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The Politics of Leadership: From Alexander the Great to Joseph Stalin

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The Politics of Leadership: From Alexander the Great to Joseph Stalin

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2014 Editorial Board

The Hartje Paper

The Martha and Robert G. Hartje Award is presented annually to a senior in the spring semester. The History Department determines the three or four finalists who then write a 600 to 800 word narrative essay on an historical event or figure. The finalists must have at least a 2.7 grade point average and have completed at least six history courses. The winner is awarded $500 at a spring semester History Department colloquium and the winner paper is included in the *History Journal*. This year's Hartje Award was presented to Clint Rodgers.

On the Cover

Sebastiano Conca, Alexander the Great in the Temple of Jerusalem, 1735-1737, Museo Nacional de Prado, Madrid.

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Dedication

This publication represents the hard work and tremendous efforts of the History Department's students and professors, particularly the contributors and editors. We would like to dedicate this journal to Dr. Tammy Proctor, Professor of History for her commitment to improving and developing the History program here at Wittenberg. Your efforts regarding academic success and the overall structure and organization of the program have greatly influenced the development of the department as well as the experience of the faculty, staff, and most importantly the students. Thank you for making the Wittenberg History Department an example of excellence in academia, which allows or eth celebration of community and success through programs such as this journal.

The History Journal Editorial Board

The Nicely Family: The Effects of an Ohio Disaster

Clint Rodgers

The Ohio Flood of 1913 is recorded as the largest weather disaster in the state's history. For a five day period, society was devastated. Lives were lost, crops were destroyed, and buildings were ruined. All lowlands and riverbeds were susceptible to incredible flooding; therefore, no part of Ohio was unaffected. This account of the Vernando Nicely family is based entirely in historical fact. Only some small details about the way Vernando experienced the situation are the author's speculation.

Outside Bellevue, Ohio, Late March 1913

Vernando H. Nicely only resided in Bellevue for a short time. Mr. Nicely was from Defiance; his wife, the former Jennie O'Donnell, came from Wood County. Bellevue was a clean slate for Vernando and his family. Like many others, the Nicelys arrived in Bellevue for employment. A city at the crossroads of many different railroad lines, Bellevue was a bustling place that offered new chances. Vernando's two brother-in-laws worked for the railroad there already. Though originally from Defiance, they brought their families to Bellevue between 1905 and 1907. His other brother Cassius also moved to the Bellevue area to farm. By relocating, Vernando moved closer to the majority of his family, but also gave his children and wife a chance to restart after several setbacks, including the death of an infant son.

In early March, Vernando prepared his crop. The fresh start in Bellevue rejuvenated his family's attitude. He had three children: Ralph, 11; Robert, 5; and Norman, 2. Jennie was pregnant again; he looked forward to the new addition to his family. A new baby was a symbol for hope. Economic stability hinged on the survival of his crop; everything seemed to indicate joy coming to fruition.

Then the rain came. The skies opened and for five days straight water pummeled the earth, inundating his fields. Vernando felt cursed. Had God turned his back on him forever? He tried to act as though everything was normal for his family, but the excessive rain influenced his attitude. One morning, they awoke to find their home and farm buildings completely surrounded by water. Rain continued to pour as Vernando and Ralph explored the region surrounding the house. They found no escape route through the water: they were trapped. On March 27, the last day of the rain, Norman had his second birthday. They were unable to fully celebrate the event because pessimism overcame the evening easily. Dampness lurked in the very air they breathed and was a constant reminder of a potential inability to plant.

The next day, Robert saw a boat coming through the high water. Depressed as he was, not even the sight of rescue made Vernando feel better. Jennie answered the door and was told by the man to collect their essentials. They would be taken into the city for shelter. She hurried about the house grabbing belongings. Vernando walked aimlessly, comprehending his destruction in his waterlogged fields.

Bellevue would claim fate was against the Nicelys from the beginning. However, the next twist it had in store for them was quite horrific. Just as they had gotten settled in the small boat with all of their essential belongings, a combination of a breeze and the distribution of weight capsized the boat. All of the family fell into the water. After a few moments, Vernando, Jennie, and a rescuer were able to get everyone safely back on board. They, and their belongings, were completely soaked. It was several hours before they were safely in town at Vernando's sister's house to dry. That was the day he began to cough; the rainfall had not claimed its last victim.

Vernando Nicely died on June 30, 1913 of typhoid fever, leaving his wife with four children. He was buried in Bellevue Cemetery, where you can still see his marker today. Vernando and the Nicelys were victims of the flood, just like many Ohio residents. Yet, rather than generalizing by saying that "lots of people died," it is significant to examine a specific case and the grievous toil the flood took upon real human beings.

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Section I.
New Approaches to Alexander

Alexander the Great in the Battle of Issus, 333 B.C.E., House of the Faun, Pompeii.

The Many Faces of Alexander the Great: Ruthlessness and Benevolence in the Asiatic Campaigns of 331-326 B.C.E.

Madison Law

As a historical figure, Alexander the Great inspires perhaps more curiosity and confusion than many others. At times pitiless in his pursuit of greater territory and at others merciful and benevolent towards those around him, the figure of Alexander is quite a contradictory one. By examining multiple contemporary biographies of Alexander's life against and in conversation with the narratives put forth by Plutarch and Arrian, a dualism emerges between Alexander's supposed ruthlessness and his actions of benevolence. Though he is frequently shown to distrustfully purge members of his own inner circle and various others in battle, he is also portrayed by historians as acting mercifully toward the kings of toppled empires and the captured relations of said monarchs.

In this paper I aim to explore this binary characterization of Alexander in three overarching sections, beginning with an investigation of the structure of Alexander's army and how he related with and commanded both the Macedonian and Persian sections on his march to the Indus River Valley in 326 B.C.E. Following this, several key battles that Alexander and his army fought in will be traced, such as Gaugamela and Issus, exposing additional complexities within his character and the dualistic nature of his portrayal. Finally, Alexander's specific relationships with the key figures on his Asiatic campaign will also be considered, and through the subsequent comparison and contrasting of these associations, additional dualistic qualities can be seen. Ultimately, by examining this dualistic nature and understanding its nuances, a greater perception of what precisely Alexander had to gain by being ruthless or benevolent can be seen. These motives are significant in informing how Alexander interacted with his army, his enemies, his personal relations and, on a broader level, his vast empire.

I. The Structure of Alexander's Army

"With a small army, but distinguished for its intrinsic perfection, Alexander overthrew the decayed fabric of the Asiatic States: Without rest, and regardless of risks, he traversed the breadth of Asia."[1] What would Alexander the Great be without his vast army to voyage across deserts, rivers, and mountains? After the death of Philip II in 336 B.C.E., Alexander inherited his father's army, which had been built up and improved over the years into a formidable collection of phalanxes, or a rectangular military formation. It was organized primarily into several parts: "Macedonian troops, the phalanx battalions, territorially recruited, the *Hypaspistai* or foot-guards, and the Companion cavalry or horse-guards, remained his main striking force and the core of his army to the end. . ."[2] Most of the chief officers were Macedonian, and it was this initial Macedonian force that would remain the nucleus of Alexander's army, even when it would eventually include Persians and other conquered ethnicities.

Among his top generals in the army, Alexander created an interesting force of possible contention: they were made to be the "equals of kings."[3] Sir William Woodthorpe Tarn, author of perhaps the definitive biography of Alexander the Great,, describes his top tier as "proud and ambitious" as Alexander himself, and "intoxicated with victory and its material fruits."[4] Tarn describes how Alexander, at only twenty-two years old, had to unite these men, to whom "things like the sanctity of life" meant very little; these were men who "lived hard and took their chances in a world full of wonderful chances."[5] It would be this core of men that Alexander would attempt to command until his death, often using a variety of incentive-based tactics to ensure continued loyalty and service, particularly on the road to the Indus River Valley.

Part of this inner core of Alexander's Macedonian army were the Companions, or the horse-guards, primarily made up of Alexander's close friends whom he recalled from a forced exile that had occurred under Philip's reign. These men were hand-picked as born leaders. Though often Alexander's own legendary leadership eclipsed all else, there was a deliberate diffusion of strong leaders throughout the entirety of the army: "Whether Alexander's officers were new or inherited from Philip, they were generally of the highest quality."[6] Among these men were Parmenio, Perdiccas, Coenus, Cleitus, and Ptolemy, and it would be these names that would lead six distinct taxeis, or formational units that in their entirety made up the individual phalanxes of the army. These taxeis, led by a corresponding taxiarch, could be utilized as "a separate tactical unit, or be grouped together with other taxeis."[7] In addition to the strength of Alexander's physical and tactical structure in battle, and the quality of his top officers, the army also surged forward under a "tremendous feeling of moral superiority, a certainty that under his leadership no one could stand against them and no obstacle was impossible."[8]

This particular mindset of Alexander's is what can be referred to as the "moral" aspect of war, as opposed to the less impactful "physical," and it is the harmonious relationship between these two that allow armies to cut swaths across continents. However, when the moral becomes disengaged from the physical, and remains unchecked, there can be complications in the foundation of the fighting force. For example, after the battle at Gaugamela, as Alexander began to refer to himself as "Lord of Asia," the relations between Alexander and his troops began to deteriorate, concluding in "ugly episodes of mutiny and murder."[9] With the loyalty of his Macedonian troops hanging in the balance, Alexander the Great is characterized by two distinct personality and leadership styles: that of a Macedonian king, and that of a Persian emperor. Though this tension reaches a climax in India, this contrast begins to build after Gaugamela, and Alexander's troops begin to notice: "The Macedonian old-guard barons, in particular, were shocked by their king's visible drift towards oriental despotism."[10] As a response to this sign of growing dissatisfaction amongst his Macedonian troops, Alexander answered in a way that he knew was tried and true: gifts and promises. He made "lavish distributions of wealth, estates, and provinces to his senior officers," and it is this understanding of the psyche of his troops that dominates Alexander's interactions with them.[11]

The bestowment of bribes and gifts to incentivize his troops becomes a recurring motif and a repetitive action that Alexander continues to utilize with decreasing success. In July of 326 B.C.E., Alexander and his troops (which had increased to include various other conquered ethnicities along the way, most significantly, Persians) arrived at the River Hyphasis (Beas), where they "trudged on, sodden, desperate, marching and fighting like automata."[12] This portrait of Alexander's men and his relationship with them stands as a stark contrast from the strong Macedonian leader who commanded his troops with a "moral" intensity that outweighed any physical impossibilities. Here however, in the Indus River Valley, Alexander attempts again to rely on his incredible powers of charisma: "Soldiers, in particular, he seems to have dealt with on the assumption that they were motivated exclusively by fear, greed, and ambition."[13] This assumption had unfortunate consequences when paired with the obvious breaking point that the core of his army, the Macedonians, had reached in the face of a seemingly never-ending campaign, which they now knew to be indefinite: "The war would not end until Alexander had conquered the world."[14] Prominent classicist Peter Green describes this mindset as "a kind of insane optimism," and a delusion that Alexander seemed to feel would motivate his troops to continue marching endlessly.[15] What worked for him at Gaugamela and on the road to Asia failed him at the Beas when, after offering rations and child-allowances, his troops, silent and sullen, still refused to move. This becomes a pivotal point in my examination of Alexander's character, for it is in this instance that he realizes "he needed his Macedonians more than they needed him," demonstrating a shift in Alexander's place as a leader, wherein he promoted and concentrated on the notion of conquering and the expansion of his army at the expense of his relationship with his Macedonian core.[16]

Alexander historian C.A. Robinson, Jr., suggests in his article "The Extraordinary Ideas of Alexander the Great" that as he moved further into Asia and especially as he gathered more troops (particularly Persians), Alexander embodied qualities of a Persian emperor and his army began to shift in structure to resemble the force of such a ruler, and thus the question becomes "whether or not he planned to simply substitute Hellenic despotism for Oriental."[17] This shift in structure and relationship with his fighting force provides an additional dualistic coloring to Alexander's character, particularly as monomania creeps steadily into his later depictions of personality. Further evidence of a binary character can be seen through an analysis of two of Alexander's most decisive and famous battles: Issus and Gaugamela.

II. Alexander in Battle: Impulsive or Military Genius?

According to Hellenistic historian G.T. Griffith, the depiction Arrian provides of Alexander in battle at Gaugamela is one that suggests a certain amount of recklessness and lack of thought for battle structure, particularly in regards to defense: "No one has ever denied that his dispositions in preparation for the battle … show that he realized the importance here of defense: only by defending successfully could he hope to attack successfully."[18] Griffith then continues to add that within Arrian's account, after the attack at Gaugamela is launched, Alexander swiftly abandons the "role of commander-in-chief for that of brigadier," effectively not thinking much of his defensive strategy again.[19] Griffith also states that, when utilizing only Arrian's account, it is not entirely clear why the Macedonians and not the Persians won in the face of Alexander's abandonment of crucial strategy in the heat of battle.[20] This initial observation of a rash and careless Alexander, already puts his image at odds with other scholarship and portrayals, revealing a certain dualism about his character that creates much contention amongst scholars.

The 331 BCE Battle of Gaugamela, perhaps the decisive victory for the Macedonians that secured the fall of the Achaemenid Empire of Persia, was a crucial battle in Alexander's desire to not only carve out his empire into the Indus River Valley, but also in the capture of Darius III. The Alexander who emerges from Green's description of the preparation of Gaugamela shows not a rash or careless Alexander, but rather him being possessed of an "intuitive genius," one who rationally and calmly double-checks and verifies the solidity of the strategy in question.[21] When Alexander found himself taken aback at the greater force and arms possessed by the Persian army, he gathered together his staff-commanders and "solicited" their advice about when the attack should take place, an act of rationality that suggests that Alexander valued the opinions of his men. Green writes that Alexander's officers were "keyed up for immediate action," but Alexander, with the advice of Parmenio, convinced them more reconnaissance was needed.[22] In addition to this description of Alexander's rational foresight, Green also details the structure of the battle itself, paying particular attention to the charges Alexander leads, but also describing the "6,700 mercenaries waiting in reserve behind the Macedonian cavalry," providing an image of a formidable defensive force. [23]

This description of Alexander's commitment to defensive strategy, and the image of an overall calm, collected, and balanced general in battle are in direct contrast to the Alexander portrayed in Stephen English's book about the structuring of the Macedonian army. English describes Alexander's army as being a well-oiled machine that was structured around assault: "Alexander's army was created and designed to attack the enemy; to be an offensive weapon. His mindset was evidently to destroy the enemy as quickly as possible: he had little or no interest in conducting defensive operations, but then, he never had to."[24] This not only presents Alexander's army as lacking in defense (and not, apparently ever needing it in the first place), but also characterizes Alexander in a very specific way: he is singularly fixated on victory, so much so that he spares no thought for defensive measures in the off-chance that the enemy may manage to break through the offensive. English depicts an Alexander in battle who acts rashly, with an element of tunnel-vision, to achieve victory, and this is a strategy that seems to work for him the majority of the time. These two very dissimilar portrayals of Alexander each encompass only one facet of his dualistic character: a general so immersed in the notion of victory that he will do just about anything (including compromising his own strategic genius) to attain it, or one who rationally plans the attack and then remains collected even in the heat of battle.

In addition to Gaugamela, another prominent battle on Alexander's pursuit of empire was the Battle of Issus, which took place approximately three years (333 BCE) prior to Gaugamela in southern Anatolia. This was to be the second decisive win for Alexander and his army after the battle at the Granicus River, where Alexander's army defeated the Persian satraps of Asia Minor. In Arrian's The Campaigns of Alexander, the beginning of the battle sequence is colored by a stark contrast between Darius and Alexander. Once possessing Issus by sneaking behind Alexander, Darius "mutilated and put to death every Macedonian he found left there as unfit for service," while Alexander is described shortly after delivering a long, rousing speech to his troops to encourage them in the coming battle against "Medes and Persians, men who for centuries have lived soft and luxurious lives."[25] Immediately after a description of Darius mutilating and killing Macedonians comes a moment for Alexander to build up his troops before battle, with a special emphasis on the fact that Darius employs his soldiers as slaves while Alexander's troops fight for Greece "and our hearts will be in it."[26] This contrast paints Alexander as inspiring and confident to his men and inherently connects him with upright values of freedom and courage while describing him in direct contrast with Darius. Green again provides a

detailed description of the battle, which also begins with a "rousing address" full of "outrageous optimism," and proved "infectious" in buoying up an army that was "sodden, exhausted, and resentful."[27] Alexander is once again put in the role of the strategic mastermind, encouraging his loyal army and at once both decisive and rational.

This rationality is encompassed in Green's expressions of Alexander's patience and foresight: when Darius organizes his infantry into battle formation, Alexander shows no impatience, moving "his troops forward at a very leisurely pace, with frequent halts," to check again the enemy's movements.[28] Additionally, near the conclusion of the battle, an opening becomes available through which Alexander can charge at Darius. However, despite having chased the Great King since the beginning of his campaign, and being singularly fixated on his capture, Alexander still listens to his troops: "At the very moment of his departure, Alexander received an urgent appeal from the phalanx … with both centre and left thus seriously threatened, Alexander had no option but to postpone his pursuit of the Great King."[29] These are not the actions of a man so consumed by the chase that he possesses an inability to act rationally. Green's Alexander at both Gaugamela and Issus is a general who cares for his troops while also caring for strategy, structure, and the taste of victory. English, however, also draws attention to the fact that Alexander used the weaker Peloponnesian and Greek cavalry as "bait" to provoke the Persians into battle.[30] This tactic of utilizing a weaker part of the cavalry to draw the enemy onto disadvantageous ground was a "regular feature of Alexander's battles," one that clearly demonstrates Alexander's commitment ultimately to victory: "At the Granicus in the previous year, Alexander essentially sacrificed an advanced unit of cavalry in order to throw the Persian cavalry … into confusion and disarray."[31] This portrayal of Alexander is one that views his battles as chess matches, and his army as the pieces; English even describes the structuring of the army using allusions to pawns, rooks, and queens. This adds an element of coldness to the generalship of Alexander; though possessing a "supreme strategic and tactical ability," he does so consistently through the deliberate sacrificing of sections of his army.[32]

The Battle of Issus was numerically devastating for the Persians, with disproportionately high Persian deaths compared to Macedonian. This may have most to do, however, with the nature of the retreat, which incited chaos among the high numbers of Persian troops.[33] The Battle of Issus laid the groundwork for Alexander's sieges of Tyre and Gaza and his occupations of Syria and Egypt. It also demonstrates an additional battle of contention over the characterization of Alexander.[34] Hot-headed and reckless, too hungry for victory or methodical, rational, and proficient at motivating his army, Alexander remains a consistent figure of contradiction.

III. Alexander's Relationships: Paranoid or Compassionate?

Perhaps one of the greatest and most enduring examples of Alexander the Great's contrary nature can be seen within the interactions and relationships he formed with his immediate inner circle of friends, companions, and generals. Multiple scholars say that he had the potential to love greatly and reward generously and faultlessly those closest to him. However, at other times Alexander is portrayed as the fundamental "absolute autocrat" with a "lurking paranoia" that would only grow as his empire, army, and renown expanded.[35] He both passionately mourned the losses of certain members of his inner circle (Hephaestion) and grimly turned on others, whether such actions were justified or not (Philotas and Parmenio respectively). At the same time, Alexander ruthlessly carved a swath through Asia, yet also respected conquered monarchs (Porus) and provided for their families and captured people (Darius III). The combination of all these elements and examples illustrates the dichotomy present within the very character of Alexander who is at times incredibly benevolent and at others exceptionally callous.

The Philotas affair, detailed by Arrian in Book Three of The Campaigns of Alexander, was a conspiracy discovered by Alexander in 330 B.C.E. shortly after the death of Darius: "It was here, too, that Alexander learned of Philotas's plot against his life."[36] Philotas was a trusted general and commander of the Companion cavalry, as well as the eldest son of Parmenio, another trusted general who had also served under Philip II. Green describes the actions of Alexander throughout the Philotas affair in a way that lends itself to a paranoid characterization of Alexander: "But Alexander saw, instantly, that here was the opening he had been waiting for, the perfect instrument with which to encompass Philotas' downfall."[37] This creates the suggestion that Alexander was only lying in wait, anticipating an event that would act as the proverbial domino in a chain reaction inevitably leading to the destruction of Philotas and Parmenio's house.

This is a view echoed by other scholars such as Waldemar Heckel in his article "The Conspiracy Against Philotas," wherein the trial and subsequent execution of Philotas acts as a mere excuse for a "greater scheme aimed at the destruction

of Parmenion's house."[38] Additionally, this entire affair—the trial and execution of Philotas and the eventual murder of his father Parmenion—is a classic example of the period of time after Philip II's assassination that scholars such as Heckel refer to as Alexander's "reign of terror."[39] Whereas Parmenio's death represents a moral problem for historians, Philotas' death is often seen as "rough and ready justice."[40] This distinction is clarified within Robinson's article "Alexander the Great and Parmenio," where, because he stood trial and his execution was lawfully ordered by the Macedonians, Philotas' death was a "judicial execution."[41] The death of Parmenio, on the other hand, stands as what Tarn refers to as a "deep stain" on the reputation of Alexander.[42] After Philotas was dealt with, Alexander next set his sights on Parmenio, a trusted general that had served both Philip II and Alexander faithfully. With no evidence to implicate Parmenio in the conspiracy his son was lawfully accused of, Alexander instead sought "some sort of statement implicating Parmenio" through the torture of Philotas.[43] Unsurprisingly, he received just such a statement with "enough extra details, imagined or remembered" to order the death of Parmenio.[44] Alexander's murder of Parmenio, which even Arrian refers to as a black crime, becomes a major example of the paranoia with which Alexander regarded those closest to him, and also characterizes the brutal, merciless side of his disposition that so often acts in opposition to acts of mercy and generosity that he is known for.

Another, perhaps stronger example of the disparity within Alexander's interactions with his inner circle can be seen within the murder of Cleitus, a Macedonian officer who was killed at Maracanda in 329 B.C.E. Alexander, whom Tarn describes as "habitually [drinking] no more than other Macedonians," had gotten drunk at a banquet when Cleitus began insulting him, comparing him to Philip and defending Parmenio.[45] Alexander makes an attempt at self control, but ultimately loses his temper and spears Cleitus through, killing him in a fit of alcohol-induced rage. Many sources offer a variety of factors that influence Alexander's outburst, including alcohol and the provocations of his "clique." However, Green notes significantly that it is not "impossible that Alexander … deliberately provoked this kind of outburst to learn what old guard officers such as Cleitus were really thinking and feeling."[46] This kind of potential for an underlying motivation on Alexander's part depicts his ultra-sensitivity and paranoia about potential conspiracies against him. However, immediately following the murder, most scholars portray a sorrowful and repentant Alexander, a man so distraught that he attempts to impale himself on the spear used for the murder and then proceeds to lock himself away for days: "He now shut himself up in his private quarters, where he continued to lament all night."[47] This strong, undisputed portrayal of an Alexander overcome with grief at his own hateful actions creates a strong disparity within Alexander's inherent character: he is capable of becoming so thoughtlessly affected by his own volatile emotions but regrets them so strongly after the fact. This pattern of conflict and regret is repeated often throughout Alexander's campaigns, suggesting a certain enslavement to monomania and paranoia as well as intense feeling for his companions and army.

Alexander displays similarly contrasting characterizations when dealing with enemies, particularly the conquered monarchs of the empires he cut a swath through on his march to the Indus River Valley. One of the strongest examples of Alexander's benevolence is his treatment of Darius III's surviving family and captured Persian women after the Battle of Issus in 333 B.C.E. After the last ruler of the Archaemenid Empire of Persia was driven off, Alexander's army captured Darius' family including his mother, wife, and children, to whom Alexander showed incredible mercy: after hearing that the women were crying out in the night, thinking that Darius had been killed, Alexander sent an officer to "tell the royal ladies that Darius was alive and that they were to retain all of their marks, ceremonies, and titles of royalty."[48] Furthermore, all Persian women who had been captured after Issus were treated "with great deference throughout the rest of the campaign," and though in the end he refused to ransom Darius' family back to him, he came to treat them as his own relations, even eventually marrying one of the daughters.[49] Even Arrian admired Alexander for his treatment of these Persian "barbarian" women and for his overall character of "mercy," "compassion," and "respect."[50] Even the Persian soldiers who had died in battle were recognized by Alexander, a man who, above all, appreciated and valued courage and valor in conflict: "He also buried those Persians who had distinguished themselves by their courage."[51]

And so here is yet another portrait of Alexander, and another distinct facet of his character: he is a king who not only bestows favor upon his own men, but anyone, enemy or not, who warrants his respect and favor. Ironically, the dualism emerges wherein Alexander appears to be more brutal to those closest to him: his friends and allies, as opposed to his enemies. This could perhaps reinforce the notion of a rising paranoia that seems to have developed as Alexander steadily increased his empire: in essence, he

was more suspicious of those closest to him because they were so close to him, as opposed to his enemies, whom he knew had designs against him. Green also supports this line of thought, writing that there is a "tendency nowadays to pooh-pooh the belief that Alexander's character had by this time undergone a very considerable degeneration."[52] This does not imply a complete shift in Alexander's character, for "from the very beginning his ambition had been insatiable, and murderous when thwarted," but rather a combination of "unbroken victories, unparalleled wealth, power absolute and unchallenged, … and incipient alcoholism."[53] After having existed for the majority of his life on the mountaintop as a near-god, Alexander became increasingly aware of all that he had to lose, which was essentially everything.

As a military strategist, Alexander the Great was unparalleled. As a leader of his army, he was generally inspiring and brilliant. On a deeper and more holistic level, however, Alexander is a contradiction. His temperament often volatile, his moments of generosity overwhelmingly lavish, and his rage murderous, Alexander was the epitome of a leader with everything to lose and his dualism in character becomes a technique to cope with such an uncertainty. As he led his army further on the road to India, this uncertainty, in a life that had hitherto been full of certainty, began to plague him, manifesting itself in binary personality traits that can be discerned within his relations with the multiple components of his army, the actions he takes in battle, and his personal relations with allies and enemies. Ultimately, such duality in a historical figure so often characterized with such conviction (whether positive or negative) reveals the picture of a human man, not a divine hero or god, who, though undoubtedly Great, was in the end, just a man.

Endnotes

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[42] Tarn, *Alexander the Great,* 64.
[43] Green, Alexander of Macedon, 345.
[44] Robinson, "Alexander the Great and Parmenio," 345.
[45] Tarn, *Alexander the Great,* 74.

[46] Green, *Alexander of Macedon,* 362.
[47] Ibid., 364.
[48] Rogers, *Alexander*, 76.
[49] Ibid., 77.
[50] Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, vol. II, 122.
[51] Rogers, *Alexander*, 76.
[52] Green, *Alexander of Macedon,* 443.
[53] Ibid.

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The Sexuality of Alexander the Great: From Arrian to Oliver Stone

Maggie Jonsson

The subject of Alexander the Great's sexuality has been a debate among scholars for decades. The definition of sexuality has changed over the years, and therefore Alexander's sexuality has been viewed differently as history has progressed; the ancient texts look at sexuality in a different manner than modern scholars, and thus the homosexual aspect of Alexander's relationships is a modern focus. Examining Alexander's relationships both heterosexual and homosexual reveals much about the great hero's life. The notion of sexuality as a defining characteristic of an individual is also a new concept in historical study, and one that is particularly intriguing when applied to Alexander the Great because of the stigmas associated with homosexuality. There are issues that arise when examining any aspect of Alexander's life, due to the fact that no primary sources remain. Therefore, all the information obtained by modern scholars has to come from secondary and tertiary sources that may have had access to these initial sources. These sources, as well as modern historical and popular depictions, demonstrate that understandings of Alexander's sexuality have changed greatly over time, reflecting broader shifts in social attitudes about sex, manhood, and leadership.

The definition of homosexuality, and sexuality as a whole, has evolved over the course of human existence. For the ancient Greeks, it meant something entirely different than it does to our modern, Christian society. K. J. Dover defines homosexuality as "the disposition to seek sensory pleasure through bodily contact with persons of one's own sex in preference to contact with the other sex."[1] This basic definition sets up what homosexuality means to a modern audience, and therefore puts the remainder of his examination into context. Dover's evidence is derived from his examination of artwork and popular texts from the period. The way in which these relationships were represented in artwork and textual evidence suggests that it was a common enough occurrence, and not a source of shame. One of the issues that surfaces when examining ancient Greek homosexual relationships is the language barrier; there is a distinction between the "active" or assertive, and the "passive" or receptive partners in a homosexual relationship. In many texts, the passive partner is called *pais,* or "boy," a word that also is used in several other contexts. Dover, however, has adopted the term *erōmenos*, the masculine passive participle of *erōn*, which is "be in love with" or "have a passionate desire for" when describing a sexual relationship where the age of the passive partner is unknown. For the senior partner he has chosen *erastōs*, which is "lover."[2] Assigning these words when describing relationships gives a model for historians to base their further observations and creates an easy-to-recognize system. Furthermore, in establishing the history of homosexuality in Greece, Dover asserts that homosexual "courting" dates back to Crete. There is a bronze plaque from approximately 620-625 B.C.E. that depicts a man carrying a bow facing a youth, firmly grasping his forearm, where the youth's genitals are exposed.[3] Giving a time frame for the beginning of homosexual relationships lets the audience know that it is a practice that has existed for thousands of years.

The stigmas of homosexuality did not exist when Alexander the Great was alive for several reasons, the first of which is that homosexuality was not viewed as a defined sexual preference, and the second being that the odium of homosexuality is a modern invention that was born with the development of the Christian faith. As history progressed, church groups, particularly the Roman Catholic church, interpreted biblical texts to mean that any relation between a man and a man was sinful, and therefore not allowed. However, there is speculation that this attitude has evolved even with Christianity, according to historian John Boswell: "None of the philosophical traditions upon which Christianity is known to have drawn would necessarily precluded homosexual behavior as an option

for Christians."[4] The condemnation by the Christian faith toward homosexuality has developed as the faith progressed, and the word homosexual did not even exist in writing until the nineteenth century.[5] Therefore, when Alexander the Great was alive there was no defined homosexuality and subsequently no widespread disapproval; the meanings of whatever homosexual relations he may have had have changed throughout history.

Alexander the Great's sexual orientation was not even a factor when considering his persona until 1948 when English historian W.W. Tarn included an appendix called "Alexander's Attitude to Sex" at the conclusion of his biography. Tarn was clearly uncomfortable with the discussion of sex at all, with his first sentence in the appendix being an apology for the necessity to write it. His attempt is to explain the various relationships that Alexander was a part of, as well as attempting to explain any criticism that came from historians regarding his sex life. He mentions two theories regarding Alexander's attitudes towards women, one by Aristotle's successor Theophrastus that, according to Tarn, was based on personal bias. As stated by Tarn, "he branded Alexander as a tyrant, but he did more than that; he suggested that the tyrant was something less than a man." The second explanation he states is by a contemporary of Theophrastus, Dicaearchus, who said that Alexander was homosexual.[6] This is the first mention of Alexander's sexuality by a historian, and Tarn's Victorian views are evident in his disagreement with the homosexual theory. He suggests that any reference to his homosexual relationships is a work of fiction, implying that the eunuch Bagoas was an invention on the part of Dicaearchus in order to back up his theory. Tarn makes a point to find evidence to deny every claim made by the Greek philosophers, stating, "There is then not one scrap of evidence for calling Alexander homosexual."[7] Tarn's bias is evident; despite historical evidence he chooses not to acknowledge the possibility that Alexander could have been a homosexual. This is largely due to the period in which he lived and wrote; when Tarn lived there was no public acceptance for homosexuality and sexuality at all was not a matter for public discussion. As a result he does not like to focus on any aspect of Alexander's sexuality.

It cannot be denied or ignored that Alexander had relationships with women, although when examining those relationships on a more in-depth level, the motive behind his unions appears to be political in nature. The first relationship of Alexander's was with a woman named Barsine, the daughter of a Persian noble whom he met around 322 B.C.E.[8] He never married Barsine, and according to Plutarch, "nor did he know any other before marriage, except Barsine. This woman, memnon's widow, was taken prisoner at Damascus.… Alexander determined (at Paermenio's instigation, as Aristobulus says) to attach himself to a woman of such high birth and beauty."[9] Therefore Alexander did have a relationship with Barsine, though it was apparently only a sexual relationship, and it never amounted to much beyond that. Plutarch goes on to say, regarding Alexander's attitude towards women: "But as for the other captive women, seeing that they were surpassingly stately and beautiful, me merely said jestingly that Persian women were torments to the eyes. And displaying in rivalry with their fair looks the beauty of his own sobriety, and self-control, he passed them by as though they were lifeless images for display."[10]

The fact that Alexander is able to simply admire the beauty of women is not inherently a claim that his desire lies in homosexual relationships, but rather that he had no inherent interest in meaningless sexual relationships, regardless of the beauty of the women involved.

Tarn also makes mention of Alexander's attitude regarding women, stating that "apart from his mother, he apparently never cared for any woman; he apparently never had a mistress, and his two marriages were mere affairs of policy."[11] To say that Alexander never had a mistress, despite there being historical evidence that he did in fact have a sexual relationship with Barsine that never resulted in marriage takes away any sexual identity Alexander may have had, which is further evidence that Tarn's bias is toward extramarital sexuality as a whole and not necessarily strictly homosexuality. Because Tarn was to first to write on any aspect of Alexander's sexuality, his unfavorable attitude towards any form of sexual identity set forth a negative precedent for future historians who chose to reference his work.

The main female figure who is used to disprove claims of the ruler's homosexuality is his wife Roxane. Plutarch says of the marriage, "his marriage to Roxane, whom he saw in her youthful beauty taking part in a dance at a banquet, was a love affair, and yet it was thought to harmonize well with the matters which he had in hand."[12] If a historian chooses to focus on his reference to the marriage as a love affair, then it is understandable perhaps how it could be seen as a true love story. However, the end of the sentence is clear in stating it was convenient for the matters Alexander was currently involved in. Simply put, it was a marriage that solved some of Alexander's political issues, not necessarily a passionate love story. In fact, Plutarch's only other mention of Roxane

is to say she was with child after the death of Alexander. Her general absence from Plutarch's text suggests that she was not of much importance as a figure in the king's life. Arrian takes a similar approach, stating, "Alexander fell in love with her at sight; but captive though she was, he refused, for all his passion, to force her to his will, and condescended to marry her."[13] While she is mentioned slightly more often in Arrian's text, the references are still minimal, and she is largely used as a reference when speaking of other characters. Therefore, from these two sources, though they passingly say that Alexander was madly in love with his wife, there is no real mention of her elsewhere. While this does not necessarily suggest homosexuality as the alternative, it does show that Alexander's relationship with his wife was in all likelihood not a great love affair, as some historians would suggest.

Despite the feelings of Tarn, there are historians who would suggest that Alexander did in fact have homosexual relationships. The individuals who are often referenced as his potential relationships are his childhood friend and future figure in his military Hephaestion, the eunuch Bagoas, and possibly Hector, son of Parmenion, although according to historian Daniel Ogden the evidence depends on interpretations of Curtius. An additional figure, Excipinus is also mentioned by Curtius, though again there is no evidence elsewhere to support this. The historical context comes from examination of Arrian, Plutarch, Curitus, The Greek Alexander Romance, Justin, and Aelian. However, as with all sources, the interpretation of these sources largely depends on the historian who is doing the analysis.

The information obtained from Curtius regarding both Excipinius is largely taken with a grain of salt by the academic community, due to it coming solely from Curtius. Curtius describes Excipinius in a way that makes him appear as an almost replacement to Hephasteion: "Excipinius [was] still quite young and beloved to Alexander because of the flower of his youth. Although he equaled Hephasteion in the beauty of his body, he was certainly not equal to him in manly charm."[14] This is the only reference to Excipinius in any of the ancient texts, which does not suggest much reliability in these statements. Tarn approaches the subject, stating "In fact, [Curtius] alludes to homosexuality again in connection with a certain Excipinius, another invented character whose name is neither Greek nor any other known language."[15] Tarn's obvious bias is again showing through at this point, although he is not the only historian to agree that there is not much contextual evidence for Excipinius.

The same is to be said regarding the case for Alexander's supposed sexual relationship with Hector. The suggestion that Alexander was *erastō* to Hector is almost entirely derived from a singular passage of Curtius. In 332-1 B.C.E., Alexander was sailing the Nile when a young boy, Hector, "in the very flower of his youth and particularly dear to Alexander jumped on board a small boat with a view to catching up with him." However, Curtius's story goes on, he took more men on board than the boat could hold, and it therefore sank. Hector, along with all the others, struggled against the current for a time before making it to the shore, where he died due to sustained injuries. Alexander was supposedly struck with extreme grief for his loss and had a magnificent funeral for him once they had his body back.[16] The fact that Curtius uses language such as "in the flower of his youth" and "particularly dear to Alexander" does suggest a sexual relationship, but because there is not much evidence elsewhere to support this theory, it is largely considered by historians to not be of much importance when regarding the sexuality of Alexander.

The relationship between Alexander and Hephaestion is complex. There is much conjecture amongst historians regarding the extent of the relationship. There are a number of textual sources that suggest that Hephasteion was the *erōmenos* of Alexander, including Arrian, Justin, Curtius, and Diodorus Sicculus. Justin states that Hephasteion was "very dear to the king both because of his gifts of beauty and boyishness, and because of the services he did for him."[17] This description does imply sexual favors, although it is not the only interpretation and could imply something else entirely. Historian Daniel Ogden states that "Alexander's relationship with Hephaestion, who, as we have seen, was his exact contemporary and reared alongside him, is likely to have fallen more particularly into the pattern of homosexual relationships between age-peers that are typical of the military elites."[18] Ogden, a modern historian, acknowledges that there was likely a homosexual relationship between Alexander and Hephasteion although it was not necessarily what was implied by the ancient sources.

There are particular aspects of the relationship where the implications of a deeper bond are heavily suggested. One is the reaction of Alexander to the death of Hephasteion. There is general agreement by the remaining ancient sources that Alexander was immensely distraught at the loss of his friend. Arrian states that the accounts vary, but that "all writers have agreed that it was great, but personal prejudice, for or against both Hephasteion and Alexander himself, has coloured the accounts of how he expressed it."[19] However, the accounts that remain all paint a relatively similar portrait of the grief of Alexander. Plutarch states that his "grief at this loss knew no

bounds."[20] Furthermore, Arrian goes on to say that "that for two whole days after Hephasteion's death Alexander tasted no food and paid no attention in any ways to his bodily needs, but lay on his bed now crying lamentably, now in the silence of grief."[21] This description is incredibly intense and certainly suggests a deeper connection. Alexander went to great trouble to have a funeral for Hephasteion, sparing no cost and even implementing funeral games where three thousand men partook in the events. While this does not explicitly state that there was a sexual relationship between Alexander and Hephasteion, it does imply that there was something more than just platonic friendship between the two men.

There is comparison of Alexander's intense reaction to the death of his friend with the famed hero Achilles' reaction to the death of Patroklus. Waldemar Heckel stated that "those who saw in Alexander's grief an emulation of Achilles reported that he shaved the manes of his horses and his mules, tore down city walls, and lay upon the corpse of his Patrokolos, refusing food and water."[22] Additionally, various sources give the cost of the funeral pyre as great, Arrian saying that it was 10,000 talents or more.[23] These comparisons create an interesting parallel for modern historians: Achilles is not inherently recognized today for partaking in a homosexual relationship with Patrokolos, but there is undoubtedly textual evidence that could suggest that it was indeed a reality. By comparing Alexander to Achilles, this not only depicts him as more than human, a de facto demi-god, but also it compares his relationship with Hephaestion to one of the greatest legends in history. Achilles is the archetypal tragic hero, and adding the homosexual twist when applying the Achilles comparison to Alexander paints the hero in a new light for modern audiences, creating the image of a heroic gay figure who was able to hold a position of incredible power and authority.

The relationship between Alexander and Hephasteion has evolved as views on sexuality have changed over time, particularly in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including in Oliver Stone's 2004 film *Alexander.* The prototype for a great historical hero is to be masculine, strong in battle, stoic, and overtly heterosexual. However, Stone took that model and discarded it when creating his version of Alexander the Great. He chose instead to portray Alexander as an emotional "mama's boy" whose sexuality is ambiguous at best. This model, according to Jerry B. Pierce, follows closer to the way in which the villains in other ancient films have been depicted; "therefore, while these films present traditional masculinity and heterosexuality as positive, heroic, and admirable, *Alexander* inverts these traits, challenging the typical representation both sexually and emotionally."[24] Stone was clearly challenging established social norms in portraying Alexander in any way other than the archetypal male. Despite the historical context for Stone's depiction of Alexander, he failed to realize, as Pierce states, that the qualities he assigned Alexander "have long been considered cinematic tropes of villains and tyrants."[25] Even though there were no overtly homosexual encounters between Alexander and Hephaestion in the film, the mere suggestion was enough to make Stone's Alexander appear less the traditional hero and more an effeminate tyrant that a modern audience would have difficulty relating to.

The chief historical advisor on Stone's film was historian Robin Lane Fox, whose views on Alexander's sexuality are not ambiguous in the slightest. In his 1974 biography on Alexander, he writes, "Hephaestion was the man whom Alexander loved, and for the rest of their lives their relationship remained as intimate as it is now irrevocable: Alexander was only defeated once, the Cynic philosophers said long after his death, and that was by Hephaestion's thighs."[26] Lane Fox's blatant views on Alexander the Great's homosexuality directly affected the way in which he was interpreted in Stone's film. Fox's openly homosexual analysis of Alexander's character in his biography was once marketed, according to Daniel Ogden, as "the dashing story of the spellbinding young gay who conquered the world."[27] Stone's *Alexander* was not always received well by the public, due in part to the effeminate way in which he was portrayed, and this is a direct result of Fox's interpretation.

Stone's *Alexander* has indeed taken quite a bit of heat from the public, partly because, as Jeanne Reames stated, "given such divergent—and often violently conflicting—attitudes towards the conqueror, it would be quite impossible to please everyone, and any perspective taken would be bound to elicit strong condemnation form some quarter."[28] Simply put, Stone's interpretation was bound to evoke negative responses from some group, which is typical of any film interpretation. However, one of the biggest criticisms (other than Colin Farrell's abysmal acting) stems from the portrayal of Alexander's sexuality, a reflection of the global level of discomfort that exists regarding homosexuality. As a result, there was probably no possible way for Stone to interpret Alexander based off Lane Fox's guidance that would not cause an uproar from rightwing groups.

The other major figure that comes into play when considering the sexuality of Alexander is the Persian eunuch Bagoas. Tarn originally thought he was a fictional character

in later Greek tradition. However, other historians, such as E. Badain, argue for his existence based on the evidence from Curtius and Plutarch. Tarn's rejection of the mere idea of Bagoas is a result of his dismissal of the theory that Alexander could have been a homosexual; it was his belief that Bagoas was created as means to discredit Alexander by his political enemies. However, the evidence suggests that Bagoas was in fact a real person; as stated by Badain: "we have seen that in the two incidents reported by Curtius there is no good reason for doubting the existence of Bagoas and, on the whole, the part he is said to have played in important events."[29] Badain accepts Curtius as a source: while still acknowledging that while he may not have the most reliable historical reputation, Badain believes that there was no reason for the creation of this character, and therefore he must be accepted. Furthermore, as previously stated, Tarn cites the creation of Bagoas to Dicearchus, claiming that he created the character to generate the story of Alexander's homosexuality. Badain however approaches this question with a logical retort, stating: "It is hard to see how he could have lied: he had, after all, a considerable and serious reputation; and he lived at a time when Alexander was still a familiar figure. What would his readers among Alexander's veterans—what would the surviving Successor Kings themselves—have thought of one who not only invented an incident like the one we are considering, but stupidly made it up about a character whom both he and they knew to be imaginary?"[30] This question rejects Tarn's proposal and accepts that Bagoas was undoubtedly a real person who played at least some role in Alexander's life. It cannot be concluded on a concrete basis that Alexander and Bagoas were deeply in love, but he did play a part that would later famously be recreated by the author Mary Renault in her novel *The Persian Boy*, which is the most popular source to examine the relationship between Alexander and Bagoas.

In addition to her novels, Mary Renault also wrote a biography on Alexander the Great in which she explores his sexuality, including mentions of Bagoas. She states that he was a prize won by Alexander after the death of Darius: "'He had been loved by Darius, and was soon to be loved by Alexander.' This attachment seems to have been lifelong."[31] Renault does not deny the existence of Bagoas, even going so far as to claim that Alexander would hold a lifelong attachment to him, which is more than most authors would suggest. She cites her sources as Curtius, Plutarch, Athenaeus, and "doubtfully from Arrian," and then states that Ptolemy would have been "likely to have blue-penciled Alexander's Persian boy than his own Athenian mistress; not because he was a boy, a matter of indifference in the Greek world, but because he was a 'barbarian eunuch.'"[32] Renault has contextual sources for her claims while also interjecting her own opinions regarding sexuality. Renault is an openly lesbian writer and tends to focus on the homosexual aspect of Alexander's life. Furthermore, this is the only work of nonfiction published by Renault, her primary style being novels. Keeping that in mind, despite this being a biography on Alexander, there is a clear bias on the part of the author.

Public reactions to claims of Alexander the Great's homosexuality certainly vary largely depending on a group's end goal. Daniel Ogden describes a scene in modern Thessalonki, Greece, in 2002 where a riot ensued because a historical symposium contained papers that delved into the questions regarding Alexander's sexuality. A police force of forty had to be implemented in order to protect the delegates.[33] The mere fact that a contemporary group more than 2300 years after Alexander's death formed to protest the mere idea that a figure who lived thousands of years ago could have been a homosexual puts into perspective the public view on homosexuality that still exists today. It is widely unacceptable for many people to believe that beloved historical figure could have been gay; to them, it is detracting from his masculinity and therefore makes him less of a hero and unworthy of the praise and respect he has maintained for generations. This general backlash regarding homosexuality is found across the globe. In the United States, a republican state senator William Sharer used Alexander the Great as a means of defending his anti-gay rights argument, stating on his website "Alexander may have engaged in homosexual activity but he *married* a woman."[34] To use Alexander as a figure for the continued denial of gay rights in the United States is further proof of the public's inability to accept that a popular public figure could have held a genuine interest in the opposite sex.

On the other side of the spectrum, there is a large portion of the population that chooses to support Alexander as a homosexual and looks to him as a hero for the gay population. A simple Google search of "Alexander the Great homosexuality" brings up hundreds of hits for websites with titles such as "gayheroes" and "homohistory." The fact that these sites exist at all, and in such numbers, shows that Alexander has become a leading figure for the gay community as a means of demonstrating that even a strong historical figure, in fact arguably the greatest conqueror of all time, was indeed homosexual. These sites attempt, as Daniel Ogden states, "to appropriate historical figures or find role models of gravitas."[35] Authors like Renault contribute to the

gay community's perception of Alexander through her series of novels in which she paints a passionate love story between Alexander and Bagoas. Oliver Stone's depiction of Alexander was praised by the gay community for being the first film adaptation to show the homosexual side of Alexander the Great, which is the very reason for much of the criticism it received. The gay community, like the anti-gay rights community, is going to support the websites, film adaptations, and biographical information that contribute to their causes.

Sexuality has become a defining characteristic in determining a person's character, which when applied to an ancient historical figure, does not make sense. To call Alexander the Great a homosexual is anachronistic, simply because the terminology did not exist when he was alive. Because of the progression of history, historical interpretations have evolved. This is inevitable with any historical figure, and with Alexander, the focus has been in recent years on his sexuality. The necessity to constantly define a person by their sexual preference is a modern invention, and one that detracts from the figure as a whole. While sexuality may be a part of who that person is, it does not make up the entirety of their character. With Alexander, it is particularly ridiculous to constantly view him through the lens of his mysterious sexuality; he lived in a period where that was simply not an issue, and to project modern stigmas onto his character makes no sense. Alexander the Great was without a doubt one of the strongest leaders to ever live, and although there is a plethora of negative qualities that he possessed, his sexual preference was not one of them.

Endnotes

[1] K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (New York: MJF Books, 1979), 1

[2] Ibid., 16

[3] Ibid., 205

[4] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 128.

[5] Gary Greenberg, "Gay by Choice? The Science of Sexual Identity," *Mother Jones*, August 26, 2007, 2.

[6] W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), 319-20.

[7] Ibid., 323.

[8] Daniel Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life," in *Alexander the Great: A New History*, ed. Waldemar Heckel and Lawrence A. Tritle (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 205.

[9] Plutarch, *Lives: Demosthenes and Cicero Alexander and Caesar,* trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 285.

[10] Ibid., xxi.

[11] Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, 123.

[12] Plutarch, *Lives,* xlvii.

[13] Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. Aubrey de Sélincourt (London: Penguin Books., 1971), 234.

[14] Curtius, 7.9.19, in Daniel Ogden "Alexander's Sex Life," 211.

[15] Tarn, *Alexander the Great*, 321.

[16] Curtius 4.8.7-9 in Daniel Ogden, *Alexander the Great: Myth, Genesis, and Sexuality* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), 171.

[17] Justin 12.12.11 in Ogden, *Myth, Genesis, and Sexuality*, 159.

[18] Ogden, *Myth, Genesis, and Sexuality*, 166.

[19] Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, 7.14.

[20] Plutarch, *Lives,* lxxii.

[21] Arrian, *Campaigns*, 7.15.

[22] Waldemar Heckel, *The Marshalls of Alexander's Empire* (London: Routledge, 1992), 89

[23] Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander,* 7.15.

[24] Jerry B. Pierce, "Oliver Stone's Unmanning of Alexander the Great" in *Screening Love and Sex in the Ancient World* ed. Monica S. Cyrino (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2013), 128.

[25] Pierce, "Oliver Stone's Unmanning of Alexander the Great," 139.

[26] Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London: Allen Lane, 1973), 56.

[27] Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life," 203.

[28] Jeanne Reames, "The Cult of Hephaistion," in *Responses to Oliver Stone's Alexander: Film, History, and Cultural Studies,* ed. Paul Cartlidge and Fiona Rose Greenland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), 184.

[29] E. Badain, "The Eunuch Bagoas," *Classical Quarterly* (New Series), 8 (November 1958), 150-51.

[30] Ibid., 153.

[31] Mary Renault, *The Nature of Alexander* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books Ltd., 1975), 136.

[32] Ibid., 136.

[33] Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life," 203.

[34] William Sharer, "Why Marriage?," accessed August 23, 2013, williamsharer.com.

[35] Ogden, "Alexander's Sex Life," 203.

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Section II.
Power and Plague in Medieval Europe

Death striking down a young man, from the Macclesfield Psalter, ca. 1330.

Family Ties to Anarchy: King Stephen and Empress Matilda

Clint Rodgers

A monarchy is a family relationship. When William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, he established his family as the rulers of both England and Normandy. While the typical practice was primogeniture, where the father always established his eldest son as successor, it was not an absolute rule as it became in later periods of history. Therefore, when Henry I of England and Normandy died in 1135, the succession was thrown into incredible doubt. The two claimants were cousins: Stephen was Henry I's nephew and Matilda was Henry I's daughter. After Henry's death, Stephen and Matilda fought a civil war known as the Anarchy that consumed all of England for two decades, with severe consequences for peasants, gentry, and noblemen alike. The resulting destruction of civilized society has gripped historians for generations. Recently there has been more attention paid to the personalities of the two rivals and the effect these personalities had on the stability of the English state. Some biographers are pro-Stephen or pro-Matilda; others try to rectify the primary sources into a cohesive account of the confusing dispute. Yet, even by skimming the pages of the biographies, it is apparent that Stephen and Matilda had more in common than a blood relationship. Their political ties and previous experiences were remarkably similar, leaving the two monarchs with equal disadvantages. The relationship between King Stephen and the Empress Matilda is exceptional in its parallelisms; their background and familial ties from the pre-Anarchic period engulfed the realm in a stalemate of civil war.

Three chronicles represent the spectrum of perspectives on Stephen's reign: William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella*, William of Norwich's *History of English Affairs*, and the *Gesta Stephani*. The *Gesta Stephani* was written anonymously by a supporter of King Stephen while he reigned in England. K. R. Potter, a contemporary editor of the *Gesta Stephani*, observes that in later years the *Gesta* became less detailed. In comparison, the majority of chronicles gain detail later in the text. Potter explains, "the author was writing a panegyric of King Stephen and therefore had no wish to dwell on his final defeat, but the division of the work into two Books suggests that the author had planned his work at a time when he still believed in Stephen's ultimate victory."[1] In the structure of his work, the author expressed his strong conviction that the accession of Stephen as King of England was just. With a pro-Stephen account and chronicle extant, later historians would never be able to allege that Stephen was completely at fault for the Anarchy.

The account of William of Malmesbury completely contrasts with that of the *Gesta Stephani*. William's *Historia Novella* focuses on Empress Matilda's presence primarily by using her movements as structural bookends. William of Malmesbury begins by recounting the reasons Matilda returned to Normandy from Germany after her first husband, the Holy Roman Emperor, died.[2] Book I also ends with the deeds of the Empress. William of Malmesbury relates, "But because it will be enough to have extended the first book of the [*Historia Novella*] from the empress's return to her father, after her husband's death, up to this point, I shall now begin the second book from the year when that formidable lady came to England to vindicate her right against Stephen."[3] His use of the Empress's movements to structure his history places her as his centerpiece in the *Historia Novella*. His language even suggests her power when he writes that the "formidable lady's inheritance was in need of 'vindication.'" These sentiments would never be expressed in the *Gesta Stephani*. The *Historia Novella* and the *Gesta Stephani* are completely different perspectives on the same event, providing the lens for bias of differing sides in the civil war; a historian must reconcile the pro-Matilda and pro-Stephen chronicles to tackle these events properly.

The final chronicle is entirely different. William of Norwich's *History of English Affairs* was written during the reigns of Henry II and Richard I in the latter half of the twelfth century. The perception of the Anarchy is different

than in the *Gesta Stephani* and the *Historia Novella*. William of Norwich could only have vague personal memories of the late period of Anarchy from his childhood. While the major events of the Anarchy were clear to William of Norwich, his account is tempered by lack of detail and Henry I's need to be considered a legitimate successor to the throne. His wisdom is in hindsight; William of Norwich is able to attribute meaning to events about which William of Malmesbury and the *Gesta Stephani* can only speculate. In one instance, William of Norwich makes a powerful observation: "Thus whilst the king and empress contested with each other in continual disharmony, sometimes the factions were equally matched, and sometimes one or other prevailed but would quickly experience the fickleness of fortune."[4] William of Norwich looked back on the Anarchy and discerned a pattern that dominated the reign of King Stephen. By this point, William of Norwich can already discern that the cause of the Anarchy was a stalemate; he can also see the consequences in England due to civil war. His power as a historian is to provide criticism and commentary on the events that William of Malmesbury and the *Gesta Stephani* chronicler could only wonder about.

In the end, the rivalry was just a matter of disputed family inheritance. As grandchildren of William the Conqueror, the Empress Matilda and King Stephen were born into a family of diverse interests. A century before, the Conqueror's family did not have control over anything but Normandy. Duke William possessed great ambition and foresight when he organized the conquest from the Normandy coastline. The chronicler William of Norwich analyzed the Conqueror more than one hundred years later: "William, duke of Normans, whose soubriquet was The Bastard, made war on Harold, king of the English, either through lust of dominion or to avenge injustices."[5] William of Norwich did not give his opinion on whether William pursued ambition or revenge. However, the Duke of Normandy's motivation was essential to William of Norwich's account. The family of the Conqueror needed to live up to his power, territory, and wealth. William's children, along with his grandchildren Stephen and Matilda, were quite aware of the precedent set before them.

Another dominant factor in the war between Stephen and Matilda was the Norman Conquest of England. Normandy and England were a singular unit during the reigns of William I and Henry I; Normans held lands in England due to William I's reorganization of property and the English now had a vested economic link to Normandy.[6] The territories were split during the time of William II and Robert Curthose and the situation for the landowners became complicated. Only wealthy barons could afford the expense of crossing the English Channel to maintain property; thus, the most powerful members of the aristocracy were affected. A simple act like the invasion of England perpetrated by Robert Curthose in 1101 was more of a civil war.[7] The impact was clear: the nobility of England and Normandy were cohesive rather than fragmented. Nobles would not just consider their lands in England or on the continent, but instead viewed their estate as a whole. Matilda and Stephen had similar approaches when it came to the succession in Normandy and England. The two states were inevitably linked together by the Conqueror's organization of his realm.

The complications following William I's death would be on the minds of Stephen and Matilda after the death of Henry I.[8] The immediate concern in both cases was the question of succession. William the Conqueror had three surviving sons when he died in 1087: Robert Curthose (the eldest); William Rufus (the middle); and Henry Beauclerc (the youngest). Robert, already invested with the Dukedom of Normandy, was allowed to retain that realm. His brother, William Rufus, was granted the Kingdom of England. Meanwhile, the youngest had to be satisfied with a monetary sum and a small estate of property.[9] In the first transition of power in the Anglo-Norman conglomerate it was not the eldest son but the middle child who received the throne of England. During William I's life, Robert Curthose disputed with his father over his lack of authority in Normandy and England, even though he had already been granted the Dukedom of Normandy; therefore William Rufus inherited the crown of England in an act of paternal animosity toward the eldest son. This act established that mere birthright did not bring a Norman monarch to the throne; they had to be chosen by the previous king or accepted by the surrounding nobility and churchmen.

In King Stephen's family, primogeniture was also disregarded. His father was the Count of Blois and his mother was Adele, a daughter of William the Conqueror. Thus, the House of Blois was connected with Adele's brothers—Robert Curthose, William Rufus, and Henry Beauclerc. Adele and the Count of Blois had four surviving sons: William, Theobald, Stephen, and Henry.[10] When the Count of Blois died on crusade, Adele preserved the Blois territory for her underage sons. She made an early decision that paralleled her father's choice to exclude her brother Robert from the English succession. William of Norwich describes one possible reason: Adele, "that remarkable mother, wisely set aside her firstborn because he was deficient in intelligence and seemed second-rate, and advanced her son Theobald, who was her favourite,

to the full inheritance."[11] In elevating her second son, Adele breached the expected succession. William of Norwich respected this decision. Whether Adele actually elevated her second son because her eldest was deficient or for political reasons is a matter of debate. But, it provides clear evidence that disinheriting the eldest son was not unconventional in twelfth-century England. Stephen and Matilda would have understood inheritance as fluid; only membership in a family was required to actually succeed a dying magnate. Due to his brother Theobald's accession as Count of Blois, Stephen would know these factors intimately. Matilda would only need to glance at a genealogy to understand that the favor of nobles and churchmen required more than birthright. When Henry I died, both monarchs had a chance to demonstrate their right to the throne.

Childhood for both Stephen and Matilda was dominated by powerful parental influences that added to the stability of the Anglo-Norman realm in the first few decades of the twelfth century. Stephen's mother, Adele of Blois, was this influence for him. Besides setting her eldest son aside in the succession, she often extended her power throughout her years of activity. Edmund King states, "In over twenty years, between her husband's second departure on crusade in the winter of 1098-99 and her retirement to the nunnery of Marcigny in the spring of 1120, she did not put a foot wrong."[12] Respect for Adele came from her strong character and powerful leadership. Negative opinions for the Countess of Blois are difficult to find, even in the chronicles that are notorious for expressing their opinions, especially on women in power.[13]

Adele's marriage to Stephen Henry, Count of Blois, around 1083 also advanced an alliance between Normandy and the County of Blois to the south. Stephen was born into an alliance that was meant to strengthen the Norman position in France and create allies against the Capetians and Angevins.[14] Blois, situated south of Normandy, was in the heartland of France and very susceptible to their enemies in Anjou and France. For Blois, this was also an important relationship of kith and kin to maintain their position on the continent. The Blois-Norman axis increased the position of Stephen's family. They became allies of their uncle, Henry I. An ally on the continent, like the Count of Blois, protected Norman interests when the king was distracted by events on the island. Stephen could draw on this alliance when it came to the Anarchy by using his relations on the continent to reinforce his authority.

However, Henry I Beauclerc was just as successful as his sister Adele. The runt of the Conqueror's litter, Henry became the ruler of England upon William II Rufus' death in 1100. During Henry's reign, England was a centralized state that paid homage to one sole ruler. Tranquility and peace resulted for almost the entire reign of Henry I after the invasion of his brother Robert Curthose was handled. In Normandy, peace was only twice breached by rebellions antagonized by the French and Angevins.[15] In a time of almost constant warfare, this peace is remarkable. The "merry days of Henry" are a trope that permeates the chronicles incessantly. Edmund Kealey describes this perception: "The harsh, effective, and peaceful government of King Henry had been the marvel of the western world."[16] Such a talented father and uncle would give both Stephen and Matilda an example of what would be expected if they were to inherit the throne.

Henry I won the hand of Edith Matilda of Scotland in 1100. She became the mother of the Empress Matilda. Henry's wedding created an alliance to parallel Adele's marriage to the Count of Blois. Having an ally in Scotland was essential for an English king who desired peace. Scottish monarchs had the privilege of easily invading England from the north whenever they desired. This became a reality in 1136 when David, King of Scots, distracted Stephen, fresh in his reign, by taking control of Northumbria.[17] Still, more than just border security was in this marriage. Matilda of Scotland's mother was St. Margaret, the great-granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, an Anglo-Saxon king of the English.[18] To gain security in England, the lineage of the pre-Conquest kings was necessary to pacify any lingering Anglo-Saxon support. The children of this union would be descended from the Kings of the English who reigned previous to the Norman Invasion in 1066 and those who reigned after it. Thus, Henry I's two children, Matilda and William, were legitimate successors to the realm by conquest and heredity. While bringing in an alliance to parallel Adele's, Henry's marriage to Edith Matilda also brought another element that granted Henry's children an advantage by birth that his nephews did not possess.

Thus, Matilda and Stephen faced similar challenges: they were both at a disadvantage to inherit the titles of their parents. Stephen, as the third son of the Count of Blois, would not inherit the bulk of his father's wealth because he had three brothers. His mother Adele, recognizing this, sent him to his uncle Henry in order to give Stephen more opportunity for advancement at royal court.[19] The chronicle of Abbot Suger depicts Stephen's early importance to Henry I. In Suger's account of *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, Stephen assists Henry I in the wars with Capetian France.[20] As this comes from the mouth of a chronicler who was very pro-King

Louis, it is important to recognize that Stephen was decidedly on the side of the English at a very early age and perceived as such by his peers. After the battle of Tinchebray and the defeat of Robert Curthose, Stephen was granted the County of Mortain and attained the honors of Eye and Lancaster in England.[21] These holdings significantly expanded Stephen's wealth and power; he became a major player in the court of his uncle, Henry I. Stephen had to prove himself to attain such a position rather than just inheriting such wealth.

Matilda's fate was determined for her at an early age. She, too, found it necessary to prove herself. As a royal daughter, her destiny was to provide England with a strong ally outside of its borders. So, instead of marrying a powerful magnate within the confines of her father's kingdom, her father betrothed her to Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor, and she was sent to the German court.[22] This powerful connection gave Henry I another ally besides Blois and Scotland; he could now count on a son-in-law to keep the Capetians in check on their eastern border. Matilda, however, was able to earn esteem in the German court and learn matters of state associated with her title as Empress. During this time period she advanced in statecraft just as Stephen did in England and Normandy. Matilda and Stephen were not expected to make decisions that affected the entire empire. That was still up to Henry I and Henry V.

While Matilda was in Germany, the hope of Henry I lay with his son William. The future of the Anglo-Norman kingdom rested on the shoulders of Henry's only legitimate son and heir. In 1120, disaster struck when William was killed in the White Ship disaster without producing any issue.[23] With Matilda married to the Emperor in Germany, she could not be expected to succeed her father in England. Henry had no clear succession plan from the years 1120 to 1125. He hoped to produce a second son by a second marriage to Adeliza of Louvain, but that proved childless.[24] The possible heirs, while Matilda lived as Empress in Germany, were reduced to three nephews: William Clito, son of Robert Curthose; Theobald, Count of Blois; and Stephen, Count of Mortain. Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the natural son of Henry I, was excluded due to a prejudice among the English against illegitimate offspring.[25] Stephen, as the favored nephew, was able to extend his power. During this time period, he must have considered his role as an heir to the throne. With Matilda absent, he could easily have been the next heir to Henry I. With kingship in his grasp, it would make sense that Matilda's return would place a damper on their relationship.

Another marriage was negotiated while Matilda was Empress in Germany. Stephen married another Matilda, the Countess of Boulogne. The power of this Countess was not just in land on the continent, but also in the honor of Boulogne in England. While Matilda of Boulogne often kept control of her own estates, Stephen was able to add the prestige of his wife to his own. She also had an incredible pedigree. She was the daughter of Mary of Scotland, granddaughter of St. Margaret, and great-great-granddaughter of Edmund Ironside.[26] Matilda of Boulogne was also the first cousin of the Empress Matilda, and thus they both possessed claims to a royal Anglo-Saxon lineage. Through Matilda of Boulogne, any heirs of Stephen would have a strong claim to the throne of England by heredity and conquest, just as the Empress attained through her maternal and paternal lineage respectively. Through Stephen, any child would descend from William the Conqueror; through Matilda of Boulogne they descended from the Anglo-Saxon rulers. In terms of heredity, Stephen's heirs gained equivalence to the Empress Matilda even though she retained the order of precedence.

During Matilda's time in Germany, the Empress must have observed her husband's difficult relationship with the papacy. She learned firsthand with Henry V about the dangers of playing games with the pope. Henry was excommunicated by Paschal II due to the emperor's attempt to reform the church.[27] Marjorie Chibnall discusses the difficulties of Henry V's reign and the impact it would have on Matilda's later life: "Matilda cannot have been blind either to the regret with which the symbols were renounced in both regions, or to the fact that the real issue was now the right to grant license to elect, exercise any customary rights of regale pertaining to the temporalities, and receive the fealty of the new prelate."[28] This quote recognizes that Matilda would have been affected by the events of Henry V's reign; she could not have been "blind" to the acts of her husband and this would alter her relationship with the papacy and Rome for the rest of her career. Even though Matilda struggled with ecclesiastic power throughout her life, she still appealed to the pope for support in her bid for the English crown. The only evidence for this appears in a letter of Gilbert Foliot, Abbot of Gloucester, to Brian FitzCount, one of the barons loyal to Matilda, in 1139.[29] Foliot, as the Abbot of Gloucester, had strong ties to Earl Robert, Matilda's half-brother born out of wedlock. Thus, his support for the Empress was strong and he even argued for her at the Lateran Council. Her relationship with the papacy while in Germany at least gave her an understanding of the importance of the church to a noblewoman. She needed the backing of the pope to advance her bid for the kingdom of England.

Henry V of Germany died in 1125, leaving Matilda a childless widow. She returned to her father in 1126, bringing skill at statecraft that she learned in the German court.[30] William of Malmesbury, in favor of the Empress, chose to begin the *Historia Novella* with the council Henry I called shortly after Matilda's return in 1127. The king desired to have his nobles swear an oath to accept Matilda as the rightful heir to the throne as his only legitimate child. William of Malmesbury paints a very formal ceremony:

> Of the laity David, king of Scots, the empress's uncle, swore first; next Stephen, count of Mortain and Boulogne, King Henry's nephew by his sister Adela; then Robert the king's so, whom he had recognized as his before he came to the throne and made earl of Gloucester….There was a noteworthy contest, it is said, between Robert and Stephen, who as rivals in distinction strove with each other for the honour of swearing first, the one claiming the prerogative of a son, the other the rank of a nephew.[31]

This oath set the tone for the succession conflict. The main players of the first few years of the Anarchy were introduced; the situation in 1127 was explained. David, King of Scots, another reigning monarch and the elder of Robert and Stephen swore first. His kinship with the Empress Matilda is highlighted in William of Malmesbury to show his devotion to her interests. Stephen swore next. His precedence before Robert, Earl of Gloucester, presents Stephen's importance in the England of 1127. If Matilda did not produce heirs, Stephen would conceivably be the next in line to the throne. While William of Malmesbury claims that Stephen and Robert had a "noteworthy contest" to determine order, other chroniclers claim that Robert willingly gave Stephen precedence by age and legitimate birth.[32]

The *Gesta Stephani* justifies Stephen's oathbreaking by placing his argument in the words of a supporter:

> "It is true," they said, "and not to be denied, that King Henry gave his daughter in marriage with a politic design, that he might establish peace more surely and securely between the Normans and the Angevins, who had often troubled each other from disputes. Also with that loud commanding utterance that nobody could resist he rather compelled than directed the leading men of the whole kingdom to swear to accept her as his heir."[33]

If Henry I forced his noblemen to swear the oath, was it legitimate? This question emerges in the succession dispute quite rapidly. The supporters of Stephen maligned Matilda's legitimacy by claiming her mother was a confirmed nun at the time of her marriage. As a nun, any marriage would be null and any children declared bastards.[34] On the other hand, Matilda's supporters claimed that Stephen was an oath breaker and a curse to England. We have William of Malmesbury reporting that the moment Stephen arrived in England to claim the throne, "there was a terrible sound of thunder accompanied by fearful lightning, so that it was almost thought to be the end of the world."[35] According to Malmesbury, the omens were against Stephen from the beginning. It all hinged on this oath—Stephen needed to sully Matilda's legitimacy and the Empress had to promote the legend of Stephen the oath breaker, cursed by God. Matilda and Stephen both had a vested interest in the conclusions drawn about the oath of 1127.

One more marriage contract was made before Henry I's statecraft was complete. His daughter Matilda was wed to Geoffrey, the son of Fulk V, Count of Anjou. Two members of the Norman family had previously wed Fulk's daughters, but neither marriage lasted more than a year. Henry desired to make the alliance more permanent.[36] Carolyn Anderson claims that this alliance disturbed many contemporary nobles. The aristocracy viewed it as an attempt to build an empire uniting several territories in France with the kingdom of England in one heir—the child of Matilda and Geoffrey.[37] The Norman-Angevin alliance is, again, a parallel to the Blois-Norman axis created through the marriage of Stephen's parents.[38] That alliance, created with the intention of keeping the Counts of Anjou at bay, was still embodied in Stephen, Count of Mortain and Boulogne. Matilda's marriage represented a different option for England with the House of Anjou. Such marriages left Stephen with power in Blois through his brother and Boulogne through his wife; while Matilda had control of Anjou through her husband, along with the parts of Normandy she retained after he father's death.

The stage for the Anarchy was set. In the years before Henry I's death in 1135, Matilda and Stephen both produced male heirs.[39] According to the oath, the kingdom should have been left in the hands of Matilda upon Henry I's death, but instead Stephen was crowned at Westminster in late December.[40] Each account of the coronation is structured differently. William of Malmesbury reports omens of disaster that portend civil war. William of Norwich reports it decades later with very few details; Norwich's account is basic because

he was not living during the coronation. The *Gesta Stephani* speaks of Stephen's popular support in the country. No matter what, Stephen was once again ahead of his cousin Matilda, yet he was unable to clear away the stain of usurpation. Stephen was still perceived as an oath breaker by Matilda's supporters and though he initially received homage and support from almost everyone in England, the barons were very willing to change their minds.

The events of December 1135 left Stephen in the right place at the right time. He had been able to make the voyage to England, while Matilda and the Earl of Gloucester "delayed their return to the kingdom."[41] While William of Malmesbury does not linger over the reasons Matilda remained in Normandy, one might draw conclusions. She was pregnant with her third son, born on July 22, 1136.[42] A woman preparing for labor in a few months was not ready to make the channel crossing to England. Though few historians or chroniclers point to this issue, it seems that Matilda's pregnancy actually kept her rooted in Normandy when she could have immediately claimed the throne as her own. Her delay does not seem so strange when considering her pregnancy. However, when she finally became ready to confront Stephen in battle a year or two later he had been able to consolidate his power on the island.

As the Anarchy developed, a trend appeared in the actions of Stephen and Matilda. The two magnates could not forget the deeply rooted past. For instance, the chronicles report that Stephen, even after the Earl of Gloucester paid him homage in 1136, did not give him his trust. William of Malmesbury claims that Stephen "never showed the earl unqualified friendship, always regarding his power with suspicion."[43] Robert was a constant reminder of the oath that Stephen had sworn to uphold Matilda's inheritance; the former Count of Mortain could not forget Robert's past actions. While later events showed that Stephen had good reason to scrutinize Robert's friendship, the lack of trust may also have instigated later problems. Without a relationship of trust between Robert and Stephen, Matilda was able to get the support of her half-brother.

However, Matilda had difficulties too. Her resentment at being ousted by her cousin Stephen doused her performance as "Lady of the English" in malice. At the highest point in her campaign, she was received by the Londoners as their lady in 1141. Yet, according to the *Gesta Stephani*, Matilda did not offer the Londoners an easy transition into her control. Instead, she sought to punish them, perhaps as her father would and could have done. The *Gesta* claims she demanded a large sum from the Londoners for recompense. When they professed that they had lost much of their wealth in the strife of the kingdom, the Empress gave a vehement response: she "blazed into unbearable fury, saying that many times the people of London had made very large contributions to the king, that they had lavished their wealth on strengthening him and weakening her, that they had previously conspired with her enemies for her hurt."[44] Matilda, rather than offering the Londoners redemption, expected to receive recompense for past ills. If the *Gesta* is to be believed, Matilda was not interested in healing the wounds of the country, but instead in exacting a high price for what she considered betrayal. One of the greatest parallels between Stephen and Matilda is this problem: they were completely incapable of forgetting the past transgressions of their mercurial subjects. Their lack of forgiveness led to their unpopularity during the wars and switching alliances based on the best offer.

The parallels between the rivals bound them in the stalemate of Anarchy. Their right to rule, their talent at statecraft, and their support among noblemen in England and on the continent were consistently equalized. One could easily describe their plight as an "epic"—the dramatic chronicles that permeate the time of the Anarchy, especially with such a strong female character, would be incredible in Hollywood. The true hardships of the period, however, are difficult to overlook. *The Peterborough Chronicle* describes the situation well:

> Every man built him castles and held them against the king. They filled the whole land with these castles. When the castles were built they filled them with devils and wicked men….At regular intervals they levied a tax called *tenserie* upon the villages. When the wretched people had no more to give, all the villages were plundered and burnt.[45]

This is the outcome of Stephen and Matilda's childhood, marriage alliances, and rising abilities. For nearly two decades they left the people of England at the mercy of the "wicked." Whether the chronicle exaggerates the situation is unanswerable. Regardless, the reign of Stephen and the invasion of Matilda left the English in a difficult situation that would not be forgotten. Not until the rise of Henry II was there a chance to heal the wounds the Anarchy created.

Endnotes

[1] K. R. Potter, ed., *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), xix.

[2] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* trans. K. R. Potter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 5.

[3] Ibid., 43.

[4] William of Norwich, *The History of English Affairs*, ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh and M. J. Kennedy (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, Ltd., 1988), 65.

[5] Ibid., 37.

[6] Judith A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 48-9.

[7] C. Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986), 77.

[8] See Edmund King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), 41-2. King explains the horrors that followed William the Conqueror's death and the fear that this situation would repeat itself with Henry I's death. William I died without respect and his body burst when they were trying to force it into a too-small casket.

[9] Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1991), 6.

[10] King, *King Stephen*, 4-5.

[11] William of Norwich, *The History of English Affairs*, 53.

[12] King, *King Stephen*, 8.

[13] See Carolyn Anderson, "Narrating Matilda: 'Lady of the English' in the *Historia Novella,* the *Gesta Stephani*, and Wace's *Roman de Rou*," *Clio* 29 (Fall 1999): 51. Anderson's article explores the misogyny of male chroniclers toward females, especially the Empress Matilda.

[14] King, *King Stephen*, 4.

[15] Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions,* 171.

[16] Edmund J. Keasley, "King Stephen: Government and Anarchy," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 6 (Autumn 1974): 202.

[17] David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 39.

[18] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 7.

[19] David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, 14.

[20] Abbot Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat,* trans. Jean Dunbabin (Medieval Source Book, XXVI).

[21] King, *King Stephen,* 12.

[22] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda,* 16-7.

[23] Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions,* 145.

[24] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 37.

[25] Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions,* 148-52. The tradition among the English of excluding bastards went back to the Council of Chelsea in 787. William the Conqueror only escaped this tradition because he conquered England rather than inherited it.

[26] King, *King Stephen,* 28.

[27] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 28.

[28] Chibnall, "The Empress Matilda and Church Reform," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988): 114.

[29] Adrian Morey and C. N. L. Brooke, ed., *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 60.

[30] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 43-4.

[31] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* 9.

[32] King, *King Stephen*, 30-1. King points to John of Worcester as a primary detractor of the "noteworthy contest" between Stephen and Robert.

[33] *Gesta Stephani*, 11.

[34] Dom Adrian Morey and C. N. L. Brooke, *Gilbert Foliot and His Letters* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 121.

[35] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* 29.

[36] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 54-5. William Clito, the son of Robert Curthose, and William Adelin, Henry I's son, were both married to daughters of Fulk V of Anjou. However, Clito was divorced from his wife after a year and Adelin died in the White Ship Disaster of 1120.

[37] Anderson, "Narrating Matilda," 51.

[38] Ibid., 6.

[39] The birth of Henry Plantagenet in 1133 was a moment of great happiness for Henry I, who finally had a legitimate male heir for the first time since 1120; see King, *King Stephen*, 37.

[40] *Gesta Stephani*, 13; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* 29; William of Norwich, *The History of English Affairs*, 53.

[41] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* 27.

[42] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 67.

[43] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella,* 39.

[44] *Gesta Stephani*, 123.

[45] *The Peterborough Chronicle*, trans. Cecily Clark, 55-7, quoted in Edmund King, "The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 34 (1984): 135.

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The Black Death: A Doctor's Narrative

Sarah Blanton

Primary sources written around the time of the Black Death allow historians to paint a picture of what daily life was like in the fourteenth century during the pandemic. The same primary documents can be used to construct a personal narrative from several different perspectives of society. Perhaps one of the most intriguing of these narratives is the perspective of a plague doctor, which this narrative represents. This perspective may be the most interesting because it provides a context to the medical side of the story while also building history from the ground up. Sources used for this type of historical approach include medical texts and personal diaries along with societal texts documenting life during the time of the Black Death. What follows is a completely imaginative recreation of what a typical doctor (in this case, named Dr. Charles Hobbs) would have faced during the Black Death in an English town (here, called Loxin). This fictional narrative is based on primary sources and was inspired by John Hatcher's book The Black Death: A Personal History.[1]

As the small town of Loxin, England, awoke on a brisk summer morning in the fourteenth century, it could not have known what dark, deadly figure would be knocking on its door. The people of Loxin had received news that a sickness had spread into nearby towns, devastating families, destroying entire populations, and leaving nothing behind. On that morning, a stranger stumbled into the limits of the city. That day became known as Day One.

The stranger was a judge from a neighboring town who had isolated himself from victims of the sickness, but had been instructed to warn the surrounding area in case he was the last surviving member of his town. His town, like many others, had been exposed to the sickness by engaging in battle. Soldiers had entered the town where the sickness laid dormant and brought back items that were infected by the plague to their towns.[2] This method of spreading the disease also occurred in towns like Tortosa around 1650.[3] Once the sickness was in his town, it spread quickly and took only six months to wipe out the town completely.

He had traveled for a day when he noticed the first bubo under his left arm. When he reached Loxin, he was suffering from a headache and a fever and had developed several more buboes on his neck. His only responsibility was to warn Loxin, but when he reached the city, he took his last breath.

Five people from Loxin noticed the body while examining their crops for the day and proceeded to check if they recognized the man. They should have backed away when they noticed the swelling on the man's neck, but it was too late when they realized that the man had died from the plague, the one thing they all feared the most. These five people were the first citizens of Loxin to succumb to the Black Death. These victims, before they had time to realize it, had been infected by coming in contact with the clothes of the dead man at the edge of the city.[4] When they returned to the town, they had spread the sickness to others. Just a couple of days later, all five of them were nearing death before treatments could be made by any of the local physicians.

A single stranger had brought the plague to Loxin and the town had nothing left to do but accept that the plague was among them and precautions had to be taken.[5] The first of the plague regulations stated that sick people would be taken from the towns and into fields where they would be left to recover or to die. For the people who had come in contact with the sick, they were to be quarantined for at least ten days before coming into contact with anyone else. In other towns, those responsible for bringing the sickness to the community were required to give all of their possessions to the officials of the town.[6] After the body of the stranger had been buried, the officials of the city met to agree on these regulations and form a sanitary council based on the regulations of the Venice sanitary council of 1348.[7]

They immediately asked the local churches to recite prayers specifically requesting protection.

The local churches took the lead in ordering what should be done to prevent the spread of the pestilence by urging people to confess and holding masses and processions. These instructions were written by the bishop and read to all the population at many churches located throughout the city.[8] It was a belief amongst the citizens that God had inflicted the sickness upon them and all mankind as a punishment for their sins. They drew these assumptions from the plagues mentioned in the Bible, which also attributed the sins of a population to the reasoning for a plague.[9] The remedy posted on the door of the largest church in Loxin said:

> Whenever anyone is struck down by the plague they should immediately provide themselves with a medicine like this. Let him first gather as much as he can of bitter loathing towards the sins committed by him, and the same quantity of true contrition of heart, and mix the two into an ointment with the water of tears. Then let him make a vomit of frank and honest confession, by which he shall be purged of the pestilential poison of sin, and the boil of his vices shall be totally liquefied and melt away. Then the spirit, formerly weighed down by the plague of sin, will be left all light and full of blessed joy. Afterwards let him take the most delightful and precious medicine: the body of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. And finally let him have himself anointed on the seat of his bodily senses with holy oil. And in a little while he will pass from transient life to the incorruptible country of eternal life, safe from plague and all other infirmities.[10]

Looking back, those processions were prime opportunities for the sickness to be spread and the remedies suggested by even the most revered priest or church official did not prevent the plague from affecting anyone.[11]

Dr. Charles Hobbs was one of the very few doctors to care for a population of about ten thousand. He was considered a second-rate physician, but maintained good relationships with his patients. He attended medical school at Avignon, which had obtained its medical faculty in 1303.[12]

Hobbs was one of the first to examine one of the five people who were sick. The first symptoms he noticed were indicative of the plague. The swollen lymph nodes or buboes on the neck, groin and armpit areas, along with fever, headaches, and chills were found in his patient along with the other four victims.[13]

After those five people suffered from the plague, it was necessary for the physicians to create recommendations for the public in order to prevent the sickness from spreading. They first suggested that no foods such as poultry, waterfowl, suckling pig, old beef, or fat meat should be consumed. They also suggested that broths be made with cinnamon, spices, and ground pepper. The last of their recommendations was not to sleep during the daytime and not to drink much dark liquid with breakfast.[14] Hobbs, along with other physicians who had studied classical Greek medicine, attributed the plague to the pollution of air by elements that were poisonous.[15] It was deemed necessary to keep the air from becoming stiff. The entire town took part in setting the air in motion by ringing all the bells and discharging all cannons and weapons.[16] Birds were also used in personal quarters to keep the air moving. The physicians also considered being light-hearted and serene very important because they thought that the plague would be brought on by fear and horror.[17]

The citizens of Loxin were initially careful to take the advice given by the physicians, but as time passed, more people became sick and died. A few days after the first five deaths caused by the plague in Loxin, eleven more cases of the plague were confirmed. Soon, new cases were confirmed every day. The number of people dead from the plague totaled more than four hundred only two months after that stranger brought the plague to the city. All they knew was that it spread quickly and it was deadly.

None of the treatments Hobbs had prescribed according to Galenic traditions seemed to succeed.[18] Like most physicians who were trained at a medical university, he was taught to heal sickness through the maintenance of a balance of the four humours. They were taught that the body was composed of fire, which was hot and dry; water, which was cold and wet; earth, which was cold and dry; and air, which was hot and wet.[19] In an attempt to rid the body of the poison responsible for the sickness and balance the humours, he prescribed bloodletting, often until the patient lost consciousness.[20] He also lanced the buboes to drain the pus and cauterized them to seal the wound and allow for natural healing.[21] More extreme methods he tried included placing a plucked anus of a living chicken on the buboes, which would allow for the chicken to absorb the poison. He believed that the chickens would continue to

Figure 1 (facing page): Engraving of plague doctor by Paul Fürst, 1656, from Wikimedia Commons.

Kleidung wider den Tod zu Rom. Anno 1656.

Also gehen die Doctores Medici dahe zu Rom, wann sie die andere Pest ertrancte Personen besuchen, sie zu curiren und tragen, sich wider Gifft zu sichern, ein langes Kleid von gewärtem Tuch ihr Angesicht ist verlarvt, für den Augen haben sie grosse Crystalline Brillen, wider Nasen einen langen Schnabel voll wolriechender Specerey, in der Hände, welche mit Handschuhen wol versehen ist, eine lange Ruthe und darmit deuten sie, was man thun, und gebrauchen soll.

Figure 2: Illustration of Black Death patients, 1411, from Joseph P. Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2006).

die if they absorbed the poison causing the sickness and the method would continue until a chicken lived.[22] He also tried cupping, which involved him placing a glass cup over an open wound and heating the glass to create a vacuum which would suck out the poisonous blood.[23] Similar to cupping was the use of leeches on open wounds or on different areas of the body. While these methods may have proved somewhat successful in the past, he noticed that they did not succeed in treating the plague. Plague victims can be seen in Figure 1.

Dr. Bernard Jarrett, a barber-surgeon, was Hobbs' associate and friend. He was a key component in the practice of the methods prescribed by Hobbs. Surgeons or barber surgeons like Jarrett were the "heavy lifters" of the medical profession. They learned their profession through the system of apprentices and masters.[24] Jarrett perhaps had more experience with the human body than did Hobbs because he handled autopsies and dissections.[25] Jarrett was responsible for a number of things including dentistry, setting broken bones, dressing wounds, conducting amputations, operating on multiple parts of the body, and bloodletting. When Dr. Jarrett was being a barber he would cut, style, and shave hair, wash customers' upper bodies, clean their teeth, cut their nails, and remove lice.[26] He, like many other barber-surgeons, set up practice near Hobbs' office in order to be sure that his assistance would always be required. His office could only be differentiated from Hobbs' office by the sign hanging on his building that featured a bowl of blood.[27]

Down the street from doctors Jarrett and Hobbs was the most popular apothecary. When herbal remedies were needed, he was the one to visit. Hobbs knew how this apothecary worked, always keeping secrets about which patients received which remedy and never revealing exactly what was included in a serum or pill. Nevertheless, the apothecary received good money for what he gave to the people when they complained of an ailment.[28] Although the people of the town praised his healing abilities, Hobbs knew he was a fraud. This particular apothecary would even suggest a daily medicinal schedule with the first day consisting of juniper, rose, cloves and rue; the second day

included poley, rosemary, marjoram, thyme, green rue, and wormwood; the third day with more juniper and berries soaked in vinegar; the fourth day required more juniper and lavender to be poured on a sponge; the fifth day said to use more spices, such as coriander and cumin along with incense; the sixth day required orange peels and the essence of cloves to be poured on a rag; and on the seventh day, a patient took either angelica, valerian, or wormseed mixed with pomander, styrax, or calamita.[29]

Members of the town often trusted the advice of folk healers, which were usually women practicing a type of medicine reliant upon personal experience, common sense, and "superstitious gobbledygook."[30] These practitioners, who did not have a medical license, were also not commonly members of a professional guild in which physicians, surgeons, barber-surgeons, and apothecaries were found.[31] When the treatments prescribed by the physicians did not appear to be working, the people of the city turned to their "healers" for help. When these remedies did not prove helpful, they began to fear that any remedy would only quicken the progression of the sickness because they feared it was the end of the world.[32]

For some members of the community, treatments prescribed by physicians and remedies mixed by apothecaries were simply not enough to thwart their fear of contracting the plague. They would trust in wearing an amulet, which would display certain words, have signs papers attached, or have spells written on them.[33] The most common amulet amongst the townspeople had "Pestilentia lenit Pietas" written on it.[34] The churches supported the wearing of these amulets along with fervent prayer and repentance.[35]

When Hobbs couldn't help his patients, he began to fear for his own health. He easily could have fled the town as many other physicians and barber-surgeons did after only staying long enough to confirm that what the first five people had contracted was the plague. Hobbs was one of those doctors who valued his patients. He knew that he had to stay to provide for the citizens of Loxin. He was not focused on gaining riches from dying patients; instead, he was dedicated to trying to relieve the city of the plague.[36]

Weeks later, more people had become infected and the bodies were beginning to pile up. Among those affected was Hobbs's wife.[37] With nothing left to lose but himself, Hobbs dedicated himself to remain in the town to care for the sick while the healthy fled to safer places. He, along with other secondhand physicians who were trained as apprentices, became plague doctors for the town of Loxin. They became the primary medical team hired by the city of Loxin to provide treatment for patients suffering from the plague while also remaining isolated from all other healthy people.[38]

In order to provide medical care for the sick, the city established several pest houses that provided a space in which the plague doctors could treat their patients and remain cut off from all healthy individuals.[39] The plague doctors had no protection from coming in contact with the sick except for the outfit they donned. This outfit can be seen in Figure 2.

Their outfit was developed by Dr. Charles de l'Orme, who had designed the uniform to protect him while caring for the sick in order to protect his royal patients who were not infected.[40] The plague doctors of Loxin followed his recommendations and wore an outer layer of black canvas that was covered in wax along with leather pants, boots, a hat, and gloves that were also covered in wax. This layer of wax was believed to help protect the plague doctors from being infected. The scariest portion of the outfit was the head piece. On top of a leather hood and mask, which were held to the face by leather bands, was a protruding beak. Inside of the beak were compounds believed to keep the plague air away. In order to provide more distance between the plague doctor and patients, a stick would be used to move bed sheets.[41] In reality, Hobbs and the other plague doctors did more counting bodies than providing treatment.[42]

From the initial outbreak of the plague, many members of the community had fled the town. Only the sick and those who cared for them remained, excluding a small amount of people who isolated themselves from all others. The town had become a shadow of what it was, as most towns had become once the plague had shown its face. The only people who remained untouched seemed to be judges, priests, and notaries who had refused to come in contact with those stricken by the plague.[43] Those who died from coming in contact with the infected included parish curates and chaplains who would administer sacraments and hear confessions.[44]

All order had broken down in the city. Days were filled with wailing and crying while others lived like there were no rules and committed thefts from those already killed by the plague.[45] Although there was much to eat for the people who believed they were surviving the plague, they were scared to interact with anyone for fear of catching the deadly sickness.

Eight months from Day One, the city was bare. Dr. Hobbs was the last of the plague doctors to survive the devastation. He watched as his friends, family, and patients wasted away. In

the beginning, he made an effort to bury every single body that had died from the plague. As time passed, the plague killed such a large number of men and women that no one was around to bury the bodies of the dead. In the last days of the town, men and women would be seen throwing their own children into mass graves on their way to church.[46] Hobbs recalled only one other plague with such devastating results. This plague was recorded by Bede who claimed, "there were not enough left alive to bury the dead."[47]

As a habit, Hobbs had kept a journal all of his life. He now possessed the only record of the fall of Loxin with detailed information about how many patients died each day, what seemed useful in preventing the spread of the plague, and information he believed critical to protect other towns. In one passage he wrote that it was "a plague so virulent that children fled from their infected parents and mothers abandoned in horror a baby upon whom the marks had begun to appear."[48] In another he jotted, "the dead left unburied in the streets or thrown wantonly into rivers and the sea."[49] As he wrote these passages, he began to realize that he was all that Loxin had left. All others had fled and the other plague doctors had succumbed to the illness they were treating.

When the plague first arrived at Loxin, the doctors relied on their teachings to provide treatments and prevention while the church turned to Biblical interpretations.[50] Dr. Hobbs was the last person alive in Loxin and survived just long enough to see what damage was truly done before he himself exhibited the first signs of the plague that had destroyed his own city. He took no measures to ease the pain of the buboes or relieve the fever or headaches that overtook him. Instead, he welcomed death as a release from the darkness of what used to be known as Loxin.

The Black Plague affected the areas of the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia during the years 1346 to 1353.[51] *It is estimated to have killed a third of the population of Europe.*[52] *There are three periods of plague epidemics, which are referred to as pandemics. The first was Justinian's Plague (541 to 544 C.E.) which is believed to have been the bubonic strain of the plague. The second, the Black Death, peaked in the mid-fourteenth-century and continued to show up with outbreaks into the eighteenth century. The Black Death was a combination of all three strains: bubonic, pneumonic, and septicemic. The third pandemic, which was an outbreak of the bubonic plague, occurred between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth century and affected five continents.*[53] *Outbreaks such as the one which affected the fictional city of Loxin were common and quickly spread the plague across countries and continents. The plague is believed to have been brought by Italian merchant ships to Constantinople and other seaports along the Mediterranean coast from Crimean in 1347.*[54]

Since these pandemics, the Black Death has been studied many times in order to understand the cause and how to treat it if ever another outbreak occurs. It has been assessed that the primary means of spreading the bubonic plague occurs by fleas. The current treatment for this disease starts with an aggressive dose of antibiotics. To protect those who aren't infected, prophylactic antibiotics are used.[55]

Modern medicine, developed from the failures and successes of medieval medicine, has advanced far enough to allow a cure and prevention for the Black Plague if identified early enough. Primary sources, such as those used in this narrative, provide current historians and scientists with the information to further their techniques to protect against another pandemic such as the Black Death. These primary documents also provide information that can be utilized to recreate the Black Death from many different perspectives, such as the one given here. From several different primary and secondary sources, an understanding can be reached and exhibited in a story such as the one of the city of Loxin.

Endnotes

[1] John Hatcher, *The Black Death: a Personal History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2008).

[2] James S. Amelang, ed. and trans., *A Journal of the Plague Year: The Diary of the Barcelona Tanner Miquel Parets, 1651* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 33.

[3] Ibid., 32.

[4] Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 28, 83.

[5] Ibid., 34.

[6] Johannes Nohl, *The Black Death: a Chronicle of the Plague* (New York: Westholme Publishing, 2006), 108.

[7] Ibid., 108.

[8] Hatcher, *The Black Death*, 81.

[9] Ibid., 82.

[10] Horrox, *The Black Death*, 149.

[11] George Deaux, *The Black Death, 1347* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969), 6.

[12] Joseph P. Bryne, *Daily Life During the Black Death* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2006), 19.

[13] Sandra Moss, "Bubonic Plague," in *Pestilence, Pandemics, and Plagues,* ed. Joseph Byrne (London: Greenwood Press, 2008), 74.
[14] Nohl, *The Black Death*, 90.
[15] Ole J. Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346-1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 3.
[16] Nohl, *The Black Death*, 95.
[17] Ibid., 91.
[18] Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death,* 58.
[19] Carole Rawcliff, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England (*Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1995*),* 33.
[20] Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death,* 58.
[21] Ibid., 59.
[22] Ibid., 59.
[23] Ibid., 36.
[24] Ibid., 34.
[25] Rawcliffe, *Medicine and* Society, 127.
[26] Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death,* 34.
[27] Ibid., 35.
[28] Ibid., 38.
[29] Nohl, *The Black Death*, 93-94.
[30] Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death*, 42.
[31] Ibid., 41.
[32] Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *The Black Death Transformed: Disease and Culture in Early Renaissance Europe* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003), 225.
[33] Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death,* 52.
[34] Ibid., 99.
[35] Ibid., 99.
[36] Deaux, *The Black Death*, 7.
[37] Amelang, ed., *A Journal of the Plague Year*, 68.
[38] Carlo M. Cipolla, "A Plague Doctor," in *The Medieval City,* ed. Harry A. Miskimin, et al., (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1977), 1.
[39] Byrne, *Daily Life During the Black Death*, 131.
[40] Jackie Rosenhek, "Doctors of the Black Death," *Doctor's Review*, October 2011, accessed October 7, 2013, http://www.doctorsreview.com/history/doctors-black-death/.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Cohn, *The Black Death Transformed,* 121.
[44] Ibid., 121.
[45] Jerrold Atlas. "The Black Death: An Essay on Traumatic Change," *Journal of Psychohistory* 36 (Winter 2009): 250.
[46] "A firsthand account of the Black Death written at the Cathedral of Rochester, 1314-1350, Cotton Faustina B C," British Library, accessed November 10, 2013, http://www.bl.uk/learning/images/medieval/rurallife/transcript107637.html.
[47] G.H. Martin, *Knighton's Chronicle, 1337-1396* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 100-1.
[48] Deaux, *The Black Death*, 1.
[49] Ibid., 1.
[50] Ibid., 1.
[51] Benedictow, *The Black Death*, 3.
[52] Roger French, et al., eds., *Medicine from the Black Death to the French Disease* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 1.
[53] A. Lloyd Moote and Dorothy C. Moote, *The Great Plague: the Story of London's Most Deadly Year* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 5.
[54] Benedictow, *The Black Death*, 44.
[55] Moss, "Bubonic Plague," 75.

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The Power of Medieval Queenship: Eleanor of Aquitaine and Blanche of Castile

Jenna Langa

When the image of the Middle Ages comes to mind, one thinks of powerful kings and their queens. One does not, however, usually associate power with medieval queens. The kings flew into battle, commanding troops, and making laws; the queens stayed at home raising the children and providing an heir. According to Ralph V. Turner, "A noble lady's main function was to produce offspring, to ensure the line's continuity."[1] In popular knowledge, kings possess power, maintaining order in their kingdom; queens stay out of politics. While most queens are not mentioned in documents from the Middle Ages, it has been discovered that medieval queens did not all stay out of politics [2]

Two examples of this political engagement are Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine and Queen Blanche of Castile. These women gained great amounts of power during their lifetimes. Power, as discussed here, refers to the authority they possessed and the influence they had over those in authority positions, politics, the military, their subjects, and their children. Anne Duggan states the fact that though a queen's "role in the government and in the state was different from that of kings and emperors, [it] does not cancel out the fact that they played an important part in the maintenance of dynastic rule, in the cultivation of the arts, and in the maintenance of the memoria of their families."[3] Just because queens did not have the same role as kings in political affairs did not mean they had no power. They could not be a part of the political hierarchy, made up solely of males, but they could exercise influence and authority over political and clerical power due to the status of queen.[4]

Blanche of Castile and Eleanor of Aquitaine gained vast prestige while among the rulers of western medieval Europe; most people throughout western Europe knew the names of these dynamic queens of England and France. Besides holding the position of queen, these women were the mothers of great kings of both England and France. Throughout the reigns of their sons, they held authority and influence over the new kings and their citizens. By comparing Eleanor of Aquitaine with Blanche of Castile, one is able to see the influence a strong queen and mother could have over her sons and the empire and power she could gain from this.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was a very determined and strong-willed medieval woman. She demonstrated this throughout her life, especially through her marriages and during her widowhood. "If a prize were to be given for England's liveliest queen, Eleanor of Aquitaine would undoubtedly win," writes Petronelle Cook. "From the moment she kicked her way into the world in 1122 she was a ball of fire that never stopped rolling."[5] While married, Eleanor presented her strong will through her resolve to join the Second Crusade with her husband Louis VII, king of France.[6] With this crusade, marital problems arose between the king and queen of France, resulting in divorce.[7] She also showed her fiery spirit in her second marriage to Henry II, king of England. During this marriage she maintained control of her territories in France, not allowing them to amalgamate into those domains England held in France at the time, at least in the beginning.[8] Eleanor demonstrates herself as a strong queen throughout her regency while her husband Henry II was overseas; she managed her own holdings in France along with England during this time.[9] In the course of her marriage to the king of France, Eleanor of Aquitaine used her own seal as duchess of Aquitaine, not as queen of France, while dealing with matters that involved Aquitaine.[10] She also employs this seal during her marriage to Henry II.

Eleanor's power during her marriage to Henry II increased around 1173 when she gives her blessing and military support to her sons in an attempt to overthrow their father.[11] This revolt was sparked by Henry II withholding power from them.[12] After giving her blessing to the three

men, they arrive in the court of Louis VII, who encourages their revolt.[13] Not only did Eleanor support their cause, she inspired and incited it, according to Ralph Turner, who sees her as manipulating her sons due to her loss of influence over the country and politics.[14] Turner presents good sources to back his theories, though her active role in the revolt was virtually inconceivable to her contemporaries.[15] In a letter addressed to Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine from Peter of Blois in 1173, one can infer her influence:

> Against all women and out of childish counsel, you provoke disaster for the lord king, to whom powerful kings bow the neck. And so, before this matter reaches a bad end, you should return with your sons to your husband, whom you have promised to obey and live with. Turn back so that neither you nor your sons become suspect. We are certain that he will show you every possible kindness and the surest guarantee of safety.[16]

Peter of Blois wrote this letter upon request from Rotrou, the Archbishop of Rouen, at the requisition of one of Henry's men. Throughout the letter, one gains a sense of a religious influence; this is a religious man telling a secular queen what she should do and criticizing her. It does not seem as if she sought out his help, because the letter at times seems to be attacking the queen's decisions. The archbishop became upset that she left Henry and went against him, allowing her sons to rebel, prompting him to have this letter commissioned and sent to the queen of England.

Later in this letter, Peter of Blois informs us of Eleanor's influence over her sons by stating: "I beg you, advise your sons to be obedient and respectful to their father."[17] His request for her to persuade her sons to honor their father instead of revolting against him validates her authority and acknowledges that her influence is known by the Church. Turner points this out in stating that the "dysfunctional character of the family life of Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry II, and their sons was no secret to their contemporaries."[18] He suggests that she reinforced her dominance over her sons through solid ties of affection. The sway Eleanor held over her sons transcended her time as queen of England reigning beside Henry II; it continued into her sons' own reigns.

Eleanor of Aquitaine became most politically active during her widowhood during the reigns of her sons. In the time between Henry II's death and Richard I's return to England, she seemed to govern England by herself, forcing the free people of England to swear oaths of allegiance to Richard.[19] Elizabeth A.R. Brown suggests this as foreshadowing of the influence Eleanor will have on Richard's reign.[20] She helped Richard I secure the domains of England and, while Richard remained in captivity and on crusade between 1190 and 1194, she protected his authority over England and its territories.[21] After his death in 1199, she became actively involved in claiming her son John's right to rule England as king.[22] Her involvement exceeded those of most women of her age and rank; this involvement allowed the English people to once again accept her, enabling her to wield political power, and even ride into combat, without question.[23] This enables one to observe why some scholars, such as Elizabeth A. R. Brown and Ralph V. Turner, believed she used her children to gain political power.[24] This also raises the point of the involvement of the king's mother in the governance of medieval England. According to Rágena C. DeAragon, Henry II's mother Matilda "maintained some authority and regal presence in Normandy during her son's reign," and she allowed Henry to retain political authority over the rest of the English territories.[25] Like her mother-in-law, Eleanor became heavily involved in the governance of England.

According to Turner, Eleanor's favorite son was Richard.[26] She had the greatest hold over him. She maintained such a great amount of authority and influence during his reign that some claim she "ruled England in all but name."[27] During his time as king of England, Eleanor of Aquitaine heavily influenced her son Richard. Turner cites the chronicler Ralph Diceto, who claimed that Richard I gave Eleanor the power of regent at one point in his reign.[28] Turner also maintains that Eleanor had great power during the period of Richard's captivity, from 1190 to 1194.[29] Before leaving on the Third Crusade, Richard I set up a plan for governing England while away; it was, however, flawed as the bishop in charge, William Longchamp, who also happened to be chancellor, focused the power on his own lands.[30] Turner states, "Eleanor's role and her effectiveness during the resulting crises can refute any notion that she was 'merely a royal figurehead' for the competent professional clerks and household knights who staffed the Angevin royal administration."[31] Longchamp was ineffective especially because he lacked the respect of English nobles due to his status as a foreigner.[32] Besides Longchamp, Count John presented another problem to this absentee governance in his attacks against England. The archbishop of Rouen, Walter of Coutances, arrived in England to mediate between John and Longchamp to make peace in England.[33] With Eleanor's backing, he was able to govern England until

Richard I returned.[34] This exhibits the influence Eleanor had over the English. Without her support, Walter would have been ineffective, with other nobles rebelling or acting out against him, as John had. By March of 1192, Eleanor forced William Longchamp to leave England on threat of arrest, demonstrating her authority in the absence of Richard.[35]

Eleanor played her greatest role as queen-mother during Richard's imprisonment. Based on their relationship, she assumed a position of direct authority early in 1193 upon receiving news of his capture.[36] During this period, she wrote three letters to the pope, Celestine III, concerning Richard's imprisonment by the German king. In one she states, "Two sons remain to my solace, who today survive to punish me, miserable and condemned. King Richard is held in chains. His brother, John, depletes his kingdom with iron [sword] and lays it waste with fire."[37] In this letter she reveals to the pope Richard's captivity and John's betrayal of his country. Throughout the letter, one observes the grief these unfolding events caused the queen as she pleads for papal aid in the emancipation of her son. She criticizes the church as well in this letter because it will not send help, citing Anacharsis's metaphor of cannon law being akin to a spider's webs, "which retain weaker animals but let the strong pass through."[38] She relates Richard to the weak animals trapped in the web; Eleanor became actively involved in the church, as well as the English government, during this time.[39] After raising the ransom for Richard, Eleanor rides to free Richard from his captivity, though they leave quickly as she suspects that Phillip II, who had Richard imprisoned, will change his mind and have the emperor, who held Richard and whom she intimidates, hold him regardless.[40] Even at the age of seventy-three Eleanor remained involved in the military and government. After restoring the kingdom and Richard to power, Eleanor reconciled her sons and settled at the abbey of Fontevraud, a pseudo-retirement for the time being.[41]

Though her high point of political power came during Richard I's reign, she still continued to be active in John's reign; in fact, this became the busiest time in her life. After Richard I's death in 1199, Eleanor withdrew from her retirement to fight for John's right to be king of England.[42] John became king "largely through his mother's efforts."[43] She backed him instead of her grandson by Geoffrey, Arthur of Brittany, as the rightful heir to the crown due to her distrust of Geoffrey's Breton wife Constance, who desired to end the Plantagenet hold over the Bretons.[44] John becoming king over Arthur, who had originally been named heir, with her backing shows the pull she had with others in England at the time. After returning from his first crusade, Richard acknowledged John as his heir.[45] To ensure his succession, Eleanor gained support from her domains of Poitou, Anjou, and Aquitaine while John strengthened his grasp on the Anglo-Norman empire.[46] Eleanor navigated Aquitaine to gain support for John because, unlike Richard I, he had no claim in his mother's duchy. She entered into contracts with towns from Poitou, granting charters and confirming their rights in return for their support.[47] According to Turner, Eleanor issued more than sixty charters between Richard's death in 1199 and her own in 1204, a significant number for any medieval woman.[48] She would have employed the use of her seal on these charters to strengthen the authority of them.[49] Once John officially became king, she signed Poitou, and most likely Aquitaine, to John during a visit to his court in Rouen.[50] When all was well, she retired once again to Fontevraud.

This retirement did not last long, however. John's poor judgment caused Eleanor to reenter the world of politics.[51] He chose to marry Isabelle of Angoulême, the betrothed of Hugh IX of La Marche, instead of his own betrothed Isabelle of Gloucester.[52] Hugh IX was the head of the Lusignan clan of Poitou, a rebellious group. In marrying Hugh IX's betrothed, John created great discord among nobles of the region.[53] These men then turned to Phillip II of France, who had finally lessened attacks on England. This new conflict created by John opened up an avenue of attack for Phillip II and Arthur of Brittany. Eleanor stepped in to fight for the salvation of Anjou and Aquitaine from invaders because John was not up to the task of fighting the invaders; he was not the best of warriors.[54] Many women would have retired by the time they were Eleanor's age, but she continued to fight and be involved in the affairs of the state. Eleanor issued many charters to solidify Aquitaine's support for John.[55] Once this was secured, she, as the intermediary for John, focused her efforts on gaining the support of the viscount of Thouars, one of the most powerful Poitevin nobles.[56] In 1200 she wrote to John about steps she and Guy de Dives, Constable of Auvergne, took to ensure the faithfulness of Viscount Thouars. She states:

> He listened and at the same time understood your words…he freely and willingly conceded that he and his lands and castles were from now on at your command and will, whatever he might have done before: And his friends, and others, who had seised [sic] [taken possession of] the land and your castles without your permission…he will oppose them with all his power as much as you possessed.[57]

She gained the support of one of the most powerful Poitevin nobles. Guy de Dives arrived at Fontevraud for this negotiation due to her illness at the time. Though not well, she still harbored the great influence and authority she had throughout her widowhood. Eventually, the French king acknowledged John as his vassal, as he had lands in France, resulting in John's ultimate loss of the region of Normandy in the conflict that ensued.[58] Phillip then named Arthur heir of Aquitaine.[59]

John realized he could not have successfully ruled without his mother. He realized this when the French took her prisoner. She was captured at Mirabeau and John, knowing he could not win in the fight against invaders without her, rescued his mother. She left the safety of Fontevraud to travel to Poitou in 1202 at the age of eighty years old in an attempt to save her lands from Arthur of Brittany.[60] She rested at Mirabeau Castle and was attacked by Arthur's armies and allies and taken hostage.[61] Upon hearing of his mother's situation, John rushed to her, surprising her jailers. He took many hostages, including Arthur of Brittany and the Lusignan brothers.[62] Eleanor's involvement in the governance of her own lands, as well as England, continued until her death. John rushed to her aid, signifying his need for her to overcome these aggressors. Her active involvement allowed John to remain king.

Blanche of Castile provides another excellent example of a medieval queen who, like Eleanor of Aquitaine, involved herself in all aspects of royal authority. Margaret Wade Labarge, author of *Saint Louis: Louis IX, Most Christian King of France*, calls Blanche "the wisest of all women of her time" and that "all good things came to the realm of France while she was alive."[63] During her time in a position of authority, Blanche retained her domains and kept the peace. She even fought alongside her son to preserve this tranquility. Through Blanche's determination, she kept France strong while its king remained underage, too young to rule. After he came of age, she continued to be fueled by this determination and aided her son in his reign.

After her husband Louis VIII's death, Blanche's son, a minor, was crowned king of France as Louis IX. She secured his right to the crown at his coronation on November 29, 1226.[64] Because of his youth, Blanche became regent of France and Louis's guardian until he came of age.[65] Many nobles disagreed with the choice of an underage king whose mother claimed the title of regent. Furthermore, in his chronicle *The Life of Saint Louis*, Jean de Joinville reveals the queen's foreign background; she therefore did not have many relations or friends to support her in France, another initiator of discord.[66] This caused many revolts and rebellions among the nobles against the ruling family;[67] they desired to test her by making demands of her for large land holdings and when she did not yield to these demands, they joined together against her.[68] She brought these rebellions down, ending some with the Treaty of Vendôme.[69] At one point, she took her son and the army to attack Count Peter Mauclerc, one of the rebellions nobles; she exercised military power during her regency.[70] Blanche used marriages to strengthen the relationship of the counties of Brittany and La Marche, who had been among those unhappy nobles, with the king.[71] Her domination also encompassed the church. When bishops attempted to intrude on secular jurisdiction, she jumped into action. Eventually, they would have to consult with her before issuing excommunications due to conflicts they created.[72]

While she remained regent, Pope Gregory IX wrote a letter to her requesting her help to preserve Constantinople against the Greeks. In this document, he informs the queen that the rewards she would receive would be the same as if she had been on crusade herself. He pleads "we entreat the royal serenity by apostolic letters to send suitable fighters or other appropriate aid in support of the empire."[73] During her regency, Blanche of Castile held great power and prestige. Because of this, her help was sought by many, despite her status as female. In opposition to what many modern people believe about the medieval epoch, queens did have great authority. Through the entreaties of the Church for military support, one can see this. The pope writes "we assiduously entreat your highness again that you not delay to help that empire."[74] France's strong army, led by Blanche, could help the Church preserve Constantinople.

When Louis IX came of age and became full king of France, Blanche remained a major influence, though no longer regent. Blanche's influence persisted so much so that chroniclers could not distinguish between her reign and her son's; their authorities were greatly intertwined.[75] In both her own and her son's reign, she led the army alongside Louis IX many times;[76] the duo suppressed several minor revolts in Poitou and Languedoc.[77] Blanche of Castile became regent of France while her son Louis IX reigned, and she continued to influence him, illustrating the great power she held over this French king as his mother. Blanche became regent of France once again when Louis IX and his wife decided to go on a crusade.[78] The nobles realized the futility of their rebellions, making this regency easier for Blanche.[79]

During her second regency, the queen received a letter from King Henry III of England in 1252 in which

negotiations to mend breaches in a truce between the two countries were planned. He asked Blanche to set a date on which she will make amends on behalf of her son, who, at this time, remained on crusade. Henry III states:

> We have learned by frequent notification of our people from Gascony that the truces long established between the illustrious king of France and us are little observed, since on the part of said king many breaches have been made at the time of said truces, to amend which when you have often been requested by our people, you answered that you would do so as might be fitting.[80]

Due to her status as regent, she had the authority to make decisions and political moves on behalf of the king; she essentially had the power of a king. Henry III desired amends for breaches in the truce made between himself and Louis IX, but Louis led his troops in the crusade at this time and therefore was not available. He turned to the regent of France, Blanche of Castile. Her experience as queen and as regent before her son took control provided her the ability to make well-informed decisions on behalf of her son.

In the eyes of nobles and others high in rank she held more power than her son. She received reports, unbeknownst to her son due to the fact that they were addressed solely to her and not him, on the subject of "political intrigues and conduct of war against the rebellious barons, as well as special requests from the pope and other rulers."[81] These continued until after her death in November of 1252 before Louis IX and his wife returned from crusade.[82] Henry III in 1229 sent a letter with one of these messages. In this letter, he informs Blanche and Louis that he has sent envoys to negotiate a truce between the two countries. This letter was sent to Louis, but the last sentence, reserved for Blanche, states "And we have made this known to you."[83] This secret line presents the case of Blanche remaining influential during her son's reign. At the end of another letter written by King Henry III of England, he wrote, "And we make this known to you asking that you have them admitted for this by the aforesaid lord king, your son."[84] The letter arrived during Louis' reign as king, before his mother became regent once again, demonstrating the authority the king of England felt she had regardless whether or not she was regent. The significance behind this final line from King Henry III of England allows one to observe the influence others believed Blanche held over her son, the king of France. This great influence allowed her to remain an authority figure in the eyes of all.

Both Blanche of Castile and Eleanor of Aquitaine took the initiative to arrange marriages for their sons, demonstrating the influence of these mothers. While their sons ruled, these two women remained queen even after their sons married. According to Cook, Richard I "never even offered to have Berengaria [his wife] crowned beside him. For there was only one Queen [sic] of England—his mother."[85] This is significant in the study of the authority and influence of these queens due to the fact that the kings' wives were not actually queen—their mothers were; Blanche and Eleanor became queen-regnant of France and England respectively. These women used marriage for political reasons. Eleanor of Aquitaine even married Blanche of Castile, her granddaughter, to Philip Augustus' son and heir Louis to make peace with France.[86] Eleanor went to Castile at the age of 80 to retrieve her granddaughter, showing the importance of mending relations with Spain.[87] Blanche herself employed this use of marriage during her regencies to mend ties with the counts of Brittany and La Marche.[88] In John's marriage, Eleanor did not choose Isabelle of Angoulême, but Isabelle never became queen until after the death of Eleanor. According to Ralph V. Turner, "she [Eleanor] took precedence over their [her sons'] wives, enjoying the prerequisites of a queen-regnant."[89] She had no intention of relinquishing her political authority. In his article "Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Children: An Inquiry into Medieval Family Attachment," Turner presents Eleanor in context of the medieval family. In her tomb effigy, Eleanor represented herself as the "Anglie regina" even though her sons' wives were entitled to this designation, illustrating her desire to remain queen.[90]

Besides choosing Louis's wife and remaining queen herself, Blanche of Castile attempted to keep her son and daughter-in-law, Marguerite, separate during the day because she felt, according to Labarge, the only function of this woman was to produce an heir.[91] She wished to remain in power and so separated Marguerite from her husband while he dealt with politics. Louis' deepest affection was reserved for his mother, so he allowed her to remain queen while his wife, against her will, sat back and watched.[92] Louis's wife Marguerite was like Blanche in that she desired involvement in her husband's work.[93] Labarge states, "Marguerite was never regent, was never given political power, to her sorrow."[94] This woman desired to be a part of the politics and ruling of France. Labarge goes on to say that Blanche resented anyone who could take away her authority, her title as queen.[95] Labarge uses sufficient sources to make a compelling argument about both Louis IX and his mother

Figure 1: Seal of Blanche of Castile, from Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver: The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 153.

Figure 2: Seal of Eleanor of Aquitaine, from Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver: The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 82.

Blanche of Castile. One could conclude that these women chose the wives of their powerful sons so that they could remain in power themselves. If these mothers could influence whom their children married, they could influence much more.

Both Blanche of Castile and Eleanor of Aquitaine exhibited their power, authority, and influence through their seals. Seals were generally reserved for the use of widows and men. They indicated wealth, power, and authority, in addition to sociocultural importance.[96] In affairs dealing with Aquitaine, Eleanor utilized her seal as duchess of Aquitaine while queen of both France and England.[97] Because seals were usually reserved for widows, Eleanor's employment of them while still married demonstrates her authority. While in her second regency, when Louis IX was on crusade, Blanche employed the use of her own seal, her right as regent of France.[98] The use of her own personal seal instead of Louis's demonstrates the great authority this queen held. Women's seals, like those of the clergy, laymen, and merchants, generally had an oval shape.[99] The figures usually stood holding a scepter with a *fleur-de-lys* at the top.[100] In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, seals began emphasizing lineage and marriage alliances through heraldry symbols.[101] Blanche of Castile's seal, which is known through wax imprints, contains the image of an erect, crowned woman surrounded by lettering declaring her title (see figure 1).[102] Eleanor, on her seal as Duchess of Aquitaine, is illustrated as standing with a bare head, wearing no veil and having short hair, in the Anglo-Norman style (see figure 2).[103] In her seal as queen of England, Eleanor is veiled and wearing a crown (see figure 3). These two seals could, however, be the same but in different states of preservation.[104] Eleanor's seal as queen of France is lost. The standard pattern in which queens were depicted in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries included the figure of a woman standing holding a scepter in one hand topped with a *fleur-de-lys,* denoting authority.[105] Also, the figure held cords against her heart, illustrating "sincerity, acceptance, and 'intériorité,'"[106] or a relationship with one's soul, as well as

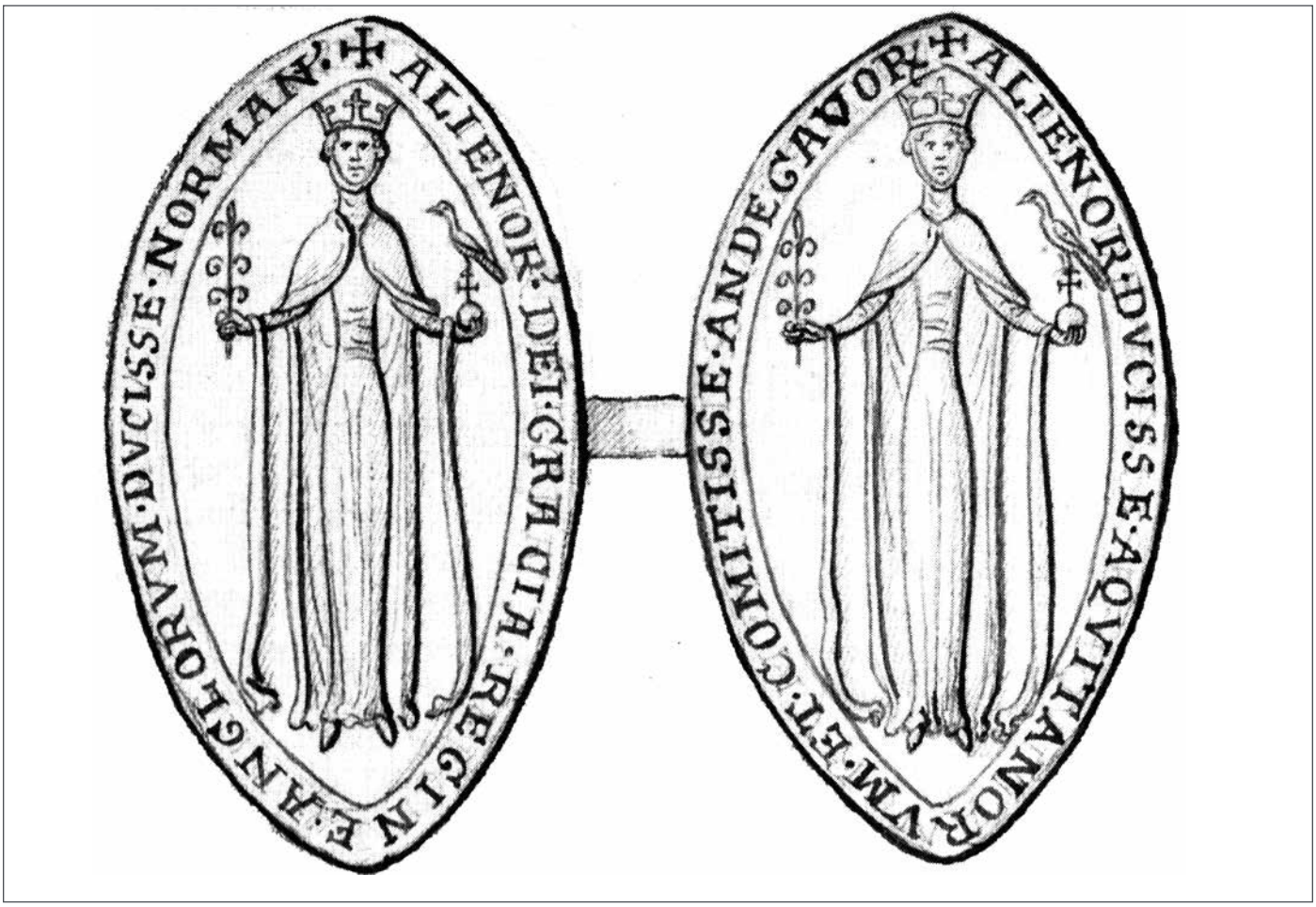

Figure 3: Seal of Eleanor of Aquitaine, from Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver: The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 84

the authority a noble possessed.[107] The images on the seals presented a representation of the queen's authority.

Blanche's seal represents her as mediator to the king; she had the ability to influence the king's decisions.[108] Blanche also became the first Capetian queen to utilize a counterseal, or a second seal imprinted on the other side of the wax ornament.[109] By Blanche's time, the counterseal represented imperial identity.[110] Her counterseal held the symbols of Castile, the castle, with a pair of *fleur-de-lys* on either side of the castle (see figure 4).[111] These two seals balance one another—her seal emphasizes her authority in France as queen while her counterseal represents her natal heritage.[112] Eleanor as well had a two-sided seal as queen of England.[113] Hers is the first Anglo-Norman seal of a queen, known today, to be double-sided.[114] The front of her seal claims the titles queen of England and duchess of the Normans; the back claims her titles as duchess of Aquitaine and countess of Anjou.[115]

Both of the seals of these two women proclaim titles they received through marriage as well as claims to their natal lands. Eleanor of Aquitaine's seal as queen greatly accentuates her position as an Anglo-Norman queen,[116] as it echoes those of Henry I, Stephen, and Henry II through the depiction of an orb topped with a cross and a bird.[117] These symbols were attached to male monarchs. Eleanor's use of these images allows her to place herself among the kings; her authority becomes one like that of the English kings before her. Nolan states, "the semiotic impact of a double, oval, and hence female, seal must have made powerful claims of authority."[118] Eleanor presents her authority through the image on her seal, as well as her use of it. Seals illustrated the authority of a medieval person. The imagery presented in a seal connected the user to one's lineage, both natal and through marriage. Queens using seals would have demonstrated great authority by claiming a male privilege.[119] In claiming this, these women presented themselves as strong, independent, authoritative, and influential.

Another way one could claim power was through tombs. Blanche of Castile claimed power in death. She

Figure 4: Seal of Blanche of Castile, from Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver: The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 156.

commissioned and designed the tombs of her children, grandchildren, and eventually her own, but not her husband's or her son Louis IX's.[120] Kathleen Nolan suggests Blanche participated more actively in decisions regarding burials than most men and women, with the exception of her son.[121] Her tomb at Maubuisson was destroyed in the French Revolution, but modern drawings of it exist (see figure 5).[122] She created the tombs of her children and grandchildren out of stone and metalwork.[123] Her own tomb most likely consisted of elaborate metalwork and stone.[124] Like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Blanche attempted to create a family necropolis at Royaumont, with all the royal children being buried there, though she herself chose to be buried in both Maubuisson and Le Lys.[125] This would not have taken, because a French royal necropolis already existed at the Basilica of Saint Denis. Blanche of Castile became the first queen and the first French monarch to practice the partition of the body.[126] She took great interest in her depiction, employing the visual formula for queenship in her design. She wears a crown as well as a nun's habit in her effigy.[127]

Eleanor also claimed power through funerary art. After the death of Henry II, Eleanor was finally released from her fifteen-year imprisonment by her now-deceased husband for aiding her sons in their revolt against Henry II. She then chose the abbey of Fontevraud for her retirement because of ancestral ties that connected her to this abbey.[128] "Eleanor chose Fontevraud as a base that reflected her political identity, and she enhanced her spiritual authority through her ties to the nuns, whose prayers might ensure the eventual repose of her family's soul and her own."[129] Eleanor's involvement in the politics of her day lasted until soon before her death. Her last act was John's rescue of her at Mirabeau. "Triumphant but exhausted, she retired to the monastery at Fontevraud, Anjou, where she died in 1204."[130] After this time, she retired to Fontevraud and began overseeing the designing and planning of the tomb effigies of both Richard I and Henry II, as well as her own.[131]

Significantly, in 1185, Eleanor of Aquitaine wrote a letter to the archbishop of Bordeaux, donating one hundred pounds "in perpetual alms" to the abbey of Fontevraud.[132] In this letter she states she gave these alms from the "provosture of Poitiers and the vineyard of Benon." Her reasons for the donation follow: "I made this donation and alms for the salvation of the soul of my lord king and the salvation of my soul and of my son Richard and and [sic] my other sons and my daughters and my ancestors."[133] The donations made by the royal family to this specific abbey illustrate the importance of life after death and the importance of the prayers of those still alive. Before their death, many medieval people purchased prayers from the church to aid their soul and the souls of their family members after death.[134] Eleanor herself continued to make donations to the abbey throughout her life, but especially after the death of Henry II, to gain prayers for her soul, and those of her family, to remain at rest after death.

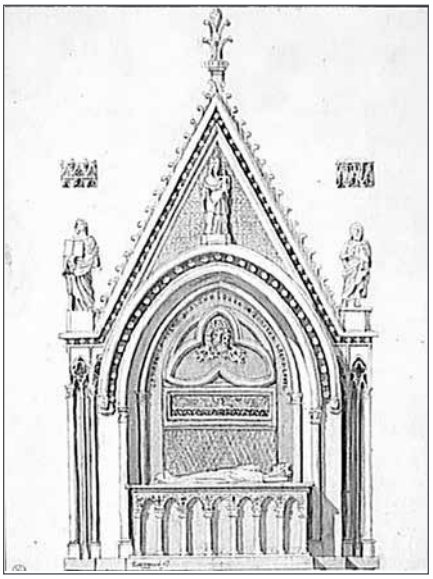

Figure 5: Drawing of the tomb of Blanche of Castile, from Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 6 (left): The tomb of Henry II, from Wikipedia Commons. **Figure 7** (right): The tomb of Eleanor of Aquitaine, from Wikimedia Commons.

Henry II chose to be buried in Grandmont, in the diocese of Limoges,[135] but his tomb rests in Fontevraud.[136] Elizabeth A. R. Brown suggests it was out of convenience that he was buried at Fontevraud, while Alain Erlande-Brandenburg proposes it "as a way to cement Henry's political claims to territories north and south of Fontevraud."[137] Some scholars have suggested that Eleanor chose this resting spot for the former king in retaliation for the years he imprisoned her.[138] The authority needed to contradict the desire of the king to be buried in Grandmont rather than Fontevraud would be considerable. Eleanor had this power, though she did not actually choose this site for his burial, according to Kathleen Nolan in the article "The Queen's Choice: Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Tombs at Fontevraud." Nolan presents an argument placing Eleanor in the context of aristocratic women of her time. She provides many scholars and their points of view on the subject matter. She also presents images of the tombs themselves, and of others, and the space in which they rest. According to Nolan, Eleanor had remained in England when her husband died and therefore could not have instructed where he was to be buried. Richard I, contrary to his father, chose Fontevraud as his burial site, wishing to be near his father.[139] According to another article written by Nolan, focusing on placing Eleanor of Aquitaine in context with her contemporaries through seals and tombs, Henry II died near Fontevraud and William Marshal made the decision to bury him in the abbey.[140] Fontevraud became a necropolis for this family, with Henry II, Richard I, Eleanor, John's wife Isabelle of Angoulême, Eleanor's daughter Joanna, and Joanna's son Raymond VII all buried in the abbey.[141]

Queens and daughters generally commissioned tombs for themselves and their family members.[142] The tombs, those of Henry II, Richard I, and Eleanor of Aquitaine, are quite interesting in that they "impersonate living beings in their scale and three-dimensionality," according to Nolan.[143] They also represent a pivotal moment in the art of tomb sculptures. Henry II's, Richard I's, and Eleanor's tombs are amid the first full sculpture effigies of contemporary monarchs.[144] Eleanor of Aquitaine is believed to have designed the tomb effigies of Henry II, Richard I, and her own. This presents a new power, one "outside modern notions."[145] Power over the image that represents one after death was quite important; this power was potent. Eleanor exercised her authority to manipulate the imagery of her husband in his death.[146] One can discern that she designed and commissioned these tombs by observing the styles and how each of the dead kings was represented.

Another way in which it is possible to infer that Eleanor designed and commissioned these effigies is how the men, in contrast to her, are depicted in their effigies. The depiction of these two English kings presented them in death instead of life; they were depicted as they were on the funeral litter upon which the kings were presented and the sculptures themselves laid (see figure 6).[147] Imperial authority became more evident in these two effigies than others due to the fact that these kings presented a certain image of themselves through their seals, which became attached to them throughout their lives and in death.[148] By designing these effigies in this way, Eleanor of Aquitaine presented the secular authority of her husband and son.[149] This suggests that Eleanor possessed authority even after the deaths of her husband and son. Both men wore their full regalia in their effigies, including a crown, scepter, sword, spurs, and gloves with gold medallions placed on them.[150] Contrary to the previous tombs she designed, Eleanor depicts herself in life in her tomb effigy (see figure 7). She holds an open book, as if actively reading.[151] Besides her crown, she wears no regalia, signaling to medieval people her lack of political power.[152] She, however, claims a different type of power for herself. The use of the book associates her with nuns and abbesses, who were also depicted reading.[153] Her use of the

book connects her to Fontevraud, a community of religious women. This also "affirmed her devotion and so her passage to Heaven, the most significant reference that could be made in a funerary context."[154] Eleanor's effigy claims the images of the "ultimate Christian victory."[155] She evokes a sense of a living queen, not a "royal living-in-state."[156] In taking control of burial and obtaining prayers for the souls of her deceased family members, Eleanor fulfilled the traditional role of queen in the eyes of the English people, according to Turner.[157] By designing these tombs, she influenced how people throughout time would envision these kings and herself.

Eleanor of Aquitaine and Blanche of Castile both claimed great authority through the rules of their sons. Turner claims that while Richard I was king, "Eleanor of Aquitaine had moved from isolation and confinement following Henry II's death in 1189 to a premier position in England's government, a place that she had long assumed to be her right."[158] Throughout her lifetime, Eleanor yearned for power, which she eventually earned. During the reigns of her sons Richard and John, Eleanor became extremely involved in the politics and governance of England, sending letters and charters throughout the territories. Through her son Louis IX, Blanche gained great authority in France, holding the title of regent twice. Throughout her regencies, this queen proved herself capable of ruling France. These two queens demonstrated their authority in seals and the commissioning of tombs for the royal family. Though many people today have the idea that medieval queens were not involved in the politics and ruling of the kingdom or that their only purpose was to produce an heir, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Blanche of Castile contradict this notion. Both women held great authority and influence in the ruling of their respective kingdoms.

Endnotes

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[2] Anne J. Duggan, "Introduction," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College, London, April 1995*," ed. Anne J. Duggan (New York: Boydell Press, 1997), XV.

[3] Ibid., XXI.

[4] Ibid., XXI-XXII.

[5] Petronelle Cook, *Queen Consorts of England: The Power Behind the Throne* (New York: Facts on Fire, 1993), 29.

[6] Ibid, 30. Though Cooks presents much information on Eleanor, she is quite biased toward seeing Eleanor as a powerful woman determined to get what she wants. Cooks provides insight into the actions of Eleanor, but does not provide sufficient evidence to support all of her claims.

[7] Guida M. Jackson, *Women Who Ruled* (Oxford: ABC-CLIO Inc., 1990), 61.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Cook, *Queen Consorts of England*, 32.

[10] Kathleen Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver: The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 79.

[11] Jackson, *Women Who Ruled*, 61.

[12] June Hall Martin McCash, "Marie de Champagne and Eleanor of Aquitaine: A Relationship Reexamined," *Speculum* 54, no. 4 (October 1979): 707.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ralph V. Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen of France, Queen of England* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 205-6.

[15] Ibid, 205.

[16] Peter of Blois, letter 154 to Queen, Internet History Sourcebooks Project, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/eleanor.asp.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 205.

[19] Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine: Parent, Queen, and Duchess," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician*, ed. William W. Kibler (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 20.

[20] Brown, "Eleanor of Aquitaine," 20.

[21] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 256.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 256-57.

[24] Turner, "Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Children," 321.

[25] Rágena C. DeAragon, "Wife, Widow, and Mother: Some Comparisons Between Eleanor of Aquitaine and Noblewomen of the Anglo-Norman and Angevin World," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 100.

[26] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine,* 206.

[27] Cook, *Queen Consorts of England,* 35.

[28] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine,* 258.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 266.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 267.

[34] Ibid., 268.

[35] Ibid., 269.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Eleanor of Aquitaine, letter to Celestine III, 1193, Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters, accessed November 1, 2013, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/141.html.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 270.

[40] Cook, *Queen Consorts of England,* 35.

[41] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine,* 275-76.

[42] Ibid., 279.

[43] Cook, *Queen Consorts of England,* 35.

[44] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine,* 280.

[45] Ibid., 275.

[46] Ibid., 281.

[47] Ibid., 283.
[48] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 285.
[49] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 80.
[50] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 286.
[51] Ibid., 290.
[52] Ibid., 290.
[53] Ibid., 291.
[54] Cook, *Queen Consorts of England*, 37.
[55] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 291.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Eleanor of Aquitaine, letter to John, king of England, 1200, Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters, accessed November 1, 2013, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/900.html.
[58] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine,* 291.
[59] Ibid., 292.
[60] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine,* 292.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Margaret Wade Labarge, *Saint Louis: Louis IX, Most Christian King of France* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 151.
[64] Jean de Joinville and Geoffrey of Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, trans. M.R.B. Shaw (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1963), 181.
[65] Jackson, *Women Who Ruled*, 36.
[66] Jean de Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 182.
[67] Labarge, *Saint Louis,* 35.
[68] Jean de Joinville and Villehardouin, *Chronicles of the Crusades*, 182.
[69] Labarge, *Saint Louis,* 37.
[70] Ibid., 39.
[71] Ibid., 37.
[72] Ibid., 47.
[73] Pope Gregory IX, letter to Blanche of Castile, queen of France, November 30, 1237, Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters, accessed November 1, 2013, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/722.html.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Labarge, *Saint Louis*, 54.
[76] Ibid., 42-43.
[77] Ibid., 72.
[78] Jackson, *Women Who Ruled*, 36.
[79] Labarge, *Saint Louis*, 146.
[80] Henry III, king of England, letter to Blanche of Castile, queen of France, 1252, Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters, accessed November 1, 2013, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/737.html.
[81] Labarge, *Saint Louis,* 54.
[82] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver,* 121.
[83] Henry III, king of England, letter to Blanche of Castile, queen of France, 1229, Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters, accessed November 1, 2013, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/714.
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[85] Cook, *Queen Consorts of England*, 36.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Jackson, *Women Who Ruled*, 36.
[88] Labarge, *Saint Louis*, 37.
[89] Turner, "Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Children," 331.
[90] Kathleen Nolan, "The Queen's Choice: Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Tombs at Fontevraud," in *Eleanor of Aquitaien: Lord and Lady*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 395.
[91] Labarge, *Saint Louis*, 56.
[92] Ibid, 56, 211.
[93] Ibid, 56.
[94] Ibid, 57.
[95] Ibid, 56.
[96] Elizabeth Danbury, "Queens and Powerful Women: Image and Authority," in *Good Impressions: Image and Authority*, ed. Noel Adams, John Cherry, and James Robinson (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008), 17.
[97] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 79.
[98] Ibid., 157.
[99] Danbury, "Queens and Powerful Women," 17.
[100] Ibid., 18.
[101] Ibid., 20.
[102] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 152.
[103] Ibid., 81.
[104] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 82.
[105] Danbury, "Queens and Powerful Women," 18.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid., 19.
[109] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 155.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid., 83.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 83.
[117] Ibid., 84.
[118] Ibid., 86.
[119] Ibid., 163.
[120] Ibid., 135, 138.
[121] Ibid., 134.
[122] Ibid., 121, 141.
[123] Ibid., 140.
[124] Ibid., 162.
[125] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver,* 121, 135, 146.
[126] Ibid, 121.
[127] Ibid, 144.
[128] Nolan, "The Queen's Choice," 380.
[129] Ibid, 382.
[130] Jackson, *Women Who Ruled*, 62.
[131] Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 293.
[132] Eleanor of Aquitaine, letter to the archbishop of Bordeaux, 1185, Henry III, Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters, accessed November 1, 2013, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/885.
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[134] Elizabeth A.R. Brown, "Authority, the Family, and the Dead in Late Medieval France," *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 4 (Autumn 1990): 821.
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[138] Ibid.
[139] Nolan, "The Queen's Choice," 382.
[140] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 106.
[141] Ibid., 107.
[142] Ibid., 142.
[143] Nolan, "The Queen's Choice," 383.
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[145] Nolan, "The Queen's Choice," 395.
[146] Ibid., 395.
[147] Nolan, *Queens in Stone and Silver*, 110.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid., 111.
[152] Ibid.
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[154] Nolan, "The Queen's Choice," 394.
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Section III. Modern Diplomacy

Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim Von Ribbentrop meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin to sign the Nazi-Soviet Pact, August 1939.

The Enemy of My Enemy is My Friend: Soviet Foreign Policy in Europe, 1933-1939

Rob Everett

When the Soviet Union was first established as a nation, between the October Revolution in 1917 and the official declaration of the Union itself in 1922, it struggled to find a place in international politics. The Soviet Union was the first Communist state ever, and its leaders believed that others were out to stop them from achieving their goal of spreading the revolution. After foreign states sent troops and military support to the enemies of the Communists in the Russian Civil War of 1918-1921, they began to feel that they were alone both diplomatically and politically. No one came to their aid to help sustain their new Communist state, and many were not sure if it could survive without other countries supporting them. As a result, a feeling of isolation began to evolve, but they were spared from being secluded in the diplomatic world in 1922 when Weimar Germany agreed to a treaty that made them economic and military partners. The Soviet government began to understand the need to become recognized as a state willing to take part in international affairs, and valued it more and more over continuing the Communist revolution. The fearful feelings subsided slightly as more states recognized the Soviet Union throughout the 1920s, but into the 1930s a new threat in the form of fascism was posed to destroy Communism from the face of the earth.

The Soviets tried their best to avoid war in Europe, and that became apparent in their foreign policy decisions leading up to World War II. They felt secluded diplomatically and under threat militarily when Hitler came to power in 1933, but felt slightly more comfortable when they were accepted into the League of Nations. The feelings of diplomatic and political remoteness returned, as their Western allies allowed Hitler to take territory as he wished, and no longer felt that allied defense against him would deter him from taking more land. The Soviets chose to ally with Germany in 1939 in order to secure a peace agreement for their country; otherwise they believed Hitler might have invaded the Soviet Union right at the start of the war. They made a deal with a country that they had spent the last six years trying to defend against, but the Soviets felt that this treaty signed between the two would truly avoid war and keep the Soviet Union intact.

Background: Relations between Germany and the Soviet Union before 1933

The states of Germany and Russia were both large political powers in Europe for many decades before the events of this paper. Russia had grown into the largest state in the world during the rule of the Romanov dynasty over a period of several centuries. The Kingdom of Prussia united all of Germany in 1870, and with the leadership of Kaiser Wilhelm and Otto von Bismarck they created one of the largest militaries and empires in the world. The two empires interacted frequently over time because they both had spheres of influence that overlapped in eastern Europe. The big factors that led to the events of 1933-1939 were the First World War and its aftermath.[1]

The German and Russian empires were at war with one another from 1914-1917, fighting over spheres of influence in between the two states. In 1917, a provisional government led by Alexander Kerensky overthrew the Romanov dynasty, but he kept the Russian people in the war against Germany. The people in Russia were not pleased with the war, so Vladimir Lenin led his Bolshevik Party to take power in the October Revolution. Lenin and his followers, one of whom was Joseph Stalin, installed the first Communist government in Russia in 1917, and then at the end of the Russian Civil War created the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922.

The Soviet government was fearful during the Russian Civil War from 1918-1921 of foreign military adversaries, which were capitalist nations such as the United States and Great Britain. These nations tried to give armed assistance to the pro-Tsarist White Army in order to overthrow the

Communist, or Bolshevik, Party from taking full control. The Communists had to fight both foreign and domestic enemies without any support from other countries in Europe. As a result of other states aiding the White Army, the Bolsheviks became wary of interacting with other states, thinking that they might try and overthrow them again.[2] However, this fear soon began to subside slightly when the Soviet Union was created in 1922, and their future was made more certain as they began to bring in other neighboring states into the new Communist empire surrounding Russia.[3]

Before the Soviet Union was created, one major event that further aided the Soviet cause of state recognition by the world's powers was the signing of the Treaty of Rapallo with the Weimar Republic in 1922. The treaty with the Germans grew out of the Genoa Conference between many states in Europe that were attempting to fix economic problems that were plaguing the continent after the First World War, as well as addressing how capitalist states were going to interact with the Bolsheviks.[4] In the end, the Bolsheviks became more a legitimate state in European affairs and were not so much a revolutionary party looking to overthrow all of European capitalist economies.

However, the Bolshevik delegation secretly signed the Treaty of Rapallo with Germany while the Genoa Conference was in the last stages of negotiations.[5] This treaty reignited all diplomatic and consular relations between the two states as well as economic cooperation.[6] This was the first time the Bolsheviks, soon to be the Soviet Union in late 1922, had created a diplomatic partnership with one state since they took power in Russia. As previously mentioned, the Bolsheviks had felt very anxious about being left alone to fight multiple enemies inside and outside of Russia during the Russian Civil War. They did not want to be consistently fighting around and within their state to ensure the existence of Communism in Russia. By 1922, the Bolsheviks emerged as a legitimate state willing to participate in world affairs instead of revolutionizing the world. With the new partnership with Weimar, they now had Germany willing to embrace a diplomatic relationship with them. These events would all eventually lead to the events of the 1930s in Soviet foreign policy.

Diplomatic relations and, more importantly, the policies that were created in the Treaty of Rapallo began to fade in the 1930s between the Soviet Union and the Weimar Republic. The Soviets had proved to not be as reliable as they had promised in 1922. By 1927, they had fallen out of favor with the British government because of the amount of pro-Soviet and Communist propaganda that the Soviet government had been sending to Britain to spread Communist ideals.[7] The Foreign Ministry was trying their hardest to make the Soviet Union become a lawful state in Europe willing to engage in proper foreign relations, but the ideological agencies of the Soviet Union were placing agents in the Ministry to make sure that spreading Communism was still the main goal of every department in the Soviet government and Party.[8]

The Comintern, or the Communist International, had been heavily involved in the development and actions of the German Communist Party (KPD) as well during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Comintern's role was to spread the revolution throughout the world, and they were in charge of most of the other Communist parties in other countries. They took full control of KPD in the mid-1920s and were involved in many political incidents in Germany between the KPD and their opponents.[9] These events had a profound influence on Adolf Hitler, who saw Russia as a land to be used as a new area for his beloved German people to take over and colonize for themselves.[10] The Nazis had many political and paramilitary confrontations with the KPD during their rise to power from 1924-1933, and further made Hitler's case that Bolshevik Russia was an evil regime that must be destroyed.[11]

In terms of the military agreements of the Treaty of Rapallo, both sides no longer had a desire to keep the status quo that was developed after the treaty was signed in 1922. The Weimar Republic began plans to rearm Germany, and therefore did not need much of the aid that was given by the Red Army during the 1920s.[12] The Red Army also did not need the relationship with the Germany Army as well, because new leaders did not feel that a strong military relationship was necessary with Germany.[13] The Soviets no longer needed German economic assistance as the end of the first Five Year Plan was coming to an end in 1932, and the Soviets no longer needed the aid of German engineers to produce heavy industrial goods.[14] In Germany, they no longer needed the Soviet Union in order to export as many supplies because they were not getting military goods in exchange for their assistance at the end of the Five Year Plan.[15] However, neither state could predict that the Nazis would take power in 1933. This would change the Soviet's outlook on Germany greatly moving into the mid-1930s and affect their foreign policy as a result.

All the events mentioned in this section were very essential in the 1930s for Soviet Foreign Policy, especially the Soviet need to be recognized as a true state and the creation of the Treaty of Rapallo with the Weimar Republic.

The Soviets managed to rid themselves of their sentiment of being alone in political, military, and diplomatic affairs with the Rapallo treaty and state recognition. However, the feeling of loneliness would return when Hitler took power in 1933 and began to end Germany's relationship with the Soviet Union. This emotion would then shape foreign policy into a new mold for the Soviets in the mid-1930s.

1932-1934: Soviet Diplomatic Policies after the Ascension of Adolf Hitler

As already outlined, the Soviet Union did interact with Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist, or Nazi, Party during the 1920s; not directly, but through the KPD by means of the Comintern. Despite the support that the KPD received from the Soviet Union in the 1920s and the early 1930s, they were not able to seize power in Weimar. Instead, the Weimar government gave power to Hitler and the Nazis in January 1933. This was a devastating blow to the Soviet Union and to the Communist effort for an international revolution. Now the Soviet Union had a right-wing party, who identified the Soviet Union as inferior and targeted for German expansionism, in control of a former power that was looking to climb back to the top of the political realm in Europe.[16]

Historian Gerhard Weinberg claims that Hitler himself never cared for the Soviet Union at all. Weinberg says that:

> Hitler did not want a relationship (with Russia) to be very close, and he was to forestall all efforts on the part of either his own diplomats or occasional feelers from the other side to make them so…. The subject of German-Russian relations in those years (1933-1939) was of far greater interest to the German professional diplomats than to Hitler.[17]

Given Hitler's political attitudes toward the Soviet Union—he wanted to eliminate the Communist threat in Russia so more land could be used for Germany and he made only lackadaisical efforts to maintain relations with Russia—the potential for diplomatic encounters did not look very positive between the two nations with Hitler's ascension.[18]

The Comintern was the Soviet institution that dealt with the Nazis first, because they were most prevalent in Germany with the KPD. Their first reaction to the rise of the Nazi Party in 1933 was to create a public call of the defense of Marxism against fascism throughout Europe. A document that was sent by the Comintern to socialist parties throughout the European continent read:

> The crisis is continuing to spread and deepen…. The bourgeoisie is preparing to launch a campaign against all the political and economic achievements of the working class….The establishment of the open fascist dictatorship in Germany has directly confronted millions of workers of all countries with the question of the necessity of organizing a united front of struggle against the fascist offensive of the bourgeoisie.[19]

The language of this quote is very militant and not inviting to create more open diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union, or any Communist or socialist party in Europe, with the Nazis. It must be noted, however, that the Comintern was not created to act as a typical institution of the Soviet government. It acted as a tool of ideology for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, separate from the government. It was used to instigate the international Communist revolution and did not behave like a standard foreign relations institution.

Although the attitude of the Comintern was very hostile toward the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933, the Soviet government began to send out a different kind of message at the same time they were beginning to target the Nazis as a possible threat. At the twelfth plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), they began to explain to followers of the Comintern that an imperialist war would damage their cause. This plenum met because of the Japanese invading China, a Communist partner with the Soviet Union, in 1931.[20] The statements claim:

> A new imperialist war, a new intervention against the U.S.S.R., will bring to the workers and the toilers of the entire world suffering, privations, and bloody sacrifices such as were not experienced even during the first world imperialist slaughter. The sharpening of all forms of bourgeoisie dictatorship, the intensification of reaction, the growth of fascism, the persecution of the revolutionary movement, shootings and hangings, already serve as the preparation of the rear areas for the imperialist war and armed intervention against the U.S.S.R.[21]

Here can be seen the beginning of what would become the Soviet diplomatic policy for the rest of the 1930s. However, at the time that the plenum took place this had yet to occur throughout every Soviet administration. This policy

will be below, but it is important to see the beginning of the policy where the Soviet Union begins to fear a large war that will destroy all the work that had been accomplished for Communism in Europe and the world.

The Soviet government also began to see the threat of Nazi Germany and the possibility of war in 1933.[22] Gustav Hilger, who was a diplomat for Nazi Germany during the 1930s, wrote in his memoirs about how Hitler viewed Soviet Russia and how the Soviets responded to his beliefs. Hilger said that Hitler saw Russia as the main target for German imperialism and expansionism well before he took power.[23] More importantly, he claims that leaders in the Soviet government and the military began to see how Hitler's beliefs and policies would possibly be used against the Soviet Union if war came. The Soviet director of TASS, the Soviet Telegram Agency, expressed his apprehension about Hitler to Higler even before he took power in 1933.[24] The director, Doletsky, said that the policies of the Nazi Party bothered the Soviet government, but they also believed that sensible relations could continue even if the Nazis took control of Germany.[25]

Even though Hilger was German himself, he could see that Hitler could be a problem for the Soviet Union in the future. He pointed out that Hitler had long hated the Treaty of Rapallo, and this made the Soviet leaders believe that Hitler wished to get rid of Rapallo in favor a return to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.[26] The Brest-Litovsk treaty was the peace agreement made between Russia and Germany that resulted in Russia pulling out of World War I, and Germany seizing some Russian lands in Eastern Europe. What Hilger means by this is that he would be in favor of very unstable relations between the two states where Germany takes land away from Soviet Russia and the Soviets appear defeated, as had happened at the end of World War I. An end to the Rapallo treaty scared the Soviet leaders very much, because it meant that Germany could possibly return to a state of war with Russia without the treaty in place. Although the treaty was not as effective in the early 1930s, as mentioned earlier, it was still in place when Hitler took power in 1933. Unfortunately for the Soviet Union, this would no longer be the case after Hitler had been in power for a several months.

Historians have discussed the topic of the end of the Treaty of Rapallo at length since writing began on the subject shortly after the end of World War II. Walter Laqueur was a strong proponent that the end of Rapallo was difficult for the Soviet Union to accept. Hitler ratified the Treaty of Berlin in May 1933, which was a new treaty with the Soviet Union but it was not a renewal of Rapallo.[27] This treaty was a positive treaty with the Soviet Union, but it did not include the military assistance that was prevalent in the Rapallo treaty.[28] Rapallo was not renewed because many leaders in the Germany Foreign Ministry did not want to renew it as a result of their anti-Soviet sentiments.[29] This sent mixed messages around Europe, because a new treaty was created between the nations after a very anti-Soviet Adolf Hitler took power, but the main treaty that was in place was not renewed. According to Laqueur, when the German ambassador returned from Moscow in November, he said, "the Rapallo chapter is closed."[30]

The Soviets in the government and the Red Army believed that although Rapallo was not renewed, a healthy relationship could be maintained. However, in the end the Red Army closed all German military installations within the Soviet Union.[31] This action meant that the Soviets no longer trusted the German leaders and the Germany military. From the Soviet perspective, they had lost an ally that had been with them since they became an officially recognized country in 1922. The leaders of the Soviet Union began to feel the same political, military, and diplomatic alienation that they felt in the early 1920s. They had lost an ally and did not have many states that wanted to maintain as strong a relationship as Germany had with Soviet Russia from 1922-1933. Also, their former ally now posed a large threat to them in the future because of their conflicting political ideologies and dictatorial leaders. War was not certain by 1933, but many within the Soviet Union could see that war may come at some point in the future. The Soviet fear of war and its lack of allies became apparent to the international public when they developed the policy of collective security. This was the strategy of the new Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov. This policy and new policies of peace for the Soviet Union would lead them into a new era: moving away from revolution and towards peace agreements to create allies in the face of the growing Nazi hazard.

1934-1938: Collective Security and Soviet Entrance into the League of Nations

Maxim Litvinov was the Soviet Foreign Commissar when Hitler took power in 1933. Although the Comintern guided Soviet foreign policy previously, Litvinov had more control over the role of the Commissar for Foreign Affairs and the foreign policy direction of the country in the 1930s. He managed to bring about the changes to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union by introducing the idea of collective security. Litvinov's goal with collective security was that if peace could be created elsewhere in Europe, then it would be easier to prevent Soviet Russia from entering any conflicts

that may occur.[32] They were willing to sacrifice their international revolution in order to keep peace and protect their interests in spreading revolution later.[33] This is different compared to the ideas of the Comintern from the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Comintern wanted revolution to occur, while Litvinov and the Commissar for Foreign Affairs wanted peace to avoid war. The two different policies did overlap for a brief period, but during 1933 and into 1934 the Comintern began to support Litvinov's policies and advocate for alliances in order to avoid war.[34]

Litvinov was not the only leader in the Soviet Union who wanted to ensure peace, stop the acts of revolution, and keep fascism from advancing out of Germany. Stalin supported the tactics of foreign policy created by Litvinov and his comrades in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Stalin gave orders to the Comintern to enforce this new policy by uniting other Communist parties around Europe, which would in the end lead to a united socialist front against fascism.[35] Litvinov's main focus was on the idea of preserving peace within the continent and trying to keep the Nazis from breaking rules in terms of militarization.[36] Litvinov focused on state affairs, while Stalin focused on the ideology of the party and other Communist parties. Both wanted the same result, which was to contain fascism in Germany, create alliances with other states, and prevent war.

These same ideas of united peace were used in 1934 when the Soviet Union became a member of the League of Nations. After the Soviet Union was formed in 1922, many states around the world refused to grant official recognition of the new state. As mentioned earlier, the Soviet diplomats tried their best to create bonds with nations in order to demonstrate their legitimacy, but the revolutionary tendencies of the Soviet system led to distrust by leading world powers. The Soviets believed that a move to a more conventional diplomatic approach to international relations would help them in the cause for peace.[37] Stalin believed that Hitler was getting ready for war, and so he allowed Litvinov to begin to integrate the Soviet Union with the League of Nations and, more importantly, with the West.[38]

The Soviets could feel more military pressure being applied by the Nazis in Europe. General Tukhachevsky, the leading general of the Red Army, could see that the Nazis were rearming themselves well beyond the limits set by the Treaty of Versailles.[39] He also observed that Hitler was appeasing France, because he still needed some of their resources to build his own military and wanted to make sure that they did not rearm at the same rate that Germany did.[40] Based on these observations, the Soviet military could see how the Nazis were becoming a threat to all of Europe, not just to the Soviet Union. The military believed that Hitler and the Nazis needed to be stopped from breaking rules placed on them by the Treaty of Versailles, which could lead to war. In this way the Soviet military agreed with the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

Maxim Litvinov also could see for himself that Hitler's acts broke both the provisions of the Versailles Treaty and the League of Nations. He believed that Hitler needed to speak out and repudiate his violations to the League of Nations in order for peace to be maintained.[41] At this point in 1935 when Litvinov spoke out against Hitler, the Soviet military, Comintern, and Commissariat for Foreign Affairs were all aware of the growing military threat posed by Nazi Germany. They feared no just an invasion of the Soviet Union but the rest of Europe if correct measures were not taken to keep Nazi Germany from building a large army. In order to deal with this issue, the Soviets took a diplomatic approach in order to protect themselves and avoid war.

In 1936, after three years of political and diplomatic tension between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, the relationship appeared to be deteriorating even more. Hitler gave a speech to the Reichstag in March 1936 in which he accused the French of breaking the Rhine Pact between the two by allying with Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.[42] He explained in reference to the Franco-Czechoslovak-Soviet Pact, "In accordance with the fundamental right of a nation to secure its frontiers and ensure its possibilities of defense, the German Government has today restored the full and unrestricted sovereignty of Germany in the demilitarized zone of the Rhineland."[43] Based on this statement, the Nazis believed that the alliance between the three states posed a major threat to the security of Nazi Germany. The Soviets may have just been trying to secure their own borders and make sure that peace alliances were made, but when they did create the treaty with France and Czechoslovakia the Nazis viewed it as aggression and chose to retake the Rhineland as punishment. The Soviets were reacting to the Nazi militarization by creating peace alliances, but the Nazis were still militarizing in response to formation of Soviet alliances. This shows that both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were reacting to one another, and both saw the other as a threat.

Despite the fact that tensions were high by 1936, the Nazis did maintain an economic relationship with the Soviet Union through trade. Historian Edward Ericson claims that they wished to continue because the Soviets wanted to pay off much of their debt, while the Germans were using it to rearm their military.[44] Here a clear contradiction can be seen compared to

Soviet foreign policy with Nazi Germany. The Soviets wanted to create peace with other European nations in order to create political alliances in case of a war caused by Nazi aggression. Meanwhile, the Soviets were actually giving the Nazis money to rebuild their military. The Soviets were trying to keep the Nazis from rearming so they could keep peace, but at the same time were helping the Nazis fund the rearmament.

The two states created a 200-million Reich mark credit plan in April 1935, which was the time when Hitler began to rearm the military.[45] In fact, six economic plans were made from 1935-1939, but they all failed eventually due to political circumstances.[46] Although there appeared to be an economic partnership growing slightly during the mid-1930s, in March 1935 Litvinov gave his speech speaking out against Nazi Germany and their violations of the Versailles treaty. The Soviets were at odds politically with Nazi Germany, but they still wanted to continue an economic relationship. It is unclear exactly why the Soviets still felt that they needed the economic trade with Germany, but most likely it was because they needed goods to help build their nation. Stalin was in the process of industrialization and collectivization, two large economic plans that he and high Soviet leaders developed in order to make the Soviet Union into a large manufacturing power. Both the Nazis and Soviets wanted economic aid from one another to grow into strong industrial powers, and this is why they continued to try to cooperate via trading despite the political problems between them. However, the differing actions of the Soviet government between Nazi Germany in economics and politics made the Soviets look naïve when in fact they were trying a diplomatic new approach.

Walter Laqueur points out that over the time period of 1932-1940, the Weimar and Nazi government began taking in more imports from Soviet Russia but giving less to them.[47] This shows that the Soviets were trying to keep the Nazis content economically and avoid war over the time period. The Soviets, in fact, do contradict themselves, as seen with the stern anti-Nazi foreign policy but open economic policy, but the main purpose was to avoid war and keep peace. From 1933 to early 1938, the Soviets had been somewhat successful in creating alliances with other nations to secure their sovereignty if war did come. Their economic trade with Germany kept the Nazis from building political animosity toward the Soviet Union for the time being during 1935-1938. The Soviets were still trying to avoid isolation and were never sure if the alliances with other states would work out. Unfortunately, all alliances and political ties created in this period would be put to the test in late 1938, and regrettably for the Soviets they would not matter.

Munich Conference, 1938-1939: The End of Collective Security

The crisis that sparked the Munich Conference was the Nazi invasion of the Sudetenland, a western section of Czechoslovakia where many German-speaking people lived. Before the Nazis entered Czechoslovakia, the Soviets had a treaty signed with Czechoslovakia that stated if they were invaded at any time by anyone, the Soviet Union would come to their aid with military support.[48] Soviet leaders, primarily Litvinov, believed that if the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France stood up to Nazi Germany, Hitler would back down and the alliances that the Soviet Union trusted so greatly would conquer aggression.[49]

Despite the hopes of the Soviet leaders that the alliances made would prevail, France did not declare war with Germany over Czechoslovakia. There were two pacts in place, one between the USSR-Czechoslovakia and another between France-Czechoslovakia. There was a clause in the pacts between the three countries that France and the Soviet Union had to mutually agree to help Czechoslovakia in any crisis in order for either to send military aid.[50] The French did not believe that the Soviets would indeed step in and aid them if they raced to help the Czechoslovaks.[51] Litvinov was perplexed by the French stance and was very passionate in vocalizing that the Soviet Union would aid Czechoslovakia if the French agreed to help as well.

There was one problem when it came to the Munich Conference itself: the Soviet Union was not invited to participate.[52] The conference resulted in the French and British allowing Hitler to possess the Sudetenland as German territory, and Czechoslovakia peacefully agreeing to concede the territory to Germany.[53] The Soviets had the option of standing up with the Czechs together against the Nazis, but the Soviets were very hesitant to fight the Nazis without the aid of Britain or France.[54] Litvinov, Stalin, and other high members of the Soviet government believed that a united defense against Hitler, primarily with the aid of other strong nations such as Britain and France, would bring aggression to a standstill and produce peace in Europe. When this did not happen during the Munich Conference, the Soviets did not give up hope on collective security prevailing over aggression, but as a result Soviet leaders began to doubt the commitments of Britain and France.

The diplomatic attempt at an alliance with Britain and France at Munich failed, but there was another opportunity a few months later that could have provided the united defense against fascism that the Soviet Union was seeking. In March 1939, a half a year after the debacle of the Munich

Conference, Hitler invaded the rest of Czechoslovakia, and the clouds of war grew ever darker.[55] Maxim Litvinov understood this, and made one last attempt at a peace with Britain and France in order to guarantee military assistance if the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union.[56] The negotiations for an association between the three states went well into April and May, and finally on May 4 Joseph Stalin decided to remove Litvinov from the position of Commissar for Foreign Affairs.[57] As for any alliance with Britain or France, Stalin believed that having another Foreign Minister step in might help to produce one.

Stalin and other members of Politburo began to feel that there was no assurance for them that any alliance with the West against Nazi Germany would come to fruition. At the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), Stalin stated that:

> To what then are we to attribute the systematic concessions made by these states to the aggressors? Britain, and France, have rejected the policy of collective security, the policy of collective resistance to aggressors, and have taken up a position of nonintervention….The policy of nonintervention reveals an eagerness…not to hinder Germany from enmeshing herself in European affairs, from embroiling herself in a war with the Soviet Union.[58]

The failure of the Munich conference and the long negotiations that ensued in early 1939 demonstrated to the Soviet high command that the British and French were not willing to confront the Nazis over their aggression. Stalin himself believed that the British and French were interested in allowing Hitler to invade eastern Europe without stopping him. This mindset came from the fact that the Soviets and Western powers knew that Hitler did not want the Soviet Union to exist and wanted lands in eastern Europe for Germany. Stalin believed that France and Britain were thinking that if they let Hitler have what he desired in the east, including the Soviet Union, he might in turn leave the west alone. Here is where the first true divide began between the west and the Soviet Union in European affairs since the age of collective security began at the beginning of the decade.

Stalin then reiterated the idea to his people that Western powers in Europe would not aid the Soviet Union in a war with Germany, so that they understood that no one else was willing to help them. At the same party conference in 1939, he said that the Soviet Union would not fight the battles of Britain and France for them, and that the Soviet Union would handle all foreign matters in their own way.[59] Before this, Litvinov and Stalin had stated that the Soviet Union would unite with other states, such as in the League of Nations, to stop aggression. After the events of late 1938 and early 1939, the Soviet leadership was now confident that the League of Nations and the states in it were not going to work as a collective to stop aggression. Instead of waiting to fight a costly battle against the Nazis to stop aggression, Stalin had another plan that most did not expect. He did the unthinkable at the time, deciding to ally the Soviet Union with the state that he had spent nearly a decade trying to stop from invading all of Europe.

August 1939: Deal with the Devil

In April 1939, when Joseph Stalin sensed that the nations of France and Britain did not truly support the survival of the Soviet Union, he decided that his country had to take a new approach to foreign policy in order to avoid being left without allies if conflict arrived. The first step that Stalin took to create a new foreign policy initiative was to appoint his friend and fellow Politburo member Vyacheslav Molotov as Commissar for Foreign Affairs.[60]

There are multiple explanations for why Stalin decided to make this move in May 1939, and historian Geoffrey Roberts helps to point out some of those explanations. Roberts believes that Stalin may have wanted Molotov to take over for Litvinov because he was a Politburo member and Litvinov was not, which meant that Molotov had power over both the Communist Party and over the state affairs of the Soviet Union.[61] Roberts also believes that Stalin wanted to become more involved in foreign affairs, in which he previously had little to no interest.[62] If this was true, then Stalin needed Molotov in the position of Foreign Commissar because they had been close friends in the Communist Party for many decades.[63] Stalin trusted Molotov more than Litvinov to do what he wished. The real reasons for Stalin's beliefs are unknown, but what is known is what Stalin instructed Molotov to do as Foreign Commissar in 1939.

Despite the fact that Stalin distrusted Britain and France and had Litvinov removed after those two nations began to look like they would never get a pact created with the Soviet Union, he had Molotov continue negotiations with them.[64] The negotiations went into August 1939, with several problems bringing the discussions to a standstill. One problem was that the Soviet Union wanted the British and French to recognize any foreign invasion of the Baltic States of Finland, Latvia, and Estonia as an invasion on the Soviet

Union.[65] Another was that the British and French included a draft that said that if a state were invaded that Britain or France felt was worth supporting with military assistance, such as Holland or Belgium, then Soviet assistance was guaranteed.[66] If a state that the Soviets considered worth sending assistance, such as the Baltic States, came under threat, then a meeting would have to be held between the three to decide what would be done.[67] The Soviets felt unequal as a result, because their safety was not automatically guaranteed unlike Britain and France.

At the same time that the negotiations with the British and French were floundering, Stalin had Molotov do the unimaginable: begin diplomatic discussions with Nazi Germany. In July 1939, Stalin and Molotov decided that a pact with Germany could be accomplished, because the British and the French could not agree on what the Soviets wanted or wanted more from the Soviet Union in terms of assistance than they were willing to give in return.[68] The Nazis had been trying to develop a treaty with the Soviets in order to prevent any alliance between France, Britain, and the Soviet Union from becoming a reality.[69] In August, German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop told the Soviets that all states that the Soviet Union wished to keep between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea would be left alone when the Nazi invasion began.[70] This was the answer that the British and French were unwilling to give, because they did not want to allow the Soviets to defend the Baltic States in case of invasion, whereas the Nazis allowed them to bring the Red Army into the Baltic region if they pleased.

The negotiations between the Anglo-French delegation and the Soviet Union truly came to an end in mid-August when they refused to allow the Red Army to move their forces through Romania and Poland if the Nazis invaded.[71] The Soviet Union believed that they could not help the British and French fight against the Nazis if they could not move into those countries and assist from there.[72] On August 23, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was officially announced in Moscow, completing a return to open diplomatic relations between the two states not seen since before Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933.[73]

The treaty itself is very complicated, because of a secret clause that was not announced to the public. The public part of the treaty explained that there was a state of guaranteed non-aggression between the two states for a period of ten years, and any issues between the two would be settled via diplomatic talks.[74] The secret clause divided up eastern Europe between the two states, with Poland being split in half.[75] The public part of the treaty can be explained as coinciding with the Soviet foreign policy of the last six years. They were able to guarantee on paper that there would not be any aggression between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Although the Soviets were not able to secure any allies against Germany in this pact, they did ease their fear of being alone without military and diplomatic allies by solidifying their security with this pact.

The second part of the pact is harder to explain. The Soviets did not reveal to the British and French that they planned to take over states in eastern Europe if they were to move their army to fight Germany, just that they would have to cross through certain states. Either the Soviets sincerely wanted to take over those states, such as the Baltic States and Poland, when they were in negotiations with Paris and London, or they were just going to cross through to help fight the Nazis. The interpretation that matches this research is that the Soviets wanted to have borderlands guarded and accounted for if war ever came. When in discussions with the British and French, Molotov said it was unacceptable to allow the Baltic States to be invaded. What he meant by this was that the Baltic States lined the border of the Soviet Union and needed to be defended as if they were the Soviet Union itself. The Soviets set up the non-aggression pact to guarantee that the Nazis would not invade them any time from 1939-1949, but they made the secret section so that they could take over the border states of the Soviet Union in case an invasion did come. Whether an invasion came from Nazi Germany or anybody else did not matter. The Soviet Union now had to deal that not only avoiding a war with Germany, but also to kept themselves out of the war to come between Germany and western Europe. The Soviet Union, at that moment in August 1939 at least, was safe from foreign invasion, which they had so greatly feared since their rule in Russia began in 1918.

Conclusion

When the Soviet Union was created under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin in 1922, other countries did not view the first Communist state as very friendly diplomatically. Lenin stated that in order to achieve the goal of world Communist revolution, the Soviet Union needed to support Communist parties in other European states, and their goal was to take over control of their governments. States around the world did not trust the Soviet Union when the country was first formed, because they saw the Soviet Union as a military and political threat to them. Therefore, they did not want Communism to succeed nor have Communism succeed in countries around the world.

Nations such as Britain and the United States sent in

troops to aid the Tsarist armies in the Russian Civil War, demonstrating to Lenin and the Bolsheviks that they were indeed fighting alone without allies to support them in their cause. This feeling of political and military separation from the rest of Europe, particularly capitalist states, set in from the beginning, as can be demonstrated by the fact that the Soviets approved of the Treaty of Rapallo with Germany in 1922. Germany was the first country to form any kind of alliance with the Soviet Union. Although the Soviet Union, under the leadership of Stalin, still tried their best to spread Communist propaganda and rhetoric around the world, more and more countries began to recognize the Soviet Union as an official state with a true diplomatic agenda.

The biggest problem that arose for the Soviet Union in international politics was the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party in Germany in 1933. This changed everything for the Soviets, as they now had a party that detested Communism controlling a state that had engaged in diplomatic interactions with the Soviets in the 1920s. The Soviets began to feel threatened again, as they had during the Russian Civil War, and the fear of being without allies in a major war began to reappear. Stalin knew that he could no longer afford to scare away potential military and diplomatic partners by continuing to pursue the revolution, and so instead gave the reigns of Soviet foreign policy to Maxim Litvinov and the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Litvinov championed new ideas about collective security and peace agreements between nations against aggression. As the Nazi war machine began to grow into the mid 1930s, the Soviets became more involved in the League of Nations to try to unite many states together to prevent the Nazis from invading countries in Europe.

The Munich Conference dealt a blow to the Soviet policy of collective security, as Britain and France opted for the option of nonintervention with the Nazis in Czechoslovakia instead of united defense against them. The Soviets tried very hard to get some sort of alliance worked out with Britain and France before the war started, but the Soviets could not get the two Western powers to agree to terms that the Soviets wanted. It appeared as though the Soviets would indeed be on their own in the looming war. It was then that Stalin and new Foreign Commissar Vyacheslav Molotov struck a deal with Germany. This did not create an alliance between the two, but it guaranteed that one would not invade the other in any form, and it allowed the Soviet Union to take over several states in Eastern Europe. The Soviets wanted to use these states as a buffer in case any country in the West did decide to invade. Although the Soviets were not allied against the Nazis anymore, they did manage to secure their borders and their sovereignty, at least for a few years.

Endnotes

[1] Although in this essay I will be looking at the events that occurred in Germany up until Hitler took power in 1933, this paper is still a focus on Soviet Foreign Policy from 1933-1939. I am only including the past of Germany in the twentieth century to show the interactions that the two had after the end of the First World War.

[2] Alastair Kocho-Williams, *Russian and Soviet Diplomacy, 1900-1939* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012), 77.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., 84-85.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 90-91.

[8] Ibid., 91.

[9] Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander M. Martin, eds., *Fascination and Enmity: Russia and Germany as Entangled Histories* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012), 60-65.

[10] Ibid., 86.

[11] Ibid., 84-88.

[12] Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Hitler's Foreign Policy, 1933-1939: The Road to World War II* (New York: Enigma Books, 2005), 89.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 88-91.

[17] Ibid., 89-90.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Xenia J. Eudin and Robert M. Slusser, *Soviet Foreign Policy 1928-1934: Documents and Materials*, vol. 2 (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1967), 513.

[20] Ibid., 504.

[21] Ibid., 505.

[22] It is important to point out how the Comintern and Commissariat were different from one another, because although they both dealt with foreign affairs they operated very differently. The Comintern saw everything in terms of economic issues and class struggle, as the Soviet ideology dictated. The Commissariat acted like any Ministry of Foreign Affairs in any country, and it saw the world in terms of states that existed and how to interact with them. The Comintern tried to create revolution, while the Commissariat looked for peaceful relations, leading other states to distrust the U.S.S.R. This will be important later in seeing how the Comintern began to act more like a foreign ministry in the 1930s when they ceased revolutionary activity and promoted state-sponsored peace.

[23] Gustav Hilger and Alfred G. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies: A Memoir-History of German-Soviet Relations, 1918-1941* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), 250.

[24] Ibid., 253.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Walter Laqueur, *Russia and Germany: A Century of Conflict* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1965), 163-65.

[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Kocho-Williams, *Russian and Soviet Diplomacy*, 119.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] George F. Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Toronto: Little, Brown, 1960), 293-94.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Kocho-Williams, *Russian and Soviet Diplomacy*, 120.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Jane Degras, ed, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy* (*1933-1941*), vol. 3 of *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy* (New York: Octagon Books, 1978), 124-26.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Maxim Litvinov, *Against Aggression: Speeches by Maxim Litvinov* (New York: International Publisher Co, Inc., 1939.), 18-21.
[42] Roderick Stackelberg and Sally A. Winkle, eds., *The Nazi Germany Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 193.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Edward E. Ericson, *Feeding the German Eagle: Soviet Economic Aid to Nazi Germany, 1933-1941* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999), 17.
[45] Ibid., 19.
[46] Ibid., 23-26.
[47] Laqueur, *Russia and Germany*, 173.
[48] Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War: Russo-German Relations and the Road to War, 1933-1941* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 49.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid., 54-55.
[51] Ibid., 58-59.
[52] Ibid., 49-50, 54-55.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 59-61.
[55] Geoffrey Roberts, *Molotov: Stalin's Cold Warrior* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2012), 21.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Roberts, *The Soviet Union*, 71. Stalin did not make this decision on a whim or without another plan of action. His new plan will be discussed in the next section.
[58] Alvin Z. Rubenstein, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, 3rd ed. (New York: Random House, Inc., 1972), 130-35.
[59] Kennan, *Russia and the West*, 326.
[60] Roberts, *The Soviet Union*, 72.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid., 72-73.
[64] Roberts, *Molotov*, 22-25.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid., 25
[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid., 28.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 27.
[72] Ibid., 30-31.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Raymond James Sontag and James Stuart Beddie, eds., *Nazi and Soviet Relations, 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office as Released by the Department of State* (New York: Didier Publishers, 1948), 76-77.
[75] Ibid., 78.

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