà* (Parma: Tecnografica sas, 2005), 42–43, translated by author.

²⁴ Bianca Ceva, *Cinque anni di storia italiana 1940–1945. Da lettere e diari di caduti* (Milan: Edizioni di Comunità, 1964).

of the civil war and the German occupation from 1943 to 1945. The diaries and letters from that period reveal a society grappling with the need to redefine its social frameworks.²⁵ In defining this process of detachment, historiography has coined the term *existential anti-Fascism*, which refers to the awareness developed by many civilians that the war was an inseparable product of Fascism and intrinsic to its very identity—a process well represented by Nuto Revelli's retrospective words about popular rallies:²⁶

A confused and generic form of wartime anti-fascism has emerged, viewing the king and Badoglio as the saviours of the homeland. The king inspires tenderness, in this province of ours, where sympathies towards the Savoy have deep roots.²⁷

Revelli embodied the process experienced by the general population. Growing up during the Fascist Era, Revelli was an army officer and an ardent fascist who fought in Russia. His experiences at the front gave him a wholly different perspective from that which he held during the regime, ultimately leading him to become a partisan commander.²⁸ In the expression “war anti-fascism,” Revelli captured this awareness: that the regime and the war were inextricably linked, leading many to see the end of the regime as the long-hoped-for end of the war. This is the unavoidable context for the definition of the king and Badoglio as “the saviours of the Homeland”—that is, as those who were thought able to transition the country from war to peace.

“With monarchical pride, euphoria, and elation, we toast to the end of the ‘regime’; we are excited to witness the end of the heavy chapter of fascism and the ‘two armies’,” wrote Furio Aceto, an officer of the lanc-

²⁵ Pietro Cavallo, “La rappresentazione della Seconda guerra mondiale nell’immaginario collettivo (1940–1943),” in *Italia 1939–1945*, 87–125.

²⁶ Guido Quazza, *Resistenza e storia d’Italia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1976); and Giovanni De Luna, *Donne in oggetto. L’antifascismo nella società italiana 1922–1939* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1995).

²⁷ Nuto Revelli, *Le due guerre. Guerra fascista e guerra partigiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 2003), 130.

²⁸ Nuto Revelli, *La guerra dei poveri* (Turin: Einaudi, 1962).

ers stationed in Pordenone.²⁹ Aceto highlighted how Mussolini's demise could be considered a possible outcome of the "rivalry" between Fascism and the alliance between the monarchy and the army.³⁰ Praising the king or Badoglio could have widely different meanings that cannot be easily reduced to anti-Fascism *tout court*. The awareness of a lost war intertwined with the hope that the country would be better guided in achieving peace, or with the confidence in the monarchy's ability to restore the country's fortunes. Conservative sentiments also coalesced around the figures of Badoglio and the king, reflecting the views of those who had regarded the regime as a valid barrier against "subversivism." This is what soldier Sereno Folloni, stationed in Albano, wrote in his diary on 25 July:

What will tomorrow bring us? At least, let there be no riots and no harsh treaties. Fascism goes away, but its ideas won't die so easily; we are a divided and discordant people. God save the King and Italy. Grant us peace according to justice. May the winner be honest and, above all, not let communism triumph.³¹

Anti-Communism, prevalent among a large part of the civilian population, would also constitute the nerve on which many militia officers and old *squadristi* tried to maintain their identity in the face of the regime's general collapse, defining a Fascist identity in post-Mussolini Italy.³²

This is why Fascism did not collapse like "a rotten pear," as Badoglio would later say in his memoir.³³ The regime had already begun to give way in the previous three years, undermined by defeats at the front, bombings,

²⁹ Furio Aceto, *La via della libertà. Storia di un ufficiale che divenne partigiano* (Milan: Terre di mezzo, 2022), 13–14.

³⁰ Paolo Colombo, *La monarchia fascista 1922–1940* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2010).

³¹ Sereno Folloni, "Quel settembre del '43 (Pagine di Diario)," *Ricerche Storiche*, no. 72 (November 1993): 16, translated by author.

³² See the telegrams of the militia generals sent to Armellini after 25 July, Segreteria Particolare del Duce, Carteggio Riservato, RSI, busta 5, fasc. 28, subfasc. 20, Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Rome.

³³ Pietro Badoglio, *L'Italia nella seconda guerra mondiale (Memorie e documenti)* (Verona: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1946), 74.

hunger, mourning, deprivation, and its inability to quell the discontent of the population. Mussolini's removal did not provoke any insurrection from the Blackshirts, just as the invasion of Sicily did not see any resurgence of the Italian Army. By then, the war was considered lost, and the regime that had initiated it was irreparably compromised.³⁴ The war, which propaganda had portrayed as a turning point for Italy, was a true test for Fascism—one it proved incapable of facing. The enthusiasm of June 1940 had faded, replaced by the relief at the fall of *Il Duce*, which was viewed as a prelude to peace, and by the elation of the Sicilians at the entry of the Allies into their cities. This was taken to be the definitive confirmation of the war's end and, consequently, the end of their suffering. However, it was also intertwined with the deep bitterness of those who saw their country at the mercy of events, reduced to a land of conquest for foreigners. On 8 August 1943, Folloni wrote:

The revulsion, the horror, the contempt for the cowardice of these people, who now insult the symbols and figures they once adored, is overwhelming. The City is stained with filthy graffiti and vandalistic destruction, where fascism once acted as a patron. But so it is. Italy does not exist. That's why we can't win. It is useless to write on the walls: the free Italian army under Badoglio will drive out the "English cowards" or "Italy, free from the Tyrant, will get rid of the Anglo-Americans." Who believes in the war any more? The internal front has completely fallen; how can the external one resist? Our condition is the most terrible, the most absurd in our history: we want peace and are willing to accept the enemy's conditions, except for one—that our homeland becomes the battleground between Germany and England. Instead, if we yield, Germany is here and

³⁴ According to the estimates of the Ministry of the Interior, probably partial, at the fall of Mussolini there were 9 fascist deaths and 20 injuries. Amedeo Osti Guerrazzi, *Storia della Repubblica sociale italiana* (Rome: Carocci, 2012), 25.

the British will come, and we will endure the miseries of someone else's struggle.³⁵

“More Fascist than the Defenestrated Hierarchs”: 25 July as a Breaking Point?

Badoglio's government famously began with the words, “The war continues.” This phrase symbolized the new leadership's (in)ability to act and the severe problems facing Italian society in the aftermath of 25 July. The government faced two crucial issues: domestic policy and the strategy for exiting the war. These were questions of vital importance on which the fate of the country rested, but the conspirators behind Mussolini's demise were unable to provide an answer.

The continuation of the war, with heavy bombing and fighting in Sicily, weighed heavily on the population and frustrated their desire for peace. The absence of a cohesive political group capable of addressing the government as an interlocutor, and effectively conveying the public's fatigue and feelings of defeat with precise political demands, aggravated the uncertainty of civilians. The social fragmentation that developed between 1940 and 1943 further complicated the spread of anti-Fascist principles among the population. A conscious anti-Fascist political maturity was the prerogative of a very narrow minority. Given the regime's influence, much of society was still skeptical of the then-called “subversive” trends.³⁶

The end of the regime was interpreted by most as the fulfilment of hopes for peace; therefore, the continuation of the war generated much perplexity. In several areas of Italy, rumors began to meander—uncontrolled yet widely believed—about the alleged suicide of Hitler or the desertion of entire Italian divisions in the Balkans. These rumors indicated the hopes of many and the meanings attributed to the events.³⁷

³⁵ Folloni, *Quel settembre del '43*, 17.

³⁶ See the considerations for Abruzzo by Costantino Felice, *Guerra Resistenza Dopoguerra in Abruzzo. Uomini, economie, istituzioni* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1993), 73–74.

³⁷ Iris Origo, *Guerra in Val d'Orcia. Diario di Guerra 1943–1944* (Bagno a Ripoli: Passigli Editore, 2021), 61, 69.

Much has been written about the problematic management of the war exit. Historiography has highlighted both the contradictory secret negotiations between Italy and the Allies for the achievement of an armistice, and the concomitant German precautionary occupation plans, in light of the critical situation in Italy.³⁸ Here is a brief focus on another critical aspect of the government: the internal front and public order, which the conspirators of 25 July considered a pressing issue, fearing uncontrolled and “subversive” repercussions from the civilian population after the collapse of the regime.³⁹

The government’s response to the issue of public order demonstrates a clear continuity with the methods of power exercised during the Fascist regime. Beyond the fact that the government met only twice during its 45-day tenure, the decisions in this regard were also the result of pressure from the king and the military leaders. The personalities involved showed a clear continuity with the Fascist Era.

Badoglio was a senior officer whose career highlights occurred during the regime. He was known for his military exploits, particularly during the Fascist Era, with a focus on the conquest of Ethiopia.⁴⁰ The marshal’s “luck” was to have been set aside after the defeats in Greece at the end of 1940, an event many civilians saw as a bad omen.⁴¹ Badoglio’s figure had been cemented in the myth that the regime had built. He was largely portrayed as a scapegoat, and his removal felt like an unjust act and a harbin-

³⁸ Elena Aga Rossi, *Una nazione allo sbando. L’armistizio italiano del settembre 1943 e le sue conseguenze* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2003); Enzo Collotti, *L’amministrazione tedesca dell’Italia occupata 1943–1945. Studio e documenti* (Milan: Lerici editori, 1963); Joseph Schröder, *Italiens Kriegsausritt 1943. Die deutsche Gegenmaßnahmen im italienischen Raum: Fall “Alarich” und “Achse”* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt-Verlag, 1969); Lutz Klinkhammer, *L’occupazione tedesca in Italia. 1943–1945* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1993); Gerhard Schreiber, *I militari italiani internati nei campi di concentramento del Terzo Reich. Traditi—Disprezzati—Dimenticati*, trans. Friedrun Mazza and Giulio Primicerj (Rome: Stato Maggiore dell’Esercito, Ufficio Storico, 1997); Fredrich Andrae, *La Wehrmacht in Italia. La guerra delle forze armate tedesche contro la popolazione civile. 1943–1944*, trans. Marco Marrone (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1997); and Carlo Gentile, *I crimini di guerra tedeschi in Italia 1943–1945* (Turin: Einaudi, 2015).

³⁹ Piero Pieri and Giorgio Rochat, *Pietro Badoglio* (Turin: UTET, 1974), 794–809.

⁴⁰ Pietro Badoglio, *La guerra d’Etiopia* (Milan-Verona: Mondadori, 1937); and Nicola Labanca, *La guerra d’Etiopia 1935–1941* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2015).

⁴¹ A5G—Seconda guerra mondiale, busta 121, fasc. 81, ACS, Rome; and Simona Colarizi, *La seconda guerra mondiale e la repubblica* (Turin: UTET, 1995), 94–102.

ger of bad luck for the nation's military ventures.⁴² The fact that Badoglio disappeared from public life until the end of July 1943 contributed to his perception as a savior of the homeland, returning to face the moment of danger.⁴³ Consider also Umberto Ricci, who served as minister of the interior from 25 July to 9 August and had been a prefect during the regime.⁴⁴ Similarly, the minister of finance, Pietro Bertolini, was considered one of the staunchest Fascist officials within the ministry, so much so that he was beaten by the crowd on 26 July.⁴⁵ Even the senior military ranks persisted through the change of regime. General Vittorio Ambrosio, head of the Supreme Command and one of the architects of Mussolini's destitution, held his post, as did General Mario Roatta, commander of the Royal Army general staff. Roatta was responsible for war crimes committed in the Balkans and, according to judicial investigations, for the elimination of anti-Fascist figures such as the Rosselli brothers.⁴⁶

The collusion of the same government leaders with Fascism reflected a society shaped by a 20-year-long regime, making it very difficult to find individuals capable of serving as valid alternatives. This was evident in the prefects' *waltz* in the following weeks.⁴⁷ Even at the local level, the continuity with the regime was unquestionable. Most quaestors and prefects in

⁴² Rodolfo Graziani, busta 65, fasc. senza numero, Agenda 1943, busta 71, fasc. 55, sottofasc. 5, Memoria n. 5, ACS, Rome; and Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Polizia Politica, busta 239, fasc. 2, Fonte fiduciaria, Roma, 28 luglio 1943, ACS, Rome.

⁴³ Emanuele Artom, *Diari di un partigiano ebreo. Gennaio 1940—febbraio 1944* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2008), 43; and Giorgio Rochat, *Le guerre italiane 1935–1943. Dall'impero d'Etiopia alla disfatta* (Turin: Einaudi, 2005), 48–74.

⁴⁴ Alberto Cifelli, *I prefetti del regno nel ventennio fascista* (Rome: Scuola Superiore dell'Amministrazione dell'Interno, 1999), 234–35; and Paola Carucci, "Il Ministero dell'interno: prefetti, questori e ispettori generali," in *Sulla crisi del regime fascista 1938–1943. La società italiana dal «consenso» alla Resistenza. Atti del convegno nazionale di studi. Padova, 4–6 novembre 1993*, ed. Angelo Ventura (Venice: Marsilio, 1996), 53.

⁴⁵ Giovanni De Luna, *Badoglio. Un militare al potere* (Milan: Bompiani, 1974), 233–34; Giorgio Candeloro, *Storia dell'Italia moderna*, vol. 10, *La Seconda guerra mondiale. Il crollo del fascismo. La Resistenza* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1986), 195; and Osti Guerrazzi, *Storia della Repubblica sociale italiana*, 26. Also interesting is the case of the Ministry of National Education and the Institute Luce, which lived the 45 days in total continuity: Tommaso Dell'Era, "Tra educazione nazionale e pubblica istruzione: le politiche ministeriali dell'istruzione pubblica dal 1943 al 1948," *Ventesimo Secolo*, no. 4 (October 2003): 145–78; and Mino Argentieri, *L'occhio del regime. Informazione e propaganda nel cinema del fascismo* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1979), 184.

⁴⁶ Mimmo Franzinelli, *Il delitto Rosselli. 9 giugno 1937. Anatomia di un omicidio politico* (Milan: Mondadori, 2007).

⁴⁷ Mario Missori, *Governi, alte cariche dello Stato e prefetti del Regno d'Italia* (Rome: Ministero dell'Interno, Pubblicazioni degli archivi di Stato, Fonti e Sussidi, 1973).

office on 25 July held their appointments during the 45-day government, maintaining a perspective on the events following the fall of Mussolini that derived from their 20-year-long engagement with Fascism. From Florence, the quaestor wrote to the Ministry of the Interior on 28 July 1943:

The public opinion, initially persuaded of a possible immediate finalisation of peace, expressed surprise and disappointment after repeated Government statements confirming the intention to continue the war. Subversive elements seized this opportunity, attempting in various ways to foment unrest and incite the masses to revolt against the established authorities. To curb this criminal activity, and considering the legitimate demands of the Military Authority, some individuals included in the known lists of persons of interest during certain contingencies, including all communists, have promptly been arrested. At present, public opinion is disoriented, and the spirit of the population is depressed due to the uncertainty of the immediate future.⁴⁸

The passive acceptance of the government's decision, the notion that subversive elements would take advantage "to foment unrest and incite the masses to revolt against the established authorities," and the subsequent arrest of well-known "communists" testify to the local authorities' *modus operandi*, in clear persistence of Fascist practices. The evident assimilation of Fascist language in the report of the Florentine Quaestor (one of many

⁴⁸ Author's translation of the report of the quaestor of Florence to the chief of police, Florence, 28 July 1943, A5G—Seconda guerra mondiale, busta 143, fasc. 214, subfasc. 2, Affari per provincia, dossier 28, No. 30 Firenze, ACS, Rome.

examples) highlights the internalized points of view on a dichotomous society, split between “good” Italians and “subversives” to be repressed.⁴⁹

It was impossible to replace all local authorities who had served during the Fascist regime, spotlighting the difficulty in managing the situation according to new parameters. Badoglio, like many of the political ruling class, did not deem it fit to make excessive concessions to the anti-Fascists, to avoid exacerbating the already critical relations with the Germans. Nevertheless, he believed it necessary to show signs of rupture with the regime to pose as a credible interlocutor to the Allies. This ambivalent strategy generated deep perplexity in the population. Many thought the marshal was simply taking his time, maintaining deep confidence in Badoglio’s abilities.⁵⁰ On 3 August, the English writer Iris Origo (who had lived in Tuscany since 1910) wrote:

The Bracci [well-known and wealthy anti-Fascist Romans] claim that Badoglio’s cabinet intended to make a separate peace from the outset but is now trying to buy time. They are so convinced of this that they have already ordered the departure of their grandchildren from Veneto, predicting that a German invasion would turn the entire area into a battlefield. Furthermore, they are sure that, as soon as the war against Germany is declared, many volunteers will rush to enlist. Another friend, on the other hand, believes that animosity against the Allies increases day by day. The truth is that none of us can know what is going on behind the scenes, and everyone interprets the news according to their own will.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Felice, *Guerra Resistenza Dopoguerra in Abruzzo*, 83–89; and Report of the quaestor of Macerata to the chief of police, Macerata, 25 June 1943, Ministero dell’Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Segreteria del Capo della Polizia, busta 12, fasc. 126–45, ACS, Rome.

⁵⁰ Angelo Ventura, “Sugli intellettuali di fronte al fascismo negli ultimi anni del regime,” in *Sulla crisi del regime fascista*, 365–86; and Ardengo Soffici, *Sull’orlo dell’abisso. Diario 1939–1943* (Milan-Trento: Luni Editrice, 2000), 125.

⁵¹ Origo, *Guerra in Val d’Orcia*, 63.

Origo's testimony is particularly interesting, as it captures both the diverse interpretations of the government's role—whether to sign the peace or rally the country against the Anglo-Americans—and the difficulty of penetrating the smokescreen that enveloped events during the 45 days. After Mussolini's fall and the destruction of all certainties, coupled with the experiences of the war from 1940 to 1943, it had become impossible to orient oneself and clearly understand what was happening. This also involved the Germans, who, once allies, already appeared to many as potential enemies. The same uncertainties in the population were also present in the government, albeit of a different nature. While the maintenance of state and public order were the only two clear objectives shared by all factions, abysmal differences emerged within the governmental structure regarding the strategy to address domestic issues. Consider the contrasting views between Carmine Senise, who returned as head of the police on 25 July and favored a gradual and soft purge of Fascists from public service, and the minister of the interior, Ricci, who took office on 9 August and advocated for a drastic departure.⁵² These differences were exacerbated by pressures from the king and Pietro d'Acquarone, who did not want to concede to the subversive camp, and from anti-Fascist factions in the government, who demanded a more open and explicit departure from the regime.⁵³ Although Badoglio, unlike the king, understood the necessity of finding common ground with the anti-Fascists—as demonstrated by the partial release of political prisoners—his government was never able to provide a credible response and present itself as a real alternative to the

⁵² Carucci, "Il Ministero dell'interno: prefetti, questori e ispettori generali," 21–73; Giovanna Tosatti, "Viminale, la rivincita della continuità. Il ministero dell'Interno tra il 1943 e il 1948," *Ventesimo Secolo*, no. 4 (October 2003): 121–43; Luciana Caminiti, *Prefetti e classe dirigente nel "Regno del Sud" 1943–1945* (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1997); and Carmine Senise, *Quando ero a capo della polizia 1940–1943* (Rome: Ruffolo, 1947), 214–16.

⁵³ Frederik William Deakin, *Storia della Repubblica di Salò*, trans. Renzo De Felice, Francesco Golzio, and Ornella Francisci (Turin: Einaudi, 1963), 414–78; and Massimo Legnani, "Italia 1943. Profilo di una crisi nazionale," in *Nasce la Resistenza. Atti del Convegno Internazionale promosso dal Comune di Piombino e dall'Istituto Storico della Resistenza in Toscana. Piombino, 22–23 aprile 1994* (Piombino: Aktis, 1994), 9–18.

deceased regime or as a reliable guide for a country exhausted by three years of war.⁵⁴

The underlying ambiguity and divisions within the very cabinet were revealed in the tactics it pursued. The marshal's first decisions aimed at dismantling the regime's organizations: on 27 July, the PNF and affiliated organizations were dissolved; on 30 July, free elections were promised at the end of the conflict; and the following day, trade union organizations were placed under the responsibility of the prefects.⁵⁵ These decisions came at the height of general degeneration, at a time when it was necessary to reconcile the organizations of the defunct regime with the state to keep a plausible violent reaction from the Fascists under control.⁵⁶ The purge was mostly a cover-up rather than substantive, and reflected a desire to make use of "moderate" Fascist public officers who had held posts during the regime in the public administration.⁵⁷ The fate of one of the regime's most important repressive instruments, the Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism (OVRA), is emblematic: similar to what happened to the militia (restructured with a simple change of leadership and the replacement of Fascist emblems with military stars on the uniforms), all the leaders and officials of the body of political repression remained in

⁵⁴ Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, 1943, busta 27, fasc. Scarcerazione detenuti politici ed altri provvedimenti relativi alla caduta del Regime Fascista. Phonogram from the *Questura* di Roma to the General Directorate of Public Security and the Prefecture of Rome, 31 July 1943, ACS, Rome; telegram from the Prefect of Piacenza to the Ministry of the Interior, 20 August 1943; Segreteria Particolare del Duce—Carteggio Ordinario RSI, busta 63, fasc. 5438, ACS, Rome; *L'Italia dei quarantacinque giorni*, 73–75; and Carlo Spartaco Capogreco, *I campi del duce. L'internamento civile nell'Italia fascista (1940–1943)* (Turin: Einaudi, 2004), 170–73, 292–93.

⁵⁵ Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri—Gabinetto, Affari Generali, fascicoli per categorie, 1941–1943, 1.6–4, no. 23329, ACS, Rome; Marina Giannetto, "Defascistizzazione, legislazione e prassi della liquidazione del sistema fascista e dei suoi responsabili (1943–1945)," *Ventesimo Secolo*, no. 4 (October 2003): 56; and Pieri and Rochat, *Badoglio*, 785.

⁵⁶ Provisions in this regard continued into August, promoting active surveillance by the police and inspectorates general over fascists who had held positions in the party and in the squads. Alleged fascist plots, such as that involving Ettore Muti, sometimes served as occasions for intensified repression. Carucci, *Il Ministero dell'Interno*, 56–57; and Giorgio Bocca, *La repubblica di Mussolini* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1977), 7.

⁵⁷ Hans Woller, *I conti con il fascismo. L'epurazione in Italia 1945–1948*, trans. Enzo Morandi (Bologna: il Mulino, 1997); Giannetto, "Defascistizzazione, legislazione e prassi della liquidazione del sistema fascista e dei suoi responsabili (1943–1945)," 53–90; and Romano Canosa, *Storia dell'epurazione in Italia. Le sanzioni contro il fascismo 1943–1948* (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1999).

their posts and continued their activities.⁵⁸ An evident contradiction was captured by the poet Magda Ceccarelli De Grada in her diary on the evening of 25 July, “‘The war continues,’ said the proclamation, so for now, no change in this state of siege. Rather than being arrested by the Ovra, we will now be arrested by the carabinieri. It’s more decorative.”⁵⁹

At the same time as the dismantling and merging of Fascist Party bodies, the government also implemented fierce repression of protests and demonstrations, which were perceived by the authorities as posing a Communist and subversive risk, in strict continuity with Fascist coercive methods.⁶⁰ On 25 July, responsibilities for public order passed to the local military authorities, and a state of war was imposed throughout the national territory, following the strongly repressive line of Roatta’s circular note.⁶¹ The repressions by the military authorities, supported by Badoglio, were severe, as seen in Reggio Emilia and Bari. It is estimated that in the first three days of the new government, there were 83 deaths, 308 injuries, and 1,554 arrests.⁶² Around industrial cities, characterized by a strong workers’ identity, entire divisions were concentrated to maintain public order.⁶³ Openness toward anti-Fascist political formations was very limited: the new parties were not recognized by law, and it was forbidden to organize rallies or print newspapers. These provisions hindered the development of new political organizations and anti-Fascist committees

⁵⁸ Mimmo Franzinelli, *I tentacoli dell’Ovra. Agenti, collaboratori e vittime della polizia fascista* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 2020), 398–410.

⁵⁹ Magda Ceccarelli De Grada, *Giornale del tempo di guerra. 12 giugno 1940–7 maggio 1945* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011), 217–18, translated by author.

⁶⁰ A5G—Seconda guerra mondiale, busta 26, fasc. 11, subfasc. 1, dossier 1, ACS, Rome; telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the Prefects of the Kingdom, 9 August 1943, busta 30, fasc. 12, subfasc. 2, dossier 3, ACS, Rome; notification of the Ancona Prefecture to the Ministry of the Interior, Ancona, 27 August 1943; Ministero dell’Interno, Gabinetto RSI—Affari Generali, busta 49, fasc. 1259, ACS, Rome; reports from the Prefect of Como to the Ministry of the Interior on the attitude of the clergy, Como, 3 August and 1 September 1943, Ministero dell’Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, 1943, busta 87, fasc. Genova, Azione politica del Clero, ACS, Rome; and Monthly Report on the Activities of the Clergy and Catholic Action during August 1943, Genoa, 5 September 1943.

⁶¹ Carucci, “Il Ministero dell’Interno,” 54–55.

⁶² Pieri, Rochat, *Pietro Badoglio*, 785.

⁶³ Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri—Gabinetto, Affari Generali, fascicoli per categorie, 1941–1943, 20.13, no. 23577, subfasc. 1, ACS, Rome.

that were being formed, albeit with multiple differences, across the entire nation.⁶⁴

The harsh repression, visible to all, dramatically illustrated how protests and demonstrations for peace were suppressed with equal, if not greater, violence than under the regime. The attitude of the government and local authorities generated widespread perplexity and disorientation. Adolfo Carbonelli decided to write to Badoglio at the end of August, complaining that citizens who had cheered the fall of the Duce in Fabriano had been reported to the public security authority: “The zealous Authority, more fascist than the defenestrated hierarchs, on the same evening, arrested more than a hundred citizens who were transported to Ancona awaiting trial.”⁶⁵

Carbonelli denounced how perplexed the population was by these actions, noting that, according to him, none of this had happened in the rest of Italy. He asked Badoglio to intervene because “Fascism fell. The rot of the fascists has remained, and practice suffers from their obstructionism.”⁶⁶ Carbonelli’s letter is a corroboration of what Origo’s diary also reveals. The role to be attributed to the government was far from easy, in terms of war efforts as well as domestic affairs, where the well-established practices of the previous 20 years were far from abandoned. Many had questions, often latent, that were too difficult to answer without precise guidance or an interpretive key capable of providing a coherent view of events. The rhetoric of Italy propagated by the regime—a strong country able to stand up to the 52 nations besieging the empire—had come to an end, destroyed by the war.⁶⁷ The “strong” Italian, as anthropologically understood by Fascism, had also died under the rubble. Now that the regime

⁶⁴ Candeloro, *Storia dell’Italia*, 195–97.

⁶⁵ Ministero dell’Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, 1943, busta 27, fasc., ACS, Rome; and Scarcerazione detenuti politici ed altri provvedimenti relativi alla caduta del Regime Fascista. Letter from Adolfo Carbonelli to Badoglio, 30 August 1943, translated by author.

⁶⁶ Ministero dell’Interno, Direzione Generale Pubblica Sicurezza, Divisione Affari Generali e Riservati, 1943, busta 27, fasc., ACS, Rome; and release of political prisoners and other measures related to the fall of the fascist regime, letter by Adolfo Carbonelli to Badoglio, 30 August 1943, translated by author.

⁶⁷ A5G—Seconda guerra mondiale, busta 121, fasc. 81., ACS, Rome.

was over (at least theoretically), the war that it had so strongly wanted continued, generating a stream of contradictions and questions that left many disoriented and disarmed.

Origo wrote on 4 August that

the Italians were irritated by the tone of English propaganda in the aftermath of fascism's demise, by its insistence on unconditional surrender, and its presumptuous belief that any peace, at any price, would be well received. To fully understand the Italian attitude, it is perhaps necessary to recall how widespread among Italians is the belief that the war was a calamity forcibly imposed by Germany—against the will of the Italian people, and therefore without their responsibility.

Meanwhile, we learn that four more German armoured divisions have passed the Brenner—among them Hitler's special division. We begin to realize that the choice—if there ever was one—has already been made. Autumn will not bring peace to Italy.⁶⁸

The Italian population, emerging from three years of war and the fall of Fascism, proved incapable of facing reality. They lacked the tools to understand it and were troubled by the dark clouds gathering over the country. The date of 25 July, like all great historical events, was a watershed moment in the country's history, encompassing the experience of war and dictatorship. Yet, as with all major divides, it also resurfaced profound signs of continuity with the past regime, more than the jubilant masses could have imagined or understood. The ongoing war with the relentless bombardment of Italian cities, the harsh control by local authorities and the army, an increasingly burdensome ally, and the continuous propaganda

⁶⁸ Origo, *Guerra in Val d'Orcia*, 65–66.

in favor of continuing the conflict generated deep discouragement and disorientation.

The general sense of loss, the disconnect between authority and the population, and between center and periphery—elements already present during the 1940–43 wartime period—were magnified during the 45 days. Navigating the events with clarity was impossible, like “living in the soft belly of a whale, like poor Geppetto who, with his dim light in that deep belly, searches in vain for a way out.”⁶⁹

It was in this context that, finally, the announcement of the armistice arrived on the evening of 8 September. Once again, the population took to the streets to celebrate the long-awaited peace. Once again, popular enthusiasm appeared to herald the end of the war. Once again, hopes were disappointed. With a population without guidance and the general disbandment of the army, Italy entered the German occupation and civil war. The rupture that many thought would come on 25 July ultimately occurred on 8 September, albeit with a thoroughly different meaning than expected.

⁶⁹ Giuliana Benzoni, *La vita ribelle. Memorie di un'aristocratica italiana fra belle époque e repubblica raccolte da Viva Tedesco* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1985), 179.

CHAPTER 11

The Wages of Unreadiness

The End of American Empire in the Southern Philippines in 1942

by Jerry W. Jones, PhD

The fall of the southern Philippines to the Japanese in 1942 is a story of American and Filipino heroism against great odds, but a story of defeat, nonetheless. The loss of the islands was inevitable given the lack of military preparedness and support for this American bastion in the Pacific. The acquisition of the Philippine islands after war with Spain in 1898 had made the United States an imperial power. Suppressing the Philippine insurrection against U.S. rule proved more costly than the war with Spain. From the first, some Americans supported full independence for the Philippines and Filipinos never gave up on their dream of self-government.¹ U.S. public sentiment for Philippine independence finally increased to the point in 1934 that Congress passed the Tydings-McDuffie Act granting full independence after a 10-year transition period.² Congress established an interim government called the Commonwealth, and Filipinos elected Manuel Quezon as their first president. Among the first tasks was to build a Philippine Army. President Quezon

¹ Adam Burns, *William Howard Taft and the Philippines: A Blueprint for Empire* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2020), 35–77.

² Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 4–10.

turned to his friend Douglas MacArthur for help. Unhappily, war with Japan came before the new Philippine military was fully formed and ready.³

MacArthur's plan provided for a 10,000-man regular Philippine Army and a reserve force that would grow to 400,000 by 1946. Mobilizing, training, and equipping this force would be easier said than done. On the eve of the war with Japan there were almost 5,000 officers and 120,000 reservists, but many of the officers lacked experience. Some of the best Filipino officers came from the Philippine Scouts, which was a regular part of the U.S. Army. The Philippine Constabulary did provide officers as well, but their experience was more focused on law enforcement than military affairs.⁴ By 1940, the Philippine Army Air Corps had a fleet of 40 planes and 100 trained pilots. Unbelievably, MacArthur dismissed the need for the archipelago to have a navy. He believed a force of 36 motor torpedo boats attached to the Philippine Army was sufficient. Since the Philippines had no colonies, he reasoned, there was no need of a fleet. Basing part of the U.S. Fleet in the Philippines was an open question. Orders were placed with British shipyards for torpedo boats, but only two had been delivered when war in Europe forced the British to cancel the contract to focus on their own needs. One additional torpedo boat was built in the Philippines under British license. MacArthur remained sanguine that torpedo boats could thwart the approach of an enemy fleet close to the few good landing beaches. Moreover, the heavy forests and jungles along with the few roads and mountainous character of the interior of the islands were ideal for defense.⁵

Belatedly, in July 1941 when war with Japan looked likely, the United States began to send more resources to prepare the Philippine Army, although the priority was for the defense of Luzon. MacArthur was recalled from retirement and made commander of the U.S. Armed Forces Far East

³ George Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 326–29.

⁴ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 10–14.

⁵ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 36–47; and John Costello, *The Pacific War, 1941–1945* (New York: Quill, 1982), 100–5.

(USAFFE) at the rank of major general. The Philippines did have 277 aircraft, including 35 B-17 bombers and 107 P-40 fighters. MacArthur shared Washington's optimism that the B-17 bombers would be a deterrent to a Japanese advance south. The B-17 would prove to be an excellent medium bomber, but it would not turn out to be successful in an antishipping role or in a tactical role in support of ground operations. MacArthur placed so much faith on the B-17 force that he rejected the guidance of the latest war planning, Rainbow 5, as too negative. The plan called for a withdrawal to the Bataan Peninsula to hold out. MacArthur instead decided on a risky plan to defeat the Japanese on the beaches should they invade. MacArthur decided in November 1941 to expand the Del Monte Airfield on Mindanao to accommodate heavy bombers in case his air forces needed a refuge if the Japanese attacked Clark Field on Luzon, as indeed they would shortly do. None of MacArthur's airfields had sufficient antiaircraft defenses, warning systems, or radars. Besides placing too much dependence on the bombers, MacArthur ambitiously reported to Washington that there would soon be a Philippine Army of 200,000 men trained and ready. His plan to defeat the Japanese on the beaches gained approval largely on that unfulfilled promise. Unfortunately, the Philippine Army was not nearly so large, well-trained, or equipped as MacArthur led his superiors to believe. Further, MacArthur counted on having at least five or six more months to prepare than was ultimately possible.⁶

MacArthur organized defense of the Philippines into three major commands. One of these was the southern Philippine command called the Visayan-Mindanao Force under the command of Colonel (soon promoted to brigadier general) William F. Sharp. Sharp's command had a much lower priority for supply and was mostly organized from newly formed Philippine Army divisions. As events would unfold, the magnitude of the task of raising and equipping a new army in the southern Philippines meant the Philippine Army was still not trained and equipped when the

⁶Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 65–69.

Japanese invaded. Shockingly, when war came, many units in the southern Philippines had only half the rifles needed to arm their new soldiers. Ammunition remained in critically short supply and heavy weapons were almost nonexistent. The entire Philippine command was short of ammunition and heavy weapons, but MacArthur made supply of Luzon the top priority, while the southern Philippines received very little.⁷

The Visayan-Mindanao Force encompassed a vast area of the southern Philippines, including the Visayan islands of Bohol, Samar, Leyte, Cebu, and Panay, along with the islands of Mindanao and Jolo to the South. Mindanao is the second largest of the Philippine islands, roughly the size of the state of Indiana. It was strategically the most important part of Sharp's command because of the presence of a complex of 10 airfields at the Del Monte plantation near the north-central coast, which was the base for the Far East Air Force following the Japanese attacks on the island of Luzon and Clark Airfield.⁸ Much of the island is mountainous and densely forested. There were only two completed highways on the island: the National Highway along the coast, and the Sayre Highway bisecting the island. There were few roads in the interior. There were no railroads on Mindanao. Mindanao did have excellent port facilities at Zamboanga, on the western end, and at Davao to the south. So vast areas of Mindanao were remote and inaccessible.⁹ The regular U.S. Army had been directed to establish supply depots throughout the southern islands in the early fall of 1941, but the system remained aspirational. Only 10 to 20 rounds per man, at the most, could be supplied in the training camps. In many cases,

⁷ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 35–37, 68–70.

⁸ "Historical Report Visayan-Mindanao Force: Defense of the Philippines," 1 September 1941–10 May 1942, MajGen William F. Sharp, Army Heritage and Education Command (AHEC) Archives, Carlisle, PA. This report of operations includes the reports of unit commanders in 37 appendices. Copies are also available in the William F. Sharp Visayan and Mindanao Campaign manuscript and personal papers collection, 3 boxes, RG 200, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, DC. The AHEC version has a consistent numbering system applied but is otherwise the same. The AHEC copy with page numbers is used here for ease of reference. The report and appendices contain 700-plus pages of text. Subsequent references will refer to the specific author (Sharp or one of his subordinate officers) and VMF report.

⁹ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 498–99.

soldiers did not have a chance to even experience firing a rifle before they faced battle.¹⁰

Adding to the problems of inducting and equipping an entirely new military organization, language barriers were a serious problem. Not only did Americans have trouble communicating with Filipino officers, but the Filipino officers were also mostly from Luzon and spoke Tagalog while the enlisted men in their command mostly spoke a variety of Visayan dialects. The Philippines lacked national unity because of the linguistic, tribal, and sometimes religious differences. Moreover, in this hastily formed force, some Filipino officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs) were not competent for their new positions. For example, it was not uncommon for company clerks to be illiterate. The instructors had no authority to weed out incompetent officers or NCOs. Less than half the projected force for the Philippine Army in the southern military districts were raised by the time war came. Colonel Hiram Tarkington, commander of the 61st Field Artillery Regiment, was unsparing in describing the deficiencies of the force when he concluded, "The Philippine Army was an army in name only."¹¹ He recalled that most of the new recruits "had never held a gun in their hands" before their mobilization. Even reservists had probably only fired five rounds in training. Given the supply situation in the early phase of the Pacific war, with the Imperial Japanese Navy dominant, little ammunition could be spared for training even on the eve of battle. Tarkington spoke well of the eagerness of the few Filipino officers and NCOs in his unit, but they had hardly more training than the new conscripts. They could not be used as instructors because they were still learning the rudiments of the service themselves. One wonders what might have been accomplished if preparations had begun five years earlier, rather than on the very eve of the Japanese invasion. For decades, U.S. war planners had

¹⁰ Sharp, VMF report, 16–20.

¹¹ Col Hiram W. Tarkington, "There Were Others," unpublished manuscript, Army Heritage and Education Command, Carlisle, PA, 6. Col Tarkington was the commanding officer of the 61st Field Artillery Regiment, Philippine Army. Besides relating his own experiences, he interviewed other members of Sharp's command. This copy includes numerous maps of the campaign in Mindanao that are not in the AHEC manuscript.

understood the reality that the Philippines would be an early target of the Japanese. The professionalism of the Philippine Scouts demonstrates what could have been accomplished with the Philippine Army had they benefited from years of training and institutional development. Only two companies of Scouts deployed to the southern Philippines, however. The Visayan-Mindanao Force also suffered from the long reluctance the U.S. Army had about adequately arming Filipino forces they did not directly control out of a fear that the weapons could be used in some future insurgency against U.S. rule in the islands.¹²

A single battery of eight 2.95-inch guns was the only artillery the Philippine Army would have on Mindanao. These were mountain howitzers built by Vickers for Egypt but also adopted by the U.S. Army Department of the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. They were decent guns when new but were obsolescent in 1942. Their greatest handicap seems to have been that their hydraulic recoil system was inadequate, forcing gunners to restrain them with ropes and tackle. This would have required re-laying the gun more frequently than modern weapons required. In the first months of the war, three other steamers made the attempt to supply the Visayan-Mindanao Force, but the Japanese sank each of them. The defenders of the southern Philippines would have to make do with local resources and ingenuity.¹³

Although the Philippine Army was half formed and poorly equipped, the civilian population responded magnificently to supporting the force during the war. Much of the quartermaster corps was actually made up of civilian volunteers who were later commissioned or who acted as civilian employees. Workshops sprang up to manufacture uniforms, shoes, and other kit. Even rifle and machine gun parts were made locally. Most of the recruits were armed with the M1917 Enfield rifle from World War I. Many of them needed replacement extractors, which were manufactured

¹² Sharp, VMF report, 16–20; and Tarkington, “There Were Others,” 7–12.

¹³ Sharp, VMF report, 23–25; and “Vickers-Maxim QF 2.95 Inch Mountain Gun,” forum discussion, GreatWarForum.org, 5 October–26 November 2007.

locally. Three of the old 2.95-inch guns had no sights, so new sights were made. Grenades and even antitank mines were produced. Bolo knives became the local weapon of choice when, as frequently happened, rifles or small arms ammunition was unavailable. Whole “Bolo Battalions” were formed locally. These helped fill the gap as a constabulary, acting as guards, and carrying out ambushes. Most of the higher-ranking officers in Sharps’ command (major and above), following the pattern elsewhere in the Philippines, were Americans holding dual commissions in the U.S. Army and the Philippine Army. Many of them had long service in the Philippines. Most of the junior officers and NCOs were Filipino. Most Filipino officers had come from Luzon, but some were natives of the southern Philippines, and a few were Moros.¹⁴

The war came to the Visayan Islands and Mindanao later than it did to Luzon. On 19 December, Del Monte Airfield was heavily bombed for the first time, and the next day heavy bombing of Davao was followed by Japanese landings to seize the port. Twenty-two transports with 12,000 troops landed, with aircraft, two cruisers, and four destroyers in support. The force included cavalry, tanks, field artillery, and bicycle troops.¹⁵ Defending Davao were two battalions of recently mobilized Philippine Army troops. To meet the landings, they had a few .30-caliber machine guns and M1917 Enfield rifles. Outgunned and after heavy fighting, this force retreated a few miles north of Davao and held a blocking position on the national road. Another Japanese force landed 3,000 troops near Digos to the west of Davao. Blocking the coast road from Digos to the old Spanish fort Pikit were another two battalions of the Philippine Army. The Japanese again used tanks and artillery. Japanese aircraft were unopposed and free to strafe and bomb the Philippine Army troops’ positions. The defenders had three of the old 2.95-inch guns in a battery commanded by Captain Manuel Acosta of the Philippine Army. The Japanese attacked

¹⁴ Sharp, VMF report, 24–25, 41–47.

¹⁵ Sharp, VMF report, 82.

both flanks of the defensive line simultaneously. Acosta was killed and one of the precious artillery pieces lost. The Filipinos withdrew 11 kilometers farther west on the Digos-Pikit road and dug in along a destroyed bridge flanked by wooded hills. Japanese aircraft managed to destroy another of the 2.95-inch guns, but the line held. One quarter of the artillery pieces on Mindanao had been lost. Nevertheless, the defenders held their lines. The Japanese advanced no farther in that sector until May 1942.¹⁶

On 21 December, Del Monte was heavily bombed again and Philippine Army camps at Malaybalay near the airfields were also bombed. By 24 December, the situation in the Philippines was deteriorating rapidly. Army Air Corps General Lewis Hyde Brereton and his staff, along with the remainder of the B-17 forces, left Del Monte for sanctuary in Australia. General MacArthur made clear that Sharp would play the role of an independent theater commander should they lose direct communications, which was only a matter of time. If Sharp's command was defeated in the field, he should go over to guerrilla warfare. After landings at Davao, the lack of ammunition made a sustained counterattack impossible. The Japanese did not have many troops ashore initially, but these had all the advantages of air support and heavy weapons. Sharp decided to hold the Japanese at Davao, rather than try to retake the port, and harass them with guerrilla attacks.¹⁷

The Japanese also used irregular forces in the Philippines. These included Filipino collaborators and Japanese civilians. An estimated 20,000 Japanese civilians lived on Mindanao at this time, most of them at Davao. The Japanese irregulars were not as well armed as the regular Japanese Army, and the Philippine Army found it could assert control over the country around Davao right up to the outskirts of the city. After heavy losses in frequent skirmishes, the Japanese settled for control of Davao City only.¹⁸

¹⁶Tarkington, "There Were Others," 122–25.

¹⁷Sharp, VMF report, 39.

¹⁸Tarkington, "There Were Others," 169–70.

On 2 March, the Japanese landed at Zamboanga, one of the most scenic ports in the Philippines. Pettit Barracks housed the garrison and also encompassed the seventeenth-century Spanish fort. The enlisted soldiers there were mostly schoolboys and most of their officers had been their teachers. Their eagerness made up for their inexperience and they learned quickly. Japanese landing craft hit the waterfront area under the light of the moon. The defenders caught the Japanese boats in a withering fire that caused the Japanese considerable confusion and heavy losses. Some boats collided with others while the others returned to the ships without landing their men. In response, a Japanese cruiser used its big guns to bombard the waterfront at point-blank range. Most of the defenders withstood the terrible barrage and defeated a second Japanese landing attempt. In the light of the next morning, the Japanese finally landed a couple miles to the east of Zamboanga. The advantage in heavy weapons made the difference, and the Japanese finally took the port. General Sharp ordered the Zamboanga sector to resort to guerrilla warfare, and the pattern from the Davao landings repeated itself here. The Japanese had the strength to take port cities but could not pacify the interior.¹⁹

The Japanese plans for conquest of the southern Philippines next focused on the Visayan Islands north of Mindanao. When the war began, Brigadier General Bradford Chynoweth was in command of the Visayan Islands and had his headquarters on Panay. The most important islands of the command were Panay and Cebu, while Negros, Samar, Bohol, and Leyte were only lightly held. Chynoweth recalled a meeting with MacArthur before the war started and before he left Manila for his command in which MacArthur said that the troops in the Visayan Islands would be “somewhat short in equipment” and that Chynoweth’s command could expect no more supplies. On the bright side, MacArthur said the Philippine Army troops Chynoweth would command were trained to fight in the terrain he would need to defend. Chynoweth afterward would muse that

¹⁹Tarkington, “There Were Others,” 229–33.

maybe MacArthur believed what he was saying. The truth Chynoweth discovered when he reached Panay was that the Philippine Army troops had not been trained to fight on any terrain whatsoever. The reservists among the troops on Cebu had presumably had five months of training, but the general estimated it seemed more like a month. They had fired perhaps five rounds at a rifle range. As other officers in the southern Philippines did, Chynoweth observed that reserve officers and NCOs had about the same level of training as the enlisted. The general described his troops as “an untrained mob” without discipline. Filipino officers would commandeer supplies and equipment without payment. The command also had the custodianship of the island’s Japanese civilians. Chynoweth was happy he was able to keep these Japanese prisoners alive, given the Filipino officers wanted to simply kill them. Still, he praised the spirit of the Filipino soldiers and said they usually had good intentions, even if they did not always know what the right thing was. Chynoweth sensed that severe discipline would likely backfire and cause mass desertions. There would be very few courts-martial cases and no executions on Cebu.²⁰

Chynoweth soon learned that the equipment his troops did possess was in worse condition than he had been led to expect. Many of the Enfield rifles had broken extractors, as was the case elsewhere in the Philippine arsenals. To defend an area of almost 5,000 square miles, Chynoweth’s only heavy weapons were six machine guns. He was promised mountain howitzers when the war began, but the Japanese sank the ship carrying them not far from Corregidor. His command would not have a single artillery piece during the war. Shortly after the war began, Chynoweth lost three of his best regiments when Sharp ordered them to serve on Mindanao. While 8,700 soldiers remained on Cebu, there were only 3,000 rifles for them. Desperate for weapons, Chynoweth had local shops begin producing Bolo knives, spears, and bows and arrows. It is appalling to contemplate that

²⁰ “The Visayan Force During World War II,” Chynoweth to Louis Morton, 29 March 1947, Sharp Papers, AHEC.

the U.S. preparation for war in the Philippines was so poor that many defenders would face Japanese armor, artillery, and aircraft with nothing more than primitive weapons. Ammunition shortages would further limit the fighting ability of the Visayan Force, as it did on Mindanao. Ammunition shipments to Cebu ended up at the bottom of the sea. Salvage efforts yielded few good rounds and many duds. The Visayan Force had no more than 40 rounds per rifle in their battle with the Japanese.²¹

By Christmas 1941, messages from MacArthur implied help would not be coming from the United States. The Visayan Force gave up any hope of defeating the enemy on the beaches, as envisioned in MacArthur's war plans. The force began preparing for guerrilla warfare in earnest. Critically, Chynoweth's soldiers would need to haul many tons of rice and other staples by hand up mountain trails to remote bases. At the time the Japanese landed the Visayan command had enough food stores for a year. Chynoweth planned to send the weaker recruits home and keep the stronger fighters in the guerrilla force. The smaller force, needing less food and consolidating the arms, could have held out against the Japanese for years, in Chynoweth's opinion. Chynoweth started a guerrilla warfare school for NCOs with Captain Marcario Paralta Jr. in command. He remembered Paralta as a natural fighter who became a brigadier general in the Philippine Army and went on to lead the successful guerrilla campaign on Panay after the surrender.²²

Adding to Chynoweth's problems in the first months of the war, the economy in the Visayas was near collapse because of a currency shortage. The banking system, based in Manila, was now cut off from the southern Philippines. Demoralized farmers refused to harvest crops because they would not be paid for lack of specie. On his own authority, Chynoweth had emergency currency printed, about 3 million pesos, and distributed to the islands in his command. President Quezon passed through Panay

²¹ "The Visayan Force During World War II."

²² "The Visayan Force During World War II."

during his trip to the Del Monte Airfield and his evacuation to Australia. The president was initially furious to hear Chynoweth was printing pesos and he cursed the general roundly. Later, after cooling down, Quezon accepted the wisdom of Chynoweth's move and authorized him to print 10 million more pesos if necessary. The economic situation stabilized, and the currency served for the duration of the war in areas not under Japanese control.²³

During February 1942, Chynoweth played a key role in supplying Bataan and Corregidor. Getting his orders directly from MacArthur's chief of staff, General Richard K. Sutherland, Chynoweth gathered all manner of foodstuffs, including canned goods from a local cannery. Sutherland asked for dried beef, fish, shrimp, beans, fruit, salt, and yeast. He required more than 350,000 pounds of meat, 100,000 pounds of fish, and 700,000 pounds of rice per shipment. That Chynoweth did not object to these shipments and still had adequate supply for his own command is a testament to the bounty of the Visayan Islands. Moreover, the islands labored to supply Mindanao as well. The supply demands from both Luzon and Mindanao strained the capacity of the small fleet of steamers operating out of Panay and Cebu. Chynoweth expressed relief to have an independent command in early March. His communications from Sharp's headquarters on Mindanao were infrequent and sometimes contradictory. Apparently, too many members of Sharp's staff were issuing commands to Chynoweth. Before many weeks, however, Chynoweth's command was again placed under General Sharp. The transport force of steamers remained under Chynoweth's command, however.²⁴

²³ "The Visayan Force During World War II."

²⁴ Sutherland to Chynoweth, 3 February 1942, background files to the Study The Fall of the Philippines, Sharp Papers, 1941–1942, Records of the Army Staff, entry 40, box 7, RG 319, NARA; Chynoweth to Sutherland, 6 February 1942, background files to the Study The Fall of the Philippines, Sharp Papers, 1941–1942, Records of the Army Staff, entry 40, box 7, RG 319, NARA; Chynoweth to Sharp, 25 January, Reports, Sharp Papers, 1941–1942, Records of the Army Staff, entry 40, box 7, RG 319, NARA; and Radiogram, Macarthur to Sharp, 11 February 1942, Reports, Sharp Papers, Records of the Army Staff, 1941–1942, entry 40, box 7, RG 319, NARA.

On 10 March, General Chynoweth moved to Cebu. Until that time, the regiments on Cebu had been under the command of Colonel Irwin Scudder. Sharp had ordered nonessential civilians to be evacuated from Cebu City, the island's principal port, in December 1941 following a major Japanese air raid on the city. The Japanese set fire to oil storage facilities on Shell Island in the harbor and sank four or five interisland boats. Shell, Standard Oil, and Texaco all had facilities at the port. An airfield near the city had about 10 old military training planes. They were only capable of reconnaissance and had no hope of surviving combat. Their top speed was 120 miles per hour. The defense of the city was the responsibility of the Cebu Military Police Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Howard Edmands. This regiment was newly formed and included some cadets from four colleges in Cebu City. While primarily armed with the usual obsolete and broken Enfield rifles, the unit had 16 Browning water-cooled machine guns to use in the city's defense. A special detachment from this regiment operated about 20 interisland boats for patrols of the harbor and area coastline as an early warning system. Some served as guards on the craft employed in the supply effort to Corregidor. The 82d and 83d Infantry Regiments, under Lieutenant Colonel Emigdio David and Lieutenant Colonel Fortunato Borbon respectively, defended the region around the city. General Sharp told his commanders on Cebu that he did not expect their defense against a major Japanese landing could succeed. He was pragmatic enough to know that, given the state of supply and inexperience of the Philippine Army troops, the force would be forced to revert to guerrilla operations at an early stage. MacArthur's orders at this point indicated he also did not expect a defense of major cities to succeed in the end. His biggest concern was apparently to supply the guerrilla effort and leave nothing behind for the Japanese in occupation of the

coastal districts. Preparing demolitions of port facilities was a particular responsibility of the military police regiment.²⁵

Since his arrival on Cebu, Chynoweth had ordered the movement of all supplies from Cebu City to the mountains. Unfortunately, this effort had not been completed by the time of the Japanese landings. Increasing naval bombardments and air raids made it clear a Japanese attack was only a matter of time. On 5 April, the Kawaguchi Detachment took ship for Cebu with 4,852 battle-tested veterans. On 9 April, Chynoweth learned of the approaching Japanese flotilla with transports and held a last conference with his commanders. The command had been rehearsing their defense plans for the past two months, but the news left little time for last arrangements. The force carried out demolitions of the refinery and shipyard at this point. Shortly after dawn on 10 April, the invasion force split into two elements, one moving along Cebu's west coast and the larger of the two landing at Cebu City, the capital. From his observation post Lieutenant Colonel Edmands could see six large transports, a cruiser, a destroyer, and several smaller ships entering the harbor. Japanese sea-planes began bombing and strafing the waterfront. The Japanese landed in armored barges at about 0800, firing light artillery as they approached. Most men of the two companies of the military police regiment dropped their rifles and ran. The machine gun sections did not join the panic and fired into the barges before withdrawing into the city in good order. The machine guns had caused heavy Japanese casualties but did not stop the barge traffic. The barges landed their surviving troops and returned to the transports for more soldiers. A Japanese launch moved close to the piers and began a barrage of light artillery fire that covered the approach of two transports that succeeded in landing their troops. By 1000, the Japanese cruiser began shelling the city and multiple fires began burn-

²⁵ "Report of Military Activities in Cebu: 2 December 1941–4 March 1942," Irwin Scudder, Sharp Reports II, 1941–1942, Records of the Army Staff, entry 40, box 7, RG 319, NARA; And "A History of the Cebu Military Police Regiment and Cebu During the War Period," Sharp Reports II, 1941–1942, Records of the Army Staff, entry 40, box 7, RG 319, NARA.

ing. About 1,000 of the military police withdrew to a prepared position along the railroad line in the outer district of the city by about 1115. Fires from demolitions and arson of the Japanese business district joined with the fires from Japanese shelling to become a conflagration. The smoke hindered Japanese observation and the shelling and strafing died down. As the Japanese pressed forward in the narrow streets, the defenders' fire turned them back several times, leaving their dead and wounded. As dark fell, Edmands withdrew his force, now joined by the 82d and 83d Infantries along with some Philippine Constabulary, to Landon Heights 10 miles inland from Cebu City.²⁶

By late morning the following day, the Japanese had discovered the Philippine Army positions on Landon Heights and sea planes began bombing and strafing attacks. Two bombs fell within 25 yards of Edmands's temporary command post. Meanwhile, Japanese land-based planes began landing on the newly captured airfield. Japanese patrols probed the outskirts of Cebu City and reached the lower slopes of Landon Heights. By the early morning hours of 13 April, the Japanese prepared to take Landon Heights on a wide front and had already infiltrated ravines behind the defenders. To avoid the trap, the defenders buried their machine guns, which were too heavy to quickly move, fell back along forest trails, and reached General Chynoweth's camp just as that position was being evacuated. By that point, many Filipino enlisted men had deserted, and Edmands's command was reduced to about 140 officers and enlisted. Edmands and his small command joined the retreat but were not in direct contact with Chynoweth. In an exchange of messages, Edmands gained approval from Chynoweth to escape by boat with about 70 men to Leyte, from where they took another boat to Surigao, Mindanao. Sharp attached

²⁶ "A History of the Cebu Military Police Regiment and Cebu During the War Period"; and Chynoweth to Sharp, "Report of Operations," 3 March 1943, Sharp Papers, AHEC.

Edmands and his men to Colonel Ben-Hur Chastaine's force fighting along the Agusan River.²⁷

While the defenders of Cebu City were being driven back to the mountains, the second Japanese landing on the west coast had taken the town of Toledo from a battalion of defenders, who fell back on the cross-island road to Chynoweth's headquarters at Cantabaco.²⁸ Road demolition teams fled when they saw the Japanese force, preceded by tanks. Their officer, Colonel Arthur Grimes, had been captured as he reconnoitered ahead of the position. After easily taking the key bridges, the Japanese drove through to Chynoweth's camp. The general was able to retreat into the northern mountains with about 200 troops. This left the Japanese in possession of the central highway. The campaign for Cebu was effectively over.²⁹

The Japanese now shifted their focus to Panay, under Colonel Albert Christie. The Kawamura Detachment invaded with 4,160 troops. Most of the landing was at the major port, Iliolo, on the southeast shore of Pany, while a smaller force landed at Capiz, on the north coast. Two days later, a third landing was made at San Jose on the southwest coast. Christie did not seriously contest these landings and had better-prepared supply caches in the mountains than the garrison on Cebu had. Workshops and rice mills had been moved into the mountains before the battle. With abundant food supplies, Christie could wage a lengthy guerrilla campaign, but the Japanese quickly controlled the ports and major roads. Christie's troops launched hit-and-run raids against the Japanese that provoked them to attack Christie's headquarters in the mountains. Filipino spies warned Christie of this attack, and so he laid an ambush for the attackers. A company armed only with bows, bolos, and spears fell on the Japanese

²⁷ "A History of the Cebu Military Police Regiment and Cebu During the War Period"; and Chynoweth to Sharp, "Report of Operations, 3 March 1943.

²⁸ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 504–6.

²⁹ "A History of the Cebu Military Police Regiment and Cebu During the War Period," unsigned, Sharp Papers, AHEC; and "Report of Military Activities in Cebu," 2 December 1941–4 March 1942, Col Irwin Scudder, Sharp Papers, AHEC.

as they struggled through a narrow pass leading to Christie's base. Surprise was complete. Many Japanese were killed and the remainder fled. Captured weapons would have been welcome and the small victory was a morale boost. Nevertheless, successes like this only allowed the guerrilla campaign to continue but in no way threatened the Japanese hold on Panay's ports and airstrips. With the facilities of Cebu and Panay in their control and with only small Philippine Army forces in the lesser Visayan Islands, the Japanese could turn their attention to Mindanao.³⁰

The Japanese plan to conquer Mindanao called for coordinated attacks from three directions focused on a drive against Sharp's defenses surrounding Del Monte in the interior. The Miura Detachment already holding Davao and Digos would strike along one of the principal roads, Highway 1, to the west of Digos. Their immediate objective would be to gain the Sayre Highway which runs north through the center of the island to Del Monte. Meanwhile, two other Japanese detachments released from Cebu and Panay would make amphibious landings on the north-central and south-central coasts. Each of these landings were a success. The Philippine Army regiments defending the north coast had about four miles of coast to cover, too much to remain in physical contact with neighboring regiments. The defenders used the resources they had. Beach defenses included mantraps made of sharpened bamboo and bamboo also provided the cases for grenades. A half-stick of dynamite provided the explosive. These grenades only caused concussion rather than shrapnel, but they were better than nothing.³¹

Moving on concentric lines, the Japanese broke out of their beach-heads and drove toward Del Monte and General Sharp's headquarters. In the early morning hours of 3 May, Sharp's troops carried out demolition work targeting likely routes from Cagayan to the Del Monte Air-

³⁰ Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 506–7. Morton notes that Col Christie made no report on the campaign on Panay after he took command from Col Chynoweth.

³¹ Sharp, VMF report, 52–54, 70; Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 516; and Tarkington, "There Were Others," 190–92.

fields. Demolitions were on a steel bridge over the Cagayan River and the Sayre Highway leading from Bugo to Del Monte. By sunrise on 4 May, Sharp's defenses were in trouble. A detachment of Army Air Corps troops attached to the 61st Field Artillery had been tasked with defending a small canyon leading to the heights above the beaches. The regimental commander, Colonel Tarkington, recalled giving the detachment this key terrain feature because of its importance and assuming they would be steadier in their first combat than Filipino troops. His assumption proved wrong. They fled the approaching Japanese and left a critical gap between two regiments that the Japanese were able to exploit. Sharp's forces were finally forced to abandon the Del Monte Airfields on 5 May, and they prepared a new defensive line at Dalirig in mountainous terrain. Sharp's command was prepared now to go over to guerrilla warfare. After all, the major ports and airfields were lost. In the days that followed, Sharp's command resisted several Japanese assaults while stragglers filtered back to the Dalirig line.³²

On the evening of 9 May, a Japanese plane dropped a message from General Wainwright acting as commander-in-chief of the forces in the Philippines. Wainwright had asked to surrender the Corregidor garrison, all that remained of the forces on Luzon. The message explained that General Masaharu Homma demanded that all forces in the Philippines surrender, including General Sharp's Visayan-Mindanao Force. It was immediately clear to Sharp that essentially the lives of the Corregidor defenders were hostage to end hostilities throughout the Philippines. Even though Sharp's command could wage a guerrilla campaign in the southern Philippines for a very long time, Sharp felt he had no option but to comply with the surrender demand to save the lives of the Corregidor garrison.³³

³² Sharp, VMF report, 52–70; Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines*, 516; and Tarkington, "There Were Others," 190–92.

³³ Radiogram, Wainwright to Sharp, 7 May 1942, VMF report; Radiogram, MacArthur to Sharp, 10 May 1942, VMF report; and Radiogram, Sharp to MacArthur, 10 May 1942, VMF report, 61–71.

The American empire in the southern Philippines was no more. Many of the American officers and enlisted serving with the Philippine Army perished as prisoners of war during the brutal Japanese occupation. The Japanese paroled most Filipino troops in the southern islands soon after the surrender. Many Philippine Army soldiers and growing numbers of civilians simply escaped into the jungle and formed the nucleus of a guerilla force that challenged the Japanese hold on the islands until the end of the war. The Philippines eventually emerged from the ordeal of the war as a fully independent nation, free of any imperial domination and with a new spirit of national unity.

The fall of the southern Philippines, indeed the loss of the entire archipelago, was a policy disaster that had been years in the making. The languid preparations for war in the Philippines at all levels and lean defense budgets in the 1930s undermined the creation of an effective Philippine Army, especially in the neglected southern islands. Most critically, MacArthur's dramatic underestimation of the Japanese war machine and exaggerated appraisal of his new Philippine Army created the conditions for the defeat. Had MacArthur given a more honest appraisal of Philippine defenses to the War Department during his five years in the Philippines, more could have been done to prepare. MacArthur's sublime conviction that the Japanese could be defeated on the beaches of Luzon not only handicapped the defense of Bataan, Manila, and Corregidor, it apparently led him to assume that a defense of the southern Philippines would prove unnecessary.³⁴ What else can explain the lack of any real effort to adequately supply the southern commands in the six months before the war? Before the Japanese invasion, MacArthur treated the southern Philippines as no more than a mobilization area for raw recruits to draw on for battles on Luzon. His lack of interest in naval operations and sealift are surprising

³⁴ Alan Schom, *The Eagle and the Rising Sun: The Japanese-American War, 1941–1943* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2004), 205–7. Schom has a detailed account of MacArthur's decisions for defense of the Philippines and is one of many historians who have faulted him for inflated reports about the Philippine Army and discounting Japanese power. It is my assumption that MacArthur did not contemplate a major campaign in the southern Philippines.

given his mission to defend an archipelago of 11 major islands and more than 7,000 minor islands. The ability of the Japanese Navy to quickly establish sea control gave the Japanese mobility that MacArthur's forces did not have. Optimism that the Far East Air Force could make up for deficiencies in the land and naval defenses of the Philippines was misplaced.

The fall of the Philippines is the worst disaster in U.S. military history. While the disaster of Bataan is well-documented, the story of the struggle in the southern Philippines is little known. The cost of MacArthur's miscalculation and poor preparation was even worse in the southern Philippines. Half-trained, poorly armed, and badly supplied, the defenders had no realistic hope against the military might of Imperial Japan. That their defense lasted as long as it did is a testament to their determination and valor.

CHAPTER 12

Blacklisted

Guerrilla Responses to Local Collaborators in Negros Oriental, Philippines, during the Second World War¹

by *Justin Jose A. Bulado, PhD*

Introduction

The issue of collaboration in the Philippines dates back to the Spanish colonial period when the local chieftains and tribespeople worked along with or for the Spanish conquistadors.² It continued even during the Philippine Revolution (1896–98) when local elites refused to take sides with the supremo, Andrés Bonifacio.³ What made it worse was the decision of the majority of these political elites to collaborate with the Americans, after seeing the futility of General Emilio Aguinaldo’s fight to maintain Philippine independence.⁴ In retrospect, the ruling class—i.e., political elites—have often accommodated occupying forces, whether

¹This chapter was previously published in *Prism*, the university journal of Negros Oriental State University, Dumaguete City, Philippines, and is reproduced in this volume with permission. See Justin Jose A. Bulado, “Guerrilla Responses to Local Collaborators in Negros Oriental during the Japanese Occupation,” *Prism* 25, no. 1 (2021): 53–69.

²The local chieftains were eventually called as the *principalia*—a landed elite class, that became the bureaucrats during the Spanish colonial period. Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America’s Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), 51–52.

³See chap. 7, “Betrayal of Teodoro Agoncillo’s Revolt of the Masses,” in Teodoro Agoncillo, *The Revolt of the Masses: The Story of Bonifacio and the Katipunan* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1996), 102–20.

⁴Renato Constantino, *The Philippines: A Past Revisited*, vol. 1 (Quezon City: Twentieth Printing, 1975), 238–46.

Spaniards or Americans. Though some resisted, most of the ruling class worked along with the colonizers. To understand the collaborative proclivities of political elites during the Japanese occupation of World War II, one must first be cognizant of their historical development as this will provide some context to the narrative and provide the reader with a better understanding of why they did what they did.

In one way or another, the actions of the ruling class or the political elites during the Spanish and American period, when they worked along with the colonizers, are not dissimilar to what the next generation of political elites did during the Japanese occupation. Whether it was a matter of survival or performing one's duty, among many other reasons, the political elites in the Philippines have invariably shown their willingness to work with an occupying force. Indeed, they were just continuing a common practice, or a habit, which pejoratively typifies the political elites as opportunistic, selfish, and disloyal. In their defense, the political elites would invariably describe their actions as pragmatic. They did not usually believe or stand by the idea of achieving independence by revolution but more so by compromise. To the eyes of the revolutionists, their actions were cowardly and traitorous, but for the political elites, they believed that they were doing the right thing for the people—that is, to abstain from unnecessary violence and casualties.⁵

There are few sources about collaboration in the Philippines during the Japanese period. Perhaps one of the earliest sources, if not one of the best defenses for the collaborators' cause, was Senator Claro M. Recto's *Three Years of Enemy Occupation: The Issue of Political Collaboration in the Philippines*. His book was more of a defense for him and his colleagues to give context for their collaboration with the Japanese occupying forces. Recto argued that their actions were not unlike those political elites who collaborated during the American occupation, as they believed that col-

⁵ Most of these political elites who collaborated with the Americans thought that they were collaborating for the betterment of the country. Constantino, *The Philippines*, 246.

laboration was imperative for the country's survival.⁶ Recto argued that they were merely ordered by Quezon to "try to keep the Philippines in one piece. Try to protect the people from Japan's brutality and avarice."⁷

Augusto de Viana and David J. Steinberg also wrote on Filipino collaboration with the Japanese during World War II.⁸ Their accounts, however, focused on the national level. Both historians examined the motives and the outcome of collaboration and how the Filipino collaborators had worked with the Japanese. Their sweeping accounts at the national level are useful to the present study to give a sense of perspective about what was happening in the capital and what kind of collaboration transpired there.

On collaboration at the local level, Satoshi Ara has written an article on the collaboration of Mayor Catalino Hermosilla, the wartime mayor of Ormoc, Leyte.⁹ Seemingly, Hermosilla's form of collaboration with the enemy was unique in the sense that he used it to gain leverage over his enemies. Ara inferred that this was done through the Home Guard, which Hermosilla purportedly used to maintain peace and order; however, again, it became apparent that its creation was to help increase Hermosilla's influence and gradually extirpate his political rivals. "Apparently," as Ara averred, "his chosen political stance was nothing but to protect his vested interests while ostensibly being cooperative with the Japanese."¹⁰ Ara's study on Hermosilla vividly depicts collaboration at the local level and how it is quite different from the national level. The motives of local collaborators vary from one place to another, depending on the province's

⁶ The Filipino political elites who collaborated with the Japanese forces desired for the "maintenance of peace and order and the promotion of well-being and happiness of the people." Their collaboration, undoubtedly, was done to mitigate the suffering of the Filipino people under Japanese rule. See Claro M. Recto, *Three Years of Enemy Occupation: The Issue of Political Collaboration in the Philippines* (Manila: People's Publishers, 1946), 8.

⁷ Recto, *Three Years of Enemy Occupation*, 9.

⁸ Augusto de Viana, *Kulaboretor! The Issue of Political Collaboration during World War II* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2016); and David J. Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II* (Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1967).

⁹ Satoshi Ara, "Collaboration and Resistance: Catalino Hermosilla and the Japanese Occupation of Ormoc, Leyte (1942–1945)," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 60, no. 1 (2012): 33–68.

¹⁰ Ara, "Collaboration and Resistance: Catalino Hermosilla and the Japanese Occupation of Ormoc, Leyte (1942–1945)," 46–47.

or town's political milieu. Hence, there is no general, or, rather, uniform, motive for why and how the Filipino collaborators worked with the Japanese. Again, the collaborators' experiences vary; that is why a study on the different collaborators and the different reactions to their actions is imperative to prevent any hasty generalizations about their actions.

Another work on the local history of the resistance and collaboration of Filipinos during World War II is Emil B. Justimbaste's *Heroes, Brigands, Spies: The Untold Story of Leyte Guerrillas during the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945*.¹¹ His book delves into the early beginnings of the Leyte Guerrilla Movement, the intricate, if not complicated, relationships among the guerrillas, and the guerrillas' responses to the issue of collaboration in Leyte typified by violent reprisals.

To explain why the political elites collaborated with the Japanese and why the guerrillas responded the way they did against the collaborators, we must understand Talcott Parsons's postulation that "people internalize the values of a society; that is, they make social values of the cultural system their own by learning from other actors in the social system what is expected of them."¹² Looking back at the situation of the collaborators and the resistance movement, one can see that collaborators were influenced by the similar role collaborators played during the American occupation. By and large, they acted in the same manner, that is, they collaborated with the occupying forces, the Americans, and then later the Japanese.¹³ They carried on with what was expected of them; they simply learned from the past political elites. Parsons aptly termed this as their *role expectation*. The same goes for the guerrillas, most of whom did not have the proclivity to collaborate because they believed in freedom and independence the same way

¹¹ Emil B. Justimbaste, *Heroes, Brigands, Spies: The Untold Story of Leyte Guerrillas during the Japanese Occupation, 1942–1945* (Ormoc: Emil B. Justimbaste, 2016).

¹² Ruth A. Wallace and Alison Wolf, *Contemporary Sociological Theory: Continuing the Classical Tradition* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), 29.

¹³ These Filipino political elites—or as Steinberg called them, the "Philippine oligarchy"—"had a historic tradition of flexibility toward any metropolitan power which would legitimate its position." See Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II*, 13.

the revolutionaries fought against the Americans during the Philippine-American War. However, it must be noted that most of the guerrillas were solidly loyal to the Americans.¹⁴

This essay is a work of microhistory, which is vital to fill the lacuna of microhistories in the Philippines, especially during the Japanese occupation. The issue of collaboration and responses to it is not black and white and never will be. One should not hastily say that collaborators were traitors and guerrillas were heroes, as their cases vary from one person to another. That aside, this chapter discusses the different responses of the members of the guerrilla movement toward the collaborators and how the guerrillas dealt with them at the local level. This shows the complex nature of collaboration and how it was pejoratively perceived by members of the resistance movement.

¹⁴ There are many accounts of guerrilla units who showed unyielding loyalty to the Americans, though not all can be thoroughly discussed in this essay. To name a few, James Kelly Morningstar wrote about a certain Maj Nakar, commanding officer of the 14th Infantry Regiment in Luzon. He had repeatedly tried to contact Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) command, sending a morse code message: "Detachment of Fil-American forces—we have not surrendered and are actively raiding northeast towns of Pangasinan, including Dagupan." Consequently, according to Morningstar, "a senior SWPA officer later described, 'his message was the first clear proof that loyal Filipinos, led by [Douglas] MacArthur's soldiers who had escaped capture, still fought on. It dramatically confirmed MacArthur's faith that they would and he determined to do all in his power not only to support it but in time to exploit it as a powerful adjunct to Allied arms.'" See James Kelly Morningstar, *War and Resistance in the Philippines, 1942–1944* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2021), 81. In Visayas, the central region of the Philippines, there were still many guerrilla movements that continued to fight against the Japanese occupying forces until the latter's surrender. Although there were some internal conflicts that arose due to question of command, they still were able to manage to patch things up and continue to fight—through guerrilla warfare—against the Japanese forces. See "Japanese Occupation in the Visayas," in Earl Jude Paul L. Cleope, *The Visayas: Islands in the Seas, A History* (Manila: National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 2023); and Justin Jose A. Bulado, "Divided by Pride: Internecine Strife in the Guerrilla Command of Negros Oriental, Philippines during the Second World War," *Journal of Philippine Local History & Heritage* 10, no.1 (June 2024): 85–146. By and large, James Villanueva has also pointed out the sense of loyalty that the guerrillas had toward the Americans, stating that: "a feeling of loyalty and indebtedness to the United States and the 'belief in the ideological worth of democracy over totalitarianism' were other factors in resistance to the Japanese." See James A. Villanueva, *Awaiting MacArthur's Return: World War II Guerrilla Resistance against the Japanese in the Philippines* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2022), 27.

Background

Collaboration in this context is defined as “working jointly or cooperating traitorously with the enemy.”¹⁵ Indeed, there were varying forms of war-time collaboration with the Japanese in the Philippines. There is political collaboration, military collaboration, economic collaboration, and others. Political collaboration is emphasized in this chapter as the main subjects collaborated in a political aspect, which is defined as the act of a government official, who is still exercising power, and is voluntarily working together with—or providing aid to—an occupying force.

In the Philippines, those who collaborated militarily included members of the Bureau of Constabulary and the League of Patriotic Filipinos, or more infamously known as the *Makapili* (Kalipunang Makabayan ng mga Pilipino). They were, especially the latter, the most dreaded Filipino units during the war. The Bureau of the Constabulary was primarily used “for domestic policing and counter-insurgency purposes.”¹⁶ Meanwhile, the *Makapilis* were active collaborators known for being a “fanatical, self-immolating Filipino militia” whose role was to serve as Japanese spies or saboteurs anonymously, as they hid their identities by wearing bayong (straw bags) on their head, and were often used to pinpoint who among the civilians were part, or sympathizers, of the guerrilla movement.¹⁷ During that time, the common perception among Filipinos was that the *Makapilis* were “the ones that ordered the killing of the people.”¹⁸ In Negros Oriental, the most widely known military collaborators were part of the Public Opinion Office, considered the “Japanese Spy Corps,” more or less like the *Makapili* in Luzon.¹⁹

¹⁵ This was the definition Peter Davies took from the Concise Oxford Dictionary. But this is just the general definition of the term, as there are more complex aspects and types of collaboration. Peter Davies, *Dangerous Liaisons: Collaboration and World War II* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 10.

¹⁶ Konrad Lawson, “Wartime Atrocities and the Politics of Treason in the Ruins of Japanese Empire, 1937–1953” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), 179.

¹⁷ Lawson, “Wartime Atrocities and the Politics of Treason in the Ruins of Japanese Empire, 1937–1953,” 185.

¹⁸ G.R. No. L-943, *The People of the Philippines vs Domingo Capacete*, 26 May 1949.

¹⁹ G.R. No. L-944, *The People of the Philippines vs Fausto Avila* (alias Faustino M. Avila), 26 May 1949.

Furthermore, the economic collaborators benefited financially by supplying the Japanese with raw materials or resources used in their war efforts. Many political elites were guilty of this crime, for example, Serging Osmena and F. C. De La Rama. Cultural collaboration, on the other hand, often involved propaganda. Cultural collaborators often worked for newspaper and magazine companies, which tried to brainwash the Filipinos into believing that the Americans were their enemies (given that Asia should be for the Asians) and that the country would never return to belong to the Philippines.²⁰

This chapter focuses more on the political collaborators and other minor collaborators and how the guerrillas responded to their collaboration. The guerrillas respected some of them, but they detested most collaborators as traitorous and conniving individuals. As a result, the unfortunate ones were violently assassinated, while others were fortunate enough to have survived such attacks. The succeeding paragraphs will recall the different cases of collaboration and the varying responses of the guerrillas.

Guerrilla Responses to Major Collaborators in Negros Oriental

The Case of Mayor Mariano Perdices

Mayor Mariano Perdices was a young politician who faced a herculean task when the Japanese arrived in the somber, soporific town of Dumaguete.²¹ He was immediately placed in a moral conundrum whether to actively collaborate with the Japanese or passively collaborate with them. In the end, he chose the latter.

Even if Perdices has been included in the list of enemy collaborators reported by Juan Dominado, who was the S-2 or intelligence officer of the 75th Infantry, he still managed to gain the trust of the members of the

²⁰ Maria Felisa Syjuco-Tan, *Philippine History*, vol. 1, *War and Reconstruction, 1941–1947* (Quezon City: Pantas Publishing & Printing, 2015), 94.

²¹ See Justin Jose A. Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete: The Case of Mariano Perdices, Wartime Mayor (1942–1945)," *Prism* 20, no. 2 (July–December 2015), 59.

guerrilla movement, since there are many instances where Mayor Perdices proved to have had connections with the guerrilla movement.²² Likewise, Perdices opted to remain in the occupied area to help or, since it was a time of war, become the cushion of the people of Dumaguete.²³

Before he continued serving as mayor of Dumaguete during the Japanese occupation, one of the first things that he did to help the people of Dumaguete was to demur on the supposed plan of burning the town so that the Japanese could not make use of the infrastructures.²⁴ Perdices completely opposed this plan, so he met with Silliman University's president, Dr. Arthur L. Carson, and advised him not to support or push it through. More specifically, he asked Carson to give him and the other Dumaguete officials time to warn the people, as their safety was his primary concern. Without a doubt, Perdices thought that it was not a good idea as it would be devastating to the people living in Dumaguete. He averred that "the only people to suffer from a burning policy would be the Filipinos."²⁵ Eventually, he successfully convinced those who had planned the policy to change their minds. This action of Perdices benefited the people of Dumaguete, not necessarily the Japanese, since some of them, especially those who had escaped to the hinterlands at the outset of Japanese arrival, gradually returned to their residences.²⁶ Perdices's request to Carson ultimately saved the town from being unnecessarily destroyed.

When the Japanese finally arrived, Perdices was one of the first municipal officials to return to office.²⁷ His intentions were clear from the start. He opted to return to Dumaguete immediately, not necessarily because he was under duress, but because he felt that he could save more lives if he were in the occupied area. It was known—not among the Japanese forces,

²² See Maj Juan Dominado, *Enemy Collaborators, A Report* as cited in File Name 69 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers, World War II Archives, Silliman University Library.

²³ Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete," 64–65.

²⁴ Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete," 64–65.

²⁵ Arthur L. Carson, *Silliman University: 1901–1959* (Taiwan: United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, 1965), 134.

²⁶ Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete," 59–60.

²⁷ Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete," 59–60.

but among the members of the guerrilla movement—that Perdices, even if he was seemingly the puppet mayor of Dumaguete, was still clandestinely in contact with the guerrillas.²⁸ One of the few guerrilla members that he was constantly, if surreptitiously, in touch with was Lieutenant Juan Dominado, the intelligence officer of the 75th Infantry Regiment.²⁹

Eventually, Perdices's intent or loyalty was tested when Juan Dominado was asked by Professor Henry Roy Bell (a faculty member of Silliman University, who became one of the leading, respected figures of the guerrilla forces in Malabo) to rescue Lieutenant Louis R. Vail, a U.S. Army Signal Corps officer.³⁰ Professor Bell specifically needed Vail to fix and operate his radio in Malabo, which was crucial to receive and transmit information.³¹ Lieutenant Vail was previously wounded and was being treated at the Mission Hospital. He had just recently been married to a local Filipina named Rosa, and Lieutenant Dominado reported to Bell that it would be difficult to convince Vail to help Bell as he “may not want to take a break so soon that would risk their lives.”³² But Bell was adamant that he really needed Vail in Malabo. He then replied to Dominado, stating that

if you think it would be all right to ask him, I will be satisfied with his answer—whatever it is. He was a student of mine, as you may know, and is a friend. I can provide a cottage for Louis and his new wife. He will understand my need for him. You could suggest to him offhandedly that as a prisoner his good life is not necessarily going to last long.³³

²⁸ See Diaries of Juan Dominado and Lorenzo Cimafranca, as cited in Earl Jude Cleope, “Silliman War Diaries” (unpublished manuscript, Silliman University, Dumaguete City, Philippines, no date).

²⁹ Bulado, “Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete,” 62.

³⁰ Scott A. Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines: Professor Bell's Private War against the Japanese* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 54.

³¹ Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 54.

³² Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 54.

³³ Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 54.

However, things got complicated for Lieutenant Vail when he had a check-up at the Mission Hospital, during which he talked to a close friend from Silliman University, Teodorico Lajato. He was admitted at the Mission Hospital “for a deep cut on his right forearm.”³⁴ During their conversation, Vail voiced his negative sentiments, if not frustrations, against the Japanese. Little did Vail know that Lajato was the head of the Public Opinion Office and was a notable spy or informer (usually identifying guerrillas) for the Japanese. It was only when another patient, named Angelo, overheard their conversation and quickly informed Vail that Lajato was a Japanese informer and that his wounds had come from an ambush by Vic Jornales and his guerrilla unit that Vail started to feel anxious about their future in Dumaguete. Vail did not know that his friend actively collaborated with the Japanese forces. Now his life and that of his wife were in danger. Thus, when Dominado spoke to Vail about Bell’s offer he quickly accepted it as he did not feel safe anymore in Dumaguete after his conversation with his old friend Lajato.³⁵

Vail and his wife would eventually arrive at Malabo and meet with Bell. However, they were not accompanied by Lieutenant Dominado since he had to return quickly to Dumaguete due to an emergency: his wife was missing and the Japanese were looking for him. In his diary, Dominado recalled:

At about 2:00 o’clock that following morning, we were all aroused by the arrival of the boy I left with my wife. He was gasping for breath and could hardly utter a word. When he got his wind back, he reported that late the previous afternoon, about four hours after we left, Furisima, with some soldiers, entered our house and questioned my wife about my whereabouts. . . . He said that all my wife could do was cry and cower in fear and that they ransacked all the rooms.

³⁴Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 55.

³⁵Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 54.

My first concern was my wife, and when I asked him where [she] was, he said that she ran out and did not know where she went and that he himself ran to catch up with me.³⁶

Before Dominado could arrive in Dumaguete, he encountered Vic Jornales and his men. During their conversation, Jornales proudly told Dominado that he was able to raid the house of Dumaguete's chief of police, Severino Pastor, the previous night and was able to confiscate Chief Pastor's revolver.³⁷ After hearing Jornales's story, Dominado then figured out something that would exculpate him from his dilemma: he was going to need Pastor's revolver so that he could gain, or reaffirm, the trust of the Japanese and so that the Japanese would not doubt him as someone who was working with or for the guerrilla movement.³⁸ Jornales did not have qualms with the idea and gladly gave the revolver to Dominado.

When Dominado finally arrived in Dumaguete, he first tried to look for his wife, Maria, but she was nowhere to be found.³⁹ He then had already thought of the worst-case scenario, which was that the Japanese had taken custody of his wife because of his role in Vail's escape. Desperate for help, he then went to the house of Governor Guillermo Villanueva, but Villanueva did not want to help and told Dominado that he would have nothing to do with him and that his case "is now handled purely by the Japanese."⁴⁰

Since the governor did not help him, he had no choice but to go directly to the Japanese. It took much courage to do this, but his gumption paid off. When he met Captain Tsuda, he then immediately presented the revolver of Chief Pastor and said: "I wasn't able to stop a raid on Chief

³⁶ Diary of Juan Dominado, as cited in Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 27.

³⁷ Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 56. Silliman stated that Jornales had been eyeing on getting the gun of Chief Pastor. See Robert B. Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance: Guerrilla Warfare in Negros Island, Philippines* (Manila: Philippine Editions, 1980), 99.

³⁸ Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 56.

³⁹ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 26.

⁴⁰ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 27.

Pastor's home last night, but afterward I retrieved the Chief's revolver that the young rascals had taken. I hope to persuade one of them to settle back in town in a few days."⁴¹ This undoubtedly impressed Captain Tsuda, but the captain could not answer Dominado when asked about his wife's whereabouts and why the Japanese ransacked his house. Instead, he merely congratulated Dominado and rewarded him.⁴²

Nevertheless, when Dominado left the Japanese headquarters, he subsequently found out from a friend that his wife, Maria, was safe and that, as his friend explained, "she was saved by Mayor Mariano Perdices, who by great luck, had just returned from Manila—where with characteristic aplomb he attended a conference of Philippine puppet mayors. Perdices was back in time to learn of Tsuda's plan and got Maria out in time." Mayor Perdices then hid Dominado's wife from the Japanese after knowing that her life was in danger due to Dominado's involvement in Vail and his wife's escape from Dumaguete.⁴³ This action by Perdices, which happened around the third week of September 1942, solidified the guerrillas' trust in him. However, the guerrillas' trust in Perdices was further reinforced when Perdices started to send medicines for Dominado to give to his compatriots in the hinterlands.⁴⁴ Perdices was treading on thin ice. One can only imagine the potential consequences of his actions if the Japanese found out that he was working with the guerrillas.

Suffice it to say, Mayor Perdices played an essential role as the war-time mayor of Dumaguete and was perceived by the guerrillas as one of them—a political collaborator who played the double game, who risked his life to help the guerrillas. He later also helped the Americans, when he became the buffer or the middleman between Lorenzo Cimafranca (a guerrilla runner) and engineer E. J. Blanco leading to the creation of

⁴¹ Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 57.

⁴² Mills, *Stranded in the Philippines*, 57.

⁴³ This is corroborated by Silliman's account on the incident, stating that Perdices hid Maria "in the closet of another house which belonged to her relatives." Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 102.

⁴⁴ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 28.

a blueprint of Dumaguete airport.⁴⁵ This was used for the bombing campaign of that airport in September 1944, which led to the destruction of Japanese aircraft and supplies.⁴⁶ Overall, Perdices's role was recognized by both the guerrillas and the local populace of Dumaguete. As a result, after the war he became a successful politician in Negros Oriental.

The Case of Governor Guillermo Villanueva

The case of Governor Guillermo Villanueva (governor of Negros Oriental) was different from Mayor Perdices, as Villanueva was abhorred by the guerrillas and was perceived as a traitor for actively collaborating with the Japanese forces.⁴⁷ Although he was able to help some locals, most of the accounts from civilians prove that Villanueva was an active collaborator, unlike Perdices.

However, it must be noted that Governor Villanueva's role in the occupied area was very limited. He did not have the power and influence he had before the war. In fact, some accounts state that he merely accompanied the Japanese in the different towns of Negros Oriental to help convince hitherto elected municipal officials to return to town.⁴⁸ Through this, he played an essential role in convincing the municipal officials to side with the Japanese imperial forces. He convinced the mayors of Bacong, Dauin, Zamboanguita, Siaton, and Tolong to return to the occupied areas and continue to serve as puppet mayors of the Japanese imperial forces.⁴⁹ As a result, the guerrillas then considered him as an enemy.

⁴⁵ Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Dumaguete," 61.

⁴⁶ After the initial bombing on 12 September 1944, Lt Yaichiro Yamada—the intelligence officer of the *174th Independent Infantry Battalion* assigned in Negros Oriental—tallied that half the planes at Dumaguete Airfield were destroyed. See Interpellation of Lt Yaichiro Yamada, United States of America vs. Satoshi Oie, trial transcript, 27 March 1947, Military Commission, Philippine-Ryukus Command, U.S. Army Forces Pacific Command.

⁴⁷ For more details on the case of Guillermo Villanueva, see Justin Jose A. Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Negros Oriental: The Case of Guillermo Z. Villanueva, Wartime Governor (1942–1945)," *Prism* 25, no. 1 (2020): 33–52.

⁴⁸ Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 86.

⁴⁹ Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 86.

Other acts that made Villanueva unpopular among the guerrillas were representing the KALIBAPI (Kapisanan sa Paglilingkod sa Bagong Pilipinas) assembly, his role in the food confiscation incident in Tanjay, and his notice to those who had evacuated to the hinterlands in fear of the purported “conscription.”⁵⁰

As a result of his active collaboration, he almost fell victim to guerrilla reprisals as he was ambushed on 22 October 1942 by Corporal Rodolfo Maypa and Private First Class Ramon Custodio.⁵¹ Maypa and Custodio fired at the governor’s car and wounded him; the wound was not fatal and was treated easily by Dr. Ponce de Leon in the Mission Hospital.⁵² For safety reasons, Governor Villanueva decided to leave Dumaguete and seek a haven in Opon, Cebu, on 1 November 1942. However, he only stayed in Opon temporarily while waiting for the violent reprisals to die down.⁵³

Two years later, in June 1944, Villanueva wrote a missive to Colonel Salvador Abcede, head of the resistance movement in Negros Oriental, asking him to surrender and return to the occupied area.⁵⁴ Abcede’s riposte was clear, however. He told Villanueva that “my men and I are certainly going down soon but not to surrender. . . . God willing, all true Filipinos are going down, not to shake the hands with the Japanese, but to drive them from our shores.”⁵⁵ Abcede’s reply clearly showed where his, and, in general, the guerrilla movement’s, loyalty was: they were freedom fighters who were loyal to America and were eagerly waiting for General Douglas MacArthur’s inexorable return.

Suffice it to say, the governor was in too deep. Robert B. Silliman described him as a “much-tormented official under Japanese orders.”⁵⁶ He had to choose between risking his life (like Perdices did) or trying to

⁵⁰ Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 67.

⁵¹ Cleope, “Silliman War Diaries,” 96.

⁵² Cleope, “Silliman War Diaries,” 96.

⁵³ Cleope, “Silliman War Diaries,” 99.

⁵⁴ Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 63–64.

⁵⁵ Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 64–66.

⁵⁶ Silliman, *Pocket of Resistance*, 63.

save his life and the lives of his family members by collaborating with the Japanese. Unfortunately, he lost the guerrillas' respect because he chose the latter. He died retreating from American forces in the hinterlands of Zamboanguita. It has been said that he was killed by the retreating Japanese forces on 18 September 1945 before the latter surrendered. Even now, his remains have not yet been found.⁵⁷

The Case of Jose "Pepe" Martinez

One prominent collaborator who unnecessarily fell victim to guerrilla reprisal was former Dumaguete mayor and provincial board member Jose "Pepe" Martinez. He was active in the pacification campaign convincing Americans, guerrillas, and other locals to come down from the mountains to the occupied areas.⁵⁸ The guerrillas perceived him as an active collaborator—a traitor—because of his role in these pacification campaigns.⁵⁹ Jose Romero, however, did not see Martinez the same way the guerrillas did; in fact, he described Martinez as a man "known for his great courage."⁶⁰ More often than not, as a part of the pacification campaign, he would go up to the mountains unarmed with only a guide to try convincing locals to return to the occupied areas. He did not have any reservations in doing so, nor did he fear for his life. He participated in the pacification campaign because he believed he was helping the people through his collaboration with the Japanese.⁶¹

Martinez took the place of Jose Romero in convincing the Bryant family from Pamplona to return to Dumaguete.⁶² During this time, he was already detested by the guerrillas and was notorious for aiding the Japa-

⁵⁷ Bulado, "Political Collaboration during the Japanese Occupation of Negros Oriental," 43.

⁵⁸ Alice Bryant, in her memoir, wrote that Pepe Martinez was active in the pacification campaign and would always head to the mountains to convince locals to return to the occupied areas. See Alice Franklin Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened* (Boston, MA: Chapman & Grimes, 1947), 86–87.

⁵⁹ Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened*, 88.

⁶⁰ Jose E. Romero, *Not So Long Ago: A Chronicle of My Life, Times, and Contemporaries* (Manila: Alemar Phoenix Publishing House, 1979), 162.

⁶¹ Account of Pedro Basa, in Cleope, *Silliman War Diaries*, 15.

⁶² Romero, *Not So Long Ago*, 162.

nese in the arrest of Pio Caballero, the manager of the Philippine National Bank (Dumaguete Branch). The Japanese later executed Caballero as he refused to cooperate with them.⁶³ The Bryants knew about this and were quite apprehensive to know that Martinez was heading to their plantation.⁶⁴ They already knew his mission, so when he arrived, all they did was ask him questions about the Japanese. In reply, Martinez told them that he could not ascertain that they would be treated well, as the Japanese were “very strict” and “very stern”—even his own brother, Celerino Martinez, fell victim to Japanese brutality.⁶⁵ He then told the Bryant family that he was in “a very uncomfortable position. The Filipinos consider me a traitor,” Martinez candidly admitted, “I suppose the Americans think I am against them. And the Japanese don’t trust me.”⁶⁶ His statement to the Bryants shows the conundrum that collaborators experienced during the Japanese occupation: how they were often misunderstood by their fellow Filipinos and distrusted by both the Americans and the Japanese.

Unfortunately for Martinez, he became one of the targets of the guerrilla reprisals. The guerrillas wanted to arrest him and bring him to Malabo. They figured out a plan to entrap him in Luzuriaga (now Valencia) through the cooperation of the city’s mayor, Jose Villamil. Villamil wrote a letter to Martinez telling him that “some guerrillas were willing to surrender and that he should come to Valencia and converse with them” on 1 November 1942.⁶⁷ Without hesitation, Martinez, with a few bodyguards, went to meet Villamil in Luzuriaga. After the meeting, they decided to go to the residence of Judge Pablo Teves (who was Martinez’s uncle and Villamil’s father-in-law). When Judge Teves saw Martinez, he advised him to leave the town right away as he was the target of the guerrillas

⁶³ Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened*, 86–87.

⁶⁴ Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened*, 86–87.

⁶⁵ Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened*, 87. The slapping of Celerino Martinez was corroborated in the account of Jose Romero about Pepe Martinez. See Romero, *Not So Long Ago*, 174–75.

⁶⁶ Bryant, *The Sun Was Darkened*, 88.

⁶⁷ Lt Benjamin Vilorio, *Early Signs of the Resistance Movement in Negros Oriental*, as cited in File Name 95, Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers, 8.

and that his life was in danger. Furthermore, Teves also told him that the pacification campaign was “impossible and hopeless,” stating that most of the Americans and guerrillas in the hinterlands did not consider surrender an option.⁶⁸ A few moments later, a scuffle ensued, which led to the death of one of Martinez’s bodyguards. After that, Martinez was arrested by the guerrillas led by Lieutenant Ben Vilorio and Lieutenant Augusto Mendaros.⁶⁹

The mission of the guerrillas was to bring Martinez to Malabo. Lieutenant Dominado was to take charge in bringing him there.⁷⁰ However, Martinez was never brought alive to Malabo; he was killed at dawn on 3 November 1942. They headed for Malabo, but for some unknown reason, the guerrillas summarily executed him along the way in Apolong.⁷¹ Dr. Jose Garcia, in an interview with Professor Caridad Rodriguez, retold the story of his final encounter with Martinez stating,

My companions and I were looking for a hut to rest and have a place to sleep above Camp-Look-Out. It was about almost 6:00 o’clock in the afternoon when we were going up this hill, and on our way, we met Pepe Martinez, accompanied by around ten guerrilla soldiers going down the hill. We recognized each other, and we just smiled at each other. He did not talk to me. I think he was confident that nothing would happen to him. In just a short while, we found a small nipa hut in the middle of an abaca plantation, and we thought it was a good place to rest for the night. Just as we sat down on the floor we heard several shots from below the hill and found out later that Pepe Martinez was shot.⁷²

⁶⁸ Veronico “Ron” Somera, *Brown American: Philippine Life, World War II, and Survival in a White Man’s World* (San Diego, CA: CreateSpace, 2014), 47.

⁶⁹ Vilorio, *Early Signs of the Resistance Movement in Negros Oriental*, 9.

⁷⁰ Vilorio, *Early Signs of the Resistance Movement in Negros Oriental*, 9.

⁷¹ According to Timoteo Oracion, Martinez was shot six times with a .30-caliber rifle. See Account of Timoteo Oracion, in Cleope, “Silliman War Diaries,” 47.

⁷² Caridad Aldecoa Rodriguez, *Negros Oriental: From American Rule to the Present, A History*, vol. 2, *The War Years* (Cebu City: Jose Clavano Incorporated, 1989), 121.

The people of Luzuriaga bore the brunt of Martinez's arrest and execution. There were serious ramifications that followed. After learning about what happened to Martinez, the Japanese forces sought retribution, and the next day, went to Luzuriaga. However, before they could arrive, the guerrillas had already informed the people to evacuate to the hills as they were able to receive information from the underground movement that the Japanese were planning a vicious retaliatory attack. Thus, a cavalcade of townspeople tirelessly walked to the hills to escape from the Japanese forces. Unfortunately, there were still some stragglers who remained in town. They were arrested later by the Japanese and, as one eyewitness recalled, "tied to house posts, and mercilessly burned alive."⁷³ The Japanese also burned almost all of the buildings and houses in the town. Only three buildings were spared—the elementary school, the market, and the Roman Catholic church.⁷⁴

The people of Luzuriaga suffered tremendously because of the murder of Jose Martinez. In hindsight, Jose Romero described the untimely death of Martinez as "one of the drawbacks of the resistance movement."⁷⁵ Whether it was indeed a drawback or not, it is not surprising to know that the guerrillas were targeting collaborators. At that time, when emotions ran high and when things seemed black and white, one could not blame the guerrillas for doing what they did.

⁷³ Somera, *Brown American*, 48. It is possible that Somera was referring to three natives of barrio Bong-ao in Luzuriaga: Castro Panday, Irineo Baybay, and Modesto Albina. As recorded, the three were tied to a post of a house and then the house was burned down by the Japanese. This happened a day after the execution of Martinez. See "History and Cultural Life of Barrio Bong-ao," Historical Data Papers of Luzuriaga, Negros Oriental, National Memory Project, National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

⁷⁴ The elementary school was later used as garrison headquarters for the occupying Japanese forces in Luzuriaga. Somera, *Brown American*, 48–49.

⁷⁵ Romero, however, saw it as "inevitable in view of the emergency and the confusion of the times." Romero, *Not So Long Ago*, 175.

Guerrilla Reprisals against Minor Collaborators in Negros Oriental

Many other violent reprisals took place before and after Martinez's execution. On 28 October, Governor Villanueva ordered a policeman named Cabaron to deliver a letter to a wife of a Japanese officer named Shoshoki in Siquijor. After landing in Siquijor, Cabaron was immediately shot by the guerrillas. After that, two other men from Dumaguete were sent to Siquijor to investigate the whereabouts of Cabaron, and both of them were also killed.⁷⁶ On 30 October, another suspected collaborator, Miguel Patero from Ajong, Sibulan, was killed by Vic Jornales and his men.⁷⁷

In Amlan, Primo Benjamin proudly admitted to Lieutenant Pedro Bandoquillo, Captain Leon Flores, and the other members of the Amlan guerrilla unit, that he was a spy of the Japanese after being confronted by them.⁷⁸ The case of Benjamin is interesting because he was a friend of Bandoquillo and Flores. Both were in a dilemma as to what they were going to do with him after his surprising admission, perhaps not knowing the implications of being a spy. After much consternation, the Amlan guerrilla unit then made the difficult decision to order the execution of Benjamin for being a Japanese spy.⁷⁹

Teodorico Lajato (head of the Public Opinion Office) was also ambushed by the guerrillas led by Lieutenant Federico Ridad on the evening of 29 August 1942.⁸⁰ Lajato was heading back to Dumaguete from Siaton when Ridad and his men opened fire at his car somewhere near Dauin. Lajato was hit in the forearm, while his driver, Gerardo Diago, was badly hurt in the leg. Nevertheless, both of them were able to escape, spending the night in the convent of Dauin.⁸¹ They were treated at the Mission

⁷⁶ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 96–97.

⁷⁷ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 97.

⁷⁸ Venancio S. Bandoquillo, "The Formation of the Amlan Guerrilla Unit—A Narrative," in File Name 62 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.

⁷⁹ Bandoquillo, "The Formation of the Amlan Guerrilla Unit—A Narrative."

⁸⁰ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 148–49.

⁸¹ Cleope, "Silliman War Diaries," 148–49.

Hospital the next day.⁸² The day after Lajato's ambush, Japanese forces then went to Siaton to fetch his family, which was left behind, and to get some of his furniture as he did not intend to go back to Siaton. Indeed, the guerrillas were relentless in their blacklist mission against purported collaborators. They even killed the puppet mayor of Bacong, Tomas Merced.⁸³

However, these guerrilla reprisals stopped when Mayor Perdices advised Juan Dominado to discontinue the blacklist mission, as it was not the right way of attaining justice. Whether it was the right way of attaining justice or not, many collaborators had already fallen victim to these violent reprisals in executions or assassinations without trial. These attacks caused fear among the collaborators in the occupied areas, but they continued to stand their ground and perform their limited roles.

Even when the war was almost over, the guerrillas still looked at the collaborators and those living in the occupied areas with contempt. In his letter to the officers and men of the 7th Military District dated 12 November 1944, Lieutenant Colonel Abcede asked his men to

scorn and treat with contempt, all Filipinos who have worked for the enemy as "puppets", collaborators, informers, and fifth columnists; all Filipinos who in one way or another have aided or made it easy for the enemy to continue to stay in our country, but could not be prosecuted on account of the devious legalities; and all Filipinos who stayed in the enemy-occupied areas . . . their only aim being to join the winner after the struggle.⁸⁴

⁸² Rodriguez, *Negros Oriental*, 67; and Account on the Beginning of Guerrilla Warfare in the Dumaguete Area, in File Name 60 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.

⁸³ Interview of Norberto Merced, 2 March 1946, "Manila Report No. 275: Murder of Twenty-Two Filipino Civilians, Attempted Murder of Another in Barrio Calindagan, Looting and Burning in Barrio Banilad, Dumaguete, Negros Oriental, 10 November 1944, and Torture of Severino Pastor in Dumaguete, Negros Oriental in October 1944," container: 1927, Record Group 331: Records of Allied Operational and Occupation, GHQ, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, NARA; see also Historical Data Papers of Bacong, National Library of the Philippines, National Memory Project, National Historical Commission of the Philippines, 93.

⁸⁴ LtCol Salvador Abcede, "Message to all Officers and Men of the 7th Military District," 12 November 1944, in File Name 27 of the Robert B. Silliman World War II Papers.

Abcede also described the collaborators and the people living in the occupied areas as opportunists by siding with the enemies or doing nothing, while he characterized the guerrillas as patriotic Filipinos.⁸⁵

The view of Abcede was shared among the guerrillas. They always thought that they were of service to the country by fighting the Japanese, while the collaborators were doing a disservice by working with the Japanese. Be that as it may, looking back at the actions of the guerrillas toward the collaborators in Negros Oriental, one can infer that both sides indeed had a bitter rivalry. Unfortunately, it was a case of Filipinos fighting against fellow Filipinos due to differing foreign loyalties, the guerrillas being extremely loyal to the Americans, while the collaborators—although not all, as most were passive—being too involved with the Japanese. Often, guerrilla retaliation was swift and violent. James A. Villanueva appropriately concluded that “the summary justice and sometimes brutal methods of the guerrillas in eliminating informers and others assisting the Japanese is a dark chapter in the history of the Philippines.”⁸⁶

Conclusion

By and large, there were two types of reactions by the guerrillas to the collaboration issue in Negros Oriental: one that was supportive (toward Perdices and other passive collaborators) and one that was violent (toward Governor Guillermo Villanueva, Jose Martinez, and other active minor collaborators). Admittedly, some of those whom the guerrillas killed did not necessarily deserve it, but the emotions ran high during those times, and they fell victim to the polarizing tendency of being either pro-American or pro-Japanese. However, it must be noted that this should not have been the case, as the issue of collaboration and resistance is not, and should not be, typified as *black* and *white*. Be that as it may, the violence waned after Mayor Perdices asked Major Juan Dominado to refrain from

⁸⁵ Abcede, “Message to all Officers and Men of the 7th Military District.”

⁸⁶ Villanueva, *Awaiting MacArthur's Return*, 158.

killing purported collaborators as this was not the right way to attain justice.

In conclusion, most of the collaborators were perceived negatively by the guerrillas due, in most part, to the latter's extreme loyalty to the Americans. They viewed most of the collaborators as traitors to the Americans who had helped the Filipino people immensely. To the guerrillas' eyes, collaboration was a testament to their pro-Japanese proclivities. Inevitably, most of these political collaborators, especially at the national level, were given amnesty—known as Amnesty Proclamation No. 51—by President Manuel Roxas, and the issue of collaboration gradually died down.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II*, 161.

CHAPTER 13

Naval-Capital Towns as the Center of the Military-Industrial Complex

by Ryan C. Walker

What led to Naval Submarine Base New London and General Dynamics Electric Boat being located in the small town of Groton at the mouth of the Thames River in a relatively rural area of eastern Connecticut?¹ Generations of naval-capital investment in Groton—wealth in the form of assets, maritime in nature, owned by a private or public organization, with the express purpose of researching, developing, constructing, maintaining, operating, and/or otherwise supporting public naval activities of the nation—built the town into what the residents proclaimed the “Submarine Capital of the World.”

General Dynamics Electric Boat Shipyard and Naval Submarine Base New London worked concurrently to turn Groton into a Naval-Capital Town (NCT), a town that defines itself as a geographic location where the national efforts of research, development, construction, and mainte-

¹The line of questioning originated with the author as a young recruit who found out that his path to become a fire control technician in the U.S. Navy would begin in a relatively small town located in eastern Connecticut after graduating from Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes. This research path followed a very simple question that formed during my tenure in the U.S. Navy and was stationed at Submarine Base New London in Groton, CT: “Why Groton?”

nance of naval capital producing naval vessels is centered.² Through several generations of sustained investment, Groton became synonymous with submarine construction and operation, a process involving buy-in from stakeholders with varied interests such as the local community, labor groups, businesses, the U.S. Navy, and local, state, and federal politicians. Submarines are among the most complex machines that require a national effort channeled into several NCTs, which are connected in a network. These NCT networks channel the national effort into centralized locations, such as Groton, as a complex web of interconnected and interdependent economic activities associated with military production that create what is known as the military-industrial complex (MIC). In the example of Groton, the NCT network developed from 1910 to 1940 was made up not only of nearby towns in Connecticut's Thames River Valley but also of NCTs from Kittery, Maine, to Coco Solo, Panama, and Manila, Philippines. The ties that connected these locations strengthened during the Second World War, but they existed for decades prior to the war as a part of the MIC.

Historiography

Whenever the MIC is mentioned, the conversation inevitably turns to Dwight D. Eisenhower's farewell address warning:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowl-

²This chapter is a continuation of the research conducted for Ryan C. Walker, "The Development of Groton as a Naval Capital Town: 1868–1940," in *Seapower by Other Means: Naval Contributions to National Objectives Beyond Sea Control, Power Projection, and Traditional Service Missions*, vol. 5, The Kiel Seapower Series, ed. J. Overton (Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2023), 29–54.

edgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.³

Despite this being the remembered portion of his farewell address, Eisenhower's message is more nuanced, his argument being:

A vital element in keeping the peace is our military establishment. Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action, so that no potential aggressor may be tempted to risk his own destruction. Our military organization today bears little relation to that known by any of my predecessors in peace time, or indeed by the fighting men of Second World War or Korea. Until the latest of our world conflicts, the United States had no armaments industry. American makers of plowshares could, with time and as required, make swords as well. But now we can no longer risk emergency improvisation of national defense; we have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions.⁴

As is often forgotten, during his speech, Eisenhower recognizes the importance of the industry while simultaneously being wary of its influence. The times have changed and so too must the MIC persist to defend American sovereignty. Eisenhower's own experience with the U.S. Army may have colored his statements, but the armed forces of the United States included the U.S. Navy, which had much more visible and significant investments in its supply chain prior to the Second World War. The U.S. Navy did not

³ Farewell address by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 17 January 1961, Final TV Talk 1/17/61 (1), box 38, Speech Series, Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower as President, 1953–61, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

⁴ Farewell address by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 17 January 1961.

dramatically transform during World War II; it had received sustained investment for several generations and been involved in several conflicts as the primary representation of American power abroad, a product of increased investment for the “New Steel Navy” after 1883.⁵ U.S. Navy ships were deployed to regions where it sought to project influence and were often at the center of diplomatic conflicts such as the USS *Baltimore* (C3) Affair in Valparaíso, Chile (1893); the USS *Maine* (ACR 1) Explosion in Havana, Cuba (1898), (along with the prominent role the Navy played in the Spanish-American War); up until the USS *Panay* Incident (1937), when Imperial Japanese naval forces attacked *Panay* (PR 5) while it was evacuating civilians during the Nanjing Massacre. These high-profile incidents occurred where the Navy was the primary American force projection.⁶

The Navy could not accomplish this without its significant shoreside bureaucracy and private companies to support its mission. Eisenhower’s assertion that it was a new phenomenon spurred by the Second World War and the Cold War is incorrect. The MIC is defined by Mark R. Wilson as “the networks of producers, sellers, promoters, and consumers of the goods and services required by the armed forces.” As Wilson notes, the moniker is often employed as a pejorative, while the less charged term

⁵ Timothy S. Wolters, “Recapitalizing the Fleet: A Material Analysis of Late-Nineteenth-Century U.S. Naval Power,” *Technology and Culture* 52, no. 1 (January 2011): 103–26, <https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2011.0023>; William H. Thiesen, “Professionalization and American Naval Modernization in the 1880s,” *Naval War College Review* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1996): 33–49; and William H. Thiesen, “Construction of America’s ‘New Navy’ and the Transfer of British Naval Technology to the United States, 1870–1900,” *Mariner’s Mirror* 85 no. 4 (November 1999): 428–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00253359.1999.10656766>.

⁶ Joyce S. Goldberg, “Consent to Ascent: The Baltimore Affair and the U.S. Rise to World Power Status,” *Americas* 41, no. 1 (July 1984): 21–35, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1006946>; Kurt Hackemer, “The U.S. Navy and the Late Nineteenth-Century Steel Industry,” *Historian* 57, no. 4 (Summer 1995): 703–5; Louis A. Pérez, “The Meaning of the Maine: Causation and the Historiography of the Spanish-American War,” *Pacific Historical Review* 58, no. 3 (August 1989): 293–322, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3640268>; “The American Decision to Go to War with Spain, 1898,” in *Blinders, Blunders, and Wars: What America and China Can Learn*, eds. David C. Gompert, Hans Binnendijk, and Bonny Lin (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2014), 53–62; Andrew Kelly, “The Sino-Japanese War and the Anglo-American Response,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 32, no. 2 (December 2013): 33–34; Joseph F. Bouchard, “Accidents and Crises: ‘Panay, Liberty,’ and ‘Stark,’” *Naval War College Review* 41, no. 4 (Autumn 1988): 87–88; and Hunter Stires, “‘They Were Playing Chicken’: The U.S. Asiatic Fleet’s Gray-Zone Deterrence Campaign Against Japan, 1937–40,” *Naval War College Review* 72, no. 3 (Summer 2019): 139–58.

defense sector is often employed to avoid the same level of negative connotation.⁷ Wilson further argued that the public myth surrounding the MIC is a result of the historical context of the Cold War, as the United States had maintained investments for a national defense well before World War II by a dynamic mix of private and public entities.⁸ Wilson's findings are in agreement with the interpretation of Timothy S. Wolters's and William H. Thiesen's research into the U.S. Navy's processes at the turn of the twentieth century. Wolters noted, "These findings serve as a powerful reminder that capital-intensive organizations, like industrial-era navies, usually took decades to recapitalize . . . fleet operations required considerable coordination among vessels."⁹ Wilson's chapter (despite mentioning workers) largely focuses on the macroeconomic processes, government oversight, and the evolution of the MIC in the twentieth century. His goal was to offer greater understanding, not to illustrate the processes involved in a particular form of production, and is limited in application to naval forces.

As a potential subset of MIC studies that emphasize the interaction between leaders of industries, politicians, and military officials, submarine construction has been analyzed, with Gary E. Weir seeking to specifically understand interwar submarine design and construction.¹⁰ In *Building American Submarines 1914–1940*, he emphasizes the connections between private and public stakeholders, arguing more could be learned from the interwar production. Weir has been one of the primary influences in identifying these processes specifically for shipyards, arguing the "war-time blend of naval, industrial, and scientific resources" would eventually

⁷ Mark R. Wilson, "The Military-Industrial Complex," in *At War: The Military and American Culture in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, ed. David Kieran and Edwin A. Martini (Camden, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 68.

⁸ Wilson, "The Military-Industrial Complex," 68–70.

⁹ Wolters, "Recapitalizing the Fleet," 105; and Thiesen, "Construction of America's 'New Navy'," 435.

¹⁰ Gary E. Weir, *Building American Submarines 1914–1940* (Washington DC: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1991); Gary E. Weir, *Forged in War: The Naval-Industrial Complex and American Submarine Construction* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1993); and Gary E. Weir, "The Search for an American Submarine Strategy and Design, 1916–1936," *Naval War College Review* 44, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 34–48.

coalesce into what he termed the *naval-industrial complex*, which was a result of “the wartime blend of naval, industrial, and scientific resources” that constituted modern submarine construction.¹¹ Weir explores the naval-industrial complex as a subcategory of the MIC, which NCT networks, NCTs, and naval capital support. In line with this assessment, the naval portion of the MIC, consisting of NCTs and their networks, should be seen as the center of national networks. Rather than placing the center at seats of power or finance, we should view the places where the work is conducted as the primary point of emphasis.

In examples that focus on specific technologies developed at NCTs, the treatment is still on points associated with positions in power. The development of the torpedo has been treated in depth by Anthony Newpower and Katherine Epstein.¹² Newpower was a naval officer, and his interest is in the lessons learned from a comparison between the German and American experiences during Second World War.

Most submarines and many historians . . . consider the U.S. torpedo problems in Second World War one of the great scandals in the history of warfare. The initial reaction of blaming the crews for poor tactics and execution, while occasionally appropriate, was not the root cause of the problem. . . . Ironically, the Navy never concluded inquiries or a formal investigation to determine the cause of the torpedo problems.¹³

Newpower depends on previous operational research for much of his analysis but uncovers wartime sources from the Bureau of Ordnance and Newport Torpedo Station that were not previously analyzed. Newpower concludes the lessons learned from World War II experiences emphasize

¹¹ Weir, *Forged in War*, 6.

¹² Anthony Newpower, *Iron Men and Tin Fish: The Race to Build a Better Torpedo during Second World War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010); and Katherine C. Epstein, *Torpedo: Inventing the Military-Industrial Complex in the United States and Great Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

¹³ Newpower, *Iron Men and Tin Fish*, 188–89.

that private competition, involvement from the warfighter, and proper testing were fundamental to proper weapon development, a lesson that continues to ring true in the present day.¹⁴

Epstein also conducts a comparative study between the development of the torpedo for both the U.S. Navy and the Royal Navy, but by doing so tackles the same anchoring heuristic that Weir previously challenged: the myth of the MIC only having an origin in the United States during Second World War.¹⁵ While she acknowledges the studies that have sought to extend this development to the interwar period, she argues that the development extends much further—prior to the First World War for both the United States and United Kingdom—but the processes were established more definitively in the United Kingdom. In one example of a comparison between superheater development, Epstein argues that the research and development of the Royal Navy was significantly better funded, encouraged innovation from within instead of cooperating with private industry, and exercised greater control over the whole process than the U.S. Navy.¹⁶ The important note is that the processes, although perceived to be less efficient, were present in the United States and the ties between industry and government were growing.

Whereas Newpower primarily emphasizes the processes in government during war, Epstein explores the interactions between private and public entities in both the United States and the United Kingdom prior to World War I. Epstein employs a comparative methodology that illustrates how these deficiencies could have occurred in the American model of acquisition. While the United States was much quicker to acquire new technology, neither their companies nor their bureaucracy conduct the same level of exhaustive testing that British models of acquisition employed.¹⁷ Epstein concludes that current naval history models such as the *Dread-*

¹⁴ Newpower, *Iron Men and Tin Fish*, 192–96.

¹⁵ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 2.

¹⁶ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 226–27.

¹⁷ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 219–21.

nought Revolution or arms race are insufficient to capture the full scope of what occurred in torpedo development and that any simple causal explanation is not sufficient to capture the complexity of the problem faced by those living in the period.¹⁸

Both analyses still focus on higher-up echelons, inventors, business heads, government officials, and naval authorities. The actual locations where the work is conducted and the involvement of those in the towns where the communities that thrived or struggled, depending on the whims of these organizations, have rarely been explored in the same level of detail. For communities like Groton and other NCTs, the development of this NCT network, the investment would have profound implications for the communities that performed the labor and supported the industry. For submarine production, between 1910–40, Groton became one of the central points where a national effort channeled into a centralized location and where the actual work was conducted. For Groton, the NCT network encompassed numerous locations, including the surrounding communities in the Thames River Valley; Quincy, Massachusetts; Newport, Rhode Island; Nahant, Massachusetts; and numerous other locations that converged into a single platform that represented a national effort to build a submarine force for a navy that was “Second to None.”¹⁹

The Thames River Valley

The communities on the banks of the Thames River are interconnected polities that represent the available pool of labor available for Groton. The two largest communities in 1900 were Norwich and New London, with

¹⁸ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 213–15.

¹⁹ “Our Naval Nonentity,” *Washington Post*, 3 January 1900, 6; “Banquet of Navy League Was a Great Success,” *Tribune* (Scranton, PA), 18 May 1906, 5; “Navy’s Critics Answered,” *Omaha (NE) Daily Bee*, 18 February 1908, 6; “Britain Modernizes Navy Under Terms of 5–5–3 Agreement,” *Fresno (CA) Morning Republican*, 11 December 1922, 10; “Plunkett Bares U.S. Naval Policy,” *Brooklyn (NY) Daily Times*, 25 February 1923, 4; “The Big Navy Challenge,” *Tulsa (OK) Tribune*, 8 October 1933, 20; and “Mr. Roosevelt’s Navy,” *St. Louis (MO) Post-Dispatch*, 23 April 1938, 4. *Second to none* is a commonly used phrase in newspapers from the period, but it dates to at least January 1900 (despite attachments to Woodrow Wilson, Calvin Coolidge, or other presidents) and continued to be a pithy rallying cry for pro-naval expenditures until the Second World War. The newspapers included are thus representative of the conversation and appeal.

Groton home to fewer than 6,000 individuals.²⁰ The town's population slightly increased by the time Electric Boat Shipyard engineer Frank Cable visited the location while scouting potential locations to build diesel engines in 1909.²¹ New London Ship and Engine Company (NELSECO) diesel engines were the first line item produced in Groton that were associated with submarines. By 1960, shortly before Eisenhower's speech, Groton was nearly as large as Norwich and New London, and in terms of the percentage of population increase, it far outpaced the growth of nearby towns and likely fed the growth of smaller towns like Ledyard, Montville, and Waterford.²²

Figure 1 shows the populations of the towns in the Thames River Valley that represent the potential pool of labor. The figures taken from U.S. Census records paint a picture of increasing population. The numbers should be seen as the culmination of the efforts of the previous decade, an indication, particularly when compared to the control of the state, of Connecticut's population growth percentage change. In 1920, the first decade of production at NELSECO, Groton's population grew nearly 42 percent, almost double the overall rate of growth in the state of Connecticut during that same decade. Similarly, in 1950, after the Second World War and continued investment, Groton doubled in size—five times greater than the overall state of Connecticut's population growth.²³ The 1920s and 1930s represent difficult economic times for the private industry of the MIC. As Wilson notes, this was the period where the majority of investment was directed toward public NCTs and investment for submarines shifted from Lake Torpedo Boat and Electric Boat Shipyard to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.²⁴ Electric Boat Shipyard

²⁰ Figures 1 and 2, "Population of Connecticut Towns 1900–1960," Office of the Secretary of the State, State of Connecticut.

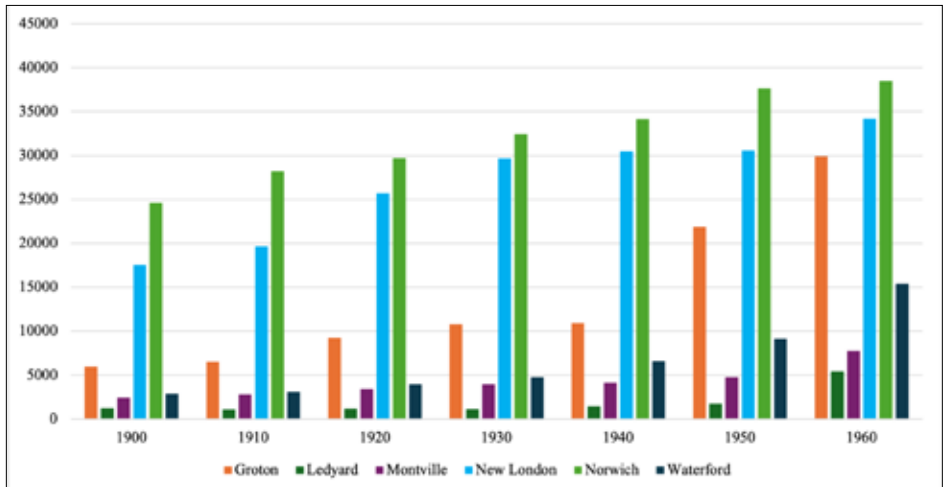
²¹ Frank Cable, "The Story of Our Plant," *Association Mirror*, May 1935, in Submarine Archives, Electric Boat Collection, Submarine Force Library and Museum, Groton, CT, 3–4.

²² Figures 1 and 2, "Population of Connecticut Towns 1900–1960."

²³ Figures 1 and 2, "Population of Connecticut Towns 1900–1960."

²⁴ Wilson, "The Military-Industrial Complex," 74–75.

Figure 1. Total population of Connecticut's Thames River Valley towns 1900–60.



Source: U.S. Census Records

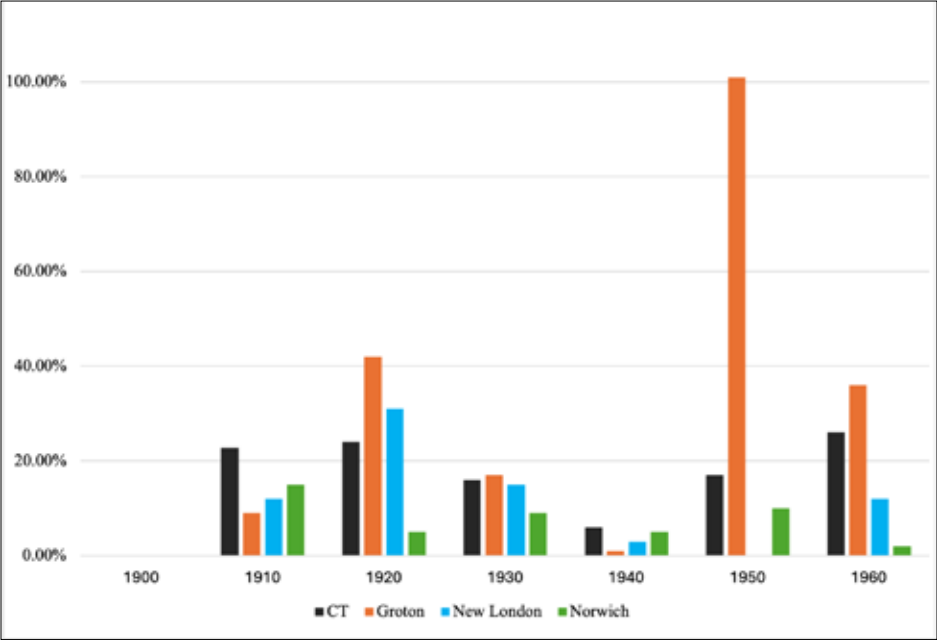
survived and was able to benefit from increased investment in the 1930s, when the first ship (the USS *Cuttlefish* [SS 171]) was built fully on-site from keel to commission for the U.S. Navy.²⁵ It takes generations to build NCTs, but it could take only a decade to damage the NCT's base of naval-capital and the networks that support it.

By 1950, residents in New London, Ledyard, and Waterford commuted to Groton in significant numbers. As local Waterford historian Robert Bachman notes, “The buildup preceding WWII increased the numbers employed by [Electric Boat Shipyard] and, for the first time, large numbers of Waterford residents crossed the Gold Star Memorial Bridge to work in this defense facility.”²⁶ Photographer Marion Post Wolcott shot several photographic examples of the shift turnover, one of which can be seen in figure 3, in 1941, before formal American entry into the war. Wol-

²⁵ Jeffrey L. Rodengen, *Serving the Silent Service: The Legend of Electric Boat* (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Write Stuff Syndicate, 1994), 78–80; and Jim Streeter, *History Revisited, Groton, Connecticut: Note Worthy Tales, Stories and Facts* (Dover: Arcadia Publishing, 2024), 76.

²⁶ Robert L. Bachman, *An Illustrated History of Waterford, Connecticut* (Norwich, CT: Thames Printing, 2000), 82.

Figure 2. Total population change per decade of the twentieth century in Connecticut’s Thames River Valley towns.



Source: U.S. Census Records

cott captured a long line of traffic that could be viewed during the shift change, waiting to cross the Gold Star Bridge during peak traffic periods.²⁷ The line of traffic was likely caused by the toll booth collections on the Gold Star Bridge that connected the banks of the Thames River. The line of traffic (which extends further back and can be seen in Wolcott’s other photographs) illustrates the connection between the towns. While Groton was the central point of production, people in the local communities would have ample opportunities to participate in supporting the naval capital housed within it. The jobs provided by the MIC were likely a

²⁷ Marion Post Wolcott, “Workers in and around Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut around afternoon shift change,” photo, May–June 1941, LC-USF33- 031239-M2, LOT 1288-31, Farm Security Administration/ Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

Figure 3. Traffic congestion in Groton, CT, at afternoon change of shift of the Electric Boat Works shipyard, May–June 1941.



Source: photo by Marion Post Wolcott, Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, LC-USF33- 031239-M2

welcome reprieve after the economic stagnation of the Great Depression and likely attracted new residents.

Who were these workers? They were middle-class Americans employed in industrial production facilities. They were primarily male; almost all that could be seen in Wolcott's photographs were working age men, but the one on the far right holding an ice cream cone appears to be in his teenage years who looks young enough to still be in school can be seen in figure 4. The labor market was healthy enough by 1937 to have a major strike, a peaceful sit-in.²⁸ The conditions illustrated the proficiency of the labor force required to build submarines. Their primary gripe was that the

²⁸ "U.S. Labor Dept. Agent Sent to Investigate Electric Boat Strike; Company Says 89 P.C. at Work," *The Day* (New London, CT), 3 March 1937, 10.

Figure 4. Workers lounging around town and waiting for a lift home at afternoon change of shift of the Electric Boat Works shipyard, Groton, CT.



Source: photo by Marion Post Wolcott, Farm Security Administration – Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, LC-USF33- 031238-M2

labor contract forced many individuals to work in tiers below what their experience should dictate.²⁹ The crowd was reportedly solemn and serious, with only a few of the more raucous displays of anger observed lending credence that this was not a simple case of agitation.³⁰ As described in an interview with a state police sergeant, “This is as orderly a picket line as any I’ve dealt with.”³¹ The fact that the striking workers felt comfortable enough to do so in the recovery after the Great Depression speaks volumes. Submarines were being built again, and with the money returning to private industry, laborers felt they were able in a position to influence

²⁹ “U.S. Labor Dept. Agent Sent,” *The Day* (New London, CT), 10.

³⁰ “Strikers Ask Workers to Join Walkout,” *Hartford (CT) Courant*, 28 February 1937, 2.

³¹ “Deadlock Unbroken in Electric Boat Strike,” *Gazette and Daily* (York, CT), 27 February 1937, 5.

wage restructuring. The conduct of the picket line indicates that the workers at Electric Boat Shipyard saw themselves as part of the communities they worked within. They did not want to ruin the relationships they did have, such as their fellows living in close quarters. As can be seen in figure 4, based on the facial features of three people present, three generations can be seen, the elder, his son, and potentially his grandson eating ice cream, all worked onsite.³² The generations represent the continued investment of the community, along with the numerous shops and restaurants that catered to the laborers working several shifts.

Groton, along with the communities along the Thames River, catered to the sailors and yardbirds at Submarine Base New London and Electric Boat Shipyard. As George O. Jones recalled, his favorite bars were in New London, particularly Johnnie's Bar, which was particularly noteworthy as it was owned by a retired sailor, who potentially represents the sailors who became part of the community when their time out to sea ended.³³ Jones also recalled that a "small Italian store" would send one of its workers in a Ford Model A to deliver Italian sandwiches (grinders) that cost 15 cents.³⁴ The communities knew submarines, and industry represented employment and opportunity.

Quincy, Kittery, and Bridgeport

Submarines were eventually built entirely in Groton, but they were fully assembled in several other locations before 1931. The primary location NELSECO engines were transported to was Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts, which was owned by the Bethlehem Steel

³² Marion Post Wolcott, "Workers lounging around town and waiting for a lift home at afternoon change of shift of the Electric Boat Works shipyard, Groton, CT," photo, May-June 1941, LC-USF33- 031238-M2, LOT 1288-31, Photograph Collection from Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Library of Congress.

³³ George O. Jones and Stephen L. Jackson, *Jonesy: For God, Country, and Something to Eat* (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear, 2013), 34. There are several memoirs that discuss the sailors' time in Groton, but most involve the wartime efforts. Jones was stationed at Submarine Base New London in 1939 and represents the sailors who were stationed in Groton in that period as one of the few accounts with a memoir.

³⁴ Jones and Jackson, *Jonesy*, 39.

Corporation, later the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation.³⁵ Quincy's connection to the submarine force predated that of Groton, with nine submarines having been built there by 1908.³⁶ The submarine was built in several locations and the design details were often shared, particularly as naval officials and government bureaucracy began to exercise more influence over the submarine.³⁷

Quincy's involvement is best illustrated by the construction of the S-boats, the submarines built under the S-class specification. David Johnston notes 19 of the S-boats were built at Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, a production that was paused during the 1920s as the U.S. Navy shifted to production entirely at public facilities.³⁸ Quincy's overall submarine production was part of its portfolio as an NCT. The factory also produced several other much more involved naval vessels, such as battleships. The connection between Bethlehem Shipbuilding and Fore River Shipyard would also lead to a new connection in San Francisco, California. Union Iron Works was eventually purchased and incorporated under the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation representing a type of partnership between private industrial partners still exists today, acting both as competitors and collaborators for government contracts, with clearly defined boundary lines and contractually obligated fund allocations.

S-boats as a class of submarine consisted of two primary designs, the Lake Torpedo Boat design and the Electric Boat Shipyard design, which were then built at Lake Torpedo Boat Shipyard, Fore River Shipyard, and a hybrid design at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine.³⁹ Johnston describes the issues each faced during design and their ultimate

³⁵ David Johnston, "The Devil in the Details: An Analysis of S-class Submarine Construction 1917–1925," *Submarine Review* (December 2020), 1–13.

³⁶ Frank Kyper, "The Diminutive High Iron of Massachusetts Bay: The Fore River Railroad Corporation the Union Freight Railroad Company," *Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 120 (1969): 7–30.

³⁷ Johnston, "The Devil in the Details," 5–7.

³⁸ Johnston, "The Devil in the Details," 12; and Weir, *Forged in War*, 23–24. Patent transfers and information sharing, such as the incorporation of Electric Boat Shipyard and Lake Torpedo Boat designs and equipment into the government S-boats.

³⁹ Johnston, "The Devil in the Details," 5–7.

redemption in the Second World War, but the design of a submarine underwent a fundamental paradigm shift, from coastal defensive designs to aggressive, offensive, Fleet-minded designs.⁴⁰ The development of these designs, along with the U.S. Navy's desire to control the designs more directly, saw several shipyards become intertwined as major constituents of a shipbuilding NCT network.⁴¹

The quality of NELSECO and other privately produced diesel engines were at best questionable, with NELSECO engines suffering the worst reputation. But other American companies struggled with successful engines. Hyman G. Rickover, who served on the *S-9* and *S-48*, would write in a letter to his wife on 8 July 1930:

We steamed out past the lighthouse. Then the Chief Machinist's Mate in charge of the Engine Room came up and reported that a stem on one of the exhaust valves of the diesel engine was cracked, and that at least an hour would be required for repairs. Well—there was nothing to be done but stop once more. Finally, when we were chugging away again and I had begun to lose my dour expression and long face, the word came up that the new valve stem was heating up. So, we stopped once more. . . . We started off once more and increased our speed to that required for full power and I was about to inform the Captain that I was ready to commence the run when three of the cylinder jackets of the port engine developed leaks. This meant that there was a possibility of getting salt water into the lubricating oil system—which is dangerous. This casualty was a result of poor feature of design in the original German engines, and the fault had been copied by American designers. I made a quick decision. . . . I decided to take a chance and

⁴⁰ Johnston, "The Devil in the Details," 5–7.

⁴¹ Weir, *Building American Submarines 1914–1940*, 117.

run with the leaky cylinder jackets. I really didn't expect the engines to hold out the 20 hours required. . . . Never in all my experience in the Navy have I had such a multitude of ill-starred events befall me, I am surprised that I am acting like an ordinary human being and not overwhelmed by all of this.⁴²

The *S-48* was built by Lake Torpedo Boat and had the (allegedly) more reliable Busch-Sulzer Brothers diesel engine, yet Rickover's account indicated that all engines, being licensed German copies, were complicated machines that broke frequently. Rickover's experience deserves extra weight as a representation of the frustration submarine engineers experienced in this period, as he became synonymous with engineering of the nuclear navy and his shrewd ability to diagnose root causes.

The question of quality, particularly in diesel engines, was the fundamental issue that caused the public/private break during the 1920s, but there were other teething issues.⁴³ Though engine problems were the primary issue for many boats, there were several boats like *S-5* (1920) and *S-48* (1921), both of which nearly sank during builder's trials, with civilian shipyard workers on board.⁴⁴ Both ships were lost due to teething issues with hull openings and material failure. Notably for this research, in the example of *S-48*, most of the crew were civilians, including the major heroes of the story, J. E. Austin and Peter F. Dunne.⁴⁵ Austin was a submariner, but Dunne had no naval experience. There were issues with all boats produced that were not resolved until the Fleet-Boat designs, which were the result of collaboration between Electric Boat Shipyard

⁴² Hyman G. Rickover, "Letter to Ruth Master, 8 July 1930," in *Rickover Uncensored*, ed. Claude G. Berube and Samuel Limneos (Annapolis, MD: Focsls, 2023), 76–77.

⁴³ Weir, "The Search for an American Submarine Strategy and Design, 1916–1936," 35–37.

⁴⁴ Charles A. Lockwood and Hans C. Adamson, *Hell at 50 Fathoms* (New York: Ambassador Books, 1962), 106–15.

⁴⁵ Lockwood and Adamson, *Hell at 50 Fathoms*, 106–7.

and Portsmouth Naval Shipyard with improved domestic diesel engines, such as the Fairbanks-Morse and General Motors engines.

In response, the government sought to increase control over production. Submarine production shifted to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which was found to be insufficient to meet all the needs of the U.S. Navy.⁴⁶ As private contracts dried up, private industry atrophied; Electric Boat Shipyard scrounged for work and Lake Torpedo Boat eventually went out of business in 1924.⁴⁷ Simon Lake, main inventor and proprietor of Lake Torpedo Boat, ended up employed by the government, but many submarine-savvy people were left unemployed by the atrophy. While it is easy to resort back to viewing laborers as inputs that can be moved depending on market factors for employment, this misunderstands the need people have to be a part of communities. It was not a guarantee those employed in submarine industries would just move to Groton or Kittery from other locations; they would more likely seek new employment in Bridgeport. After Lake Torpedo Boat went bankrupt, Dunne became a manager of a clothing department in a store and was interviewed by the *Bridgeport Telegram* after the loss of *S-4* on 17 December 1927, as he was considered an expert due to his time on *S-48*'s disabled submarine episode in 7 December 1921.⁴⁸ The networks were not the only loss when Lake Torpedo Boat went under—so too were the submarine construction-savvy individuals so essential to the success of these companies.

While Lake Torpedo Boat and Electric Boat Shipyard suffered from a lack of contracts, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard became the primary area of construction, including building many of the S-boats under a government

⁴⁶ Wilson, "The Military-Industrial Complex," 74–75; and Weir, "The Search for an American Submarine Strategy and Design, 1916–1936," 34.

⁴⁷ James S. Reyburn, *Images of America: Electric Boat Corporation* (Portsmouth, NH: Arcadia Publishers, 2006), 42; and Jeffrey L. Rodengen, *Serving the Silent Service*, 71–74.

⁴⁸ "Jinxed' Submarines Go Out of Service," *Bridgeport (CT) Telegram*, 17 March 1927, 1; and "Trapped Men on S-4 Probably Went Mad, Survivor of S-48 Says Telling His Experience," *The Day* (New London, CT), 27 December 1927, 10.

design, a fusion of the Lake Torpedo Boat and Electric Boat Shipyard designs.⁴⁹ As Johnston explains:

In the Navy, a class of warships will meet this definition, but in addition the ships will also look and be outfitted in such a manner as to be nearly identical. The layman might be surprised to learn that the 51 S-class submarines were anything but a homogenous, identical group and were in fact a class in name only. The S-class was actually made up of no less than six distinct groups that were built by four different manufacturers. The Navy considered all 51 boats a single class because they were all intended to meet the same set of performance and war-fighting specifications.⁵⁰

The ill-fated *S-5* was one of these government boats built with Electric Boat Shipyard assistance. It had a NELSECO engine, was built in Kittery, and had numerous teething issues, including a disabled-submarine tragedy requiring rigorous effort to rescue the crew.⁵¹ The locations involved in submarine construction could not sustain production alone, nor could public or private industry supplant each other conclusively. When oversight and collaboration became the norm, submarine construction became standardized and much more reliable.

Newport

It is perhaps stating the obvious to say that submarine bases were interconnected, as a submarine could transfer at any time to another base and frequently did seasonal maneuvers. The chains of command of naval personnel often intersected, and submariners were an insular group with an increasingly prominent identity. Naval Station Newport, in Newport, Rhode Island, had been a thriving base since 1883, with a recruit training

⁴⁹ Johnston, "The Devil in the Details," 1–13.

⁵⁰ Johnston, "The Devil in the Details," 1.

⁵¹ A. J. Hill, *Under Pressure: The Final Voyage of Submarine S-Five* (New York: New American Library, 2002).

command, torpedo station, the Naval War College, and growing research institutions.⁵² For submarines, the most important facility in Newport was the Naval Torpedo Station. The primary offensive weapon of the submarine was the torpedo, and its development was fundamental to the increasing efficiency and potency of the submarine as a weapon of war. As Epstein notes, the officers at the Naval Torpedo Station influenced the American adoption and development of the torpedo, and the local community of Newport jealously guarded its status as the producer of torpedoes.⁵³ The interaction of naval investment in Newport and Groton could be far more adversarial. Unlike the collaborative relationship in Quincy, the example of Newport illustrates the friction between private entities and governmental entities that characterized submarine construction in the interwar period.

Epstein notes one of these adversarial episodes in the construction of the Davison superheater, designed to improve four torpedo designs. Electric Boat Shipyard, having an interest in torpedo development, invented the Davison superheater, which the commanding officer of the torpedo station found unsatisfactory.⁵⁴ The language of contracts was debated over in court from 1912 to 1914, with royalties becoming an issue when the Bliss Company and the Naval Torpedo Station continued to improve the superheater. In 1914, the court case made its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of the government.⁵⁵ The delicate balance between maintaining the ties between contractors and the government organizations who purchased from them contributed to the rift between the U.S. Navy and private industry. The diesel engines were a visible symbol of the consternation in the 1920s, similar to the status Newpower argues the torpedo would have in the Second World War.⁵⁶

⁵² Anthony S. Nicolosi, "The Navy, Newport and Stephen B. Luce," *Naval War College Review* 37, no. 5 (September–October 1984): 117–31.

⁵³ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 21–22.

⁵⁴ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 162–67.

⁵⁵ Epstein, *Torpedo*, 171–72.

⁵⁶ Newpower, *Iron Men and Tin Fish*, 188–89.

The ties between naval chains of command were much more pleasant, and they often depended on the exchange of sailors to other duty stations. This exchange can be illustrated by the early career of torpedoman's mate Petty Officer First Class Henry Breault.⁵⁷ Breault enlisted in the U.S. Navy and initially went to Newport's recruit training command and then transferred to his rating school, often referred to as an A school, also located in Newport. From there, he was transferred to Submarine Base New London, where he reported aboard the USS *Eagle* (PE 56) in July 1921 for four days, then reported aboard the USS *O-5*.⁵⁸ Fleet maneuvers brought them to the Caribbean, where the U.S. Navy maintained bases such as Coco Solo in the Panama Canal zone.⁵⁹ There were numerous recruit training commands. Robert Hunt recalled his time at Great Lakes Naval Training Station (now Great Lakes Recruit Training Command), located in North Chicago, Illinois, and Jones recalled his time at Navy Training Station San Diego, California, representing a nationwide network of naval labor to new commands.⁶⁰

These transfers meant that boats built in numerous locations were stationed around the world. Recruit training commands and rating schools likely represented one of the primary avenues for early sailors to end up in Groton, as sailors by Jones's era would often serve periods of time in the surface fleet before applying for submarine duty.⁶¹ Transfers like Jones and Breault illustrate the reality of the number of naval personnel on the base—their tenure there was often temporary. Newport was not the only location with a torpedo station, but it was the most enduring example.

⁵⁷ Enlisted ratings are the rate (TM in the case of Breault) and the rank expressed (first, second, third class petty officers). Breault passed away as a TM1, his highest rank, but his initial rating was TM3, and he received his Medal of Honor as a TM2.

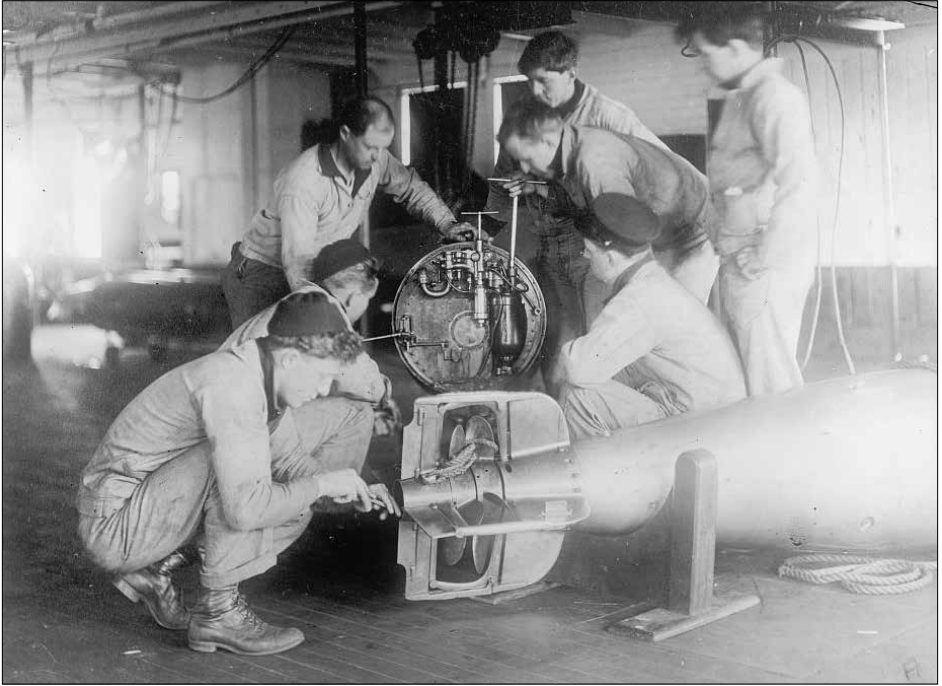
⁵⁸ U.S. Navy enlistment enrollment form, 20 July 1920, Official Military Personnel File for Henry Breault. Series: Official Military Personnel Files, 1885–1998, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), accessed 16 October 2021, 1; and C. B. Hatch, "Memorandum for Navy Press Room," 20 February 1924, Official Military Personnel File for Henry Breault. Series: Official Military Personnel Files, 1885–1998, NARA, accessed 16 October 2021, 30.

⁵⁹ Hatch, "Memorandum for Navy Press Room," 30.

⁶⁰ Robert Schultz and James Shell, *We Were Pirates: A Torpedoman's Pacific War* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 20; and Jones and Jackson, *Jonesy*, 8–10.

⁶¹ Schultz and Shell, *We Were Pirates*, 20; and Jones and Jackson, *Jonesy*, 8–10.

Figure 5. Naval torpedo station sailors training, U.S. torpedo station, Newport, RI, ca. 1910–26.



*Source: photo by National Photo Company Collection,
Library of Congress, LC-F82- 1538*

For a submarine to be successful, it needed a vast interconnection of both production and research to sustain its far-flung networks.

Nahant, Massachusetts

One of the key portions of Eisenhower's argument was that today, the solitary inventor, tinkering in his shop, has been over shadowed by task forces of scientists in laboratories and testing fields. In the same fashion, the free university, historically the fountainhead of free ideas and scientific discovery, has experienced a revolution in the conduct of research. Partly because of the huge costs involved, a government contract becomes virtually a substitute for intel-

lectual curiosity. For every old blackboard there are now hundreds of new electronic computers.⁶²

The *tinkerer* referenced sounds remarkably like depictions of Benjamin Franklin, a representation of the plucky American inventor working by candlelight. Or perhaps Eisenhower referred to people involved in the development of the submarine such as John P. Holland, who declined in prominence as his business became a corporation.

Just as industry leaders provided to the War Industries Board were offered for government service during the war while remaining on their employer's payroll, academics became engrained in naval industry and bureaucracy during the First World War. The formalization occurred when several professors were granted leave from their universities and offered officer commissions in the U.S. Navy Reserve. In a letter written in 1917 by the commanding officer of the USS *L-10* (submarine no. 50), James C. van de Carr records the sound silencing efforts they conducted to make the boat quieter as it prepared to cross the Atlantic to support naval operations during the First World War.⁶³ The letter, written to the Special Board on Submarine Devices, concludes with the assertion that "it was found impracticable to muffle the noise of the gyro compass without making radical changes. The authorities at Nahant stated that this noise could not be heard anyhow."⁶⁴

In his memoirs, Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels recorded that the Sound Laboratory was an experimental station that had academics, private businesses, and naval officials occupied in the development and testing of sound equipment to combat German submarines:

Scientists and naval officers engaged in this work held a conference . . . and two days later I created a Special Board

⁶² Farewell address by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 17 January 1961.

⁶³ Lt James C. Van de Carr, Commander L-10, to Special Board on Submarine Devices, 20 September 1917, Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHHC), Washington, DC, hereafter Van de Carr letter.

⁶⁴ Van de Carr letter.

on Anti-submarine Devices, with Rear Admiral A. W. Grant as chairman, and representatives of the electrical and signal companies, and the National Research Council as advisory members. Extensive experiments were carried on at our submarine station at New London, as well as at Nahant.⁶⁵

Academics were recruited and sent to Submarine Base New London specifically to support the experiments for the board, and Daniels expresses great appreciation for their contribution, particularly noting the presence of famous inventor Thomas Edison.⁶⁶ While private corporations were willing to pay their employees while they worked for the government, academic institutions were apparently willing to let their professors support the war effort and offer them pay differential between their government salaries. As then-captain Samuel S. Robinson recommended to Josephus Daniels:

This Board has a group of scientists working at the Submarine Base, New London, on experimental and development work. . . . These men have been on this work at New London for about three months and have become familiar with the problems before this Board and have developed some principles for detection of submarines which offer considerable promise. The colleges will soon open and these men will return to their universities unless some steps are taken at once to retain them. . . . At present they are devoting their vacations to this work and serving without pay from the Government. This Board has a number of other scientists at Nahant [MA] and elsewhere, who are reserve officers in the Army. It is understood that the three men

⁶⁵ Josephus Daniels, *Our Navy at War* (Washington, DC: Pictorial Bureau, 1922), 287.

⁶⁶ Daniels, *Our Navy at War*, 17, 285, 289–96. Edison appears frequently in Daniel's memoir to include conversations and pictures.

wanted here at New London, could be commissioned. . . . It is understood that the Secretary can commission officers in the Reserve Force with the rank of Lieutenant Commander and it is further understood that these three professors would accept Commissions as Lieutenant Commander in the Reserve Force of the Navy. It is expected, in this case, to make arrangements with their respective universities, or with scientific societies, to pay them the difference between their pay from the Navy and their present salaries.⁶⁷

Not only were these three academics included, but there were also numerous precedents, as reservists from the U.S. Army were already working alongside their Navy counterparts. The intelligentsia were already involved in the NCT networks connecting Nahant to Groton and the submarine force, well before the Second World War, even during peacetime. Daniels noted this process began in 1915, before formal American involvement in World War I as a belligerent nation.⁶⁸

Conclusion: The NCT Network as a Web Converging on the NCT

These examples are intended to be representative of the level of interconnection NCT networks provided, and they primarily focused on ship-building and design from 1910 to 1940. There are other examples, such as the Fairbanks-Morse Company, that never intentionally set out to construct a submarine product, but the conditions to build a diesel engine suitable for rail appeared to have the same requirements for submarines. Weir argued it was due to the greater interconnection between submarine

⁶⁷ Capt Samuel S. Robison, Commander, Atlantic Submarine Force, to Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, 1 September 1917, NHHC.

⁶⁸ Daniels, *Our Navy at War*, 17. "With all the Navy striving to build up and expand the service, I turned attention to other forces that might be utilized. War had become a science; inventions were playing a vastly greater part than ever before, and on July 7, 1915, I wrote to Mr. Thomas A. Edison, suggesting the formation of a board of eminent inventors and scientists. . . . This board began in 1915."

Figure 6. Thomas Alva Edison and wife Mina Miller (both, middle), Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels (right) and wife Addie Worth Bagley Daniels (left), and naval personnel (background) on a visit to Brooklyn Navy Yard, NY, 12 October 1914.



Source: photo by Bain News Service, Bain News Service Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, LC-B2-3262-1

industry and government bureaucracy that a satisfactory submarine design was implemented.⁶⁹ This interconnection still exists today, but it took generations to fully develop and could, as seen in the examples of Quincy and Bridgeport, atrophy irreversibly should investment cease.

Financial inputs and oversight should still be considered, though as one of the avenues through which production is possible and connected to the well-being of the greater NCT network. Figures such as Representative Edwin W. Higgins and New London mayor (later representative)

⁶⁹Weir, *Building American Submarines 1914–1940*, 117.

Bryan Mahan are still part of the story as the saviors of the Thames Naval Yard in 1911 and 1912, respectively.⁷⁰ Similarly, the story of the torpedo as told by Newpower and Epstein is worth telling to trace how the weapons get to the end users, but the full story encompasses every individual involved, from the apprentice standing a firewatch while a welder works, to the naval officers in charge, and to the intelligentsia researching improvements. No one aspect of the story is greater than the end product, whether the construction, operation, maintenance, or improvements made to the platforms that house them. Bringing the fight to the enemy in World War II required extensive networks of private and public NCTs that comprise the MIC, and those communities and ties were not built overnight.

When taken to the logical extreme, all inputs of labor—private, naval, and government—can be considered part of the NCT network. Even workers associated with diesel engine development for nonmilitary usage before the U.S. Navy purchased the engines could be considered part of the MIC. So too was the Italian sandwich shop that delivered submarine sandwiches to hungry submariners recalled by Jones. Following the path of every individual submariner (a difficult endeavor) who ever made their way to Groton to either train or serve on submarines, their hometown connection, and where their connection to the Service would be severed represents the national character of the investment into the NCT networks of the submarine force. Many stayed in the areas, continuing to contribute professionally to the forces of which they were once a part, as sailors were often drawn to learning valuable skills for future civilian improvement. This is best exemplified by none other than Electric Boat Shipyard's Lawrence Y. Spear, who was a U.S. Navy officer, resigned his commission, and served as president of the company from 1942 to 1947.⁷¹ The scale of the network may never be fully explored due to its vastness,

⁷⁰ John Ruddy, "First Seven Submarines Arrived in Groton a Century Ago," *The Day* (New London, CT), 18 October 2015.

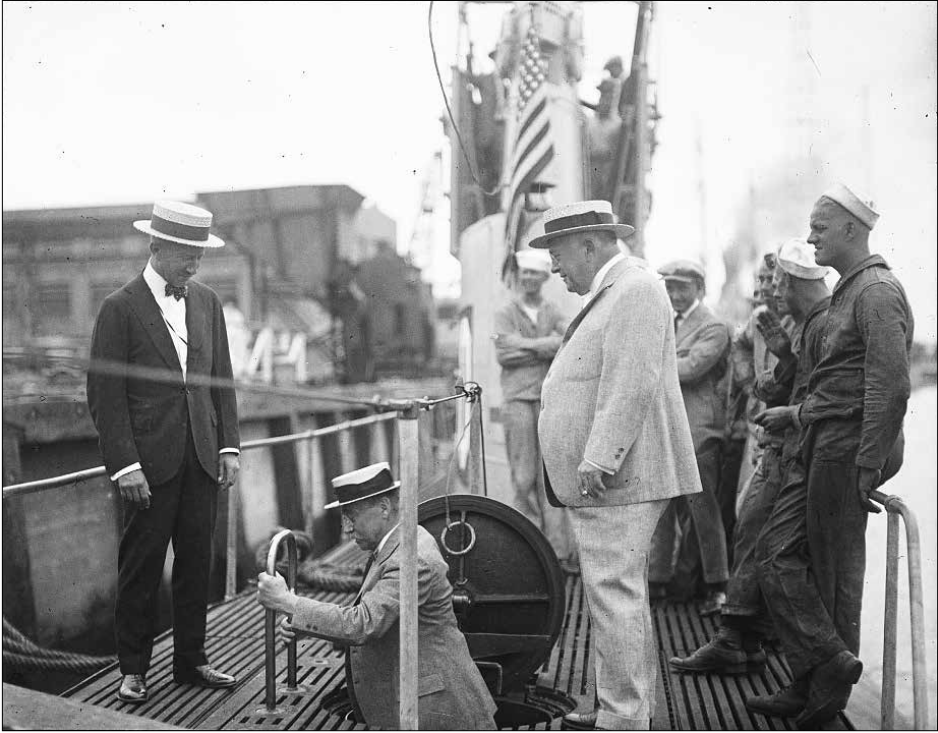
⁷¹ "L. Y. Spear (AS-36)," Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, NHHC, accessed 26 September 2025; and "History," USS *L.Y. Spear* Association (AS-36), accessed 26 September 2025.

but it indicates how certain regions develop their comparative advantages as NCTs.

NCTs such as Groton should be the centerpiece for fully understanding the development of the MIC. NCTs that are the final assembly and operation represent the culmination of generations of research, development, construction, and operation of the submarine. The financial and oversight associated with Washington, DC, are still recognized, but not as the primary story. For submarines, several peer NCTs alongside Groton could describe the primary nodes of the network, where processes channel in from locations to make the submarine possible through all phases of its lifetime. The story of the submarine neither begins nor ends with Congress, naval officials, bureaucrats, or the finances of companies, but exists in the lifespan of the submarine, the ports they frequented, the equipment, and the personnel serving on board. Groton is the center of this analysis.

The NCT model could be extended to other naval communities, such as surface or aviation communities, which likely center on their own NCTs and have their own unique NCT networks. There also exist Air Force-Capital Towns, Army-Capital Towns, Strategic Weapons-Capital Towns, and even Space-Capital Towns that then have subcategories depending on their industry. In this respect, Eisenhower was correct: the size of the MIC was much larger than it had been, but the ties were already there. There were (and still are) representative in Congress who were well aware that many of their constituents depended on continued investment into the MIC, and they defended the investment against anything that could threaten it. There were people employed for generations within a town such as Groton into the local industry before the Second World War. Perhaps most importantly, teams of researchers to improve naval, and other military, capital were present. The ties between the military and other intellectual institutions were strong and present before the Second World War, and the emphasis Eisenhower placed on the financial alone centered the conversation on Washington and pushed the communities that performed the work to the periphery. After decades of atrophy today,

Figure 7. *S-50* submarine, 1922.



Source: photo by Harris & Ewing, Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress, LC-H234- A-4690

even when the money is available, the recovery is slow and the communities of constituent NCTs play a pivotal role in their respective NCT networks.

Decentering the MIC to instead focus on the products and the communities around them gives a much fuller idea for why committed, continued investment is so important to NCTs and their networks. Groton became an NCT in 1910, but it did not become the primary avenue for submarine construction until investment was made to expand facilities and the U.S. Navy contracted the yard to build the USS *Cuttlefish* (SS 171) in 1931. By the time of the USS *Nautilus* (SSN 571), Groton had become one of the major centers of submarine design, production, opera-

tion, and maintenance. The investment in infrastructure and naval capital for generations was a gradual process that is still continually evolving and responding to numerous pressures. Rebuilding NCTs and their networks will require generations of sustained investment, a promising future, and time to train a growing workforce.

CHAPTER 14

The Sun Never Sets

Defense, Economics,
and the Fate of Modern Empires

by Alexei (Frank) Hoffman, JD

In the current geopolitical landscape, the concept of relative power—defined as the comparative strength of states—dominates interactions. Although the pursuit of absolute power may drive a nation's foreign policy, it is the constraints imposed by relative power that ultimately shape these dynamics. In essence, a state's overarching strategic objectives may be guided by various motivations, but it is their relative power that dictates the means to achieve them.¹

Theorists often debate about the determinants of a state's diplomatic influence.² Yet, when reduced to its core, the concept of relative power can be encapsulated by two primary elements: the capacity for military force projection and economic strength. While other factors such as domestic political resolve or leadership's appetite for risk may affect the application of diplomatic pressure, the breadth of a state's international reach is ultimately circumscribed and thus characterized by its military prowess and economic leverage to incentivize compliance.

¹ Robert Powell, "Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 4 (December 1991): 1303–10, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1963947>.

² Vincent Pouliot, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 90–100, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316534564>.

Military capability and economic strength are intrinsically linked; the former often hinges on the latter as a foundational resource. Conversely, a robust military is essential for safeguarding a nation's economic interests. Together, these elements form the bedrock of a state's relative power. A shortfall in either can significantly impede a state's capacity to exert influence abroad or maintain its sovereignty and agency in the international arena.

The significance of relative power in international relations is perhaps most vividly illustrated by the instances where former colonies, initially zealous for independence, have subsequently reestablished ties with their erstwhile colonial powers. This *colonial repatriation* has left an indelible mark on the contemporary geopolitical landscape. The genesis of many modern alliances and international bodies can be traced back to such repatriations, with the reemergence of historical imperial boundaries within these groups.³ These organizations often resemble a neodominion framework, where the once-independent states find themselves in a state of limited autonomy, effectively under the tutelage of their previous imperial rulers, now acting as powerful patrons.⁴

Equally compelling is the trajectory of states that, harboring deep-seated animosity toward their former imperial subjugation, strive to forge a path distinct from any semblance of their prior dominion. These nations often choose to assert their independence on the global stage or align with adversaries of their former rulers, exemplifying the repercussions of lacking relative power. Such independent ex-colonies frequently descend into state failure or involuntarily enter the sphere of influence of a major power, compelled by necessity rather than choice.⁵

Many international relations theorists, particularly those focused on the developing world such as Mahmood Mamdani and Rollin F. Tusa-

³ Guy Fiti Sinclair, *To Reform the World: International Organizations and the Making of Modern States* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 79–85, 102–7.

⁴ Ulaş Başar Gezgin, "A Thought Experiment in Futurology: 12 Models of World Government and the World Peace," *Eurasian Journal of Anthropology* 10, no. 1 (2019): 20–38.

⁵ Gezgin, "A Thought Experiment in Futurology," 26–30.

lem, assert that the inherent fragility and eventual disintegration of post-colonial states stem directly from the legacies of imperialism.⁶ They argue that such outcomes are often inevitable, resulting from either the exploitative tendencies or the neglect of the former imperial powers.⁷ While the misconduct of former imperial nations such as France, Spain, and Belgium may indeed contribute to the phenomenon of failed postcolonial states, the contrasting fortunes of ex-colonies once under similar dominion, such as those of Britain, suggest a more complex underlying factor determining the success or failure of these states after independence.⁸

Throughout history, collective defense and economic interests have often been the glue binding empires, while their dissolution has frequently been precipitated by deficits in security and investment. For repatriated colonies, it was the reinvigoration of military-economic alliances that renewed trust in their former sovereigns and reintegrated them into the influence spheres of their mother countries. This pattern is supported by scholarly analysis, which suggests that the evolution of the U.S.-led international security system, for instance, has provided strategic advantages and stability through its network of alliances.⁹ Moreover, the historical interplay between economic and military imperialism further underscores the significance of these partnerships.¹⁰

This chapter examines a range of major colonial empires that disintegrated in the twentieth century to understand how and why certain empires regained influence over their former territories through leadership

⁶ Rollin F. Tusalem, "Reformulating World-System Theory: Third World Participation in the World Polity as an Attempt to Combat Global Inequality" (master's thesis, Ball State University, Muncie, IN, 2003); and Fazil Moradi et al., "From the Colonial Nation-State to a Decolonized Political Community" (conference paper, Virtual Symposium at the Johannesburg Institute for Advanced Study, 25 February 2021).

⁷ Stein Sundstøl Eriksen, "'State Failure' in Theory and Practice: The Idea of the State and the Contradictions of State Formation," *Review of International Studies* 37, no. 1 (January 2011): 229–34, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210510000409>.

⁸ Marcus Power, "The Commonwealth, 'Development' and Post-Colonial Responsibility," *Geoforum* 40, no. 1 (January 2009): 14–20, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2008.04.008>.

⁹ Kathleen J. McInnis, "The Competitive Advantages and Risks of Alliances," Heritage Foundation, last modified 27 June 2022; and Bruno Tertrais, "Entangling Alliances? Europe, the United States, Asia, and the Risk of a New 1914," Atlantic Council, June 2022.

¹⁰ Isaac Christiansen, "Linkages Between Economic and Military Imperialism," *World Review of Political Economy* 11, no. 3 (Fall 2020): 337–56, <https://doi.org/10.13169/worldrevipolicecon.11.3.0337>.

in international partnerships while others failed to reclaim their prominence in multilateral forums. Subsequently, this chapter explores the ramifications of these historical patterns for the foreign policy of the modern United States.

Relative Power Factors

The significance of relative power is evident when examining the bilateral relationships between a former imperial ruler and its postcolonial successor states. A state's ability or decision not to utilize its relative power for the benefit of its colony has a strong correlation with the new state's willingness to reengage in a bilateral relationship with its former empire after achieving independence. What follows is an analysis of defense and economic factors in their historical context and exploration of how an empire's engagement in these areas predicted its capacity to maintain and exert external geopolitical influence in the contemporary world.

Factor One: Defense Links

Defense and economy are pivotal in the sustainability of empires, with defense often emerging as a critical factor. The ability of an empire to protect its colonies has historically been a decisive factor in the colonies' readiness to reengage with their former rulers after periods of conflict or separation.¹¹ For instance, British colonies acquired on the eve of the Second World War, such as Burma, Sudan, and territories in the Middle East, such as Iraq, did not join the Commonwealth after the war, largely due to the empire's failure to defend them during the conflict.¹²

While economic distress can indeed precipitate rebellion, underscored by the American Revolution's origins in economic grievances, colonial prosperity often hinges on the assurance of protection. The interdepen-

¹¹ Kurt William Nagel, *Empire and Interest: British Colonial Defense Policy, 1689–1748* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, 1992), 514–74.

¹² Nagel, *Empire and Interest*; and Field-Marshal Viscount William Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942–1945* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

dence of economic and military power is well-documented, suggesting that their separation may be somewhat artificial in discussions of colonial dynamics.¹³ In the context of reengagement, the imperatives of defense policy frequently overshadow economic considerations, even transcending past colonial grievances, emphasizing the role of military capacity in post-colonial state formation and the enduring influence of colonial military structures in contemporary statecraft.¹⁴

Case Study 1: Spain and Portugal

The phenomenon of colonial empires, such as the French, British, and Spanish, experiencing internal fractures leading to the loss of their colonies can be observed with particular clarity in the case of the Spanish Empire. Predominantly located in Latin America, the Spanish Empire was structured around a colonial viceroy system, with its primary purposes being the spread of Christianity and the economic enrichment of the mother country.¹⁵ Like many imperial economies, the Spanish colonies were prohibited from participating in external trade.¹⁶

This system created a significant power disparity. As long as Spain maintained its dominance, its colonies, dependent on the mother country for military and economic support, remained loyal despite local grievances

¹³ Edward J. Balleisen, review essay of *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* by T. H. Breen, *Business History Review* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 353–63, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007680500080600>; Lucille Griffith, review of *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggles for American Independence* by John Shy, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 3 (July 1976): 373–75; and Gbensuglo Alidu Bukari, “Political Economy of Colonial and Postcolonial African Military,” in *The Political Impact of African Military Leaders: Soldiers as Intellectuals, Nationalists, Pan-Africanists, and Statesmen*, ed. Sabella Ogbobode Abide and Felix Kumah-Abiwu (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 39–52, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-31427-8>.

¹⁴ James E. Kitchen, “Colonial Empires after the War/Decolonization,” in 1914–1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War; Clainos Chidoko, “Post-independence Reforms and Policies in Zimbabwe,” in *Post-Independence Development in Africa: Decolonisation and Transformation Prospects*, ed. David Mhlanga and Emmanuel Ndhlova (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 213–26; and Alison Brysk, Craig Parsons, and Wayne Sandholtz, “After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 2 (June 2002): 267–305, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066102008002004>.

¹⁵ Brysk, Parsons, and Sandholtz, “After Empire: National Identity and Post-Colonial Families of Nations.”

¹⁶ Jaime E. Rodríguez O., “The Hispanic Revolution: Spain and America, 1808–1826,” *Ler História* 57 (2009): 73–92, <https://doi.org/10.4000/lerhistoria.1848>; and J. H. Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

against Spanish governance. However, when British naval threats began to undermine Spanish maritime security and blockades restricted defense and trade capabilities, the empire's vulnerabilities became apparent.¹⁷ The colonies, out of necessity, began to independently engage in trade to acquire supplies and arms.¹⁸ The situation escalated in 1808 when Napoléon's betrayal and subsequent invasion of Spain caused these initial fractures to expand dramatically.¹⁹ With the majority of Spain's possessions left to their own devices, they achieved defensive and economic autonomy. Consequently, they chose to break away from what had become, in essence, an empire in name only.²⁰

The separation of colonies from their European empires, often due to a breakdown in the imperial support system, is exemplified by the relationship between the Portuguese Empire and its Brazilian colony. Brazil's destiny, akin to that of other Latin American colonies, became intricately linked to the Napoleonic Wars when the Braganza monarchy was coerced into the conflict by Napoléon. Similar to Spain, Portugal was later betrayed and invaded by the French, leaving Brazil effectively under British control, who deployed a substantial force to defend their longstanding ally Portugal from Napoleonic incursions on the Iberian Peninsula.²¹ Notably, after the Brazilian War of Independence (1821–24), the newly independent Brazilian Empire reestablished robust ties with Portugal.²²

In both Latin American case studies, a recurring pattern is evident. The colonies, barred from engaging in external trade, suffered economic

¹⁷ Nathanael Greene, review of *Historical Dictionary of the Spanish Empire, 1402–1975* by James S. Olson, *History: Reviews of New Books* 21, no. 1 (1992): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03612759.1992.9950708>.

¹⁸ Alexander Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars: A Global History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2020), 255.

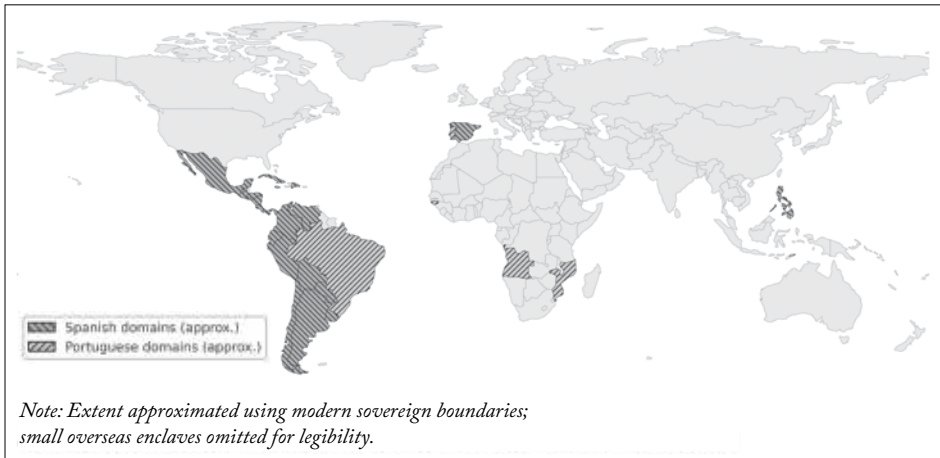
¹⁹ "Peninsular War," War and Peace, Explore, National Army Museum (London), accessed 27 June 2022.

²⁰ Mikaberidze, *The Napoleonic Wars*, 270–75.

²¹ Martin Robson, *Britain, Portugal and South America in the Napoleonic Wars: Alliances and Diplomacy in Economic Maritime Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010); and Rafe Blaufarb, "Arms for Revolutions: Military Demobilization after the Napoleonic Wars and Latin American Independence," in *War, Demobilization and Memory: The Legacy of War in the Era of Atlantic Revolutions*, ed. Alan Forrest and Peter H. Wilson (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 100–16.

²² Fernando Arenas, *Utopias of Otherness: Nationhood and Subjectivity in Portugal and Brazil* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and Mel Sheeha, "I Shall Stay Day: Unpacking Brazil's Fight for Independence," *VCU History News*, 6 September 2023.

Figure 1. Spanish and Portuguese Empires (1581–1640). Geographic distribution of Spanish and Portuguese imperial domains during the period of the Iberian Union, illustrating the breadth and dispersion of Iberian holdings across the Atlantic world and key maritime nodes.



Source: Alexei (Frank) Hoffman

devastation due to the loss of naval connection and support from their mother countries during home-based invasions.²³ This outcome was predictable, considering the imperial economic systems of Spain and Portugal resembled command economies, where each colony specialized in producing a particular resource to the exclusion of all others.²⁴ This not only streamlined production for the imperial authorities but also made insurrection highly challenging, as no single colony possessed the necessary resources or infrastructure to support an independent state.²⁵

²³ Bartolomé Yun-Casalilla, “The Luso-Spanish Composite Global Empire, 1598–1640,” in *Iberian World Empires and the Globalization of Europe 1415–1668*, Palgrave Studies in Comparative Global History (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

²⁴ Fabrício Pereira Prado, *Spanish and Portuguese Trade, 1500–1750* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²⁵ Rafe Blaufarb, “Arms for Revolutions: Military Demobilization after the Napoleonic Wars and Latin American Independence,” 112–16.

Consequently, the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, lacking independent defense or economic structures—and in the case of Spanish colonies, also severely depleted of natural resources through extensive mining operations—became vulnerable to the Coalition forces during the Napoleonic Wars.²⁶

The culmination of these events was precipitated by Napoléon's conquest of Spain, which left Venezuelan provinces, formerly under the viceroyalty of Gran Colombia, poised for rebellion due to a longstanding lack of Spanish support and governance. The occupation of Spain and the ensuing internal succession crisis, exacerbated by the invasion but with roots in preexisting tensions, served as the final impetus for the Latin American wars of independence beginning in 1808.²⁷ The Spanish military, already weakened by conflicts in Europe, was largely absent from the wars in the Americas, leaving local royalist forces to defend the crown's interests. This lack of support and apparent indifference toward its colonies fueled further resentment and ultimately contributed to the dissolution of Spanish control over its American territories.²⁸

Case Study 2: France

The French Empire's formation and governance shared similarities with the Spanish Empire, yet their colonial pursuits diverged in both motiva-

²⁶ J. Shield Nicholson, "Trade after the Napoleonic War: With Some Comparison between Present Conditions and Those of a Hundred Years Ago," *Scottish Historical Review* 14, no. 56 (1917): 373–79; Katherine Aaslestad, "Blockade and Economic Warfare," in *The Cambridge History of the Napoleonic Wars*, eds. Alan Forrest and Peter Hicks (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 117–41; Russell H. Bartley, *Imperial Russia and the Struggle for Latin American Independence, 1808–1828* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978); and William W. Kaufman, *British Policy and the Independence of Latin America, 1804–1828* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1951).

²⁷ Jorge I. Domínguez, *Insurrection or Loyalty: The Breakdown of the Spanish American Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Brian R. Hamnett, *The End of Iberian Rule on the American Continent, 1770–1830* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316795996>; and Eric Selbin, *Modern Latin American Revolutions* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

²⁸ Arthur P. Whitaker, "France and Latin-American Independence," *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 210, no. 1 (1940): 157–59; Natalia Sobrevilla Perea, "Wars of Spanish-American Independence," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199366439.013.66>; and Robert L. Scheina, *The Age of the Caudillo, 1791–1899* (Dulles, VA: Brassey's, 2003).

tion and method. Spain's early explorations were driven by the quest for a route to India, but France's expansion into the Americas was a strategic response to Spanish discoveries, aimed at securing territories and thwarting Spanish and English claims.²⁹ The French colonial endeavor in Africa, more central to the empire's interests, unfolded under markedly different circumstances than those of Spain and Portugal, leading to a more substantial French, Belgian, English, and Dutch presence in Africa.³⁰

France's approach to maintaining its empire differed from Spain's with a consistent deployment of substantial garrison forces to quell invasions and rebellions. This strategy effectively spared France the indignity of losing territories due to defense inadequacies. However, the context of geography and historical periods played a pivotal role. Spain's mainland conflicts impeded its colonial oversight, while France's African colonies, being closer, benefited from more direct support. The financial burdens following the loss of Canada to the English and the American Revolution led to the sale of Louisiana by Napoléon, who deemed the American territories strategically untenable compared to the more accessible African regions.³¹

World War II instances like the Battle of Dakar and Mers el Kébir serve as examples of French military engagement, yet it is imperative to distinguish between the colonial dynamics of the early twentieth century and those of the late eighteenth century. French colonial rule often resorted to severe repression to maintain order, facilitated by the presence of large garrisons that empowered colonial governors to enforce stringent control measures. The annexation of Algeria is often posited as a move

²⁹ Barnett Singer and John Langdon, *Cultured Force: Makers and Defenders of the French Colonial Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008); Martin Thomas, ed., *The French Colonial Mind*, 2 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); Alice L. Conkin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Madeleine Dobie, *Trading Places: Colonization and Slavery in 18th-Century French Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010).

³⁰ Steven A. Cook, *Ruling but Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

³¹ William R. Griffith IV, "The French and Indian War (1754–1763): Causes and Outbreak," American Battlefield Trust, last modified 15 November 2023.

driven primarily by France's desire to enhance its imperial stature.³² This perspective is supported by historical accounts that suggest the French conquest of Algeria was initiated during the last days of the Bourbon Restoration by Charles X to end Barbary piracy and bolster the French monarch's popularity, especially among Parisian veterans of the Napoleonic Wars.³³ Additionally, the formal annexation of Algeria on 22 June 1834 was part of a broader French strategy to establish military colonies and exert control over the region, reflecting the era's prevailing colonial mindset.³⁴ The cultural origins of French Algeria also point to the crises of colonial and political legitimacy following the Haitian and French Revolutions, which propelled the military conquest and settlement colonization that integrated Algeria into France itself and led to intense military campaigns in the 1850s. After conquest, Algeria was subjected to significant resource extraction and the imposition of a garrison force comparable to a full French Army division.³⁵

The French military's repressive tactics in Algeria, particularly the nearly ubiquitous civil conflict that endured between the French occupiers and local Berber tribes, served as a whetstone for colonial forces inadvertently honing the skills of the local populations and giving rise to renowned units like the African Zouaves. These units, established as early as 1830, became a symbol of French military prowess and served as a crucible for developing combat-ready organizations.³⁶ The militarization of its colonies is partly responsible for the current state of France's former

³² Jennifer E. Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

³³ David Todd, *A Velvet Empire: French Informal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

³⁴ "Ordonnance du Roi relative au commandement et à la haute administration des Possessions françaises dans le nord de l'Afrique" [Royal Ordinance on the Command and Higher Administration of the French Possessions in North Africa], 22 July 1834, *Bulletin des lois*, 2e partie, ordonnances, no. 324 (1834): 121–22, arts. 1, 4.

³⁵ Conkin, *A Mission to Civilize*; and Richard S. Fogarty, *Race and War in France: Colonial Subjects in the French Army, 1914–1918* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).

³⁶ "Ordonnance du Roi qui règle la composition et l'organisation des bataillons et escadrons de zouaves qui pourront être formés en Afrique" [Royal Ordinance regulating the composition and organization of Zouave battalions and squadrons that may be formed in Africa] (21 March 1831), *Journal militaire officiel*, année 1831, premier semestre (Paris: Anselin, 1831), 409.

territories. The training and combat experience gained by colonial troops, particularly during World War II, enabled them to maintain defense and order following the fall of metropolitan France. After the 22 June 1940 armistice and the fall of metropolitan France, the regime retained only those armed units “necessary for maintenance of domestic order,” while authority over, and military provisions connected to, the empire persisted under the armistice framework.³⁷ However, the historical harsh repression by France in its former colonies has led to a lingering resentment that has affected the relationship between these countries and France, particularly in the context of military alignment and peacekeeping efforts.³⁸ Recent developments have seen a shift in the relationship between France and some of its former African colonies, with countries like Mali and Niger taking steps to limit or end French military operations within their borders. This change is part of a broader reassessment of the postcolonial military agreements that have allowed France to intervene in the region for decades.³⁹ Additionally, the reevaluation of France’s military role on the continent comes amid a backdrop of increasing influence from other global powers such as China and Russia.⁴⁰

The liberation of France in World War II by the Allied powers marked a turning point. Similar to Spain’s actions during the Napoleonic Wars, France stripped its African garrisons to bolster its own defenses, conveying a disregard for the colonies’ safety and importance. This neglect fu-

³⁷ Armistice Agreement between the German High Command of the Armed Forces and French Plenipotentiaries, Compiègne, June 22, 1940,” Avalon Project, Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School, arts. 1, 4, 8; and Martin Thomas, “After Mers-el-Kébir: The Armed Neutrality of the Vichy French Navy, 1940–43,” *English Historical Review* 112, no. 447 (June 1997): 643–70.

³⁸ Nicolas de Rivière, “Peace Operations Are Now Facing New Challenges,” United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, statement to the Security Council, 6 September 2022, Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations, NY.

³⁹ Recent years have seen a notable shift in the military relationship between France and several African nations. For example, Mali requested the withdrawal of French troops in 2021, ending Operation Barkhane, France’s counterterrorism operation in the Sahel region. Similarly, in 2023, Burkina Faso’s transitional government demanded the departure of French troops. These actions reflect a broader trend of African nations reassessing their military ties with France, often amid rising anti-French sentiment and protests against what is perceived as neocolonial influence. Laura Kayali and Clea Caulcutt, “France’s Niger Debacle Marks End of an Era in Africa,” *Politico*, 27 September 2023; and “France’s Military Presence in Africa,” *Afrique Media*, 24 March 2023.

⁴⁰ John Grady, “AFRICOM: China, Russia Expanding Influence in Africa,” *USNI News*, 15 March 2022.

eled postwar independence movements, accelerating the decolonization of many French territories in the mid-1950s through the early 1960s.⁴¹

The postcolonial period was challenging for former French colonies. Designed as economies to serve the imperial system, they faced severe economic downturns akin to those experienced by Spanish Latin America in the 1800s. The absence of French military support and economic depression caused by the abrupt withdrawal of imperial support, effectively severing a lifeline, precipitated a power vacuum filled by warlords, resulting in the widespread sectarian violence that characterized West and Central Africa in the postcolonial era.⁴²

In the immediate aftermath of decolonization, countries such as Guinea, which gained independence in 1958, experienced political instability as various groups vied for control. This was a pattern repeated across many former French territories in Africa as they transitioned to self-rule.⁴³ For example, in the Central African Republic, Jean-Bédél Bokassa, an army officer, seized power in a 1966 coup and later declared himself emperor, illustrating the kind of military-led governance that emerged in some postcolonial states.⁴⁴ Similarly, in Chad, the withdrawal of French support led to decades of civil war, with different warlords and factions, including

⁴¹ Carina Schmitt, "The Warfare–Welfare Nexus in French African Colonies in the Course of the First and Second World War," *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 45, no. 2 (172) (2020): 217–38; and Julian Wucherpfennig, Philipp Hunziker, and Lars-Erik Cederman, "Who Inherits the State?: Colonial Rule and Postcolonial Conflict," *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 4 (October 2016): 882–98, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12236>. Morocco regained independence from France in 1956; Tunisia achieved full independence in 1956; 1960 saw a major wave of independence across sub-Saharan Africa, including many former French colonies; Algeria's independence was achieved in 1962.

⁴² Frederick Cooper, "The Politics of Decolonization in French and British West Africa," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.111>; and Emily Estelle Perez, "Vicious Cycles: How Disruptive States and Extremist Movements Fill Power Vacuums and Fuel Each Other," Critical Threats Project, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 17 August 2020.

⁴³ Frederick Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511584091>.

⁴⁴ Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

Hissène Habré and later Idriss Déby, coming to power through military force.⁴⁵

These effects continue to echo into modernity in France's former African imperium. For instance, the Central African Republic has seen a multitude of armed groups vying for control since the onset of its civil conflict in 2004, with peace agreements failing to bring lasting stability.⁴⁶ Similarly, the withdrawal of French forces from Mali was swiftly followed by the entry of Russian mercenaries, exacerbating violence and instability in the region.⁴⁷

The economic impact of France's colonial endeavors varied across different periods and territories. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the resources from French colonies in the Americas were instrumental in funding grandiose projects, including the palace of Versailles.⁴⁸ However, these American colonies were lost well before the height of French colonialism in Africa, which played a significant role in the modernization and rebuilding of Paris in later years.⁴⁹

In the wake of decolonization, France experienced a relatively smooth transition to a trade-based system with its former colonies. The shift was facilitated by the nation's economic self-sufficiency and the fact that, historically, colonial resources had often been directed toward nonessential national projects rather than fundamental economic needs.⁵⁰ This transition was marked by a slight improvement in the French economy, as it was

⁴⁵ Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

⁴⁶ Andrew Hansen, "The French Military in Africa," Council on Foreign Relations, last updated 8 February 2008.

⁴⁷ Isabelle King, "How France Failed Mali: The End of Operation Barkhane," *Harvard International Review*, 30 January 2023.

⁴⁸ Richard Bonney, "Vindication of the Fronde?: The Cost of Louis XIV's Versailles Building Programme," *French History* 21, no. 2 (2007): 205–25, <https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/crm004>.

⁴⁹ Daron Acemoglu, "The Economic Impact of Colonialism," Centre for Economic Policy Research, 30 January 2017.

⁵⁰ Edward Peter Fitzgerald, "Did France's Colonial Empire Make Economic Sense?: A Perspective from the Postwar Decade, 1946–1956," *Journal of Economic History* 48, no. 2 (1988): 373–85, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022050700004976>.

no longer encumbered by the responsibilities and costs associated with maintaining and defending vast overseas territories.⁵¹

Case Study 3: Britain

The British Empire's strategy during the world wars, particularly in relation to its colonies, was not uniform and had varying impacts on different territories. Egypt, for example, faced invasions in both world wars, while Asian colonies including Burma (Myanmar), Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong, were occupied during the second.⁵² Among these, only Sudan and Burma experienced postcolonial instability akin to the scenarios observed in French and Spanish colonies.⁵³ Moreover, Sudan and Burma were the only ones that did not reengage with the Commonwealth postwar, which could be attributed to the level of defense investment by Britain in these colonies.⁵⁴

In Burma's case, the British defense was notably minimal in terms of manpower and material. The British military leadership viewed Burma as a buffer to protect India, a more valued asset.⁵⁵ This strategy was so apparent that it caused dismay among the British general staff, with one commander noting the consternation it caused within senior ranks.⁵⁶ The memory of being used as a buffer has not faded in modern Myanmar, and it is noteworthy that Myanmar aligns more closely with China, which,

⁵¹ Silvia Marzagalli, "French Colonial Policy, Warfare, and Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Trade" (paper, Economic History Seminar, Yale University, 30 April 2018).

⁵² Ashley Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2006), 351–462; and Eileen P. Sullivan, "Liberalism and Imperialism: J. S. Mill's Defense of the British Empire," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 4 (October–December 1983): 599–617, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2709218>.

⁵³ R. Lemos, "Can We Decolonize the Ancient Past?: Bridging Postcolonial and Decolonial Theory in Sudanese and Nubian Archaeology," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 33, no. 1 (February 2023): 19–37, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774322000178>; "Political Solution in Sudan Needed Now to Restore Credible, Fully Functioning Civilian-led Government, Special Representative Tells Security Council," 9129th meeting, SC/15027, United Nations Security Council, 13 September 2022; and Kristin Romey, "Facing an Uncertain Future: Sudan Is Drawing Strength from Its Ancient Past," *National Geographic*, 14 January 2022.

⁵⁴ "Map of Commonwealth Countries," Commonwealth Secretariat, accessed 19 June 2023; and William Stroock, "Final Battle for Burma, 1945," *World War 2 Quarterly*, Spring 2014.

⁵⁵ It should be noted that the level of British resistance can arguably be attributed to theater command-level decisions. Stroock, *Final Battle for Burma*; and Jackson, *The British Empire and the Second World War*, 351–462.

⁵⁶ "We were there to hold for as long as we could and with what we had, that we might get out of there towards India, which caused the greatest consternation to senior command." Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 2000.

despite facing its own challenges from the Japanese invasion, committed significant military resources to aid in the defense of Burma. The Chinese Expeditionary Force was dispatched to Burma and India to support the Allied efforts against the Imperial Japanese Army during the Japanese occupation of Burma.⁵⁷ The commitment of Chinese forces to Burma's defense was substantial and, in some cases, surpassed the resources that Britain allocated to the region.⁵⁸ This alignment is reflected in the current geopolitical landscape, where Myanmar's relationship with China has deepened, particularly in light of China's growing involvement in Myanmar's internal conflicts and the Belt and Road Initiative.⁵⁹

Sudan experienced a fate akin to that of Burma, succumbing to an Italian invasion launched from Ethiopia.⁶⁰ The British response was initially limited, as the bulk of the empire's regional forces were engaged with German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's forces in the north.⁶¹ The repercussions of Britain's withdrawal are evident in contemporary Sudan, which continues to grapple with domestic instability and maintains a cautious stance toward involvement with the Commonwealth on the international stage.⁶²

In contrast, Burma, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaya, despite also being invaded and occupied, chose to reengage with the British Empire through the Commonwealth.⁶³ This differing level of postwar engagement can arguably be attributed to the extent of Britain's defense investments. The relatively greater economic value of these regions to Britain and their

⁵⁷ Wang Xinjuan, "The Chinese Expeditionary Force's Fight in Burma," *China Daily*, 15 September 2020.

⁵⁸ Mark D. Sherry, *Campaigns of World War II: China Defensive, 4 July 1942–4 May 1945* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1996).

⁵⁹ Tereza Štilipová, "China's Involvement in Myanmar Amid Deepening Ties between China and ASEAN Countries," *China Observers in Central and Eastern Europe*, 5 September 2023; and Grant Peck, "Myanmar's Military Government Says China Brokered Peace Talks to De-escalate Fighting in Northeast," Associated Press, 11 December 2023.

⁶⁰ "How Italy Was Defeated in East Africa in 1941," Imperial War Museums (UK), accessed 24 November 2025.

⁶¹ "How Italy Was Defeated in East Africa in 1941."

⁶² Simon Rynn and Michael Jones, *Deal or No Deal?: An Appraisal of UK Engagement in Sudan* (London: Royal United Services Institute [RUSI] occasional paper, 2023).

⁶³ "Continuing the United Kingdom's Trade Relationship with Singapore (web version)," Department for Business and Trade and Department for International Trade, 16 December 2020.

proximity to the lucrative China market may have influenced this decision.⁶⁴

During the Japanese campaigns of 1941–42, Singapore and Malaya were captured. The British mounted a formidable defense, not only in manpower but also through a significant show of naval strength, dispatching capital warships to Singapore's harbor. The British public was aghast at the sinking of the HMS *Prince of Wales* (53) and the HMS *Repulse* (1916) by Japanese bombers, and the subsequent surrender of 80,000 soldiers in Singapore—the largest in the empire's history—was a profound blow to British military honor.⁶⁵ The prewar imperial designation of Singapore as the Gibraltar of the East reflected the high economic value placed on the colony and the overall esteem in which Britain held its territories.⁶⁶ Unlike Burma and Sudan, Singapore, along with Malaya and Hong Kong (which received a similarly vigorous British defense) have narratives that portray the British Empire as steadfast during their time of crisis.⁶⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising that these former colonies have reciprocated this loyalty by actively participating in the modern Commonwealth.⁶⁸

Factor Two: Economic Links

Economic links are a pivotal factor in shaping postcolonial relationships. While defense connections may initially drive engagement with a former imperial power, economic considerations often play a more enduring role. These ties influence a former colony's willingness to collaborate with its

⁶⁴ Jonathan Eyal, "Digital Economy Deal Unlocks Vast Opportunities for Singapore, UK," *Straits Times*, updated 28 September 2023.

⁶⁵ "Changi Fortress," Exhibitions, What's On, Changi Chapel and Museum, Government of Singapore (National Heritage Board), accessed 15 December 2025; and Fred Glueckstein, "Churchill and the Fall of Singapore," International Churchill Society, 10 November 2015.

⁶⁶ "Why Did Singapore Fall?," Imperial War Museums (UK), 24 November 2025; and David Hein, "Vulnerable: HMS *Prince of Wales* in 1941," *Journal of Military History* 77, no. 3 (July 2013): 955–89.

⁶⁷ Richard Francis, "The Fall of Singapore in February 1942—Naval Operations," *Naval Historical Review* (March 2002); and "A World Turned Upside Down—British Defeat in Malaya and Singapore," *Forces News*, 15 February 2019.

⁶⁸ "The Role and Future of the Commonwealth, Foreign Affairs Committee," House of Commons (UK), prepared 15 November 2012.

previous ruler on the global stage and serve as a significant indicator of its potential for stability and independence.

For example, robust economic links can lead to preferential trade agreements and continued investment, fostering growth and stability in the post-independence era. Conversely, the absence of such ties can leave a nation isolated and struggling to establish a sustainable economy. The legacy of economic interdependence developed during colonial times can persist, influencing not only trade patterns but also diplomatic relations and investment flows.

In essence, while defense considerations are significant, the economic dimension is equally vital in understanding the nuances of postcolonial engagement and the trajectory of a nation's development. Countries that have managed to diversify their economies and reduce reliance on their former colonial power tend to fare better in terms of stability and self-sufficiency. Conversely, those that remain economically dependent may face challenges in achieving sustainable growth and autonomy.

Case Study 1: Britain

Britain, which has already provided excellent examples of defense linkage, also exemplifies an effective approach to colonial economic engagement. The British Empire crafted an imperial economic network within the framework of the Commonwealth of Nations. This international body, founded on the humanist principles of equality (relative to the period's definitions), fraternity, and mutual defense, set a standard for the empire's colonies as Britain's global influence receded. The Commonwealth fostered a sense of loyalty among its members, evident in their readiness to support each other and Britain in diverse areas, including scientific research, infrastructure development, and economic reforms. This coopera-

tive spirit has been a cornerstone of the Commonwealth's enduring legacy, promoting a sense of unity and shared progress among its member states.⁶⁹

For Britain, the Commonwealth provided a platform for maintaining economic ties and fostering mutual support among its members. This economic continuity helped former colonies transition to independence with a sense of partnership rather than abandonment. Nations that enjoyed stronger economic bonds with Britain, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, continued to engage positively with the Commonwealth, benefiting from trade, investment, and cooperative initiatives.⁷⁰

However, it is important to recognize that Britain's approach to its former colonies was not uniform but varied based on each territory's strategic and economic importance. While some regions such as South Africa and Zimbabwe were closely integrated into the British economic system due to their resource wealth, others such as Sudan were less prioritized and faced challenges post-independence. This disparity in treatment can be attributed to the economic potential each colony presented.⁷¹

The case of Ireland stands as a stark contrast, where historical repression and the struggle for independence have led to a longstanding reluctance to engage closely with Britain. The Irish experience underscores that economic decisions were not the sole factor in determining the nature of postcolonial relationships; historical grievances and the quest for sovereignty also played significant roles.⁷²

⁶⁹ Alan Lester, "Humanism, Race and the Colonial Frontier," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 37, no. 1 (January 2012): 132–48, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2011.00450.x>.

⁷⁰ Amy McKeever, "How the Commonwealth Arose from a Crumbling British Empire," *National Geographic*, 22 November 2021; Sukhpreet Kaur and Aditi Paul, "Commonwealth to Postcolonial Literature: A Critical Review," *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts* 10, no. 6 (June 2022): c81–c85; and Bryan Cheang, "Hong Kong and Singapore as an Anglo-Chinese Success Story," in *Economic Liberalism and the Developmental State* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 153–202, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-08100-2_5.

⁷¹ Siyabonga Hadebe, "Britain Changed Its Former Colonial Territories into Financial Enclaves," *Mail & Guardian*, 22 February 2024; and "The End of the British Empire After the Second World War," Imperial War Museums (UK).

⁷² Joe Cleary, "Postcolonial Ireland," in *Ireland and the British Empire*, ed. Kevin Kenny, *Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (Oxford, UK: Oxford Academic, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199251841.003.0009>; and Livia Gershon, "Britain's Blueprint for Colonialism: Made in Ireland," *JSTOR Daily*, 29 January 2022.

In essence, the economic links established during colonial times were crucial in determining the trajectory of postcolonial nations. Those with stronger economic foundations and continued support from the former imperial power were better positioned to achieve stability and prosperity, reflecting the importance of these ties in the postcolonial world order.⁷³ Conversely, territories such as Sudan, which did not have substantial economic ties or strategic value to Britain, faced a more challenging postcolonial experience. The lack of a robust economic framework left them more vulnerable to instability and less inclined to maintain close ties with the Commonwealth.⁷⁴

Britain's postcolonial engagement exists as a complex tapestry woven from economic considerations, strategic value, and historical context, resulting in a diverse range of outcomes for its former colonies. While some have thrived and maintained strong ties with the Commonwealth, others have navigated a more tumultuous path to self-sufficiency. The economic dimension, while not the only factor, played a vital role in shaping these postcolonial relationships and the future stability and self-sufficiency of the nations involved.

The Commonwealth system has offered a sustainable model for multilateral cooperation with Britain, allowing all member states to have a political voice and the chance for legislative leadership through the role of the secretary-general.⁷⁵ This structure has enabled Britain to adapt its imperial influence into a more diplomatically acceptable form. The potential repercussions of being excluded from the Commonwealth highlight the system's effectiveness in maintaining Britain's central influence without

⁷³ Jan Wilkens, "Postcolonialism in International Relations," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 20 November 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.101>.

⁷⁴ Utz Pape and Arden Finn, "How Conflict and Economic Crises Exacerbate Poverty in South Sudan," *World Bank* (blog), 23 April 2019; and Mrs. Kavita, "Decolonization and Its Aftermath: Exploring Post-Colonial Societies in the 20th Century," *Innovative Research Thoughts* 9, no. 3 (April–June 2023): 141–46.

⁷⁵ "Multilateralism Remains a Powerful Agent of Positive Change, Says Secretary-General," News, the Commonwealth Secretariat, 17 May 2019; and "Bilateral and Multilateral Co-operation," Commonwealth Network.

resorting to military force.⁷⁶ The significance of economic ties established during colonial times is evident when comparing the current map of the Commonwealth with that of the former British Empire. The two are remarkably similar, underscoring the lasting connections between these nations.⁷⁷

Case Study 2: France

In stark contrast to the British Empire, France's colonial system rapidly disintegrated shortly after the Second World War. Despite France's concerted efforts to maintain its global influence, the postwar period marked a significant shift in colonial dynamics. French authorities, recognizing the changing tide, endeavored to emulate the British Commonwealth by offering their colonies the status of departments—akin to the American territories and British dominions. Yet, France's militaristic approach and the breakdown of defense networks during the conflict largely sealed the fate of these endeavors.⁷⁸

Most French colonies opted for independence, severing ties with France—a decision influenced by various factors. For instance, the Ivory Coast chose to remain connected due to its economic stability and political alignment with French interests. Conversely, others sought complete autonomy, driven by the desire for self-determination and disillusionment with French governance.⁷⁹

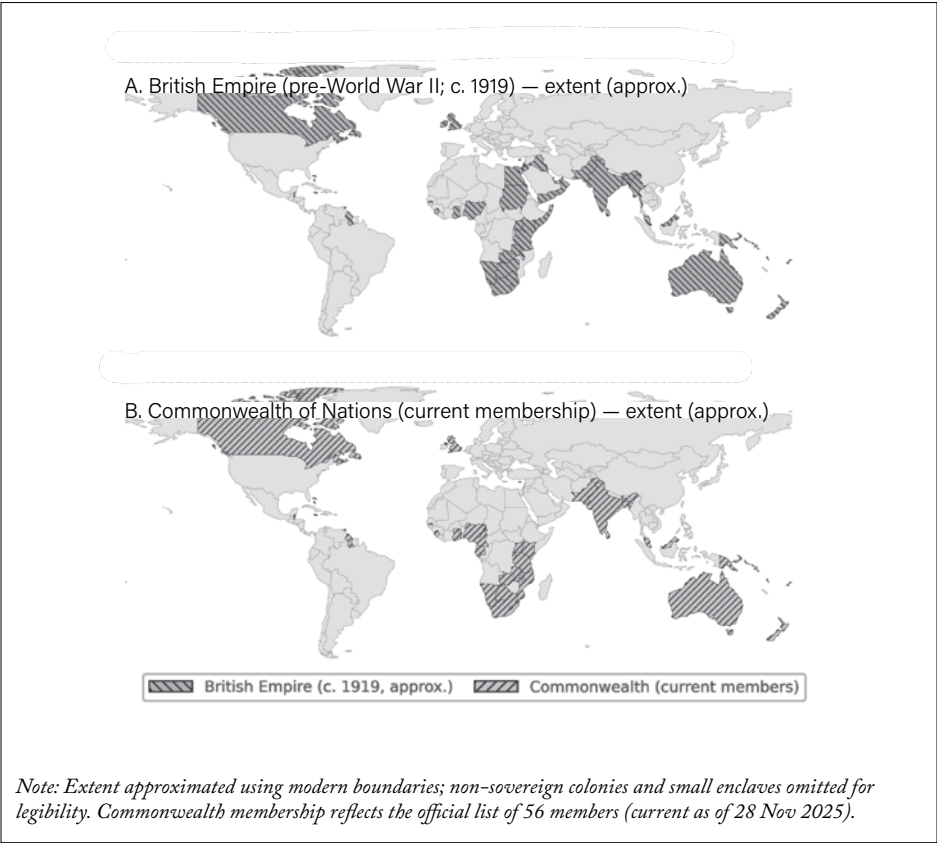
⁷⁶ McKeever, "How the Commonwealth Arose from a Crumbling British Empire"; and Donal K. Coffey, "The Right to Shoot Himself": Secession in the British Commonwealth of Nations," *Journal of Legal History* 39, no. 2 (2018): 117–39, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01440365.2018.1484323>.

⁷⁷ Alice Gibbs, "How the Queen's Modern Commonwealth Compared to the Former British Empire," *Newsweek*, 9 September 2022.

⁷⁸ Fred Réno, "Re-sourcing Dependency: Decolonisation and Post-colonialism in French Overseas Departments," *Itinerario* 25, no. 2 (June 2001): 9–22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0165115300008792>; and Cooper, "The Politics of Decolonization in French and British West Africa."

⁷⁹ France, "Proclamation du 4 octobre 1958 des résultats des votes émis par le peuple français à l'occasion de sa consultation par voie de référendum, le 28 septembre 1958" [Proclamation of October 4, 1958 regarding the results of the votes cast by the French people during the referendum consultation of September 28, 1958], *Journal officiel de la République française*, 5 October 1958; and "Memorandum of Conversation," 12 November 1959, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958–1960*, vol. 14, *Africa* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), doc. 19.

Figure 2. Comparison of the pre–World War II British Empire (top) with the modern Commonwealth of Nations (bottom). The two maps highlight broad continuity between the geographic footprint of Britain’s imperial-era governance network and the contemporary Commonwealth’s membership pattern.



Source: Alexei (Frank) Hoffman

The transition to postcolonial relations was fraught with distrust. French attempts at economic reform in the colonies, aimed at fostering self-reliance, were met with skepticism. The prevailing sentiment was that if France had not prioritized colonial interests during its rule, it was unlikely to do so during their separation. Consequently, the colonies depart-

ed without a viable framework for stability, their economies often hinged on a single resource cultivated during imperial rule.⁸⁰

The aftermath for these nascent nations was turbulent. Devoid of French military support and investment, they faced a succession of civil conflicts and authoritarian regimes vying for control of lucrative industries. The Central African Republic serves as a poignant example, where the struggle for dominance over diamond mines epitomized the broader challenges of transitioning from colonial dependency to sovereignty.⁸¹

On Russia and Austria-Hungary: Overland Empires

The synthesis of defense and economic interests is exemplified in the overland empires of Russia and Austria-Hungary, where the imperial economic system was not the focal point. Trade within these empires was managed internally, shielded from the destabilizing effects of distant external forces. Although not directly comparable to the colonial systems of other European powers, the dependency of far-flung territories on the central regions for defense and economic support aligns them with the broader themes explored in this study.

The Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires provide insightful case studies. Both empires experienced fragmentation due to the destabilizing effects of subjugation and the absence of a cohesive state identity, as various regions retained their cultural uniqueness without fully integrating into a singular imperial identity. Additionally, the downfall of these empires was marked by external military invasions targeting their core areas.

These instances reveal the inherent vulnerabilities within overland empires, where the lack of economic diversification and the challenges of maintaining a unified defense across vast, culturally diverse territories ultimately contributed to their disintegration. The Austro-Hungarian Em-

⁸⁰ Emmanuelle Saada, "France: The Longue Durée of French Decolonization," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire*, eds. Martin Thomas and Andrew S. Thompson (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 85–101, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198713197.013.5>.

⁸¹ Wiesław Lizak, "The Central African Republic as a Fragile (Failed) State," *Stosunki Międzynarodowe* 52, no. 2 (2016): 179–94.

pire, a complex multinational entity, struggled with nationalist tensions and the pressures of World War I, leading to its dissolution.⁸² Similarly, the Russian Empire, despite its vast expanse, faced internal revolutions and the strains of war, culminating in the empire's collapse and the subsequent rise of the Soviet Union.⁸³

Case Study 1: Russia

The legacy of the Russian Empire is mirrored in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), established after the Soviet Union's dissolution.⁸⁴ The first factor, defense, is notably evident in the choices of former Soviet states that bore the brunt of invasions during the world wars. These states chose not to rejoin Russia under the CIS framework. While various factors, including cultural and political differences, influenced these decisions, it is remarkable that the borders of the nations that declined CIS membership closely align with the furthest extent of Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1942.⁸⁵ Notably, Belarus, under the rule of a pro-Russian leader, was the exception, opting to reintegrate with Russia within the CIS structure.⁸⁶

Russia's approach to its far western regions was marked by significant neglect, a stance rooted in the perception that these areas were not an integral part of Russia but rather territories under occupation.⁸⁷ This perspec-

⁸² Alan Sked, *The Decline and Fall of the Habsburg Empire, 1815–1918*, 2d ed. (London: Routledge, 2015); and Walter Sauer, "Habsburg Colonial: Austria-Hungary's Role in European Overseas Expansion Reconsidered," *Austrian Studies* 20 (2012): 5–23, <https://doi.org/10.5699/austrianstudies.20.2012.0005>.

⁸³ John B. Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 320–50; and Jonathan Davis, "The Birth of the Soviet Union and the Death of the Russian Revolution," *JSTOR Daily*, 21 December 2022.

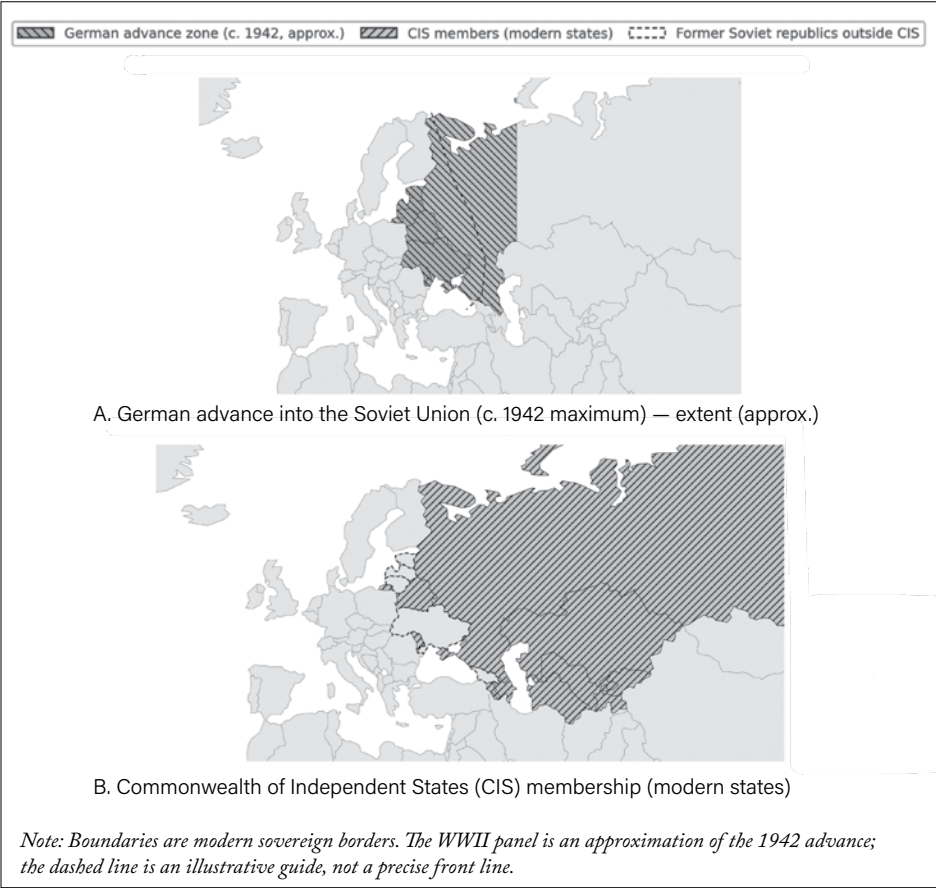
⁸⁴ Members of the CIS include: Russian Federation, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.

⁸⁵ Natasha Kuhrt and Filippo Costa Buranelli, "Russia and the CIS in 2018: Regionalism or Transregionalism?," *Asian Survey* 59, no. 1 (February 2019): 44–53, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2019.59.1.44>; and Taras Kuzio, "History, Memory and Nation Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space," *Nationalities Papers* 30, no. 2 (2002): 241–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905990220140649>.

⁸⁶ "Belarus in the CIS," President of the Republic of Belarus, accessed 13 March 2024; and Dmitri Trenin, "Russia and CIS Countries: The Relations Getting Mature," Russian International Affairs Council, 2 March 2012.

⁸⁷ Kristiina Silvan and Marcin Kaczmarek, "Russia's Approach to Connectivity in Asia: From Cooperation to Coercion," *East Asia* 40 (September 2023): 317–34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-023-09404-w>; and Bob Seely, "The Russian Way of War," *Foreign Affairs*, 24 November 2023.

Figure 3. German advances into the Soviet Union during World War II (top) compared with the modern Commonwealth of Independent States (bottom). Panel A presents an approximation of the peak German advance in 1942 (with an illustrative guideline), rendered against modern sovereign boundaries for visual comparability. Panel B maps contemporary Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member states and outlines former Soviet republics outside the CIS to facilitate comparison.



Source: Alexei (Frank) Hoffman

tive and subsequent treatment bear resemblance to the colonial policies of Spain and France a century prior. Consequently, when the opportunity arose for Russia to reestablish control over these regions, it was largely rebuffed.⁸⁸ The western territories, having experienced Russia's failure to defend them and the lack of economic incentives, saw little reason to seek reunification.

In contrast, the inner Russian states, beneficiaries of substantial economic investment from Moscow and untouched by the devastation of war, showed a willingness to engage with the nascent Russian Federation.⁸⁹ Notably, Russia offered compelling incentives for reengagement to its newly independent territories under the CIS.⁹⁰ These included guarantees of independence and promises of defensive and economic support, distinguishing it from France's unsuccessful attempt to integrate its colonies as departments.

Case Study 2: Austria-Hungary

The Austro-Hungarian Empire, under significant military duress, fragmented in 1918, a collapse that can be partly attributed to defense failures. However, unlike the French and Spanish Empires, Austria-Hungary neither systematically oppressed its provinces nor did it neglect them economically. The reluctance of the empire's outer regions to reengage can be traced to the unsuccessful assimilation of its diverse cultures. This was not due to indifference but from a fear that integration efforts would incite continuous uprisings, reminiscent of the massive 1848 Hungarian Revolt,

⁸⁸ Matthew Lange, James Mahoney, and Matthias Vom Hau, "Colonialism and Development: A Comparative Analysis of Spanish and British Colonies," *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 5 (March 2006): 1412–25, <https://doi.org/10.1086/499510>.

⁸⁹ Eric A. Miller, *To Balance or Not to Balance: Alignment Theory and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2006); and Kuzio, "History, Memory and Nation Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space," 241–64.

⁹⁰ Alexander G. Khodakov, "The Commonwealth of Independent States as a Legal Phenomenon," *Emory International Law Review* 7 (1993): 13; and UN General Assembly, Resolution 31139, Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States, A/RES 31139 (22 January 1993).

which almost overthrew the government and resulted in the execution of the prime minister.⁹¹

Consequently, the provinces perceived themselves as separate entities, viewing each other through the lens of longstanding cultural biases, and felt disconnected from the empire as a whole. These sentiments persisted beyond the empire's dissolution, leading to ongoing conflicts among the former territories, such as the Hungarian-Romanian War and the Hungarian-Czechoslovak War, which further destabilized the region in the 1920s.⁹²

Examples in Modern Geopolitics

The Belt and Road as a Modern Imperial Project

The United States has seen its primary geopolitical competitor, the People's Republic of China (PRC), effectively employ strategic factors in its engagement with nations that were once under colonial rule. China's approach, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America, encompasses not just economic incentives and infrastructure development but also the provision of military support to foster stability.⁹³ These actions, which address both economic and defense needs, have been pivotal in persuading these postcolonial states to align geopolitically with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).⁹⁴

The BRI has effectively extended China's influence across global platforms, enhancing its role in setting international standards and norms.⁹⁵ This initiative has enabled China to shape geopolitical discourse, including the international status of Taiwan, and to expand its sway within var-

⁹¹ Dalibor Roháč, "Why Did the Austro-Hungarian Empire Collapse?: A Public Choice Perspective," *Constitutional Political Economy* 20 (June 2009): 160–76, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10602-008-9058-0>.

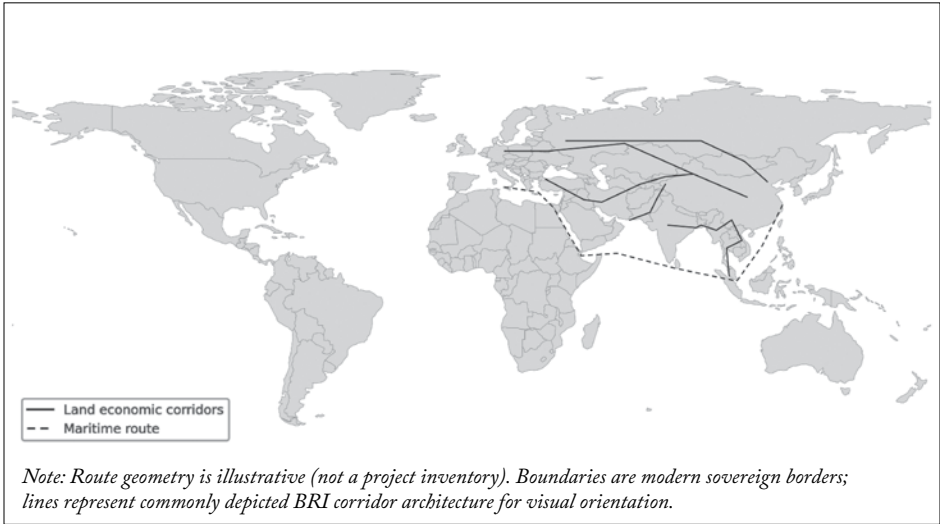
⁹² Roháč, "Why Did the Austro-Hungarian Empire Collapse?"; and Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

⁹³ Diana Roy, "China's Growing Influence in Latin America," Council on Foreign Relations, updated 15 June 2023; and R. Evan Ellis, "Comparing China's Engagement in Africa and Latin America," *Diplomat*, 21 October 2023.

⁹⁴ James McBride, Noah Berman, and Andrew Chatzky, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, updated 2 February 2023.

⁹⁵ "How Is the Belt and Road Initiative Advancing China's Interests?," China Power Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies; and "China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Geopolitical and Geo-economic Assessment," International Institute for Strategic Studies, November 2022.

Figure 4. Belt and Road Initiative—principal land economic corridors and maritime route.



Source: Alexei (Frank) Hoffman

ious international organizations.⁹⁶ The strategic deployment of the BRI underscores China’s global ambitions and its impact on the geopolitical landscape, wielding defense and economic linkages to construct a modern imperium.⁹⁷

China is increasingly leveraging defense (Factor One) as a strategic tool on the global stage. Many successor states within China’s traditional sphere of influence, previously aligned with their former colonial empires, now find themselves ideologically at odds with these empires, which have transitioned to capitalist republics. This ideological shift positions them

⁹⁶ Anthony Kleven, “Belt and Road: Colonialism with Chinese Characteristics,” *Interpreter*, 6 May 2019; and Amar Bhattacharya et al., *China’s Belt and Road: The New Geopolitics of Global Infrastructure Development* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2019).

⁹⁷ Kleven, “Belt and Road”; Maja Glysing, “Belt and Road Initiative through Post-Colonial Theory,” Department of Government, Uppsala University, Spring 2022; and Thomas P. Cavanna, “What Does China’s Belt and Road Initiative Mean for US Grand Strategy?,” *Diplomat*, 5 June 2018.

contrary to the PRC's strategic goals. In response, China has been assertive in using military linkages to distance these nations from their historical ties with their former ruling countries. By exerting military pressure, China demonstrates the former empires' inability or unwillingness to defend their past territories. When these former colonial powers do not commit to defending these states, the latter are more inclined to align with China's strategic interests, often as a means to safeguard their sovereignty.⁹⁸

For example, China's military activities around Taiwan have intensified, with frequent incursions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone and increased military drills in nearby maritime areas.⁹⁹ These actions serve as a stark reminder to Taiwan and the international community of China's capability and willingness to assert its claims, despite the island's historical ties with the United States.¹⁰⁰ Similarly, China's pursuit of defense technologies and its military-civil fusion strategy underscore its intent to bolster its defense capabilities, further influencing regional dynamics.¹⁰¹

Turkey's Assertion of Defense Diplomacy

Turkey has assertively employed Factor One diplomacy, aiming to supplant influence within what was traditionally the Russian sphere. This approach is evident in Turkey's support for Azerbaijan during the recent

⁹⁸ Anthony H. Cordesman and Grace Hwang, "Updated Report: Chinese Strategy and Military Forces in 2021," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 3 August 2021; and Gregory C. Allen, "China's Pursuit of Defense Technologies: Implications for U.S. and Multilateral Export Control and Investment Screening Regimes," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 13 April 2023.

⁹⁹ Jacob Stokes, "Resisting China's Gray Zone Military Pressure on Taiwan," Center for a New American Security, 7 December 2023.

¹⁰⁰ Ned Price, "Increasing People's Republic of China Military Pressure against Taiwan Undermines Regional Peace and Stability," U.S. Department of State, 3 October 2021; "U.S. Relations With Taiwan," Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 28 May 2022; and "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson's Remarks on US State Department's Statement on the Election in China's Taiwan Region," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 14 January 2024.

¹⁰¹ Lindsay Maizland, "China's Modernizing Military," Council on Foreign Relations, 5 February 2020; and J. Matthew McInnis, *Russia and China Look at the Future of War* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, 2023).

conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as its military operations in Syria.¹⁰² Despite Russian calls for withdrawal, Turkey's refusal to comply and the absence of significant Russian countermeasures have signaled to the international community and regional states that Russia may be unable to uphold its defense commitments, particularly when the challenging party shares a border with Russia.

This dynamic has led to a noticeable shift in the Caucasus, where former Soviet states have shown a varying degree of responsiveness to Turkish interests. Moreover, nations south of Turkey traditionally aligned with Russia are beginning to realign. If this trend persists, Turkey could potentially extend its influence economically, creating a Factor Two scenario that could attract even more allies to its side.¹⁰³

The Ukraine Conflict through a Linkage Failure Lens

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, initiated by Russia, can be interpreted as Moscow's strategic effort to mend the fractures in both defense (Factor One) and economic (Factor Two) linkages. Prior to the invasion, Kyiv was progressively gravitating toward the European Union, distancing itself from the CIS economically.¹⁰⁴ Concurrently, Ukraine was contemplating a deeper relationship with NATO, moving away from its historical defense

¹⁰² Simon Maghakyan, "Azerbaijan Could Invade Armenia. The U.S. Must Intervene," *Time*, 24 October 2023; Alex Gendler, "The Geopolitics of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict," *Voice of America*, 8 December 2023; Gareth M. Winrow, *Turkey, Russia and the Caucasus: Common and Diverging Interests* (London: Chatham House, 2009); Şule Can, "The Syrian Civil War, Sectarianism and Political Change at the Turkish-Syrian Border," *Social Anthropology/Antropologie Sociale* 25, no. 2 (2017): 174–89, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-8676.12413>; and Bassem Mroue and Suzan Fraser, "What's at Stake in Turkey's Military Escalation in Syria?," *PBS News-Hour*, 10 December 2022.

¹⁰³ Dorian Jones, "Turkey Vows Support for Azerbaijan in Escalating Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict," *Voice of America*, 28 September 2020; Kali Robinson, "Turkey's Growing Foreign Policy Ambitions," Council on Foreign Relations, 11 July 2023; and Anna Borshchevskaya, "Russia and Turkey in Nagorno-Karabakh: A Recipe for Long-Term Instability," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 30 October 2020.

¹⁰⁴ Tara Varma, "Europe and NATO Are Stepping up on Ukraine," Brookings Institution, 2 February 2024; Philip Wasielewski, "The Evolving Political-Military Aims in the War in Ukraine after 100 Days," Foreign Policy Research Institute, June 2022; and Olga Khvostunova, "Moscow's Mind Games: Finding Ideology in Putin's Russia," Foreign Policy Research Institute, 20 February 2023.

ties with Russia.¹⁰⁵ This pivot was not merely a shift in alliances but a fundamental reorientation of Ukraine's foreign policy and strategic outlook.

In this context, Russia's military intervention can be seen not as a pursuit of past imperial glory but as a critical move to reaffirm its waning influence over a key segment of its geopolitical sphere.¹⁰⁶ The invasion represents a response to the perceived erosion of Russia's strategic depth, as Ukraine's westward tilt threatened to create a new security paradigm in Eastern Europe.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion: Takeaways for Contemporary U.S. Strategic Competition

The notion of empires as fixed territorial entities has become obsolete, with no direct bearing on current global affairs. The world will no more see a reformed British Empire than it may expect to witness a revival of the Roman Empire. Yet, the enduring influence of imperial legacies continues to shape the geopolitical landscape significantly. Understanding why certain postcolonial states choose to align under a common banner, whether through multilateral organizations or other forms of union, is crucial for forecasting potential alliances or antagonisms.

For American policymakers and military strategists, recognizing the historical context is essential when interacting with postcolonial states. Although the United States never established an empire on the scale of its European counterparts, it has a network of states, particularly in the Pacific, that were once under its jurisdiction and continue to share close ties with it.

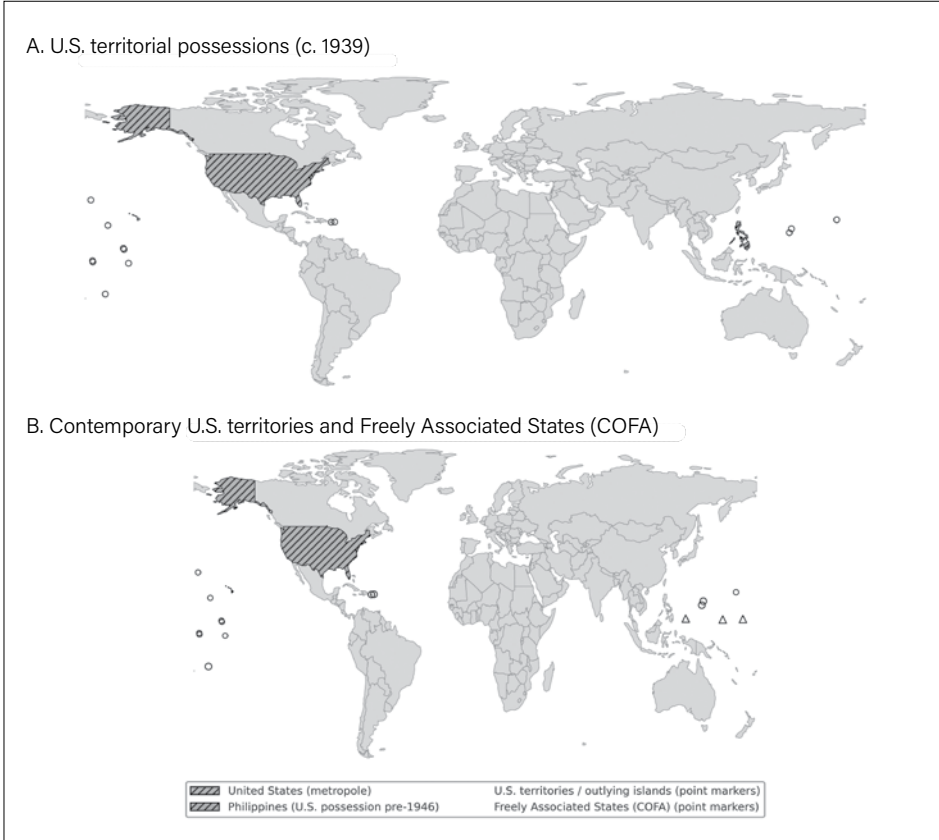
Amid China's assertive efforts to establish regional hegemony in the Indo-Pacific, the resilience of the United States' historical defense and eco-

¹⁰⁵ Anthony H. Cordesman, "The Lasting Strategic Impact of the War in the Ukraine," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 5 July 2023; and Steven Pifer, "NATO's Ukraine challenge," Brookings Institution, 6 June 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Seth G. Jones, "Russia's Ill-Fated Invasion of Ukraine: Lessons in Modern Warfare," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1 June 2022.

¹⁰⁷ "War in Ukraine," Center for Preventive Action, Council on Foreign Relations, 6 March 2024.

Figure 5. U.S. territorial possessions prior to World War II (top) compared with contemporary U.S. overseas territories and Freely Associated States (bottom). Panel A presents a snapshot of U.S. territorial reach ca. 1939 (mapped on modern sovereign borders for comparability), highlighting the Philippines as a U.S. possession/commonwealth prior to 1946 independence and marking major island possessions and outlying islands as point symbols for legibility. Panel B maps current U.S. territories and the three sovereign Freely Associated States (Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands) that maintain defense/economic compacts with the United States under the Compacts of Free Association.



Source: Alexei (Frank) Hoffman

nomic relationships with its former territories will soon be challenged.¹⁰⁸ This pivotal moment will test the strength of these bonds and the United States' ability to maintain its influence in the face of rising competition.

In light of the escalating military pressure from the PRC on allied states, American policymakers must offer a robust defensive assurance that transcends mere verbal condemnations. This should include a decisive counteraction against the BRI through substantial economic investments.¹⁰⁹ On the operational front, commanders engaged in bilateral exercises or comprehensive defense campaigns must underscore the unwavering American commitment to its allies. They must recognize that tactical successes if achieved at the expense of significant losses for partner nations could paradoxically culminate in long-term strategic setbacks.¹¹⁰

In an era marked by a resurgence of multipolar great power competition, the historical responsibility of nations that have inherited the mantle of defense and support from their former colonies is more critical than ever. The United States must heed the lessons of history to fortify its bonds with its allies.

¹⁰⁸ M. Beeson and T. Lee-Brown, "Regionalism for Realists?: The Evolution of the Indo-Pacific," *Chinese Political Science Review* 6, no. 2 (2021): 167–86; Rush Doshi, "The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order," Brookings Institution, 2 August 2021; and Rashi Randev, "Reshaping the Indo-Pacific Construct through Strategic Geopolitical Convergences: AUKUS as a Harbinger of a Multipolar Hegemony in the Region," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 20 January 2022.

¹⁰⁹ Jingjing An and Yanzhen Wang, "The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Chinese International Political Influence: An Empirical Study Using a Difference-in-Differences Approach," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* (2023): 257–81, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-023-09860-4>; and Daniel Lindley, "Assessing China's Motives: How the Belt and Road Initiative Threatens US Interests," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 1 August 2022.

¹¹⁰ Olivia Garard, "Tactical and Strategic Interdependence," *Strategy Bridge*, 18 December 2016; Bing West, "How We Fight in the Twenty-First Century: Winning Battles While Losing Wars," Hoover Institution, 10 December 2015; and Lukas Milevski, "Strategy and Cyberpower: From Tactics to Politics," *Infinity Journal* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 18–21, <https://doi.org/10.64148/msm.v3i2.4>.

Neglecting these ties risks not only damaging bilateral relationships but also precipitating a shift toward a more volatile global order.¹¹¹ History has repeatedly shown that disregarding such alliances can lead to dire repercussions, both for the nations directly involved and for the broader international community.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Thomas F. Lynch III, “America’s Great-Power Challenge: Managing Russia’s Decline and China’s Rise,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, 5 December 2022; Thomas F. Lynch III, “The New Era of Great Power Competition and the Biden Administration: Emerging Patterns and Principles,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 103, 14 October 2021; and “United States Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability,” Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, U.S. Department of State, 1 April 2022.

¹¹² Stokes, “Resisting China’s Gray Zone Military Pressure on Taiwan”; “Military Alliances, Partnerships Strengthened Through Defense Strategy Execution,” *Defense News*, 5 August 2020; and Sarah Bufano et al., “Advancing U.S. Alliances and Partnerships through Security Sector Governance Initiatives,” *DipNote: Military and Security*, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 10 July 2023.

CONCLUSION

War and Peace throughout Time

by Graham Wrightson, PhD

The chapters in this volume have taken readers on a journey through history from early Greek mythology to twentieth- and twenty-first-century empire building. War is a constant throughout human habitation and, therefore, peace and the maintenance of it is a similarly longstanding concern. This book and the conference series from which it stems, the Many Faces of War, has emphasized and demonstrated that many of the principal underlying themes in military history transcend artificial barriers of time and geography. Wherever there are and have been humans, there has been war, and although the specific methods and tools of waging war have changed beyond recognition, from the earliest records of human history, both archaeological and written, the ideas behind how to support, prepare for, and recover from war are remarkably constant.

This volume has traced a number of themes throughout history, and the introduction demonstrates how well these chapters connect despite centuries and millennia between the certain events discussed. Authors have described specific conflicts, such as Roman slave revolts or the Hundred Years' War or World War II, and analyzed specific commanders, such as Pyrrhus and Hannibal or Pierre Koenig and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Chapters have examined training and recruitment practices, such as war dancing and local Indian regiments in terms of martial ideology, logistics

and industrialization, such as travel and daily existence in medieval and modern war-torn Europe, and constructing the weapons of war, such as spears or submarines.

Civilians and women in war appear in multiple chapters, whether in early Archaic Greece or World War II-era Italy, and the power of local politics as a determinative force stretched from Syria under the Romans to France in World War II. Insurgency and citizen responses to conquest feature throughout history, whether as slaves in revolt in Rome or local populations resisting in France, Italy, or the Philippines during World War II. The importance of preparations for conquest or maintaining post-conquest peace as well as for implementing successful defense plans to prevent war while at peace remain crucial throughout history, whether rules restricting Roman slavery, how to treat incoming ambassadors in the Seleucid Mediterranean, or colonial concerns in India and the Philippines.

Historians usually limit their analytical and research requirements by creating ever-more-specific and narrow windows of analysis, confining themselves within certain topics or time periods without opening to the different ideas offered by other disciplines or areas. We often limit our views to defining history as economic, legal, social, religious, or, indeed, military. Yet, most analyses of history of any era, people, or places deal with all the different types of history. And good historians should be comfortable handling the many disparate forms of evidence that exist, from physical artifacts and written records to DNA results, tree rings, and Arctic core samples.

We hope this volume has provided a small window into how different analyses of many different time periods are all connected by themes and topics that are interdisciplinary in nature and stretch beyond limitations of areas and fields of study.

Mark Twain is reputed to have commented that “history does not repeat itself, but it often rhymes.”¹ History does not, of course, provide military leaders a formula or a recipe for success. No academic discipline can do that, and policymakers should be suspicious of rigid precepts or doctrines. Instead, history reveals patterns and principles to guide analysis and action. History provides perspective and reveals possibilities inherent in any scenario. The variety of examples we have reviewed is a benefit when making sense of changing military affairs, new threats, or evolving technology. Living military leaders have much experience of regional conflict and asymmetric warfare, but none of them have experienced war between great powers or remorseless attritional combat between large coalitions. In many respects, history is the best glimpse into the possible realities of the future. This is especially true on the strategic level of warfare. The tactical level of warfare adapts to the capabilities of new weapons. War before 1914 was fought only on land and at sea. Modern militaries must now reckon with a battlespace that includes undersea, the air, and increasingly, space-based intelligence gathering and weapons. Conversely, strategic principles are more timeless. History provides examples of the many types of conflicts. Is the conflict limited for limited aims, defensive or offensive, or is it protracted and does it force the mobilization of larger societies? Did the war involve the rise of a major new military power that threatened the balance of power? Did the conflict begin as a civil war that escalated to involve other powers? Was the decision for war based on rational policy or the result of cultural forces? History is replete with examples of these scenarios and more. The Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz, a keen student of military history, learned from the past two truths about war:

¹ Contrary to popular belief, this phrase was not coined by Mark Twain, but by Theodor Reik in his essay, “The Unreachables: The Repetition Compulsion in Jewish History,” in *Curiosities of the Self: Illusions We Have about Ourselves* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1965). However, Twain and his coauthor did write, in a satirical novel, “History never repeats itself, but the Kaleidoscopic combinations of the pictured present often seem to be constructed out of the broken fragments of antique legends.” Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of To-Day* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing, 1873), 430. For more on the debate behind the origin of this quote, see “Quote Origin: History Does Not Repeat Itself, But It Rhymes,” QuoteInvestigator.com, 12 January 2014.

first, that it is “a political instrument” and a tool of policy, and second, that “wars must differ in character according to the nature of the motives and circumstances from which they proceed.”² Clausewitz also noted that civil society—“the masses”—are no mere spectators but more or less animated in supporting the war. At times, Clausewitz notes, the feelings of rival peoples can exert forces out of all proportion to the political aims of a conflict, a “perfect explosion.”³ Clausewitz understood that the culture, traditions, and political systems of nations have a direct bearing on the nature of war. The diverse historical cases in this volume illustrate this fact.

All history is fascinating and brings insight to the present, and all humans live and have lived shared experiences, especially when it comes to war and peace. As the sayings go, we should not seek to reinvent the wheel but look to all our history to better understand and hopefully reduce in the future our human need for and interaction with war in all its forms.

² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. Anatol Rapoport (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Group, 1968), 120–21.

³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 109–12.

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