

# Wittenberg History Journal

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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER,  
FAITH AND THE OTHER

# Wittenberg History Journal

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## **New Perspectives on Gender, Faith and the Other**

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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 Scott Neall.

## **On the Cover**

Burney Relief, ca. 1750 BCE, British Museum, London

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# Contents

*Hartje Award Winner*

## **1 Never Mind the Romans, Here's Attila: The Brief and Bloody Reign of the Great Hunnic Leader**

Scott Neall

## I. RELIGION AND THE OTHER

## **5 The Christianization of the Germanic Tribes**

Hannah Sanders

## **13 Monstrous Races on the Central Tympanum at Vézelay: Constructing "the Other" in Medieval Society**

Caitlin Green

## **23 The Formation of Al Qaeda**

Nicole Waers

## II. PREMODERN FEMININITIES

## **33 Inanna-Ishtar: Recognizing the Personality and Purpose of a Goddess**

Ashleigh Pierce

## **49 Influential Women of the Mongol Empire**

Terri Paulsen

## III. REVIEW ESSAY

## **59 The Evolution of Childhood's History**

Keri Heath

## Dedication

*The staff of the History Journal dedicates this issue to Dr. Amy Livingstone, whose dedication to Wittenberg's history students and passion for education has inspired us to push our limits of thought, research, and scholarship. Through her tireless work and caring advising, she encourages students to meet their fullest potential.*

## Never Mind the Romans, Here's Attila: The Brief and Bloody Reign of the Great Hunnic Leader

Scott Neall

Despite his reputation for being a merciless killer and the credit many give him for truly starting the demise of the Roman Empire, it can be hard to take Attila seriously. One can scarcely imagine him as anything other than a screaming barbarian wreaking havoc on a scale of Hollywood proportions. His tenure as sole ruler of the Huns, which involved his famous, devastating attack into Italy that may have garnered approval from Michael Bay or Mel Gibson, was predicated on political maneuvering that was in fact more deft than brutish. Like many good stories, the tale of this invasion starts with a death.

According to Roman historians such as Marcellinus, who had spent time in Attila's court, Attila assassinated his elder brother and co-ruler Bleda on or around 445 CE.<sup>1</sup> The Huns had for many years enjoyed success against a variety of sedentary empires under their combined leadership. Nevertheless, Attila appears to have desired for more power and autonomy over the Hunnic empire and the removal of his brother would have been a straightforward method of accomplishing this. The intrigue involved with an assassination is a far cry from the mounted invasions for which Attila is famous; one might expect pitched combat for control of the forces rather than a quiet death about which little is known. Without firsthand accounts of Bleda's death there has been some debate over its exact nature, but it is certain that after he gained control over the entirety of the Hunnic forces his focus was on Rome.

Attila's invasion of the Eastern Roman Empire in 447 took advantage of the lack of cohesion among the Romans. At this point in its history the Roman empire was not wholly united but instead had relatively autonomous emperors ruling from Constantinople in the east and Ravenna in the west. This arrangement would have worked better in the mid to late fifth century if not for a variety of nomadic groups, notably the Huns at this point, occupying the space between the two. When Attila invaded he was able to defeat the

Roman forces in the east and march as far as Thermopylae.<sup>2</sup> He eventually withdrew and engaged in peace negotiations with Eastern Roman Emperor Theodosius II, but Theodosius died before they were completed. Rather than take advantage of that death or retaliate when Theodosius's son, Marcian, ceased paying tribute to the Huns, Attila decided to engage with the western Romans after this campaign.<sup>3</sup>

The events that sparked Attila's eventual invasion of the Western Roman Empire defy the commonly held view of him as the mindless, bloodthirsty destroyer of civilization. After his return from the invasion in the east Attila received an envoy from the Honoria, the sister of Western Roman Emperor Valentinian III. Valentinian had arranged her engagement with a man but she was against the marriage so she asked Attila for assistance in the matter. She had sent with the envoy treasure and promises of more and, most importantly, a ring.<sup>4</sup> Attila took this as an invitation to marriage and responded that he would help Honoria if she would become his wife.<sup>5</sup> This was a savvy political move, as it gave Attila a position to bargain with the Romans and justification for war. He did just that, and demanded Valentinian give to him Honoria and half of the Western Roman Empire.<sup>6</sup> With neither of these forthcoming, Attila launched an attack.

Attila first attacked into Gaul, rather than Italy, and was met there by Roman general Aetius. Aetius had been a captor of the Huns earlier in his life and was familiar with their tactics, and so when they met in battle on June 20, 451, at the Catalaunian Fields, both sides received heavy losses and Attila was forced to withdraw.<sup>7</sup> In 452 Attila finally began the invasion that made him the most famous and crossed the Alps into Italy. In northern Italy he sacked cities such as Aquileia, Pavia, and Milan.<sup>8</sup> When he finally reached Rome, however, he was famously persuaded to spare the city and cease his offensive by Pope Leo. Whether because of

fear of divine retribution, lack of supplies stemming from a drought in Italy, or a plague that had ravaged his soldiers, or any combination thereof, Attila was persuaded and withdrew from Italy.<sup>9</sup> Just a year later, in 253, eight years after he assumed total control of the Huns, Attila died of a blood hemorrhage on his wedding night with a new bride.

Attila is infamous in western history as the man that brought about the end of the Roman Empire through a bloody invasion of Italy. In some ways, this is exactly what he did: in a few short years he attacked several parts of the Roman Empire, destabilizing an already declining civilization. However, this was only possible because of successful statecraft both internally and externally, in addition to his military success. Attila may have been an uncommon leader, but the conditions that lead to Rome's downfall were already in place when Attila decided to take Honoria as his wife and threaten the heart of the Roman Empire. Rather than a crazed lunatic who plunged Europe into the Dark Ages, Attila is perhaps better remembered as a savvy leader who dominated his neighbors through negotiation as well as military force.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Kelly, *The End of Empire: Attila the Hun and the Fall of Rome* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009), 129.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road: A History of Central Eurasia from the Bronze Age to the Present* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 97.

<sup>3</sup> Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 97.

<sup>4</sup> E. A. Thompson, *The Huns* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 145.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, *The End of Empire*, 225-26.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>7</sup> Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road*, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Kelly, *The End of Empire*, 259.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

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Kelly, Christopher. *The End of Empire: Attila the Hun and the Fall of Rome*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009.

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## Section I. Religion and The Other



Vézelay Abbey, northern Burgundy, France.

# The Christianization of the Germanic Tribes

Hannah Sanders

Whether Rome fell due to the barbarian invasions or the spirit of Rome was transformed into the new Germanic kingdoms, the role of Christianity was instrumental in the progression of European civilization. Christianity has a turbulent history; from its very beginnings, followers of this obscure religion faced persecution from the Roman Empire under almost every emperor for a few hundred years. Things changed in the fourth century, however, with Constantine issuing edicts of toleration towards Christians and Theodosius I proclaiming Christianity the official religion of the empire. In the meantime, the Germanic tribes on the borders of the Roman Empire were encountering Christianity and eventually converting. This did not mean that the barbarian invaders felt more solidarity with the Romans; indeed, Rome itself fell to the Christian Ostrogoths in 476 CE. If not for the Christianized Germanic tribes, Christianity may have fallen into obscurity, at least in the West, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The intent of this essay is to chronicle the pre-Christian customs of the Germanic tribes as related to their susceptibility to Christianity, their preliminary conversions to Arian Christianity as encouraged by the Goths, the eventual role of Catholic Christianity and the Franks, and the effects of Christianity on the fledgling Christian Germanic kingdoms. All of this supports the theory that the Christianization of the Germanic tribes allowed for the continuation and spread of Christianity in Western Europe in the following centuries, up until the present day.

Several primary sources are utilized in this paper. The first that will be encountered is *Germania* by Tacitus, an ethnography of the Germanic people by a Roman senator and historian. This work deals with the origins, land, and customs of the Germanic tribes, some of which are described in detail. Material regarding their spiritual customs has been used in this paper. Another primary source used is the Bible, the collection of sacred Christian texts. This paper utilizes sections of the Bible regarding Christian doctrine, beliefs, and customs. Two works by Gregory of Tours are referenced

in this essay: *Glory of the Confessors* and *History of the Franks*. *Glory* is a collection of stories on Christian miracles and the people, confessors, responsible for them. *History* is a chronological account of the Franks, from creation to Gregory's own time. It is mostly used here for its sections on Clovis and the Frankish kingdom. Another primary source is *The Origins and Deeds of the Goths*, or *Getica*, by Jordanes. This chronological account of the Gothic people is used here mainly as a reference for their spiritual customs. Ammianus Marcellinus' work, *Res Gestae*, a history of the late Roman Empire, is used in the paper for information on the Germanic tribes with relation to Rome. This paper also utilizes the works of Martin of Braga and Maximus of Turin, bishops of the west, for references regarding the conversion to Christianity among the Germanic peoples.

It is important to understand that Germanic paganism was not a single entity; the various tribes naturally held various beliefs and carried out differing rituals. "Paganism" is not an adequate term either, as the Christians used this word for any of the vastly differing groups of non-Christians.<sup>1</sup> Paganism is not a religion; it is the absence of Christian belief. As such, it is more fitting to refer to this particular belief system as pre-Christian or "traditional" Germanic spirituality. Additionally, it was possible, even normal, for people to retain their ancestral beliefs while incorporating worship of the Christian god at the same time.<sup>2</sup> The modern understanding of religion tends to focus on belief in a particular god; traditional Germanic spirituality, however, cannot be understood this way. It was characterized more by a system of rituals, social conventions, and customs.<sup>3</sup> Religious practices in reality were quite complicated, and Germanic traditional beliefs can be hard to reconstruct. The only written records of pre-Christian practices among the Germanic tribes were written by strong Christian believers; the Germanic peoples themselves did not write down their traditional beliefs in their own, undoubtedly more sympathetic, words.<sup>4</sup> Though Christian writers protested this, there are many parallels

between characteristics of traditional Germanic spirituality and those of Christianity. This certainly facilitated the later conversions of the Germanic tribes.

One of the most important aspects of Germanic spirituality, and indeed many belief systems in Europe and around the world, was sacrifice of both animate beings and inanimate objects.<sup>5</sup> Animal sacrifice provided a thrilling event that would serve as an outlet for aggression as well as unite the group of sacrificers. The group was further united by the feast of the sacrificial animal that inevitably followed.<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice was not confined to animals, either. Certain Germanic tribes in the north, after defeating an army, would sacrifice their weapons and booty to fire and then water. The impracticality of this action suggests that it was a ritual, perhaps an offering to the gods.<sup>7</sup> The fact that these practices were performed in public reinforced the community and public ownership of the ritual; private sacrifice was much less common.<sup>8</sup> Private sacrifice took the form of tossing tokens, such as ceramic pots filled with food or hair, brooches, precious metals, or swords into springs, bogs, or rivers as an offering to the gods.<sup>9</sup> Shrines to the gods exist today with names that suggest a private owner. These cases, however, were few and far between compared to the regular public ceremonies. Sacrifices can also be considered as a gift to the gods, appeasements so that they would look favorably upon the offering population.<sup>10</sup> Whether this was a gift or payment is up for debate.

Themes of sacrifice run through Christianity as well. Christians gave up animal sacrifice upon the crucifixion of Jesus, as they believe him to be the ultimate sacrifice, rendering all other sacrifice unnecessary. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the author asserts, “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, [Jesus] entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”<sup>11</sup> Here the author of the letter to the Hebrews is dismissing animal sacrifice, saying that animal sacrifice had nothing to do with and is in fact inferior in function to Jesus’s sacrifice. Though Christians looked down on animal sacrifice, Jesus ultimately serves the same function: an offering of death to the god(s) to the improvement of the human condition. The difference is that Jesus represented the sole and final sacrifice, whereas animal sacrifice was carried out continuously.<sup>12</sup>

It would not be unfair to characterize the pre-Christian beliefs and practices of the Germanic tribes as violent and literally bloodthirsty. The violence associated with animal sacrifice is a given, but traditional Germanic spirituality prescribed a fixation and veneration of blood. Blood was used as a kind of holy water, thought to have strengthening and cleansing properties; our word “bless” comes from the word *bloedsian*, which means to sprinkle with blood. The northern Germanic groups collected the blood after a sacrifice in a container for this purpose.<sup>13</sup> The Scordisci tribe of Illyria was known to drink blood from skulls, and the northern Germanic tribes drank the blood from meat during feasts.<sup>14</sup> Another violent practice is difficult to talk about with certainty. Writers have dictated stories of human sacrifice and cannibalism among various “barbarian” peoples for as long as people have been writing. Did the Germanic tribes practice human sacrifice before conversion to Christianity, or were Christian writers sensationalizing their culture for shock value? Whatever the answer, records of human sacrifice among the Germanic tribes remain. It was said that they would use criminals or other social undesirables for this purpose, as well as the ill and wounded.<sup>15</sup> According to the *Gutasaga*, the old population of Gotland sacrificed their children to the gods.<sup>16</sup> Tacitus claims that they reserve human sacrifice for their highest god, Mercury/Woden.<sup>17</sup> There exists records of “sacrificial kings” in Anglo-Saxon England; it seemed that warriors and kings found honor and glorified their gods by sacrificing themselves in battle.<sup>18</sup> Whether these stories were the ancient version of yellow journalism or factual accounts, the subject of human sacrifice among the Germanic peoples is worth noting.

Although the consumption of blood is actually forbidden in the Bible, members of the early Christian church practiced the sacrament of the Eucharist.<sup>19</sup> During the Last Supper, the night before Jesus was crucified, he offered his disciples bread and wine: “And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”<sup>20</sup> Instead of interpreting it as a metaphor, Christian leadership took these verses literally and established the sacrament of the Eucharist to partake in Jesus’s flesh as a tribute to his sacrifice. As Pope John Paul II explains in the Catholic Catechism, “At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to

his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection.”<sup>21</sup> They believed that the bread and wine they consumed was transformed and that they were literally eating Jesus’s flesh and blood. As such, the Eucharist carries an interesting association with cannibalism. As Jesus was part man and part god, his crucifixion seems like human sacrifice. These Christian establishments, as well as the bloody language used in the New Testament regarding Jesus’s sacrifice, in some ways parallel the blood-stained rituals and customs of the Germanic tribes. The sacrifice of a great king and the drinking of his blood made instinctual sense to them, and therefore increased their receptiveness to Christian conversion.

Another central characteristic of Germanic spirituality was communal outdoor worship; nature provided the sacred fixtures, making temples and buildings largely unnecessary. As Tacitus relates in his ethnography, “For the rest, from the grandeur and majesty of beings celestial, they judge it altogether unsuitable to hold the Gods enclosed within walls.”<sup>22</sup> Springs were highly venerated; the pagan Germanic tribes worshiped at springs and other bodies of water so much that Christian writers thought that there were devils in the water.<sup>23</sup> Spring water was very pure, and the traditional Germanic belief system valued its cleansing and healing properties. Prayers would be held at springs, and people would wash themselves of impurities, almost like a baptism.<sup>24</sup> The people made periodic pilgrimages to certain springs due to the water being more pure at certain times of year.<sup>25</sup> As previously mentioned, people would also toss items into springs and other bodies of water as offerings to the gods.<sup>26</sup>

Gregory of Tours considered veneration of bodies of water to be foolish and ridiculous. In his works he relates an interesting account of a Gabali festival held at the lake of St Andeol: the people would travel to the lake to throw in their offerings, sacrifice animals, and then feast for three days. The local Christian leaders were disturbed by this, but upon their building of a basilica nearby and their assertions that lakes have no religious power, the “rustics” converted to Christianity: “They left the lake and brought everything they usually threw into it to the holy church. So they were freed from the mistake that had bound them.”<sup>27</sup> It is interesting that Gregory dismissed the spirituality of bodies of river so readily considering the holy association that Christianity also has with bodies of water. The Jordan River in particular was the site of many miracles in the Old Testament; its waters were considered to have healing and cleansing properties. Elisha, the prophet of Israel, guided a sick man to the Jordan for healing by God: “Then went he down, and dipped

himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.”<sup>28</sup> There is also the obvious association between bodies of water and baptism. Baptism is the Christian sacrament of admittance to the faith by a ritual bath in water; this action sanctifies the recipient, and Jesus himself stated that it was necessary for Christians: “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”<sup>29</sup> Though Christians did not make offerings to bodies of water, it is clear that they had much in common with the Germanic tribes when it came to their sanctity.

Trees and stones were likewise centers of traditional Germanic spirituality. Trees outlive humans by a considerable amount; indeed, some are hundreds of years old. The pre-Christian Germanic peoples respected their age and steadfastness, and venerated them with prayer and offering. Trees also represent fertility, as they bear fruit or nuts and therefore provide sustenance.<sup>30</sup> People would sacrifice at trees, anoint them with oil, and light candles in their vicinity.<sup>31</sup> The Goths, according to Jordanes, hung arms of their slain foes from trees as an offering to their god of war.<sup>32</sup> Stones, too, captured the imagination and respect of the pagan Germanic peoples. They were large, heavy, and immovable; like trees, they represented permanence. Stones were anointed with oil and were often believed to have healing properties.<sup>33</sup>

Sacred trees were considered a threat to Christian missionaries to the Germanic peoples. St. Boniface, a Christian missionary to Anglo-Saxon England, led the cutting down of an important tree called the Oak of Donar (Thor). The natives had been worshiping this tree, so Boniface and his colleagues decided that it had to go, and they used the timber to build a church nearby dedicated to Saint Peter.<sup>34</sup> Though Christians did not worship trees or rocks as holy, St. Boniface’s reaction seems excessive considering the language of reverence used in the Bible itself for trees and rocks. Trees are used as similes for steadfastness and fertility: “And he [the blessed man] shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”<sup>35</sup> Here, the reader is advised to emulate the tree and its positive qualities, the same ones invoked by Germanic spirituality. Rocks too are used to invoke permanence and stability: “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat

upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”<sup>36</sup> This shows that Christians and the Germanic tribes held a similar reverence for trees and rocks. Such language used in the Bible must have appealed to the Germanic peoples, making Christianity a bit less alien to them.

As in many ancient belief systems, one aspect of traditional Germanic spirituality was polytheism, the belief in a plurality of gods. Unlike the modern “high” religions, like Christianity and Islam, with which most people are currently familiar, much less emphasis was placed on gods by the pagan Germanic people.<sup>37</sup> The multitude of gods represented different aspects of human experience, so the Germanic peoples would pray or sacrifice to the god corresponding to their concern. For example, the god known as Tyr/Tiw represented war, the god Donner/Thor represented war and fertility, the god Freyr represented virility and wealth, and the god Woden/Odin represented war and wisdom.<sup>38</sup> Germanic peoples in the first half of the first millennium also venerated several mother goddesses, praying to them for health, fertility, and good fortune.<sup>39</sup> In contrast to certain monotheistic religions like Judaism and Islam, the Germanic peoples had no qualms about fashioning idols of their gods for worship. These took the form of wooden figures, branches, wooden poles, and carvings.<sup>40</sup> Clearly, the Germanic peoples were used to the idea of several gods and did not see them as vying for the top position. God veneration in traditional Germanic custom was much more flexible and relaxed.

This perhaps presents the biggest problem for Christians: monotheism is probably the most important aspect of Christianity. Paul states it clearly in his address to the Corinthians: “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many); But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”<sup>41</sup> Here he is rejecting all other gods as idols and venerating the Christian God above all. The Germanic tribes, with their worship of a multitude of gods and their fashioning of wooden idols or veneration of swords, represent a fundamentally different worldview. Christian missionaries, in their efforts to convert the Germanic peoples, found it relatively easy to get the pagans to worship the Christian God. The difficult part was inducing them to give up all other gods.<sup>42</sup>

Far from being unaware brutes, the pre-Christian Germanic tribes had an acute sense of time that dictated

their festivals and special days. While Christians observe the Sabbath on Sunday as a day of rest and reflection on God, the Germanic pagan people seem to have observed a day of rest from work on Thursday, as it was the day of Donner/Thor.<sup>43</sup> Other days of the week in English and other Indo-European languages betray a pagan origin: Monday comes from *Moenan* and means Moon’s Day, Tuesday comes from *Tyr/Tiu* and means Tyr’s Day, Wednesday comes from *Woden* and means Woden’s Day, Thursday comes from *Donner/Thor* and means Thor’s Day, and Friday comes from *Freyr/Frija* and means Freyr’s Day. Excluding the moon, which was important to the timing of traditional Germanic rituals, these days correspond to Germanic gods. Other Germanic languages have similar names, due to the words being of the same root.<sup>44</sup> The Germanic pagans held festivals and rituals based on the equinoxes as well; the Yule celebration in particular was important to them. Sacrifices and feasts were held during midwinter, during the Gothic month known as *giuli* or yule, to honor dead ancestors and invoke fertility.<sup>45</sup> This celebration, as well as *modraniht* (night of mothers), which occurred at the same time of year, of course coincided with the Christian celebration of Christ’s birth, Christmas.<sup>46</sup> This doubtless made transition to Christianity easier.

The Germanic tribes did not live in a vacuum, oblivious to alternate belief systems; many had come into contact with Roman Christians by the first couple centuries CE. In 251 CE, the Goths defeated the Roman forces at the Battle of Abritus and made their first contact with Christianity in the form of Roman Christian prisoners of war.<sup>47</sup> As the Angles and Saxons invaded and settled Britain after the fifth century, they encountered the previously converted Christian Romano-Britons.<sup>48</sup> Though these first encounters did not produce mass new converts for the Christian faith, it is likely that some Germanic people became Christians not long after the first contact. When Ulfila, the famed missionary and bishop to the Goths, was sent on a mission to the Visigoths by Emperor Constantius II, an Arian sympathizer, in the fourth century, he did not encounter a fully heathen tribe; some were already Christians.<sup>49</sup> This is not to say, however, that these Christians were representative of the beliefs of the Germanic tribes; most were pagan upon entering the Roman Empire.<sup>50</sup> The Goths were the first Germanic tribe to convert to Christianity, in part due to Ulfila’s efforts. This likely occurred after 376 CE among the Goths that crossed the Danube River.<sup>51</sup> John Chrysostom felt a degree of responsibility for the Goths under his jurisdiction in Constantinople, furnishing them with a completely Gothic church hierarchy in the late fourth century. He even gave

sermons claiming biblical figures, like the three wise men, were of Gothic ancestry.<sup>52</sup> These presumably Catholic Goths were quite in the minority, however; the Christianity preached by Ulfila and adhered to by the (non-urban) Goths was not orthodox Catholicism, but Arianism.

In the early fourth century, an Alexandrian priest named Arius had been struggling with the nature of Jesus Christ as related to God the Father. Eventually he prevailed against these challenging concepts and published his beliefs in a work called *Thalia*; though this work does not survive in its entirety, Arius’s views are known from the plentiful writings of his opponents, like Athanasius. Arianism has three basic concepts: Jesus Christ and God the Father are not of the same essence, Jesus Christ was created, and there was a time when Jesus Christ did not exist.<sup>53</sup> Essentially, Jesus Christ was considered first among creatures, but not divine like God. Of course, this position had many opponents and sparked a great controversy, which ultimately resulted in the calling of the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. With Constantine presiding, Arianism was officially declared to be heresy; this enabled the destruction of Arian materials and persecution of not only Arians, but any who were not staunch anti-Arians.<sup>54</sup> However, Arianism clearly did not disappear after the edicts from the Nicene Council. In the Roman establishment itself, several later emperors such as Constantius II were Arian sympathizers and the controversy continued after the Council of Constantinople in 381 codified the orthodox views of the Catholic Church.<sup>55</sup> Most importantly, some of the Romanized ethnic Goths, like Ulfila, picked up Arianism and brought it back to their home tribe, leading to the adoption of Arian Christianity by the Gothic peoples.

Clearly, Christianity and Arianism in particular appealed to the Germanic peoples. As demonstrated in the first few pages of this paper, many aspects of traditional Germanic rituals matched up with some Christian practices. The cleansing properties of bodies of water, the reverence for trees and rocks, the holiness of blood, and the importance of sacrifice are all points of similarity between the two belief systems. Further, Christianity represented the way to a new, better life; one could have their sins forgiven and be able to start afresh.<sup>56</sup> The Church also provided protection against demons, a serious concern for people of late antiquity; members of the church could assist those possessed by demons, for example.<sup>57</sup> Arianism especially appealed to the Germanic peoples due to their spiritual backgrounds. Since traditional Germanic spirituality was polytheistic, it was more intuitive to think of God the Father as the highest god, with Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost being inferior. The

concept of the trinity in Catholicism, with holds that God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are all the same, equal being is more complex and therefore harder to accept. As Gothic society followed a strongly paternalistic hierarchy, the preeminence of God the Father over Christ the Son in Arianism was more intuitive and appealing to the new converts.<sup>58</sup> Maintaining their Arian beliefs was also a way for the Goths to separate themselves from and stay independent of the Roman Empire, whose citizens were intended to be fully Catholic.<sup>59</sup>

The Visigoths were strong believers in Arian Christianity; so much so, that they converted other Germanic tribes to Arianism as well. They were not wholly responsible for the conversion of other groups, but their missionary efforts certainly helped increase the amount of Arians. Excluding the Anglo-Saxons and the Franks, the other Germanic peoples were gradually converted to Arian Christianity in the years following the conversion of the Visigoths in the fourth century.<sup>60</sup> This included the Sueves in northwest Spain, the Burgundians in Gaul, the Ostrogoths in Italy, and the Vandals in North Africa.<sup>61</sup> Arianism ruled among the Germanic tribes until the defeat of the Visigoths at the Battle of Vouillé in 507 by the Franks.<sup>62</sup> The Franks were unique among the Germanic peoples because they converted directly from paganism to Catholicism, without the “middle man” of Arianism as was usually the case. As the Visigoths lost their influence, Arianism lost its preeminence to Catholicism among the Germanic societies. The Burgundians converted less than a decade later, and the Visigoths themselves abandoned Arianism for Catholicism after the Council of Toledo in 589.<sup>63</sup>

The measure of independence and separation from Roman culture that Arianism gave to the Goths ultimately helped bring about their fall from power. The dichotomy between the Arian Germanic rulers and Catholic Roman subjects created great religious tension and this divide prevented feelings of unity and patriotism, inhibiting the society’s growth.<sup>64</sup> The Franks, on the other hand, recognized that assimilation with their Catholic subjects would only strengthen their power base. To this end, the Frankish king Clovis converted to Catholicism, which enabled the conversion of the rest of the Franks.<sup>65</sup> As the Visigoths, the main proponents of Arianism among the Germanic tribes, declined in power and influence with their defeat by Clovis and the Franks, Catholicism took hold of more and more barbarian societies. During the sixth century, most of the previously Arian Germanic peoples accepted conversion to Catholicism: the Ostrogoths were decimated by Roman

forces, the Vandals surrendered to the Empire, and the Burgundians converted after the defeat and death of their king Gundobad.<sup>66</sup> The most noteworthy was the conversion of King Recared of the Visigoths, which occurred around 587, and that of his people afterwards.<sup>67</sup> This shift of power from the Visigoths to the Franks and from Arianism to Catholicism set the stage for the next phase of European history, that of the Christian Germanic societies.

The Franks were unique among the Germanic peoples in that their process of Christianization skipped the phase of Arianism and went directly to Catholicism. The future king of the Franks, Clovis, recognized this as more beneficial to his power base. In the late fifth century, the Roman state was essentially dead in the west, leaving only the Church to treat with the Germanic kings. At this time, Clovis was just one of several kings in northwest Europe vying for power, and he began accomplishing this by annexing formerly Roman provinces into his realm. He was acutely aware of the religious situation and tensions present in these areas; he kept correspondence with Catholic Church leaders as well as Arian Germanic kings.<sup>68</sup> Though both “sides” wanted him, Clovis ultimately decided to convert to Catholicism.<sup>69</sup> There are several reasons for this. Orthodox Christianity was associated with the prestige and power of the former Roman Empire as opposed to the “barbaric” Germanic kingdoms, which increased its appeal. The Germanic peoples were fascinated with and admired Roman culture, and Catholicism was part of that.<sup>70</sup> Additionally, the Germanic rulers represented about 5 percent of the population of the new kingdoms; the rest were Romans, and therefore Catholic.<sup>71</sup> Accommodation of Catholic beliefs was a much better idea politically because it prevented divides between the rulers and the subjects and encouraged a spirit of religious unity. The religious dichotomy between the Arian Germanic rulers and the Catholic Roman subjects under Ostrogoth and Vandal leadership was one of the reasons for those societies’ ultimate failures.<sup>72</sup>

The policy of religious accommodation utilized by Clovis represented a turning point in Christian history: a shift of the center of Christianity from the south in Rome to the northwest in North Gaul and Germany.<sup>73</sup> The administration of the religious bodies was different, however. The new western religious power base had a simpler organization, was less well-funded, and was not considered as venerable or prestigious.<sup>74</sup> The Western Church’s power largely depended on the king’s power, and vice versa. Additionally, the roles of the king and church official were largely fused together. In Spain, the king acted as supreme Judge of the Church,

maintaining the rules of the faith and punishing dissenters.<sup>75</sup> Christianity acted as a consolidating and unifying agent, giving birth to a kind of Christian-related nationalism in the new Germanic kingdoms. The new convert to Catholicism, King Recared of the Visigoths, affirmed the unity of the Goths under Catholicism in his celebratory conversion speech.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, the prologue to the Salic Law, a collection of many Frankish laws from the eighth century, celebrates the Franks as a most Christian race, strong under their “founder,” God.<sup>77</sup> Clearly, both the Goths and the Franks found a sense of pride with their new strong Catholic faith. This unity was clearly a positive thing for the new kingdoms and their leaders, but it did not come easily.

Church leadership, with the cooperation of the monarchy, legislated against any who were not Orthodox Christians. King Childebert I, Clovis’s successor, legislated strongly against pagan practices: “Whoever shall dare to perpetrate these sacrileges, We order he shall receive a hundred blows.”<sup>78</sup> In Spain, the Visigoths forbid pagan “magical” practices such as tempest invocation and sacrifice to devils and would punish them with lashes, scalping, and public humiliation.<sup>79</sup> The Visigoths also legislated the forced baptism of non-Christians.<sup>80</sup> Such legislation was difficult to enforce, however. The rural areas of the Germanic kingdoms remained largely out of the church’s reach for centuries after Constantine converted to Christianity. Though it was hard to penetrate the countryside, some of the resistance apparently also came about due to negligent officials. Maximus of Turin condemned those officials who neglected their duties to enforce Christian worship: “You, therefore, brother, when you observe your peasant sacrificing and do not forbid the offering, sin, because even if you did not assist the sacrifice yourself you gave permission for it.”<sup>81</sup> Martin of Braga greatly simplified Christian beliefs and history for the peasants so that they could understand better and therefore practice in the correct way.<sup>82</sup> This legislation and attitude of accommodation eased any remaining pagans’ conversion to Christianity and the new Germanic kingdoms became mostly, if not fully, Christianized.

Because of the Germanic conversions to Christianity, the history of Western Europe and Christianity became inseparable. The pre-Christian customs and beliefs of the Germanic tribes had similar themes to Christianity, facilitating an easier conversion. The “middle man” of Arianism was also instrumental to the full conversion of the Germanic tribes to Catholicism. This version of Christianity was enforced in the new German kingdoms and eventually became Catholicism as it is known today. The entrenchment

of Christianity in Western Europe was made possible after the fall of the Western Roman Empire due to the Germanic “barbarians” and their enforcement of Christianity in their new kingdoms. The rest is history.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Ken Dowden, *European Paganism* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Edward James, *Europe’s Barbarians AD 200-600* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), 216.
- <sup>3</sup> Rudolph Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” in *Early Germanic Literature and Culture*, ed. Brian Murdoch (Rochester: Camden House, 2004), 74.
- <sup>4</sup> James, *Europe’s Barbarians*, 216.
- <sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, trans. Harold Mattingly (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2010), 9.
- <sup>6</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 168.
- <sup>7</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 76.
- <sup>8</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 31-32.
- <sup>9</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 79.
- <sup>10</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 170.
- <sup>11</sup> Hebrews 9:12-14 (King James Version).
- <sup>12</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 170.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 180-181.
- <sup>16</sup> Peter Tunstal, trans., *The History of the Gotlanders*.
- <sup>17</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 9.
- <sup>18</sup> William Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 119.
- <sup>19</sup> Leviticus, 17:14 (King James Version).
- <sup>20</sup> Luke 22:19-20 (King James Version).
- <sup>21</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997): 1323.
- <sup>22</sup> Tacitus, *Germania*, 9.
- <sup>23</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 42.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 45-47.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.
- <sup>26</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 79.
- <sup>27</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Glory of the Confessors*, trans. Raymond Van Dam (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988), 2.
- <sup>28</sup> 2 Kings 5:14 (King James Version).
- <sup>29</sup> John 3:5 (King James Version).
- <sup>30</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 75.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 66-73.
- <sup>32</sup> Jordanes, *The Origins and Deeds of the Goths*, trans. Charles Mierow (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 41.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-65.
- <sup>34</sup> Willibald, *Life of St Boniface the Archbishop*, trans. George Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 63-64.
- <sup>35</sup> Psalms 1:3 (King James Version).
- <sup>36</sup> Matthew 7:24 (King James Version).
- <sup>37</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 213-16.

<sup>38</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 88-89.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>41</sup> 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 (King James Version).

<sup>42</sup> Martin of Braga, *On the Castigation of Rustics*, ed. C. W. Barlow (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), 183-203.

<sup>43</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 164.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 196.

<sup>45</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 87.

<sup>46</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 204-5.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>49</sup> Dowden, *European Paganism*, 154.

<sup>50</sup> James, *Europe’s Barbarians*, 222.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> J. C. Robertson, *Sketches of Church History* (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1904), XX.II.

<sup>53</sup> Alister McGrath, *Heresy* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2009), 143.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>55</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 155.

<sup>56</sup> J. N. Hilgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 350-750 (Philadelphia: Prentice Hall Inc., 1986), 11.

<sup>57</sup> Adalbert De Vogue, ed., *Life of the Jura Fathers* (Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 1999), 158-9.

<sup>58</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 154.

<sup>59</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 45.

<sup>60</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 94.

<sup>61</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 72-73.

<sup>62</sup> Simek, “Germanic Religion and the Conversion to Christianity,” 155.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 73-74.

<sup>65</sup> Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1974), II.29-31.

<sup>66</sup> James, *Europe’s Barbarians*, 224.

<sup>67</sup> Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, IX.15.

<sup>68</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 74-75.

<sup>69</sup> Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks*, II.20-2.

<sup>70</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae*, trans. Walter Hamilton (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1986), 18.2.17.

<sup>71</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 72.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 85.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 89.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-92.

<sup>77</sup> K. A. Eckhardt, ed., *Lex Salica*, 100 Titel-Text (Weimar: 1953), 82-84.

<sup>78</sup> Hillgarth, *Christianity and Paganism*, 108.

<sup>79</sup> S. P. Scott, trans., *The Visigothic Code* (Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 2009), VI.2.6.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, XXII.2.6.



<sup>81</sup> Maximus of Turin, *Sermons of St. Maximus of Turin*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Long Prairie, MN: Neumann Press, 1989), 107.

<sup>82</sup> Martin of Braga, *On the Castigation of Rustics*, 183–203.

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# Monstrous Races on the Central Tympanum at Vézelay: Constructing "the Other" in Medieval Society

Caitlin Green

Beginning in 1095, the Crusaders made it their mission to reach the "monstrous" groups of people and restore Christian faith to holy places in and near Jerusalem. The notion of "the other," a barbaric, deformed, un-Christian group of people, swept across Europe. Pope Urban II initiated the first Crusade at the council of Clermont in 1095 with a powerful speech urging all to go forth and recover Palestine from the hands of the Muslims. In an account provided by Robert the monk, Urban vehemently stated that "a race from the kingdom of the Persians, an accursed race, a race utterly alienated from God, a generation forsooth which has not directed its heart and has not entrusted its spirit to God, has invaded the lands of those Christians and has depopulated them by the sword, pillage and fire."<sup>1</sup> This retelling from Robert the Monk reveals that there was a considerable degree of animosity toward the Muslims. They were not Christian, so were therefore "the other."

A popular pilgrimage church en route for crusader missions was Vézelay Abbey in northern Burgundy, France. Vézelay's intricate iconographic program on the tympanum and lintel sets it apart as one of the great masterpieces of Romanesque art and architecture (Figure 1). In comparison to other tympana erected at the time of the Vézelay tympanum, it is clear that there is a unique depiction at Vézelay not to be found elsewhere — the Pentecost. Even more fascinating are the depictions of the "monstrous races" encompassing the central scene of the Pentecost that Pope Urban II and other medieval figures outcast as "the other." By studying the iconography of the Vézelay tympanum, an understanding of the monstrous races, or "the other," in medieval society can be constructed.

In eleventh century France, there was a revival of monumental sculpture that had been neglected since the end of the classical period.<sup>2</sup> The central tympanum at Vézelay is an early example of the reemergence of monumental sculpture in France constructed between the



Figure 1: Central tympanum. Vézelay Abbey, Burgundy, France, 1130.



Figure 2: Tympanum, Autun, France, 1130.

years 1120–1132. Scholars have often compared the Vézelay tympanum to other contemporary tympana to exemplify the advancement in skill present on the Vézelay tympanum.<sup>3</sup> In comparison to other tympana erected at the same time as the Vézelay tympanum, there is a unique depiction, a scene depicting the Pentecost, also known as the Descent of the Holy Ghost. Many tympana scenes present the Day of Judgment, such as the tympanum contemporary with Vézelay at Autun, France (Figure 2). Not only is the subject at Vézelay distinct from its contemporary at Autun, but the artistic quality is as well. Whereas the neighboring Autun tympanum is static and rigid, the Vézelay tympanum seems to move and breathe. At Autun, Christ's knees point in opposite directions to keep him frontal; however, at Vézelay, the sculptor has twisted Christ's body into an eloquent contrapposto

position, keeping him frontal, but even more dynamic. Each individual scene in the Autun tympanum stays contained within its designated space. However, the figures at Vézelay are not restricted to a confined space; the figures move and interact with the entire scene. Even the smaller figures in the arc compartments interact with the central scene, as if no compartment barrier blocks them from interaction with the rest of the program. The sculptor behind the Vézelay tympanum produced a masterpiece in monumental sculpture that would have demanded attention from anyone who passed through the portal.

Scholars who study Vézelay have related the church closely with events associated with the Crusades. The Vézelay church was an important pilgrimage site in northern Burgundy and housed the relics of Mary Magdalene. Because it was en route for crusader missions, the church had an important role in the Crusades. In brief, Pope Urban II intended to launch the First Crusade at Vézelay before doing it instead at Clermont in 1095, St. Bernard of Clairvaux launched the Second Crusade at Vézelay in 1146, and King Louis VII of France took up the cross there. Finally, in 1190, King Richard the Lionheart of England and King Philip Augustus of France launched the Third Crusade at Vézelay. The church has a rich history with these early crusades and has become inextricably linked with the missions.

Vézelay's intricate program of imagery sets it apart as one of the great masterpieces of Romanesque art and architecture. Constructed after the First Crusade, but just before the Second, the tympanum encapsulates a medieval attitude toward "the other." The proximity of these monstrous races to the Pentecost scene suggests that these outsider races have the potential to be saved. The central image of Christ and the Apostles rest on a lintel depicting a hierarchy of medieval peoples with the soldiers, priests, and Greeks most near Christ at the center, followed by the lower orders and monstrous races. The four compartments of eight scenes surround Christ and represent scenes of moral or spiritual imperfection through monstrous race imagery. It is clear that the tympanum is a form of propaganda. It exploits the monstrous races and sends a message for the crusaders and those who visit the church that these people who they see on the tympanum are indeed monsters to be seized. At the same time, pilgrims would see these monstrous races on the tympanum. Out of fear, they would regard them as enemies because they are not Christian. The central tympanum at Vézelay contributes to the ongoing concern of monstrous races, or "the other," being explored in many levels of medieval society.

Perceptions of "the other" are deeply rooted in the earliest accounts of history beginning with Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE). Pliny's *Natural History*, dating to the first century of the Roman Empire, is one of the earliest encyclopedic accounts on race. Scholars have credited Pliny as one of the central motivations for the exploration of race in medieval society. John Block Friedman dedicated an entire chapter in his book *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* to the vast knowledge of the races Pliny compiled in his *Natural History*. When studying the iconography of the Vézelay tympanum, scholars including Véronique Rouchon-Mouilleron ascribe the depictions of monstrous races on the tympanum to Pliny's encyclopedic accounts of race. The "Plinian" races are a fundamental resource in understanding the iconography of the monstrous races on the Vézelay tympanum.

Another important figure is the early Christian theologian and philosopher, Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) who explored the wonder and amazement of the monstrous races. Whereas Pliny's encyclopedic account of the races concentrates on the physical and cultural oddities observed of people from distant lands, Augustine of Hippo begins to question them in light of God's creation. Augustine dedicated a chapter to this question in his book *City of God* entitled, "Whether Certain Monstrous Races of Men are Derived from the Stock of Adam or Noah's Sons." He wrote,

But supposing they are men of whom these marvels are recorded, what if God has seen fit to create some races in this way, that we might not suppose that the monstrous births which appear among ourselves are the failures of that wisdom whereby He fashions the human nature, as we speak of the failure of a less perfect workman? Accordingly, it ought not to seem absurd to us, that as in individual races there are monstrous births, so in the whole race there are monstrous races. Wherefore, to conclude this question cautiously and guardedly, either these things which have been told of some races have no existence at all; or if they do exist, they are not human races; or if they are human, they are descended from Adam.<sup>4</sup>

Here, Augustine raises important questions regarding the monstrous races. His concluding remarks suggest his disbelief in the existence of the monstrous races. Perhaps these accounts are just part of man's wild imagination and are exaggerations of the differences encountered. But then, Augustine proposes that, yet, if they do exist, the way they

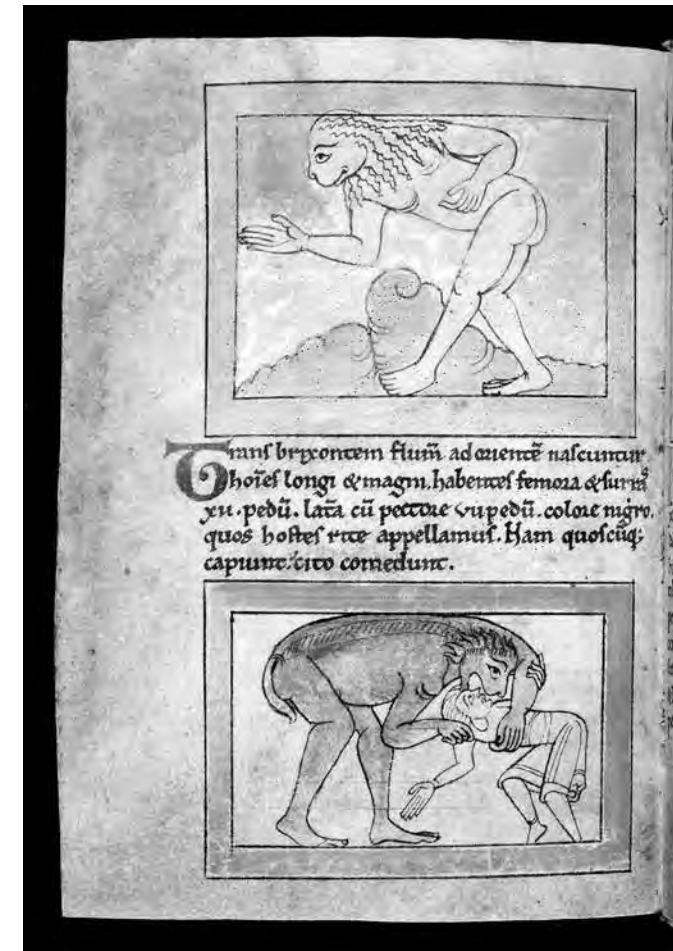


Figure 3: Page from *Wonders of the East*, ca. 1000.

are described is not of human likeness. Then again, he poses the question that if these races are indeed human, do they descend from Adam? He is essentially questioning whether these races are worthy of God's salvation. This is a question that will continue to be pondered by those who encounter the races, those who write and depict the races, and those who interpret the information secondhand, such as visitors to the Vézelay tympanum.

Others are not so gentle concerning the monstrous races, but rather exploit them, inspiring great fear and even loathing. The Clerk of Enghien's poem "De Monstruosis Hominibus," written in about 1290, is believed to have been written for a secular and aristocratic audience given its publication in a manuscript and its elaborate moralizing nature.<sup>5</sup> This fearsome tone can be found in the following lines from the poem:

There are yet other men here...  
Who have the soles of the feet transposed,  
Who are terrifyingly ugly to see  
As you can imagine.

Thus I wish to describe them to you.  
A vile, low people they are  
And vile and evil their law and customs,  
For there is no accord between them,  
And there are battles between them every day  
And thus one kills the other  
Without one crying to the other "merci!"<sup>6</sup>

Not only does the Clerk of Enghien inspire fear of the monstrous races, but also clearly dehumanizes them as a group of uncivilized people, and cast them to the role of "the other." He does this by exposing their physical differences to scare the reader, creating a false idea of what the race looks like. He projects the races as evil and disregards their humanity by describing them as merciless and showing no remorse for killing their own kind. Although the audience would have read this as entertainment, the tone is still fearful and interpreted as unwelcoming toward the monstrous races.

These three authors offered three distinct interpretations toward monstrous races. The interpretations of monstrous races ranged from encyclopedic by Pliny, to religious inquiry by Augustine, and finally fearsome exploitation by the Clerk of Enghien. All of the interpretations circulated in medieval Europe, contributing to the ongoing debate of whether these races are deserving of God's salvation as proposed by Augustine.

Not only do textual sources reveal the interest in monstrous races, but also visual sources. In tenth-century England, imagery of the monstrous races appeared in the book *Wonders of the East* for people to observe in awe the deformities of outsider regions (Figure 3). Because the monstrous races were often depicted or described in this book harming and even eating people, it demonstrates that there was a certain degree of distrust between men and the monstrous. Another from a psalter dating to about 1260 in England contains a detailed map of the world with monstrous race imagery encompassing the outer most edge, farthest away from the central image of Jerusalem (Figure 4). On this map, the monstrous are positioned as far away as possible from the central placement of Jerusalem in an effort to distance the non-Christian race from those who are Christian. There is a hierarchy insinuated that also appears on the lintel at Vézelay. The monstrous are pushed away from Christ, just as the monstrous are pushed to the outer most edges of the world on this map, away from Jerusalem. It is clear that there was a curiosity concerning races from distant lands beginning in the first century of the Roman Empire and through the Middle Ages that formed distrust and even

suppression of the monstrous races to a lower rank in the social hierarchy.

A close examination of the iconographical program on the central tympanum at Vézelay reveals representations of the monstrous races encompassing the scene of the Pentecost, or otherwise known as the Descent of the Holy Ghost. This scene is when the Apostles return to Jerusalem after witnessing the Ascension of Christ. Ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles sit together in the upper room.<sup>7</sup> According to the Acts of the Apostles, “suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, and the Spirit gave them utterance.”<sup>8</sup> There has been dissention between scholars on the central scene of the tympanum because Christ does not usually appear in the iconographic representations of the Pentecost. Whereas Emile Mâle is certain that the scene depicts the Descent of Christ on the day of Pentecost, others such as Fabre disagree because the presence of Christ is not part of Pentecost iconography. Fabre attributes the scene to the Mission of the Apostles found in Matthew 28:16–20 and Mark 16:14–18, when Christ gave each of these apostles their mission. Other scholars have created a hybrid of these two theories. Fred S. Kleiner explains, “The Vézelay tympanum depicts the Pentecost and the Mission of the Apostles.”<sup>9</sup> Another source explains that when grouped as a whole image, the monstrous races are actually “the converted races” and represents “the preaching of the Apostles to the various races.”<sup>10</sup> Given the historical circumstances at the time the tympanum was erected, any of the theories would support the medieval mentality of spreading Christianity to the distant lands represented by the monstrous on the lintel and outer compartments of the tympanum. For the purpose of this paper, the central image in the tympanum will be referred to the Pentecost and Mission of the Apostles.

Scholars have opened discussion on the meaning of the tympanum in relation to monstrous races. One study, Adolf Katzenellenbogen’s groundbreaking article on the influence of the Crusades on the tympanum, seeks to analyze the program and relate it to historical events at the time it was constructed. Katzenellenbogen is aware that the tympanum was erected at a critical moment in church history and relates the subject of the Pentecost to the mission of the crusaders. He notes that the inclusion of the monstrous races forms “an encyclopedia in themselves” and represents the lost parts



Figure 4: Psalter world map, ca. 1260, British Library, London.

of the world to be conquered by the crusaders.<sup>11</sup> In another study, John Block Freidman concludes that the iconography lends itself to being interpreted as a representation of the monstrous races waiting on the edges of the world to receive the word of God. However, Freidman notes that the scene of the Pentecost on this tympanum “is profoundly different in intention and attitude. . . . For one thing, the monstrous races are outside, enclosing the Apostles rather than enclosed by them, and for another, the Dog-Head of the Pentecosts is not but one of several unusual beings who receive the Word, presenting a far more embracing view of the cosmos for the edification of the pilgrim.”<sup>12</sup> Freidman has expanded beyond Katzenellenbogen’s discovery; his notion that there was an “embracing view” toward the monstrous is important to consider because, as previously mentioned in Augustine’s inquiry of the monstrous races, not all of society was severe in the treatment of those from distant lands.

Surrounding the central scene of the Pentecost are representations of monstrous races that the Apostles will preach the Gospel to in order to convert these groups to Christians. Beginning with the lintel, a processional of people makes up the space below the feet of Christ and the Apostles. On the outer most edges, farthest away from the central figure of Christ, are the barbaric and mythical people.

On the right are the barefoot archers, either the Scythians or the Parthians who are known to be archers. Then, on the opposite side to the far right are depictions of what seem to be dwarfs, or mythical beings with elephant sized ears from India.<sup>13</sup> According to Pliny, these are the Panotti, which he describes in *Natural History*: “there are others called the All-ears Islands in which the natives have very large ears covering the whole of their bodies, which are otherwise left naked.”<sup>14</sup> With their animal-like characteristics and near nudity, the tympanum presents them as savages and even questions their humanity by casting them as “the other.”

Next to the Panotti, there is a grouping of figures on horseback; however, one is so small that he must use a ladder to mount his horse. The figures represented here are African Pygmies from Pliny’s *Natural History*.<sup>15</sup> Pliny describes this race, stating, “Beyond these in the most outlying mountain region we are told of the Three-span men and Pygmies, who do not exceed three spans, *i.e.* twenty-seven inches, in height.”<sup>16</sup> Next to the Pygmies are thought to be the Macrobian from India.<sup>17</sup>

Still on the lintel, but moving closer to the center where Christ is located, the processional depicts people of higher status than the monstrous from the outer edges. These are the “civilized” people of the earth from antiquity and are placed near Christ to place them higher in the social hierarchy. On the right side are a grouping of soldiers who stand at the feet of St. Peter and St. Paul making offerings. On the left side near Christ is a sacrificial procession of Greeks and Romans. The men bring with them a variety of offerings including, a bull, a fish, bread, and fruits.<sup>18</sup> “Thus, gathered upon the lintel are representations of every continent, every degree of civilization, and every level of ancient society,” notes Véronique Rouchon-Mouilleron.<sup>19</sup>

The arc that surrounds the Pentecost scene provides eight scenes broken up into four compartments. Within these compartments are scenes that display physical and mental ills in the upper four scenes and moral and spiritual behaviors in the lower four scenes. For a medieval viewer, the numbers four and eight would have significant meaning tying back to the theme of the Pentecost and mission of the Apostles. The number four refers to the four points of the compass and the number eight refers to regeneration and baptism.<sup>20</sup> Given the content within the scenes, these numbers provide meaning that symbolizes the distant lands in the four directions and the mission to baptize those who are not yet Christian. The monks present at Vézelay would have understood the significance of these numbers contributing to the meaning of the tympanum.

Immediately to the left of the central axis at the top of the arc is a representation of Pliny’s dog-headed people, who live in Cynocephalia, a region in India. The dog-headed figures are mutes who only bark.<sup>21</sup> In the same grouping of figures are also representations of the deaf and the blind who will also be cured by the teachings from the gospel. To the immediate right of the central axis at the top of the arc are the bent-over hunchbacks and men depicted with pig snouts for noses. The characterization of pig-snouted men comes from the ancient thought that the Ethiopians had flat noses, which here has been represented in the extreme version of the pig snout.<sup>22</sup> The next scene to the right features deformed men suffering from the loss of limbs. Rouchon-Mouilleron has suggested that these figures represent people from Hellenic Asia due to their Phrygian cap and the crutch held by one of the figures.<sup>23</sup> The physical deformities that the monstrous experience are all symptoms that could be cured by the salvation of God. Their deformities are a visual tool to suggest that those who have not yet heard the word of God will all suffer from these physical pains.

In addition to the physical ills previously mentioned, mental ills are also represented in the arc of the tympanum. Below the scene with dog-headed people is a scene featuring two figures on the right who are Siamese twins from Cappadocia, from medieval accounts representing people from Asia Minor.<sup>24</sup> A demon is also depicted in the scene and is characterized by hair standing straight up from his head while he grasps his leg tormented by pain. Once this group of people with physical and mental ills are transformed by the conversion of Christianity, through the teachings from the gospel, their defects will be cured. These four upper scenes in the upper two compartments depict the pain and madness people thought to be “the other” suffer from in the distant lands that the apostles were to confront and convert.

The two lower compartments on the arc provide four scenes of moral and spiritual behaviors. On the right side at the bottom of the arc presents two men dressed in platform boots, characteristic of the Assyrians, as described by Greek geographer, Strabo. The pagan Assyrian men are trying to convert two men, but the men have already been won over by the Holy Spirit.<sup>25</sup> This is shown by the figure to the left of the scene who leans toward the image of Christ, as if aware of the presence of Christ beyond the compartment dividing them. Above this scene is a confrontation between a Byzantine soldier and another man who is attempting to bribe the soldier.<sup>26</sup> The soldier, like the Assyrian below, gazes toward Christ with his eyes wide and head held high. He pays no attention to the bribe, as if led by God’s divine

will, not betray by forfeiting his military secrets. Both of these scenes are important to consider in light of Friedman's research that discusses the more embracing view of the monstrous on this tympanum. Because these monstrous beings are not cut off from the central scene of the Pentecost, but actually are aware and interact with it, shows that the line drawn between Christians and the monstrous is still there, yet can be penetrated if willing to seek salvation.

The two lower scenes on the left side correspond with each other. The lower of the two depicts two scribes, which suggests they are apostles writing the Gospel that will be read to the monstrous races encompassing Christ in the tympanum. Above the scribes is thought to be a scene of Jeroboam, who worshiped idols, and is punished by God. The Jewish prophet to the right of Jeroboam invites him to follow the path of Christ, and Jeroboam falsely repents and invites the Jewish prophet to eat and drink. However, the prophet rejects the offer. Rouchon-Mouilleron makes note that the scene mirrors the biblical story; however, its presence on the tympanum has a new meaning. According to Rouchon-Mouilleron, "The prophet points his finger toward the figure of Christ, and with his other hand turns away. Jeroboam, meanwhile, seems to be taking a step back and turning the opposite direction. Interpreted in respect to the mission of the apostles, a choice is being offered to the Jewish people: retreat into idolatry or follow Christ."<sup>27</sup> For these scenes, the people within them are pushed to the outer edges with the monstrous not because of any physical deformity, but because they are Jews, and in a Christian's mind, monstrous. Jews were monstrous not only because they were non-Christian, but also because they deliberately rejected Christianity. In an effort to discredit the Jewish religion, Christians depicted the Jews as part of the monstrous races as shown on the Vézelay tympanum.

With this iconographical examination of the tympanum, it can be affirmed that the sculptor who designed and executed this program was familiar with medieval accounts of monstrous races and presents them as "the other" on this tympanum. There were many ways to view the monstrous: cataloging them, questioning their humanity for God's salvation, and subjecting them to harsh ridicule. But as noted by Friedman, this particular depiction of the monstrous follows a more embracing view than what has been previously established for their races.<sup>28</sup> The audience of this tympanum would have consisted of monks, merchants, town people, crusaders, and pilgrims who would stand below this monumental sculpture and an impression of the monstrous would be constructed. There was a vast intended audience

and, according to Debra Higgs Strickland, "This means that the tympanum would have been viewed by many whose minds were turned toward the Holy Land, whether for spoils, violence, spreading the word of God, or some combination of these. Therefore, there is good reason to believe that, gazing at these images of the Monstrous Races, crusaders may have interpreted these as the contemporary Muslims they would encounter in the East."<sup>29</sup> This tympanum had a profound role in determining the visitor's mentality toward "the other." The pilgrim, on a religious journey, would see these monstrous races as people who have yet to receive the word of God. For the crusaders, these images might be interpreted as the Muslims they would soon encounter in the east in an act of violence to reclaim the Holy Land and the infidels they were fighting against. For each of these types of visitors, the common theme is that no matter their intentions, they were once again reminded of the Holy Land and that there was a need to protect it against the infidel for the sake of Christianity.

It is clear that the artist looked to the past for accounts of monstrous races, but it is also important to consider contemporary events, notably the Crusades, that affected the interpretation of the tympanum on a day-to-day basis. Multiple crusades were launched at this site. St. Bernard's speech and the Third Crusade launched in 1190 were clearly tools of propaganda for the purpose of converting outsider societies to Christianity.

In 1095, Pope Urban II delivered a speech at the Council of Clermont — originally intended to be delivered at Vézelay — that launched the First Crusade. There are five accounts of the speech given. The following is an excerpt from an account provided by Fulcher of Chartres who was present and heard the speech:

On this account I, or rather the Lord, beseech you as Christ's heralds to publish this everywhere and to persuade all people of whatever rank, foot-soldiers and knights, poor and rich, to carry aid promptly to those Christians and to destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends. I say this to those who are present, it meant also for those who are absent. Moreover, Christ commands it.<sup>30</sup>

There is a violent tone toward the un-Christian groups when Pope Urban II prompts the Crusaders to "destroy that vile race from the lands of our friends." Here, "the other" is treated as an inferior group who must be destroyed. The violent tone of Urban's speech was carried out into acts of

violence committed by the crusaders who fought in the Holy war. To carry out the mission of restoring Christianity in the Holy Land, crusaders had to take means of violent action. Chroniclers of the First Crusade make this violence clear, all for the purpose of God's will.

Educated as a clerk in the monastery of Vézelay, Raymond D'Aguilers was one of the chroniclers of the First Crusade. In his account of the Frankish victory, D'Aguilers makes it known that the victory of the crusaders also fulfilled the mission of the church, to restore Christian faith in the Holy Land. When describing the battle at the Temple of Solomon, he states, "Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their blasphemies."<sup>31</sup> He makes it clear that because these people whom the crusaders defeated were not Christian and deserved to be slaughtered. He concludes this account with the statement, "This day, I say, will be famous in all future ages, for it turned our labors and sorrows into joy and exultation; this day, I say, marks the justification of all Christianity, the humiliation of paganism, and the renewal of our faith."<sup>32</sup> According to this account, Christianity triumphed over the monstrous races and their pagan beliefs. "The other" was simply eliminated to assert that Christians are right and anyone who is pagan is therefore wrong. This mentality, of the "vile" races in which Urban speaks of was carried over into the following Crusades and was expressed in visual terms on monumental sculpture.

With the First Crusade ending in 1099, there was a brief hiatus until 1145, when St. Bernard of Clairvaux launched the Second Crusade at the Vézelay Abbey. At this point, the Vézelay tympanum and lintel were fully constructed. In fact, St. Bernard disapproved of the richness of church sculptural programs, and that at Vézelay Abbey was no exception. He wrote a complaint in a letter to William, Abbot of Saint-Thierry, on the decoration of Romanesque churches, stating,

...in the cloisters, before the eyes of the brothers while they read — what ... are the filthy apes doing there? The fierce lions? The monstrous centaurs? The creatures part man and part beast?... Everywhere so plentiful and astonishing a variety of contradictory forms is seen that one would rather read in the marble than in books, and spend the whole day wondering at every single one of them than in meditating the law of God. Good God!<sup>33</sup>

In this statement from St. Bernard, there is a glimpse at the prospect that some believed these monstrous races not even worth time contemplating. Scholar Thomas E. A. Dale insists that even though St. Bernard deplores the use of monsters on decorative elements on the church, "it remains to be understood what purpose monstrous images served for the iconophile Benedictine monks. ... The monstrous capitals served both moralizing and cathartic functions."<sup>34</sup>

Regardless of how St. Bernard thought about church decoration, the message was still communicated to monks and anyone else who looked up to contemplate the monsters. St. Bernard was an advocate for taking action and, like the apostles on the lintel, spreading the word of God to those who have not been saved. Even if St. Bernard did not support the decoration of Vézelay, his message when preaching the Second Crusade could not be any more fitting with the tympanum program finished just fourteen years prior to the speech. As suggested by the iconographical interpretation of the tympanum and lintel, the monumental sculpture provides an image of the Pentecost, which carries a strong message of spreading the word of God. St. Bernard calls for the Second Crusade exclaiming, "Behold, brethren, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Just like the apostles who are about to go forth to the distant lands and teach the Gospel in all languages in the Pentecost scene, the message of St. Bernard was to gather crusaders who would terminate pagan beliefs and restore Christianity to the distant lands.

Unlike the First Crusade speech given by Pope Urban II and the violent accounts from Raymond D'Aguilers, St. Bernard rejects violence in this crusade speech and instead urges the crusaders to convert the Jews, not slaughter them. The Jews would have been considered "the other" to St. Bernard. His feelings toward "the other" are still derogatory, though much less violent and like the Vézelay tympanum suggests, perhaps even embracing toward these non-Christian races in an effort to spread the word of God like the apostles in the tympanum. In a letter to Eastern France and Bavaria in 1146, St. Bernard promotes a non-violent Second Crusade, stating,

Let not your former warlike skill cease, but only that spirit of hatred in which you are accustomed to strike down and kill one another and in turn be overcome yourselves. How dire a madness goads those wretched men, when kinsmen strike each other's bodies with the sword, perchance causing the soul also to perish! But he does not escape who triumphs; the sword shall go through his own soul also, when

he thinks to have slain his enemy only. To enter such a combat is madness, not valor: it is not to be ascribed to bravery, but rather to foolishness.<sup>35</sup>

And here, St. Bernard more specifically states that the Jews should not be taken with violence,

The Jews must not be persecuted, slaughtered, nor even driven out. Inquire of the pages of Holy Writ. I know what is written in the Psalms as prophecy about the Jews. “God hath commanded me,” says the Church, “Slay them not, lest my people forget.”<sup>36</sup>

The setting of Vézelay enhanced the message given by St. Bernard. The scene of the Pentecost served as a form of propaganda that reinforced the message given by St. Bernard and his call for the Second Crusade. Just as the apostles disperse to the monstrous races, or “the other,” portrayed in the arcs of the tympanum, the crusaders follow a similar mission given by St. Bernard to conquer the Holy Land. Like the observation given by Freidman suggests, there was an embracing view toward the monstrous races in the tympanum. Similarly, there was also a more embracing view in the speech provided by St. Bernard.

Whereas there have been a variety of interpretations of the monstrous races throughout antiquity and the middle ages, most of these accounts say more about Christians than the monstrous races they try to dehumanize. Christian men in medieval society with wild imaginations have over-exaggerated monstrous race imagery. The main reason for this was fear; the monstrous races were different in appearance and not Christian, and therefore a threat. With its long-standing record of the monstrous races in medieval history, the central tympanum at Vézelay constructs an important interpretation of “the other.” With the scene of the Pentecost, pilgrims, monks, townspeople, and crusaders could witness a scene that encouraged the spread of God’s word, even to the monstrous who encompass the central scene. The monstrous were still pushed farthest away from Christ, but because they interact with the Pentecost scene, the message suggests that these races are indeed worthy of salvation.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Robert the Monk, “Urban II (1088–1099): Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095,” *Fordham University: Medieval Sourcebook*, accessed December 2, 2014, <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/urban2a.asp>.

<sup>2</sup> Emile Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Twelfth Century: A Study of the Origins of Medieval Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Fred S. Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages: The Western Perspective* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2010), 319.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine of Hippo, “The City of God and Christian Doctrine: Whether Certain Monstrous Races of Men are Derived from the Stock of Adam or Noah’s Sons,” trans. Philip Schaff, *The Medieval Bestiary*, accessed December 2, 2014, <http://bestiary.ca/prisources/pstexts1757.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> John Block Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 127.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2008), 104.

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:1–4.

<sup>9</sup> Kleiner, *Gardner’s Art Through the Ages*, 320.

<sup>10</sup> Hugues Delautre and Jacqueline Greal, *La Madeleine de Vézelay: Guide Book and Plans* (Lyon: Lescuyer for Editions Franciscaines, 1985), 10.

<sup>11</sup> Adolf Katzenellenbogen, “The Central Tympanum at Vézelay: Its Encyclopedic Meaning and Its Relation to the First Crusade,” *The Art Bulletin*, 26, no. 3 (1944): 146–47.

<sup>12</sup> Freidman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 79.

<sup>13</sup> Véronique Rouchon-Mouilleron, *Vézelay: The Great Romanesque Church*, trans. Laurel Hirsch (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1999), 62–63.

<sup>14</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, trans. H. Rackham, W. H. S. Jones, and D. E. Eichholz, accessed December 2, 2014, <http://www.masseiana.org/pliny.htm#BOOK%20VII>.

<sup>15</sup> Rouchon-Mouilleron, *Vézelay*, 62–63.

<sup>16</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*.

<sup>17</sup> Rouchon-Mouilleron, *Vézelay*, 62–63.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 68–69.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 44–45.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 46–47.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 52–53.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 58–59.

<sup>28</sup> Freidman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought*, 79.

<sup>29</sup> Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 159.

<sup>30</sup> Fulcher of Chartres, “Urban II (1088–1099): Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095,” *Fordham University: Medieval Sourcebook*, accessed November 28, 2014, <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/urban2-5vers.asp>.

<sup>31</sup> Raymond D’Aguilers, “The Frankish Victory,” *Fordham University: Medieval Sourcebook*, accessed December 2, 2014, <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/cde-jlem.asp>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia 12.28–29*, trans. Conrad Rudolph, in *The “Things of Greater Importance”: Bernard of Clairvaux’s Apologia and the Medieval Attitude toward Art* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1990), 279, 283.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas E. A. Dale, “The Monstrous,” in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 267.

<sup>35</sup> St. Bernard of Clairvaux, “Letter to Eastern France and Bavaria Promoting the Second Crusade, 1146,” trans. Bruno Scott James, accessed December 2, 2014, <http://www.ccjr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/258-bernard-of-clairvaux>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

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# The Formation of Al Qaeda

Nicole Waers

If hindsight is 20/20, then history must be where the answers lie. In the struggle to comprehend the ubiquitous question of logic behind the formation of complex terrorist organizations, and more specifically, why the formation of Al Qaeda occurred, it is necessary to examine the motivations behind one of its most conspicuous public actions, the attacks on America — 9/11. The overall logic of Osama bin Laden, founder and leader of Al Qaeda, as well as the network as a whole, can only be traced back through, and derived from, the many declarations and provocations stated and evident in the decades both immediately preceding and immediately following September 11th, 2001. Because, as Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky said, “While nothing is easier than to denounce the evildoer, nothing is more difficult than to understand him.”<sup>1</sup>

From approximately 1979 until today, those desiring to “understand the evildoer” are provided with 35 years of relevant evidence in the attempt to understand why Al Qaeda was created initially, as well as why it flourished in its movement to perpetrate one of the most memorable and staggering terrorist attacks ever carried out against the United States. Moreover, it is both useful and necessary to consider the “after” just as thoroughly as the “during” and the “before.”

Primarily, Middle Eastern regional conditions fostered an atmosphere prone to the development of terrorism, while expressed goals of Al Qaeda consistently reflected its founding ideology, and subsequent expressions serve as another round of even more explicit explanations. Through translating and deciphering declarations, recruitment tools, and handbooks, as well as understanding the overall context of Al Qaeda’s formation, there are various indications in support of two very important overarching factors that contributed to the formation of Al Qaeda. Differing religious beliefs, culminating in the form of Islamic extremism, as well as incongruences of political and social ideologies between “the West” and “the East,” ultimately led to the creation and

subsequent growth of Al Qaeda as a terrorist organization. Thus, the question can be answered in one word: disparities.

Disparities most often result in one thing: conflict. A decade of conflict in the region east of the Persian Gulf — more specifically, Iran and Afghanistan, as well as Pakistan — managed to accentuate the religiopolitical differences of the ideologies of the hemispheric West and East that created an ideal atmosphere in which to cultivate extremism. Moreover, it is partially due to previously unseen levels of anti-communist sentiment of the Cold War era that an Islamic extremist network such as Al Qaeda ever came to be. This ideological opposition served as the catalyst behind various political shifts and military actions that occurred in the decade from 1979–1989 that led to a never before seen (or perhaps never before recognized) increased loyalty to the ways of Islamic fundamentalism.

A principally stirring event in the shift away from the West was the 1979 revolution in Iran that “ousted the pro-American dictator, the last Shah.”<sup>2</sup> The ousting of the pro-American Shah effectively cut the ties of any U.S.–Iran alliance, and at the same time, conveniently paved the way for an immediate Iranian launch into a revolutionary society characterized by the theology of Islamism. A fundamentalist Islamic government had taken power in Iran, and it had inherited a vehement anti-American sentiment, even though Islamic fundamentalism did align (perhaps for the last time) with the desires of the West, in the form of Iranian anti-communist sentiment. As this new Iran pushed farther and farther from the U.S., it did just the same to communism. The newly revolutionized country began to ally with more similar neighboring countries — Pakistan and Afghanistan — in order to prevent the spread of yet another, seemingly imminently threatening, competing ideology of communism.<sup>3</sup> This occurred around the same time that Saudi Arabian government officials and private donors began pouring money into both countries for the purpose of utilizing jihad against communism.<sup>4</sup> These were only some

of the actions that led to the cementing of Afghanistan's role as most valuable player among the many locales that played a part in allowing for Al Qaeda to be formed.

In 1979, when the threat of communism reared its head (quite explicitly) in the form of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, there were various countries and groups prepared to confront and oppose the enemy ideology and its accompanying military forces. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviets is said to have led to "thousands of Islamic fundamentalists from different countries in the region" to mobilize and band together in order to "help fight the Soviet 'infidels.'"<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the Afghan forces received support (most often in the form of arms) from bordering Pakistan and a very recently post-revolution Iran. A full decade of training and fighting led to increased camaraderie among the ranks of those fighting on behalf of Islam, which included a young Osama bin Laden. This would be the same fighter who, in the early 1980s, returned home to fund, recruit, transport, and train a volunteer force of Arab nationals, called the Islamic Salvation Front (ISF), to fight alongside the existing Afghan Mujahedeen — the name given to Afghan fighters confronting the Soviets.<sup>6</sup> Although the ISF was later disbanded, these formidable years undoubtedly served as priceless experience for Bin Laden's later activities to initiate the Al Qaeda organization, which acted as a home base and financier for a global network of participating Islamic groups.<sup>7</sup> The ISF can be considered a virtual prototype for the not coincidentally similar organizational description of Al Qaeda.

Nonetheless, in 1989 the Mujahedeen succeeded in driving Soviet forces out of Afghanistan. With the help of military and monetary U.S. aid to the anti-communist opposition, as well as a globalized network of support from several surrounding Middle Eastern countries, Islamic groups and followers, the Soviet invasion and mission failed. However, too busy basking in what was considered an enormous victory over the Soviet Union and communism as a whole, the United States promptly stopped paying any attention to the enormous numbers of Islamic fundamentalists that it had directly nurtured in the region.<sup>8</sup> The United States failed to take notice of this rapidly expanding "global village," which had been, and was still, uniting in a shared and prodigious religious commitment to fundamentalist Islam. This is the cause to which the United States had somewhat unknowingly or unrecognizably directly provided money and weaponry to during the invasion.

Despite previous wartime attentiveness and support, the flow of U.S. dollars to the efforts in Afghanistan was staunch, and the fanatical Taliban regime took advantage of the nation's vulnerability, quickly coming to power in the nation. Promoting — or perhaps more accurately, instating and enforcing — an Islamic fundamentalist way of life was their first priority. Along with this came the allowance of Al Qaeda's occupation of land in Afghanistan. The new government was providing a haven for the various gestating pockets of Al Qaeda.<sup>9</sup> With ambitious extremists being sheltered in various regions of their newfound jurisdiction, the Taliban's role in the growth of the Al Qaeda organization was essentially indispensable.

Finally, another domino fell: Pakistan. Clearly not wanting to be left off the Islamic bandwagon, after Soviet forces were removed from Afghanistan in 1989, religious zeal in Pakistan increased. Fundamentalism, as an ideology and a system of government, in Pakistan strengthened. Its overall amount of "training grounds on which to prepare 'Islamic freedom fighters' to fight against communism and secularism" vastly increased.<sup>10</sup> Yet another fundamentalist Islamic government had sprouted up and flourished healthily in the region of the Middle East. Thus, Afghanistan was surrounded on both sides — Iran on the west and Pakistan on the east — by countries with aligning commitments to Islamic fundamentalism. Afghanistan became the springboard nation with an ideal location in which to cultivate the grassroots of the network that would quickly develop into the Al Qaeda terrorist organization.

The stage was set. Revolutionaries, fighters, and politicians had (some, intentionally and others, haphazardly) opened the door to a unification movement — one that moved swiftly as far away from both communism and Westernization as possible, and one that did not hesitate to jump into the open and welcoming arms of Islam (in the form of Islamism). An emerging trend of commitment to the creation of a wholly fundamentalist Middle East laid much groundwork; and opposition to democracy and secularism, or more pointedly, continuation of advocacy for "purist" Islam, sustained an early wave of the Islamic fundamentalist movement being nurtured in the region — most essentially, in Afghanistan.

It is absolutely essential to examine the brand of Islam to which Osama bin Laden and his subsequent followers subscribed in order to truly understand the logic behind a group like Al Qaeda, as well as the reasons behind their many original intentions and later actions. As it has, more often than not, been concluded that terrorist groups similar to Al

Qaeda are founded upon one, overarching aim, this singular goal for Al Qaeda was (and likely still is) the achievement of an ideal Islamic society. Over an indeterminable number of years, this ideal Islamic society has been interpreted and strategized by Bin Laden and various groups of fundamentalists, including Salafists ("purists").<sup>11</sup> This term for devoted Islamic purists, Salafists, is derived from *salafiyya*, meaning the imitation of the precursors. Therefore, it is said that "the faithful should model their actions on the Prophet and his Companions who founded the ideal Islamic community" of an age long since passed.<sup>12</sup> According to Fathali M. Moghaddam's book *From the Terrorists' Point of View*, these fundamentalist individuals "have evolved identities that find fulfillment and meaning through a morality that depicts only one goal as worth living for, and justifies killing civilians to get to that one goal."<sup>13</sup> Most frankly, this means that Al Qaeda was founded upon a kind of "we will stop at nothing" approach.

However, it is not solely the responsibility of the Salafists to conscribe Islamic extremists to a commitment to fundamentalism, or subsequently to the ranks of Al Qaeda. Throughout Islamic history, *ulema* (elite Islamic scholars and religious leaders) have unanimously agreed that the *jihad* (religious "struggle") is "an individual duty if the enemy destroys the Muslim countries"; or perhaps, taken more literally, if an enemy body threatens to destroy the Muslim/Islamic purist ideological contagion, it is the expectation that that individual will fight in favor of the one and only cause.<sup>14</sup> The goal is one of conversion of person and/or transformation of society. Supporting this same idea, within the Holy Quran, Surah Nine, Surat at-Tawbah, is the most frequently cited:

Then when have passed the sacred months, the sacred months, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and seize them and besiege them and sit (in wait) for them (at) every place of ambush. But if they repent and establish the prayer and give the *zakah* then leave their way. Indeed, All (is) Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. And if anyone of the polytheists seek your protection then grant him protection until he hears the words of Allah, the word of Allah.

Calls such as this are the impetus driving the Al Qaeda network — and, more broadly, Islamic extremists as a whole.

In addition to learning from Salafists, Al Qaeda very clearly drew on the Wahhabi strain of Islam, which interprets

*shari'a* (Islamic holy law) strictly.<sup>15</sup> Because Al Qaeda's driving system of beliefs is so strict, the extremist nature of Islamism is perpetuated by the wide opposition to it. A common saying suggests that if one is prevented from doing or having something, it only makes one want to do it, or have it, more. In this way, fundamentalist ideology blossomed into the formation of Al Qaeda — a group that would unite in conviction to combat secularist opposition. This opposition to the ideology was the kindling. Calls for political change and reversal of beliefs were the gasoline and the spark; and, years and years of attempts to suppress a "pure" version of Islam has only fueled the fire that much more.

Another important purpose behind the founding of Al Qaeda was the intention to overthrow regimes with large Muslim populations that do not install *shari'a* as the official law. In much of the Western world, the past several decades have pointed toward democracy as the only possible and logical progression on the way to societal progress; however, for Islam, "democracy itself is forbidden because only divine power can decree law."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the so-called "democratic solution" intended to stop the spread of Islam, and especially Islamism, is exactly the movement that most perpetuates it. Fundamentalist Islam has been given reason to take on a more offensive stance in order to defend against their system of beliefs, as well as the "unbelief" of the Western, democratic world. In the *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*, translated into English and subtitled *The Al Qaeda Manual*, the following supporting excerpt is found,

It is the same unbelief that drove Sadat, Hosni Mubarak, Gadhafi, Hafez Assad, Saleh, Fahed — Allah's curse be upon the non-believing leaders — and all the apostate Arab rulers to torture, kill, imprison, and torment Moslems. These young men realized that an Islamic government would never be established except by the bomb and rifle. Islam does not coincide or make a truce with unbelief, but rather confronts it. The confrontation that Islam calls for with these godless and apostate regimes, does not know Socratic debates, Platonic ideals nor Aristotelian diplomacy. But it knows the dialogue of bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing, and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine-gun. The young came to prepare themselves for *Jihad*, commanded by the majestic Allah's order in the holy Koran. [Koranic verse:] "Against them make ready your strength to the utmost of your power, including steeds of war, to strike terror into (the

hearts of) the enemies of Allah and your enemies, and others besides whom ye may not know, but whom Allah doth know.”<sup>17</sup>

They could hardly be more explicit in their reasoning. Islamism had refused to even consider compromise in a democratic way, and so many orthodox extremists felt compelled by direct calls from both Allah and their founding superiors to physically combat those that will in the future work to oppose their ideals in order to implement their own, westernized ones.

Islamic fundamentalism rejects legislation, diplomacy, and civil debate in favor of intimidation, violence, and aggression. While Al Qaeda derives its objectives and purpose from the Sunni, Wahhabi branch of Islam, as well as lifestyle suggestions of Salafists, it is also structured according to many ideas of Sayyid Qutb, the principle ideologue of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood. Those that chose to work within the Al Qaeda network were likely educated about the teachings of this similar organization, by which many fundamentalist Sunni movements are inspired.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, Qutb had been strongly influenced by the writings of Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi, who was educated in an ultraconservative *deobandi* school, which led him to the development of five key Islamic principles that Qutb would later claim as his own.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps most notably, falling under his second principle, anti-Westernism, Sayyid Qutb adamantly rejects democracy because he believes in adherence to “Islamism’s first principle — *hakimiyyat* Allah, God-Government.”<sup>20</sup> Commitment to this principle meant embracing the belief that religion and politics are, and always should be, organized together, as a singular body. Because democracy stems from a basis of individuality, free speech, and self-determination, it is not in accordance with fundamentalist Islam, a religion under which individual liberty, frankly, does not exist. For fundamentalist Islam, sovereignty belongs to God alone. This anti-Westernism is all encompassing due to its humanism. For example, the aforementioned democratic ideals suggest “worship of Man,” which for Mawdudi and Qutb is the same as *shirk* or “attributing partners to God” — always considered a supreme sin.<sup>21</sup> As universalism is the last of these five important principles, this closing rule means that everything in Islam is valid for all human beings. Secularism, and any activity not in direct accordance to this sense of Islam, is most literally blasphemy. Therefore, Al Qaeda’s formation is a direct response to the conquest of democratic nations to religiously “colonize” Muslim nations, as well as any and all attempts to

quell Islam, in ways similar to those which communism was subjected to just a few years prior.

While much blame can be directed toward ideological reasoning and opposition to Islam as a whole, in somewhat more weighted and specific ways, the United States has played an integral role in prompting the formation of Al Qaeda. Many actions taken by our nation in the pursuit of cultivating democracy and protecting alliances has enraged extremists and brought cause for both defensive and offensive activity in the form of horrendous terror. It is due to these devout feelings of hatred and defensiveness that Islamic extremism was “forced” or “called” to resort to unification as one very unfortunate root of the terrorist network, Al Qaeda.

The concept of territory was, and is, yet another important point of contention between the Western and Eastern world. In Islam, it is said that once Islam takes control of lands, they should retain sovereignty over them until the end of time. The conspicuous global actions of the United States posed what Al Qaeda viewed as a very explicit threat to their Muslim way of life and to the lands of which they occupied. Within the *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*, mentioned above, and discovered in a known member of Al Qaeda’s home, it is expressed that those devoted to jihad for the sake of a pure Islam firmly believed that, just prior to the turn of the century, all Westerners aimed at a generation of progress. However, this progress was to come by way of producing a neo-generation of ambitious, individualistic, and secular citizens. The document translation recalls that, “They aimed at producing a wasted generation that pursued everything that is western and produced rulers, ministers, leaders, physicians, engineers, businessmen, politicians, journalists, and information specialists. [Koranic verse:] “And Allah’s enemies plotted and planned, and Allah too planned, and the best of planners is Allah.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the responsibility to reverse this way of thinking fell into the willing hands of those aligning with the words of Allah and the objectives of Al Qaeda.

By the same token, years and years — which at that time, was said to have been about seven — of U.S. occupation of the Islamic holy lands in the Arabian Peninsula was offensive to Muslims, especially as many worried about the potentially detrimental effects of the U.S. role behind the spread of a type of “Western contagion” of individual ambition. This is a key component of the first facet listed by Osama bin Laden in his 1998 fatwa. He reasons, “the United States has been occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula, plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and

turning its bases in the Peninsula into a spearhead through which to fight the neighboring Muslim peoples.”<sup>23</sup> (Iraq — a Soviet ally, ironically enough — was later occupied in efforts to combat ideology that directly opposed democracy.) Mughaddam argues that Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups were determined to gain control of territory and other material resources, as reflected for example by their efforts to expel Westerners from Islamic lands (such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq). The purpose behind their formation was, perhaps most importantly, to “drive both overt and covert U.S. forces out of Muslim lands in the Near and Middle East (covert American forces have not left Saudi Arabia, the country that houses the most important Islamic holy places, including Mecca, the prime destination for millions of Muslim pilgrims from around the world each year).”<sup>24</sup> Just two years prior, in *Osama bin Laden’s Declaration of Jihad Against Americans*, he had declared the condemnation of the U.S. occupation of Saudi Arabia, as well as Saudi Arabian arms trade with the United States. Looking here, and tracing the logic backward just a few more years, Osama bin Laden makes it clear that Al Qaeda originally banded together as a response to the assumed and anticipated threat that a U.S. presence in these lands meant to an Islamic way of life, and to believers themselves.

Moving forward through the Middle East’s historical chronology, it is important to recognize the United States’ role in the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a pivotal moment on the timeline of Al Qaeda’s formation. Prompted by the accusation that Kuwait was stealing petroleum from Iraq, leader Saddam Hussein’s extremist forces moved to invade Kuwait. However, when Bin Laden offered up his band of jihadists (not quite yet a fully structured Al Qaeda) to protect the nation and turn back the Iraqi forces who threatened Saudi Arabia, the Saudi government turned instead to the U.S. military forces, who then formed their own coalition of hundreds of thousands that defeated the invading Iraqi forces in about a month.<sup>25</sup> Seth Jones, author of *In the Graveyard of Empires*, refers to this as a “clarion call for [Bin Laden’s] movement.” For the Americans to lead the Saudi military efforts in an assault against Iraq as a result of its occupation of Kuwait was considered a “grievous transgression.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, this event was one of the final catalysts propelling the unification of Al Qaeda.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, another one of the most important men thrust to a position of leadership in Al Qaeda during this time, prepared the jihadists for the struggle to pursue a three-pronged plan. Aligning almost exactly with the outline of the reasons listed herein that allowed for and motivated

the formation of Al Qaeda, Zawahiri spells out his invoking objectives. The first was to overthrow “corrupt regimes” in the Muslim world. These would include the likes of Iran, as mentioned earlier. The second, was the establishment of *shari’a* in these lands — the goal to implement pure Islam as a universal rule. Finally, he looked to put an “end to U.S. support for, and manipulation of, corrupt puppet regimes in Saudi Arabia and other dictatorships of the Near East, Middle East, and North Africa.” The goal was to inflict significant casualties on those working for the causes of the west and to “get crusaders out of the lands of Islam especially from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine.”<sup>27</sup> And while there had to have been some disagreement or variation of intended focuses and goals within the ranks of potential Al Qaeda jihadists, these were the things most commonly presented as motivators and desires for the movement upon which Al Qaeda was based.

Recalling above the mention of American occupation of Palestine, this presence and topic of debate is perhaps one of the most often noted areas of discontent for Al Qaeda fighters, and especially Osama bin Laden himself. The longstanding U.S. alliance with Israel currently stands as a source of contention, and also acted as a clear motivating factor for members of Al Qaeda. The jihadist movement did not approve of the unqualified U.S. military and political support for Israel.<sup>28</sup> In fact, in his declaration of jihad, Osama bin Laden directly called for expanded jihad against the United States because of the occupation of Palestine (in support of Israel and Judeo-Christianity) and alleged murders of Muslims there.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps a reiteration of previous ideological testimonies, the U.S. presence in what (according to many who considered themselves a part of the fundamentalist movement) should be a region safe for Muslims and conducive to the practice and support of Islam, again prompted actions of terror in the pursuit of their eradication. According to Jonathan Schnazer, author of the book *Al-Qaeda’s Armies*, the group from which Al Qaeda’s ranks would have been chosen rejected Israel’s existence. He states that, for them, “the very concept of peace with Israel is an anathema.” To be sure, the absence of peace and the *intifada* (with its images of Palestinian youngsters taking on Israeli tanks) soured the climate for moderation in the area and created a more fertile breeding ground for anger and resentment — the stock in trade of Osama bin Laden and the terrorist networks.<sup>30</sup> Al Qaeda jihadists shared the perspective that Israel, and Israel’s perpetual alliance with the United States, explained the unrest in the region and the persecution of Palestinians in the ongoing territorial, religious, and political conflict. For Al Qaeda, these



unresolved tensions, and U.S. contributions to it, stood as one large and legitimate cause for the formation of a terrorist organization. Eventually, Al Qaeda would be essentially fighting fire with fire, performing acts of terror and violence as retribution for Israeli/Palestinian violence and tension in the Middle Eastern region, and American contributions toward it.

The answer to the question of why extremist Muslims, Islamic jihadists, Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the thousands of others worldwide originally came together, structured Al Qaeda as an organization, and took up arms to perform acts of terror is not entirely conclusive, confusingly tangled up in the events of the last several decades, and contains seemingly innumerable reasons. But, from many large pools of information, it can be gathered and studied, many logical conclusions can be drawn, and many in search of answers can be provided with some degree of explanation, or even closure. The creation of Al Qaeda as a terrorist organization was due to various events and conditions, culminating in three collective causes.

First, the decade of 1979-1989 and its major events, as well as their results, led down the road to Al Qaeda. Most importantly, events such as the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan fostered a kind of heightened Islamic unity, in the face of opposing outside ideologies. Revolutionary changes in power and culture, as well as recruitment and unification for the purpose of military action, increased external funding and weaponry, and legitimate reason for training masses, led to never-before-seen levels of Islamic, Muslim, and Middle Eastern camaraderie on the Persian Gulf.

After the development of this coincidentally ideal climate in countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan came the heightened popularity and devotion to the religion and culture of Islamism. Advocacy for an extreme sect of Islam, one whose perfect society is a most pure Islamic one, became perhaps the most logical catalyst propelling the Islamist movement and resulting in the formation of an Al Qaeda, clearly intending to perform its bidding. With renewed devotion to such an extreme ideology, jihadists (with the help of experienced leaders like Osama bin Laden) began to connect the dots and listen attentively to their grievances with the West, as well as to the calls of Allah to address these discrepancies.

Together with this, the modern, progressive, democratic and westernization movement, as well as actions of the United States such as occupation of Islamic lands and continuation of an alliance with Israel, were also important

components of the initiating logic of Al Qaeda. All of these activities were viewed as an interconnected, giant affront to Islam as a whole. So, those interested in standing up for what they believed in — Islamism — as what was best for their people ended up being the ones first in line to contribute to the foundation and ultimately decide to form such an organization as Al Qaeda in the first place.

It was not one person's fault. It was not one nation's fault. The "fault" was, most simply, in any and all opposition and continuation of violations of the extremist Islamic ideology. The fault was in our differences and in their discrimination. Al Qaeda is not the effect of one event. The Al Qaeda organization is the effect of thousands of actions and events in our fairly recent history that culminated in the form of extremist terror. Ultimately, it can be concluded that differing religious beliefs and incongruences of political and social ideologies between "the West" and "the East," both prompted, and have allowed for, the progress and growth of Al Qaeda in the past three decades. Without any one of the events or developments listed herein, the timeline of formation and subsequent acts of terror might well have been completely altered. Nonetheless, this is the history that our world has created, and the formation of Al Qaeda as an Islamic terrorist organization was the unfortunate result we've been forced to reason, and to live with.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rex A. Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why: The 1999 Government Report on Profiling Terrorists* (Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Fathali M. Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View: What They Experience and What They Come to Destroy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing, 2006), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>4</sup> Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010), 69

<sup>5</sup> Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, 171.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>8</sup> Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View*, 34.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>12</sup> Peter R. Demant, *Islam vs. Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2006), 161.

<sup>13</sup> Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View*, 97.

<sup>14</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Osama bin Laden's 1998 Fatwa," 1998, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/Osama%20bin%20Laden%27s%201998%20Fatwa%20declaring%20war%20against%20the%20West%20and%20Israel.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Aaron Mannes, *Profiles in Terror: The Guide to Middle East Terror Organizations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>17</sup> Al Qaeda, *Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad*, 1993, accessed March 13, 2015, [http://www.justice.gov/ag/manualpart1\\_1.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> Demant, *Islam vs. Islamism*, 100.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>22</sup> Al Qaeda, *Encyclopedia*.

<sup>23</sup> Bin Laden, *1998 Fatwa*.

<sup>24</sup> Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View*, 58.

<sup>25</sup> Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 70.

<sup>27</sup> Moghaddam, *From the Terrorists' Point of View*, 24.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>29</sup> Osama bin Laden, "Osama bin Laden's Declaration of Jihad Against Americans," 1996, accessed March 13, 2015, <http://www.911memorial.org/sites/all/files/Osama%20bin%20Laden%27s%201996%20Fatwa%20against%20United%20States.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Schnazer, *Al-Qaeda's Armies: Middle East Affiliate Groups and the Next Generation of Terror* (New York: Specialist Press International, 2005), 6.

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*Section II.*  
Premodern Femininities



Rashid al-Din, portrait of Bulughan Khatun feeding her child Ghazan, from *Compendium of Chronicles*, early 14th century.

# Inanna-Ishtar: Recognizing the Personality and Purpose of a Goddess

Ashleigh Pierce

The mythology of ancient Mesopotamia is far less familiar to the average American than that of many other ancient religions. To scholars, though, it is a subject of utmost importance in understanding the culture of many early Mesopotamian societies: the Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians, Babylonians, etc. By studying the ancient cults and myths surrounding their deities, it is possible to uncover some of the beliefs and values held in this region's fount of civilization. From why the Tigris and Euphrates flood erratically, to examples of how heirs should behave toward their fathers, the stories about the gods provide explanations about the world. Among the frequently named gods stands a powerful and dynamic goddess whose name is invoked by priests, kings, and commoners throughout the region and over the course of time: Inanna-Ishtar.

Inanna-Ishtar was the goddess of both love and war. Her two names represent differences in place and time, with Inanna being the name the Sumerians and Akkadians assigned to her, and Ishtar being the name she was known by to the Assyrians. Despite the vast number of sources referring to her, and the numerous sources that include or describe her in detail, it can be difficult to comprehend her personality and characteristics; as Rivkah Harris labels her, she is a paradox.<sup>1</sup> The available sources about her reveal a deity who is both orderly and chaotic, a goddess capable of bringing both great prosperity and destruction. By being such an anomaly, Inanna-Ishtar was unlike many goddesses of the ancient world and broke with the gender norms of the time. Consequently, she is unrepresentative of how Mesopotamian women were expected to behave.

## The Archaeological History

Before critiquing the goddess's character, and trying to sort through *what* is known about her, it is important to consider *how* scholars have uncovered this knowledge. Archaeological

research is the source of these discoveries. By working to uncover ancient artifacts, both artistic and textual, modern scholars are provided with the evidence necessary to learn about the ancient world. For the study of Inanna-Ishtar the textual sources found on clay tablets, cylinder seals and other inscriptions are especially vital; by transliterating and translating these sources, cuneiform scholars have vastly expanded the available knowledge about her. To understand the historiography about Inanna-Ishtar, then, it is necessary to discuss the scholarly debate about her and the main sources used: literary documents, artifacts, and images.

One particularly significant scholar was Samuel Noah Kramer, who spent his career in the careful study of Sumer and cuneiform texts and was highly respected by his colleagues in the field.<sup>2</sup> Not only was he asked to be a guest professor at many universities, but he was also invited to help catalogue and decipher literary tablets in different collections.<sup>3</sup> In addition to his many popular books, though, it was perhaps his building of a sense of cooperation among the Sumerologist community that made the greatest impact and progress for this field of study.<sup>4</sup> Rather than attempting to retain sources for his own private study and success, he made them available to many other scholars around the world; not only could more sources be deciphered this way, but it also made scholarly discussion and debate about the documents possible.

One area of difference in this discussion is between Near Eastern specialists and more general scholars. To some groups, such as classicists, there is a desire to compare Mesopotamian cultural aspects — like Inanna-Ishtar — to other regions and time periods. An example of this is Miroslav Marcovich's work, which argues that the Greek deity Aphrodite was descended from and extremely similar to Ishtar.<sup>5</sup> Historically, part of the drive for this has been to prove that ancient Mesopotamia served as a birthplace for Western cultures and values. Unfortunately, while comparisons can be made

between the two cultures and their goddesses, they frequently depict too broad an image of Inanna-Ishtar and lose sight of many of her detailed characteristics. As Rivkah Harris puts it, “much has been written about Inanna-Ishtar by people outside of the field of ancient Near Eastern studies. The tendency in these writings is to flatten and level the distinctively Mesopotamian features of the goddess.”<sup>6</sup> Notably, scholars focus on her role as the goddess of love and queen of heaven while deemphasizing her values as the goddess of war. This tunnel vision can partly be attributed to modern ideas of patriarchy and a hesitancy to associate a female deity with what are perceived as masculine virtues.<sup>7</sup> The study of Inanna-Ishtar therefore requires consciousness of these subjective perceptions of her and a comfort with acknowledging her distinctiveness. Furthermore, like all historical discourse this study requires a careful analysis of the primary sources relevant to the topic.

In order to gain access to many literary sources, it is necessary to decipher what is written in cuneiform — a script that was used for many languages, some unrelated, in Mesopotamia. The expansion of this field of study further enables archaeologists to make sense of many of the artifacts they find at excavation sites. The excavations at Nippur provide one excellent example of this. At this site, a temple to Inanna was uncovered toward the southwest of a ziggurat dedicated to Enlil.<sup>8</sup> The documents and building inscriptions found there allowed scholars to learn more about the daily life and functions within the temple. G. van Driel found that economically the temple was independent but had many economic links to the other temples in the city.<sup>9</sup> Another scholar, Albrecht Goetze, also studied the Nippur temple by looking at “the astonishing numbers [of] treasures that, as is the custom in Mesopotamia, had carefully been buried in parts of the building and underneath its very floors.”<sup>10</sup> Analysis of the numerous vases, bowls, statuettes, and other objects of value found showed that they had inscriptions dedicating them to Inanna. Not only were these objects very valuable, showing how sincerely individuals desired her favor, but most were also given by women, suggesting who her main worshippers were.

Sources about Inanna were not limited to this excavation, however. One of the most important classifications of documents that have been uncovered are the myths and hymns to Inanna and Ishtar. Kramer’s 1963 history about the Sumerians states that — to that point — five myths that featured Inanna as the major actor had been recovered and translated; in addition, two more myths focusing on Dumuzi, her husband, were also available to analyze her relationship

to him.<sup>11</sup> Kramer’s list is not all inclusive, however. It does not account for the numerous post-Sumerian documents, or more recently discovered sources. Examples of more recent sources that will be discussed are the poems and hymns from Enheduanna, *en*-priestess to Nanna under Sargon, king of Akkad. Translated by Betty De Shong Meador, the source is useful to an analysis of Inanna-Ishtar not only because of its discussion of the goddess, but also because it provides insight to the author, a human woman.<sup>12</sup>

In order to compare Inanna-Ishtar to the gender norms of the time, sources must be used that establish what they were, specifically what the female gender role was. One of the most useful in this aspect are the law codes of ancient civilizations. Analyzing the laws about women — how they were penalized or protected — provides one account of how they were expected to behave. It also provides insight into the different social castes women could fall into, and provides the understanding that not all women were expected to behave in the same way. Therefore, it is important to consider Inanna-Ishtar in comparison to multiple societal roles and see if there are some that she reflects more than others. Other textual sources that can be used are marriage contracts, which according to M. Stol, “reflect the social positions of both parties,”<sup>13</sup> and letters, both of which can be found in family archives across Mesopotamia.

A somewhat more challenging source scholars have available to them is the visual depiction of women and Inanna-Ishtar. Unlike many textual sources, visual depictions do not always state specifically what is being represented. An example of this can be found in Dominique Collon’s *The Queen of the Night*; Collon describes in detail the ambiguity around the identity of the women in the relief sculpture and suggests that it could be one of three different females, Ishtar being among her list.<sup>14</sup> Despite this dilemma, there are common features to Inanna-Ishtar’s visual portrayals: the lion and her weapons.<sup>15</sup> It is therefore possible to identify her in images recovered from ancient Mesopotamia, but oftentimes controversially.

The problem in identifying Inanna-Ishtar stems from several reasons. One is that, as shown above, it is not always clearly stated that she is the subject being depicted. In his analysis of the findings at Nippur, Goetze discusses disagreement about the goddess’s identity. The scholar I. J. Gelb (1960) contests the excavation’s identification of the temple as being dedicated to Inanna; rather he suggests the name on the artifact inscriptions was the goddess Ninni. Goetze defends his identification of the goddess as Inanna with the support of scholars E. Sollberger (1962), Th.

Jacobsen (1963) and A. Sjöberg (1966). They argue that “*In-nin* also appears with other goddesses and must be explained as an honorific epithet. Jacobsen suggest[ed] cautiously it might mean something like ‘conqueress.’” These ambiguities in translations are one source of the uncertainty in studying Inanna-Ishtar. Like the artistic depictions of the goddess, scholars must carefully analyze all the details available to uncover the most probable truth.<sup>16</sup>

This uncertainty has been present at sites other than Nippur as well. In her article “The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh,” Nadav Na’aman works to clarify the identity of a series of temples found during Woolley’s excavations at Alalakh. While Woolley vaguely stated they were “presumably dedicated to the city goddess invoked by Idri-mi,” Na’aman seeks to demonstrate from level VII archives that this goddess was in fact Ishtar. She supports her argument using textual sources from the city: Ishtar and Hadad were the two main deities mentioned, the king’s records invoked Ishtar as one of the deities giving him military might, and they refer to the *assinnum*, cultic devotees of Ishtar.<sup>17</sup>

The nature of Inanna-Ishtar’s cultic worshippers is another issue faced by scholars in the field. It is not only their job within the cult that is hard to understand, but also their very sexuality. Most scholars find their gender so ambiguous they believe but cannot agree on whether groups like the *kugarru*, *assinmu*, and *kulu’u* were eunuchs, homosexuals, hermaphrodites, or transsexuals.<sup>18</sup> Na’aman suggests that there might have been “some popular legend or belief where Ishtar played the role of a castrating goddess.”<sup>19</sup> Whether this was true in the literal sense cannot be proven; however, it is clear she and her cult provided confusion about the traditional concepts of gender in the Mesopotamian world. “She [Inanna-Ishtar] breaks the boundaries between the sexes by embodying both femaleness and maleness,”<sup>20</sup> and her cultic participants appear to have done the same.

According to Julia Assante, they may have done so in a way very different from what most scholars believe. Traditionally, many of Inanna-Ishtar’s male cultic worshippers were believed to be demasculinized in some way. As already mentioned, this manifested itself in scholarship by describing them as eunuchs, homosexuals, transsexuals, and so on. In her essay “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?: The Modern Prostituting of Ishtar, Her Clergy, and Her Cults,” Assante argues that there is no tangible evidence to support this. She even suggests that some of the positions traditionally thought to be held by males could have also been held by women. It is her belief that these views of the past were subjective and became normalized in scholarship as a result of Victorian-era norms.<sup>21</sup>

Assante also warns that scholars need to be aware of a pre-conceived notion about the idea of sacred marriage and sacred prostitution being related to Inanna-Ishtar. These concepts date back to Herodotus — who is a notoriously questionable source among scholars — and were expanded upon by later scholars such as James Frazer. Despite how commonly accepted and referenced these ideas have become, there is a notable lack of primary evidence to support the existence of this practice. Indeed, Assante claims that in the thousands of literary texts recovered from various Inanna-Ishtar temples, none even suggest such a practice existed. Furthermore, she believes the patriarchal norms of the era discredit the idea that fathers and husbands would allow women to engage in this type of behavior.<sup>22</sup>

The other great difficulty in identifying Inanna-Ishtar is that some sources indicate that there were multiple “Ishtars” simultaneously. Not only do her characteristics change over time, as she transitioned from the Sumerian Inanna to the Akkadian Ishtar, but she was also distinct to each individual city. This is demonstrated by Barbara Nevling Porter in her explanation of a hymn written for Assurbanipal. The hymn discusses the existence of both Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela as the king’s patrons, and it claims that they collaborated to help him during his reign.<sup>23</sup> It makes clear that they are two very distinct individuals, who had separate roles in his upbringing and provided him with different gifts. What adds to this confusion is that in other texts the same king invokes Ishtar as a single goddess, without differentiating between individuals. Porter sites one source which utilizes a single “Ishtar” in one line, just a few lines before distinguishing between the Ishtars of Nineveh and Arbela: “In the introduction to Prism A, for example, Assurbanipal announces that Shamash, Adad, and Ishtar — just Ishtar — have ordered him to exercise kingship, a comment that appears just twelve lines after a carefully specified Ishtar of Nineveh and Ishtar of Arbela.”<sup>24</sup> This type of situation makes evident the existence of distinct Ishtars, but also clarifies that there was one prevailing deity. Having discussed the various ways scholars have uncovered knowledge — and confusion — about Inanna-Ishtar, I will move to the next step. An analysis of how she broke with female gender norms of the time period and supported the kings of Mesopotamia is necessary to establish her characteristics.

## Identifying Inanna-Ishtar’s Personality

As can be surmised from that already discussed, Inanna-Ishtar demonstrated a great variety of behaviors both as she changed over time and within time periods as a result of her

personality. She was vital to the growth and prosperity of cities and their kingdoms and equally capable of destroying entire empires on a whim. Her cult and worship was one of the most widespread in ancient Mesopotamia, and she is one of the deities whom archaeologists have recovered the most sources about. Ultimately her strength and mood swings served as a mechanism for the ancient societies to explain both natural and human calamities and occurrences. To understand her personality, it is important to look at multiple aspects of her powers as a goddess: bringing fertility to agricultural fields and animal raising; acting as a lover and spouse, and strength as the goddess of war. It is also important to analyze how her cult worshipped her in her temples, myths, and hymns.

### A Goddess of Fertility

The power to bring fertility to the land was normally associated with Inanna rather than Ishtar. It was one of her earlier abilities, before becoming more militarized by the Assyrian era. Figure 1 shows her symbolized by the reed bundle as a fecundity goddess and being held by a priestess next to “two large containers (baskets?) probably holding grain.”<sup>25</sup> As well as the imagery, this role was reinforced by several literary documents that have been discovered and translated.

Her power as a goddess capable of bringing fertility to the land is attested in a Sumerian fertility song that describes her relationship with the Sumerian king Sulgi. Acting as an incarnation of her husband Dumuzi, Sulgi is one of many kings to claim marriage to the deity. It was believed that if the king could satisfy Inanna’s great lust, she would grant him all the necessary powers of kingship. In Sulgi’s case, Inanna rewarded him “with victory in battle and acclaimed him as the king eligible for all the rights, prerogatives, and insignia of kingship.”<sup>26</sup> More relevant to the tablet, however, was her power to bring fertility to the land. After Inanna complains of the lack of food, Sulgi asks her to accompany him one at a time into the fields, garden, and orchard.<sup>27</sup> The surviving part of this tablet does not specify how, but by some means it appears Inanna returns the areas to fruitfulness and prosperity to the earth.

Her power to bring prosperity to the land is again testified in “The Curse of Agade.” In this explanation of the fall of Akkad and its great empire, the initial success is attributed to Inanna: “Inanna allowed herself no sleep” and therefore the city was filled with gold and wisdom, and “their people witnessed (nothing but) happiness.”<sup>28</sup> After she — seemingly for no reason — refuses to accept further gifts from the people



**Figure 1:** Impression of a limestone cylinder-seal of the Uruk period (ca. 4,000-3350 BCE) depicting a priestess holding a reed bundle (symbolic of Inanna) and a priest-king holding an ear of wheat; from Charles Keith Maisels, *The Near East: Archaeology in the “Cradle of Civilization”* (London: Routledge, 1993).

and “forsook the shrine Agade,” the other powerful gods leave and take their blessings of wisdom and eloquence with them.<sup>29</sup> This results in the cities’ fearfulness as they begin to lose battles and doubt the future of kingship in the city. Agade’s final destruction does not come until later, after enraging Enlil, but it begins with the loss of Inanna’s favor.

In comparison to these documents, it is interesting that — despite being the goddess of love — Inanna-Ishtar is not equally associated with the fertility of humans. At least, that is the case according to Assante. She notes the significance that “Ishtar’s celebrated sexual exploits never once led to impregnation . . . but to an irresistible power and agency.”<sup>30</sup> This viewpoint is important because it changes the focus many scholars have placed on Inanna-Ishtar’s feminine role in Mesopotamian culture, and instead emphasizes her “masculine” powers. She was indeed an active pursuer of love in many myths, as well as a goddess sought after by many kings, and the many lovers who served Inanna-Ishtar over the course of Mesopotamian history is one of her most clearly defined traits.

### The Goddess of Love

Perhaps the most well-known testimony to the goddess’s many lovers is the “Epic of Gilgamesh.” When Ishtar “raised an eye at the beauty of Gilgamesh [and said] ‘Come, Gilgamesh, be thou (my) lover,’”<sup>31</sup> he scorns her foolishly. He cites multiple instances where she has taken lovers, grown bored with them, and condemned them to some horrible punishment: “Which lover didst thou love forever?/Which of thy shepherds pleased [thee for all time]?”<sup>32</sup> Though a rash thing to say to a goddess — and a speech for which Gilgamesh and his city received severe punishment — it does reflect a true aspect of her character. It is not surprising that an immortal deity like Inanna-Ishtar would take multiple

lovers over her long life, but the way in which she left them could be very shocking.

Of the many lovers which Gilgamesh lists, Tammuz is the best known. Known to the Mesopotamians as the shepherd Dumuzi, he was Inanna-Ishtar’s first lover and husband. There were four different myths known about how these two became lovers and of these only one suggests that Dumuzi was not Inanna-Ishtar’s first choice.<sup>33</sup> In the other myths, she quickly submits to his seduction with varying levels of approval from her parents. One of these myths, translated by Kramer, states

As I [Inanna] was shining bright, was dancing about,  
As I was singing away while the bright light overcame  
(?) the night,  
He met me, he met me,  
The lord Kuli-Anna (Dumuzi) met me,  
The lord put his hand into my hand,  
Ushungal-Anna (Dumuzi) embraced me.<sup>34</sup>

After this affair they agree to marry, but their relationship does not stay so romantic.

A well-preserved myth known as “Inanna’s Descent to the Nether World” tells scholars about Dumuzi’s demise at the hands of Inanna-Ishtar. Scholars recovered this document in several different pieces, with the earlier parts of the myth being translated first. Because of this and the combined knowledge that Dumuzi had died at some point in Mesopotamian mythology, it was frequently assumed that Inanna-Ishtar went to the Nether World in order to save him;<sup>35</sup> the similarity between such a story and the Greek legend of Orpheus is a reflection of how subjective historians can be. As more of the text was translated however, the extended story demonstrated that this could not be the case. Inanna-Ishtar is killed by her sister Ereshkigal during the journey and only resurrected with the help of Enki, but in order to return to the living world she must find a replacement for herself. Of the several gods she meets while on this quest, it is her husband Dumuzi whom she condemns. Angered to find him living prosperously without her,

She fastened the eye upon him, the eye of death,  
Spoke the word against him, the word of wrath,  
Uttered the cry against him, the cry of guilt:  
“As for him, carry him off.”<sup>36</sup>

Her actions in this myth display two of her most noticeable behavioral traits: severe irascibility and changeability. Her influence on other deities is also noticeable, however, and proves that despite being female, she is one of the most powerful of the pantheon.

### The Goddess of War

Her power as the goddess of war contributes to the portrayal of her as an irascible individual prone to random, wanton destruction. Fumi Karahashi, in her comparative work “Fighting the Mountain: Some Observations on the Sumerian Myths of Inanna and Ninurta,” looks at this aspect of Inanna-Ishtar in greater detail. In contrast to Ninurta — who fights his opponent Asag in response to a rebellion — Inanna challenges Mount Ebih I: its “disrespectful behavior as well as its beauty . . . apparently enrages Inanna and invites its total destruction.”<sup>37</sup> The fact that she is angered because the mountain does not bow to her is reflective of other stories that show she becomes petulant whenever she feels slighted or disrespected. Her condemnation of Dumuzi in the Nether World myth and her anger toward Gilgamesh in his epic both show this.

However, she is not only aggravated by her lovers. In “Enki and the World Order,” Inanna becomes bitter toward Enki, one of the oldest and most powerful gods, because she believes he slighted her by giving all the special powers to other deities.<sup>38</sup> He pacifies her, but is put on the defensive in doing so. It is important in these sorts of myths to quickly satisfy the goddess since when people fail to do so, they risk the same fate as the unfortunate Mount Ebih: “she [Inanna] leaves the sad destruction behind her: the stones forming the body of Ebih clatter down its flanks.”<sup>39</sup> In the comparison, Karahashi points out that, unlike Ninurta, Inanna “destroys for the sake of destruction” and builds nothing out of the wreckage.<sup>40</sup> To the ancient Mesopotamians, her personality would therefore be one way of explaining the chaos of the world and natural disasters.

Her art also demonstrated her strength as a warrior. As one oracle described her in a dream, they imagined her equipped for battle: “The goddess Ishtar who dwells in Arbela came in. Right and left quivers were suspended from her. She was holding a bow in her hand, and a sharp sword was drawn to do battle. . . . Her face shone like fire. Then [she went out in a frightening way] to defeat your enemies.”<sup>41</sup> This type of description gives scholars an idea of what she looked like in Mesopotamian art. One famous piece often believed to represent her is “The Queen of the Night” relief at the British Museum (Figure 2). The horned helmet makes

it clear the image depicts a Mesopotamian deity, but other icons like the lions, jewels and rod-and-ring — held in her hands — also suggest it may have been her. All of these were icons associated with her image. The lion was a symbol of power frequently associated with Inanna-Ishtar in art and literature. The rod-and-ring symbols held in her hands were a symbol of divinity, and items she carried in her descent to the Nether World.<sup>42</sup> Where the Queen of the Night falls short of being Inanna-Ishtar is the lack of her weapons; normally, she carries a scimitar in one hand. It also contains two lions, even though Ishtar is typically only depicted with one.<sup>43</sup> Figure 3 provides a comparison to study this. While the second image also has two lions, which Ishtar sits above, like in Figure 2, it differs by displaying multiple weapons — scimitars and maces — rising from her shoulders.<sup>44</sup> This type of iconography was more common with Ishtar and displayed her skill as the goddess of war.

The Gilgamesh epic also provides support for the recognition of Inanna-Ishtar's powers as the goddess of war. When she goes to Anu in order to receive the Bull of Heaven and take her vengeance on Gilgamesh, the god is at first unwilling. Consequently, she proceeds to threaten him:

If thou [dost not make] me [the Bull of Heaven],  
I will smash [the doors of the Nether World],  
I will [...],  
I will [raise up the dead eating (and) alive],  
So that the dead shall outnumber the living!<sup>45</sup>

After additionally assuring him that she can provide food for people and animals in the resulting famine, Anu concedes the Bull to her. As the goddess of war, her power is so impressive that even one of the greatest of the gods does not desire to provoke her wrath. Her power and aggression in this tale is fitting for the goddess who would later be invoked by many kings to support their reign as king.

Inanna-Ishtar was beneficial to kings both as overseer against treaty-breakers and a patron to the king's military strength while conquering new territory or suppressing rebellion. The treaties written by ancient Mesopotamians contained severe consequences for any cities that broke with the agreements. Inanna-Ishtar was frequently invoked "as a war goddess who will break the bows of any treaty breakers and make them crouch defeated."<sup>46</sup> This was a fitting action for her as the goddess of war, but not the only consequence. In another curse, the king Idrimi states, "Whoever shall change the settlement ... may Ishtar deliver him into the hands of those who pursue him; may Ishtar ... impress



**Figure 2:** Burney Relief (image of unidentified Mesopotamian goddess, known as the Queen of the Night), ca. 1750 BCE, British Museum, London.



**Figure 3:** Akkadian cylinder seal depicting Inanna-Ishtar on her throne receiving libations from worshippers, with another goddess (right) attending her; from Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983).

feminine parts into his male parts."<sup>47</sup> This action would not only defeat the king's enemies, but also shame and humiliate them. The conquered enemy should not challenge the king's rule, since the goddess had already demonstrated who she favored.



**Figure 4:** "Stela of Nabonidus" depicting Nabonidus beneath the symbols of Sin (left), Ishtar (middle) and Shamash (right), ca. 555 BCE, British Museum, London.

The acknowledgement of Inanna-Ishtar as a leader and guide in battle was a common theme in Mesopotamian texts. By gaining her favor, opponents were forced to submit. A stela about Nabonidus acknowledges this. Normally, this Babylonian king offered all his praise to Sin — the moon god — but in this artifact he also acknowledged the deities Ishtar and Shamash, who can be seen above him in their common symbolic forms (Figure 4). The text also contributes that "upon the command of Sin <<and>> Ishtar, the Lady-of-Battle, without whom neither hostilities nor reconciliation can occur in the country and no battle can be fought ... all the hostile kings, were sending me messages of reconciliation and friendship."<sup>48</sup> Ishtar's power was so great that the other kings' expectations of Nabonidus were unquestionably increased by his relation to her. An oracle's earlier statement to the Assyrian king Esarhaddon also displayed Ishtar's support for the ruling king:

I am the goddess Ishtar of Arbela,<sup>49</sup> she who (15) has destroyed your enemies at your mere approach... I shall lie in wait for your enemies, I shall give them to you. I, Ishtar of Arbela, will go before you and behind you... O king of Assyria, fear not! The enemy of the king of Assyria I will deliver to slaughter.<sup>50</sup>

Without the support of the goddess of war, Esarhaddon could not have hoped to succeed in his campaigns against neighboring kingdoms. With her guidance and favoritism however, he — like Nabonidus and many of those before and after them — was confident in his power to challenge the world around him.

Kings were not the only individuals to trust in Inanna-Ishtar's strength, however. As previously alluded to, three hymns written by the Sumerian High Priestess Enheduanna were discovered and later translated by Betty De Shong Meador. All three exalt Inanna and even argue that she is the greatest and most powerful of the gods: "queen of rare deeds/ she gathers the me/ from heaven and earth/ surpassing great An."<sup>51</sup> In these poems, Inanna's strength as the goddess of war is attested to both in literal descriptions and metaphorically. The first of these can be shown in the hymn of her battle against Mount Ebih: "Inanna/ holding a pure lance/ terror folds in her robes/ flood-storm-hurricane adorned/ she bolts out in battle/ plants a standing shield on the ground/ Great Lady Inanna/ battle planner/ foe smasher."<sup>52</sup> Here, it is clear that Inanna is physically strong, but "battle planner" also recognizes her intelligence and talent in planning military strategies. When the goddess was being less rational during warfare however, she could be very animal-like in her actions: "mountain wildcat/ prowling the roads/ shows wet fangs/ gnashes her teeth."<sup>53</sup> This sort of imagery evokes the primal, instinctual aspects of the goddess described by Harris as "wild and savage, excessive in her sexuality and love of war."<sup>54</sup> Inanna-Ishtar is capable of being the rational, methodical warrior, but also of frequently being aggressive and instinctual.

### A Collector of the Mes

A final feature of Inanna-Ishtar's role in ancient Mesopotamian society was as a collector of *me*. "The MEs are the social and cultural elements, both abstract and concrete, of which Sumerians thought their world was made up."<sup>55</sup> The main evidence archaeologists have uncovered about this so far is the tale of "Inanna and the God of Wisdom," also known as "Inanna and Enki." Inanna, desiring to gain the power and respect conveyed by the *me*, decides to go to the Abzu and meet the god of wisdom, Enki. By praising, sitting and drinking with Enki, he quickly becomes compliant and gives her what she desires:

They toasted each other; they challenged each other.  
Enki, swaying with drink, toasted Inanna:

“In the name of my power! In the name of my holy shrine!

To my daughter Inanna I shall give

The high priesthood! Godship!

The noble, enduring crown! The throne of kingship!”

Inanna replied:

“I take them!”<sup>56</sup>

Their conversation does not end there, though. Enki continues to toast Inanna, and in total she receives 80 *mes*.<sup>57</sup> When Enki becomes sober again, he realizes what has happened and sends his servant to retrieve the *mes* from Inanna. She refuses however and — despite Enki sending sea monsters to stop her — returns home safely to her city of Uruk. Intriguingly, despite being the goddess of war, Inanna does not defeat the monsters herself, but instead relies upon her servant Ninshubur — the same servant who aided her in the “Descent to the Nether World” myth — to do so. She is far more interested in watching the *mes* and returning them to her temple to increase her renown. This myth therefore reinforces Inanna-Ishtar’s intelligence and cleverness as tools she could use against others.

### Inanna-Ishtar’s Cult

Inanna-Ishtar’s temples had both similarities to and differences from the temples of other deities. As was the custom and belief, temples maintained statues of the goddess who was believed to reside within it. A. R. George discusses this in his analysis of “Inanna’s Descent,” arguing that the lines of Ninsubur’s lament are not metaphorical, but a literal description of the desecration of her statue and dismantling of the lapis lazuli, silver and other precious objects used to construct it.<sup>58</sup> While caring for Inanna-Ishtar in the form of this statue was a temple’s (and its members’) primary purpose, there is also evidence that they had to function as an economically independent organization. This can be seen from the numerous tablets accounting for ration lists and trade. G. van Driel’s study of tablets found at the Nippur temple indicate the employment or cultic involvement of agricultural workers, house personnel, musicians, gardeners, etc.<sup>59</sup> The temple’s records also provide evidence for her main festival, when “payment of personnel belongings to the Inanna temple by other institutions ... in month XI exceeds the whole amount of the rations paid in the following month.”<sup>60</sup> According to Harris, learning about the nature of these festivals and how the cult prepared them is important, because they are reflective of Inanna-Ishtar’s character: “the festivals of the goddess were the time for disorder and

antistructure, when reversals in categories of age, species, status and sex all came into play”;<sup>61</sup> “the goddess, involves the arena of war, for her playground was the battleground”;<sup>62</sup> and her main cultic actors — like the *kurgarru* — performed a ritual sword dance that some scholars argue involved self-mutilation.<sup>63</sup> These festival traditions were a way the cities could embrace Inanna-Ishtar’s multi-faceted personality and gender ambiguity. The fact that her worship involved such gender confusion suggests that ancient Mesopotamians recognized that their most powerful goddess broke with the expectations for both male and female.

The scholarly debate about Inanna-Ishtar’s main cultic practitioners has already been discussed, but while her cult may be an enigma, there are primary sources that clearly indicate Inanna-Ishtar did have the power to reverse human gender. In the New Year’s Festival discussed, there is a procession of individuals who enter “dressed as men on their right sides but as women on their left”<sup>64</sup> and are followed by

young men with hoops and young women with swords and double axes. . . priestesses carrying the gir (sword or dagger) and a ba-da-ra (a battle club, prod or knife). The festival climaxes with the kugarra who take a weapon and do something that creates blood. Despite the utter obscurity of the lines, the interpretation has been self-mutilation.<sup>65</sup>

Taken by itself, this festival practice proves only that Inanna-Ishtar’s cult involved gender reversal. Comparing it to other sources, however, shows that it was a power of Inanna-Ishtar to change human genders. Na’aman cites multiple instances — such as in the Assyrian royal inscriptions and Hittite military oaths — where Ishtar was shown changing men into women.<sup>66</sup> Other sources also show where she changes women into men. Indeed, Enheduanna’s hymns to Inanna suggest that festivals may have involved these gender-mixing ritual behaviors to pay homage to the goddess’ power to reverse human gender as a protection for her followers and form of divine justice.

In “Lady of Largest Heart,” Enheduanna describes how Inanna came across a maiden “evilly spurned” and aided her. The goddess decides to make her a “manly/woman,” and so “in sacred rite/she takes the broach/which pins a woman’s robe/breaks the needle, silver thin/consecrates the maiden’s heart as male/gives to her a mace ... splits the door/where cleverness resides/and there reveals/what lives inside.”<sup>67</sup> After assisting the young woman, she goes to the man who scorned her and “breaks his mace/gives to him

the broach/which pins a woman’s robe.”<sup>68</sup> Through these actions, Inanna gives the woman masculine traits of strength and intelligence, and she shames the man by demasculinizing him. Enheduanna exalts the goddess for such action — “these two SHE changed/renamed” — and it is possible that the religious festivals did the same.<sup>69</sup> If cultic members like the *assinmu* really did include manly woman, as Assante suggests, then it would make sense that they would celebrate their goddess’s power to reverse genders and protect her faithful worshippers.

Understanding Inanna-Ishtar’s powers and personality is therefore difficult and confusing at times, but results in some clear lessons. The goddess embraced both feminine and masculine components of her personality. As the goddess of fertility and love, she embraced her nature as a woman, but her military prowess and aggressiveness in the pursuit of knowledge or sexual desires were both more masculine behaviors. Furthermore, her cultic worship demonstrates that not only was she gender ambiguous, but also possessed the power to change the gender of humans. To prove that Inanna-Ishtar was unrepresentative of how Mesopotamian women were expected and allowed to behave, it is next necessary to identify what these women were allowed to do, and what their gender role in society was.

### Identifying the Gender Norm for Women in Ancient Mesopotamia

In order to study how Inanna-Ishtar broke with the female gender norms of ancient Mesopotamia, it is important to also conclude what the female gender norm was. In this regard, most scholars concur that a woman’s life revolved around and was predominated by marriage and childbearing. This remains true across the socio-economic divisions of the time: elite women, free women, and slaves. Laws and marriage texts focus the most attention on the marriage process and whether or not a woman was able to bear children. They also show that one of the most important transitions in their lives was moving from being the dependent of a father or brother to being the dependent of their husbands’ households. Once married, adultery was not permissible under any circumstances due to the obsession with patrilineal familial lines and divorce was seriously discouraged. Some women did not fall into this typical gender mold, however, and groups like the *harimtu* and *naditu* require separate discussion.

Scholars’ long accepted interpretation of ancient Mesopotamian marriages is that they are “basically a sale” — “payment first, at the betrothal, and *traditio* later, at the

wedding.”<sup>70</sup> M. Stol summarizes the fundamental norms of marriage as

- (a) The fathers of the bride and groom come to an agreement and the couple is to live in the husband’s home;
- (b) The husband can take another wife if no children are born;
- (c) A man has the right to take a concubine;
- (d) A man can degradate his wife and promote his concubine;
- (e) The eldest son receives a double share in the inheritance.

This summary covers the basic ideas behind the marriage, but it does not analyze the numerous variances in a women’s life once she was married, or before that. One thing to consider is unfaithfulness or divorce in marriage, both of which occurred. Because the Mesopotamians were so concerned with being able to identify a child’s paternal ancestry, adultery was a serious crime that received substantial attention in Mesopotamian laws. Law 7 in “Laws of Ur-Namma” demonstrates the common punishment for this crime. If the woman is found guilty she was killed, but in order to be proven innocent she had to endure the “River Ordeal.”<sup>71</sup> It was not easy for a woman to leave her husband, either. The “Laws of Hammurabi” did permit a woman to leave her husband if he could be proven wayward and cruel — law 142 — but if she is found to have falsely accused him, or is the one committing faults, she risks being sent away with nothing, made a slave woman, or even killed.<sup>72</sup> Ultimately, she belonged to her husband and since her primary task was to bear children, she could not engage in extramarital relationships.

With elite and wealthy women, the analogy of a marriage to a sale becomes even more appropriate, yet these women also exercised rights and influence poorer women and slaves could not. “Rulers regularly gave and received ranking women in diplomatic unions.”<sup>73</sup> There is evidence that kings would arrange marriages for princesses that could secure ties to other nations and ensure the success of the kingdom. The women were not just objects however; Amy R. Gansell proposes that “in addition to their domestic and reproductive functions ... elite women contributed to the male-dominated spheres of the arts, economy, religion, and government.”<sup>74</sup> The truth in this statement can be seen from works like Enheduanna’s hymns or the stela records of Adad-guppi, mother of Babylon’s King Nabonidus, who exercised considerable influence over her son’s religious and political beliefs.<sup>75</sup> Perhaps elite women and their dowries

were traded through marriage agreements, but the women were still able to influence their husbands and lives.

To gain influence and a permanent position in the household, women were expected to bear children after marriage. According to Stol after marriage “she is now ‘the bride’ (*kallatum*) and she seems to keep this title until her first child is born.” If a woman failed to produce children she risked her position as the only wife: “in theory monogamy was the rule, but in practice what might be called ‘secondary wives,’ drawn from among the slaves, were also tolerated.”<sup>76</sup> The “Laws of Lipit-Ishtar” indicate this in laws 24-31: in order to produce more children a man may take a second wife. He may also adopt children he had by a slave or *karkid*.<sup>77</sup> Childbearing so that one’s husband would have an heir was so important Mesopotamians were willing to alter the normal family structure.

Some ancient Mesopotamian women were also involved in work aside from that associated with their marriage. One form of labor was slavery. One could become a slave in numerous ways, such as by birth, but one of the most notable is that “a father of a family might be driven by destitution to sell as slaves his wife or children”<sup>78</sup> While most scholars might focus on the economic implications of this fact, the power the husband exercises over his wife and her children is so extreme it can only reinforce the image of a woman being owned and traded by her father or husband. This may have been only a last resort, but pledging wives, children and other slaves to a creditor as security on a debt “was not an unusual step and having them released appears to be one of the main problems.”<sup>79</sup> Even though individuals given as security were not supposed to be kept in slavery for more than four years, this did not guarantee that their owners would willingly give them up at the end of that term.<sup>80</sup>

There were types of work available to free women as well. In addition to common domestic chores, some “wives of Old Assyrian merchants . . . were actively involved in their husband’s business in the colonies”<sup>81</sup> A small number of women were even able to manage their own landed estates.<sup>82</sup> While these jobs were associated with the more well-to-do, there were also occupations available to poorer classes. Some women became employed by temples as agricultural workers,<sup>83</sup> weavers, flour-grinders, and other kinds of laborers.<sup>84</sup> The various types of jobs they completed can be found by the ration lists and laws written to protect them. On these it can be seen that a women’s labor was worth only half of what a man would receive for similar leveled work; women received only half the rations men did.<sup>85</sup> There were

also laws that protected them and mandated what kind of treatment female workers should receive.

One of the most recorded female vocations was that of the bar-wife or innkeeper. In ancient Mesopotamia it was traditional that single women owned all the taverns. According to Stol, these women not only provided beer to their customers, but also small loans.<sup>86</sup> This is supported by law I of the “Laws of X”: “If a woman innkeeper gives one of her vats (of beer on credit) to a man, [she shall receive] 50 silas of grain at the harvest.”<sup>87</sup> Despite having these extra rights, however, the bar-wives also had additional responsibilities. If one was caught conducting illegal trades and convicted then the authorities “shall cast her into the water.”<sup>88</sup> Law 109 of Hammurabi’s laws also states “if there should be a woman innkeeper in whose house criminals congregate, and she does not seize those criminals and lead them off to the palace authorities, that woman innkeeper shall be killed.”<sup>89</sup> These were strict consequences for crimes that may have only resulted in a man being fined. Despite being independent, bar-wives were still low on the social scale and had their own rules to be aware of.

Discussing the role of bar-wives and taverns leads to Assante’s analysis of the *karkid* and *harimtu*, who were frequently associated with these institutions.<sup>90</sup> Early scholars of ancient Mesopotamia consistently translated these two words as “prostitute,” but Assante reliably argues that these words have nothing to do with prostitution.<sup>91</sup> Instead, the words roughly translate as “a woman who is neither ‘the daughter of a man’ nor ‘the wife of a man.’ She was thus a woman separated from the patriarchal household, as the stem verb *haramu*, ‘to separate,’ indicates.”<sup>92</sup> Understanding this correction allows a more accurate study of primary sources in order to uncover their role in society. One matter of significance is that because they were separate from the patriarchal ties that regulated most women, *karkid/harimtu* had sexual liberty unknown to other females. Consider law 27 of the “Laws of Lipit-Ishtar:”

If a man’s wife does not bear him a child but a prostitute from the street does bear him a child, he shall provide grain, oil, and clothing rations for the prostitute, and the child whom the prostitute bore him shall be his heir; as long as his wife is alive, the prostitute will not reside in the house with his first-ranking wife.<sup>93</sup>

To understand the relevance of this law, it is first important to recognize that Martha T. Roth has translated

*karkid* as prostitute; the transliteration from cuneiform uses “*kar-kid-da*,” “*kar-kid-ba*,” “*kar-kid-dè*,” and “*kar-kid*” in each respective clause of the law. If one reconsiders the law then using Assante’s definition of *karkid*, they can see how it demonstrates that the *karkid/harimtu* were free from the sexual limitations of women within the normal patriarchal status. Rather than being punished or left to a male relative’s judgment for having a child outside of normal family relations, the *karkum* is provided for after producing the childless man an heir. She is not considered an equal to the wife, a woman living respectfully within the traditional female gender role, but she is also not mistreated. This could perhaps be a result of the *karkid/harimtu*’s relation to Ishtar, who was the patron goddess of these unmarried women. This relationship is reinforced “in the Akkadian *Erra Epic* (4,52-53) . . . where Uruk is said to be ‘the city of *kezertu*’s, *samhatu*’s and *harimtu*’s, whom Ishtar deprived of husbands and reckoned as her own.”<sup>94</sup> By claiming them, Ishtar allowed these women to live a life very distinct from the average female, and it is telling that she patronized women who failed to conform to normal female gender roles of Mesopotamia.

The final distinct group of women who should be discussed individually is the *naditu*. As was mentioned previously, *naditu* stood out from the average women because they were not permitted to bear children and had many privileges similar to men. Normally, *naditu* lived with a group of women in the *gagum*,<sup>95</sup> but they could also marry, manage private estates, and tend to other private interests.<sup>96</sup> Concerning marriage, a *naditu* was not allowed to have children, so she was expected to provide another means for her husband to do so. The source explanations for this differ. In the “Laws of Hammurabi,” law 144 states that “if a man marries a *naditu*, and that *naditu* gives a slave woman to her husband, and thus she provides children, but that man then decides to marry a *sugitu*, they will not permit that man to do so, he will not marry the *sugitu*.”<sup>97</sup>

In this situation, by providing a slave woman as a second “wife,” the *naditu* fulfills both her obligation to provide children to her husband and her obligation to refrain from bearing children herself. Stol suggests, however, that a *naditu* would bring “her sister with her as second wife (the *sugutum*); this woman was expected to give birth to the children. She was the physical sister and marrying two sisters may have been an ancient tradition.”<sup>98</sup> These two sources provide very different explanations for how a *naditu* provided children in marriage, but it is possible the tradition varied across time periods and in different cities. What is evident is that even

though they differed from the gender norm somewhat, they were also expected to fulfill it in alternative ways.

While not all women fell under the same strict gender norm, most lived within the structure where marriage dominated a women’s life and childbearing was her ultimate purpose. Within this patriarchal family structure, she was the subject and effectively property of her husband and his family. Some individuals did step outside strict family ties though; elite women were able to use their influence and knowledge to become involved in politics, religion and other aspects of culture and lower class women had different types of work available to them as a means to earn extra income. The most distinct class of women though was the *kakid/harimtu*, who were not associated with a father or a husband. This gave them the ability to pursue careers and sexual lives free from the control of traditional patriarchal ties.

## A Comparison of Inanna-Ishtar and Ancient Mesopotamian Women

Having familiarized oneself with the historiography around Inanna-Ishtar, the personality and characteristics of the goddess, and the normal female gender roles of the time period, it becomes possible to examine how Inanna-Ishtar compared to women of the time. Because the primary role of women in ancient Mesopotamia was as a wife and a mother, this forms the primary comparison between the two. However Inanna-Ishtar’s traits as the goddess of war and a collector of *me* are a vital part of her identity, and must also be discussed because of the fact that they severely break the goddess apart from purely feminine behavior.

Like most women in Mesopotamia, Inanna-Ishtar was married, but her role as a wife was remarkably different from what women were normally expected to have. Whereas human women’s main purpose as a wife was to bear children for their husbands, Inanna-Ishtar never provides a child for her husband Dumuzi. Instead, her behavior was much more primal as she sought and gave sexual love and pleasure. The “Courtship of Inanna and Dumuzi” makes this relationship explicit in a way human love is not described:

Inanna spoke:

“ . . . He laid his hands on my holy vulva,  
He smoothed my black boat with cream,  
He quickened my narrow boat with milk,  
He caressed me on the bed.

Now I will caress my high priest on the bed,  
I will caress the faithful shepherd Dumuzi,



I will caress his loins, the shepherdship of the land,  
I will decree a sweet fate for him.”<sup>99</sup>

The available sources neither prove nor deny whether human women were expected to take the same pleasure in carnal relations with their husbands, but having a well-known and popular goddess who did so suggests they might have.

On the other hand, not everything Inanna-Ishtar did as a lover would be allowed for human women. While of these concepts it is easiest to say that Inanna-Ishtar was much freer with her love, this is not exactly true. She did take multiple lovers over the thousands of years she was worshipped, but she was generally faithful to them during the time she was in love with them. Her “marriages” to Mesopotamian kings were even described in terms of those kings being incarnations of her husband Dumuzi.<sup>100</sup> Mesopotamian women were also allowed to remarry after the death of their husbands, though they were legally less valued as widows than as first-time brides.<sup>101</sup> In these ways the women are at least similar to Inanna-Ishtar, but where the goddess completely breaks with any plausible norm of the female gender role is in her murder of her husband. Whereas Mesopotamian women were never even allowed to serve as witness in a court case,<sup>102</sup> Inanna-Ishtar serves as both judge and jury for Dumuzi when she says “As for *him*, carry him off.”<sup>103</sup> This is a drastic reversal from the human women who were so under their husbands’ control, they could give them away as slaves. By condemning her husband to death, as well as never producing an heir for her husband, Inanna-Ishtar breaks with the women’s most important gender roles of obedience and reproductive usefulness.

Despite never having any children in her mythology, Inanna-Ishtar was as time described as a mother or protective figure. Gertrud Farber translates one Old Babylonian incantation that invoked Inanna to help a woman go through labor: “The woman who was about to give birth steered the *Gi*-baot through the water, / pure Inanna steered the *Gi*-boat through the water.”<sup>104</sup> Even though Inanna was a protective deity in these circumstances, she still was only rarely described as actually being a mother. The Assyrian king Assurbanipal was one individual who did fancy her this way. According to Porter, Ishtar of Nineveh was described as his mother, and Ishtar of Arbela was his nanny.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, in an oracular dream, a priest described her relation to him as motherly: “You [Assurbanipal] were standing in front of her and she spoke to you like a real mother. . . . She wrapped you in her lovely babysling, protecting your entire body.”<sup>106</sup>

These examples could have demonstrated either sincere belief, or propaganda to legitimize Assurbanipal’s kingship in a way similar to when other kings described themselves as the husband of Inanna-Ishtar. Despite the example of this one king, however, Inanna-Ishtar was still more frequently depicted as a lover and warrior than as a mother. Her life did not revolve around the features of bearing children and raising them for her husband, unlike the women of Mesopotamia.

It is in her role as the goddess of war where Inanna-Ishtar truly broke with feminine behavior and embraced a masculine side not acceptable to human women. Unlike women, her iconography frequently displays her carrying weapons and other implements of war. The literature about her also places great influence on her military might. In contrast, the only discovered evidence that Mesopotamian women might have engaged in any form of military show is Assante’s suggestion that *assinnu* may have been women. Even then, the possibility is confined to a small sub-sect of individuals who are non-representative of the general female population. For most women, they were expected to work in the home of a male relation or engage in domestic work with low compensation values. It was only those women specifically “claimed” by Inanna-Ishtar or other deities who were allowed to break with the Mesopotamia’s gender norm.

What then was Inanna-Ishtar’s purpose if not to provide a divine representation of how women should behave? Why would such a dedicated lover, fertile benefactress, and clever collector of *me* also commit matricide, be a violent warrior, and destroy so arbitrarily? Scholars suggest that Inanna-Ishtar originated and developed as a way to explain the natural disasters and unpredictability of the dangerous world they lived in. Through her affectionate and/or orderly traits they could explain why the world would become benign and safe or why a kingdom had success militarily. In contrast, through her violent destruction and chaos priests could explain the floods, famine, and other catastrophes that struck Mesopotamian cities. As Enheduanna describes Inanna in the battle against Ebih, when

FURY OVERTURNS HER HEART!  
...  
bedlam unleashed  
She sends down a raging battle  
Hurls a storm from her wide arms  
To the ground below  
...

And hurricane winds  
Swift piercing, stinging  
Fly with Inanna’s fury  
Suck loosened earth into sweet air.<sup>107</sup>

Perhaps this was why so many ancient Mesopotamian cities had temples to Inanna-Ishtar. As such a powerful goddess, it was important to at least attempt to appease her and retain her favor at all times. She did not represent to them how a socially acceptable women should act and behave, but was instead an intricate mix of both the feminine and masculine. Through her multiple complex roles as a goddess of fertility, love, war and collector of the *me*, Inanna-Ishtar could bring both prosperity and calamity to this ancient society.

## Conclusion

Inanna-Ishtar was an enigma in her behaviors, and this has caused scholars considerable discord and confusion while studying her. To this day, new ideas, translations, and interpretations of the goddess and her cult are being argued in an academic setting. While her iconography is somewhat recognizable, the lack of definite labels on many images leads to the question of whether it was really her. Literature also leaves scholars with important questions such as how could there be multiple Ishtars at once, and what sex and gender did her cult worshippers actually possess? What has become clear is that her main functions as a deity were as the goddess of love and the goddess of war. In addition, early renditions of Inanna described her as a goddess of fertility, and throughout history Mesopotamians lauded her success in collecting *me* from Enki and the underworld. But her personality and character stand out because of how much they contrast with the women of ancient Mesopotamia, whose lives for most revolved around marriage, producing children, and in effect being the property of their husbands or other male relatives. Some may find it easy to dismiss this as a simple result of Inanna-Ishtar being a goddess and above insignificant, human rules, but the explanation is not that simple. There were many other Mesopotamian goddesses who did conform to the female gender roles of the era. Inanna-Ishtar specifically embraces both female and male characteristics; she was an anomaly who broke gender norms more drastically than any other figure in ancient Mesopotamian mythology or history.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rivkah Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox and a Coincidence of Opposites,” *History of Religions* 30, no. 3 (February 1991), 263.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Noah Kramer was an Assyriologist who received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania’s Oriental Studies Department in 1930; see Ake W. Sjöberg, “Samuel Noah Kramer (28 September 1897–26 November 1990),” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 138, no. 1 (March 1994): 171.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Noah Kramer, “Inanna’s Descent to the Nether World’ Continued,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 94, no. 4 (August 25, 1950): 361; Gertrud Farber, “Inanna and Enki’ in Geneva: A Sumerian Myth Revisited,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54, no. 4 (October 1995): 287.

<sup>4</sup> Sjöberg, “Samuel Noah Kramer,” 172.

<sup>5</sup> Miroslav Marcovich, “From Ishtar to Aphrodite,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 30, no. 2 (1996): 46.

<sup>6</sup> Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox,” 263.

<sup>7</sup> Julia Assante, “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?: The Modern Prostituting of Ishtar, Her Clergy, and Her Cults,” in *Tempelprostitution im Altertum: Fakten und Fiktionen*, ed. T. S. Scheer (Berlin: Oikumene, 2009), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Albrecht Goetze, “Early Dynastic Dedication Inscriptions from Nippur,” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 23, no. 2 (1970): 39.

<sup>9</sup> G. Van Driel, “Nippur and the Inanna Temple during the Ur III Period,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 3 (1995): 395.

<sup>10</sup> Goetze, “Early Dynastic Dedication Inscriptions from Nippur,” 39.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 171.

<sup>12</sup> Betty De Shong Meador, *Inanna lady of Largest Heart: Poems of the Sumerian High Priestess Enheduanna* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), xi.

<sup>13</sup> M. Stol, “Women in Mesopotamia,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38, no. 2 (1995): 140.

<sup>14</sup> Dominique Collon, *The Queen of the Night* (London: British Museum Press, 2005), 39–41.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>16</sup> Goetze, “Early Dynastic Dedication Inscriptions from Nippur,” 40.

<sup>17</sup> Nadav Na’aman, “The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 39, no. 3 (July 1980): 209–11.

<sup>18</sup> Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox,” 276.

<sup>19</sup> Na’aman, “The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh,” 211.

<sup>20</sup> Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox,” 268.

<sup>21</sup> Assante, “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?,” 23–54.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Barbara Nevling Porter, “Ishtar of Nineveh and Her Collaborator, Ishtar of Arbela, in the Reign of Assurbanipal,” *Iraq* 66 (2004): 41.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>25</sup> Charles Keith Maisels, *The Near East: Archaeology in the “Cradle of Civilization”* (London: Routledge, 1993), 188.

<sup>26</sup> Samuel Noah Kramer, “Inanna and Sulgi: A Sumerian Fertility Song,” *Iraq* 31, no. 1 (1969): 18.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 20, 22.

<sup>28</sup> James B. Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 416–17.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 417.

<sup>30</sup> Assante, “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?,” 29.

<sup>31</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 50.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>33</sup> Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 252–53.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>35</sup> Kramer, “‘Inanna’s Descent to the Nether World’ Continued,” 363.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Karahashi Fumi, “Fighting the Mountain: Some Observations on the Sumerian Myths of Inanna and Ninurta,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 63, no. 2 (April 2004): 114.

<sup>38</sup> Kramer, *The Sumerians*, 171, 173.

<sup>39</sup> Fumi, “Fighting the Mountain,” 118.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 400.

<sup>42</sup> Collon, *The Queen of the Night*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>44</sup> Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth: Her Stories and Hymns from Sumer* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 189.

<sup>45</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 52.

<sup>46</sup> Porter, “Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator,” 43.

<sup>47</sup> Na’aman, “The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh,” 210.

<sup>48</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 279.

<sup>49</sup> This Ishtar of Arbela is the same one discussed in Porter’s analysis of the multiple Ishtars during the Neo-Assyrian period. Porter states that “Ishtar of Arbela only appears in the accounts of military activity,” which would explain why she is the one specifically mentioned in this separate text; see Porter, “Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator,” 43.

<sup>50</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 398.

<sup>51</sup> Meador, *Inanna Lady of Largest Heart*, 117.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>54</sup> Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox,” 264.

<sup>55</sup> Fumi, “Fighting the Mountain,” 113.

<sup>56</sup> Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth*, 14.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 16–18.

<sup>58</sup> A. R. George, “Observations on a Passage of ‘Inanna’s Descent,’” *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 37, no. 1 (1985): 112.

<sup>59</sup> G. van Driel, *Nippur and the Inanna Temple*, 399–400.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 402.

<sup>61</sup> Harris, “Inanna-Ishtar as Paradox,” 273.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 274.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 276.

<sup>64</sup> Assante, “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?,” 35.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Na’aman, “The Ishtar Temple at Alalakh,” 211.

<sup>67</sup> Meador, *Inanna lady of Largest Heart*, 123–124.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Stol, “Women in Mesopotamia,” 126.

<sup>71</sup> Martha T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor*, 2nd ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 17–18.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>73</sup> Amy R. Gansell, “Women in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, eds. Sharon L. James and Sheila Dillon (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), 20.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>75</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 275.

<sup>76</sup> Georges Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*, trans. K. R. and A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1954), 15.

<sup>77</sup> Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 30–31.

<sup>78</sup> Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*, 19.

<sup>79</sup> M. Stol, *Women in Mesopotamia*, 136.

<sup>80</sup> Contenau, *Everyday Life in Babylon and Assyria*, 23.

<sup>81</sup> Stol, “Women in Mesopotamia 136.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> van Driel, “Nippur and the Inanna Temple,” 402.

<sup>84</sup> Stol, “Women in Mesopotamia,” 137.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 38.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> These transliterations represent the Sumerian and Akkadian languages respectively.

<sup>91</sup> This is an English term that has no word in the ancient languages since it was not considered a profession.

<sup>92</sup> Assante, “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?,” 32.

<sup>93</sup> Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 31.

<sup>94</sup> Assante, “Bad Girls and Kinky Boys?,” 32.

<sup>95</sup> Gwendolyn Leick, *Mesopotamia: The Invention of the City* (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 178.

<sup>96</sup> Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 88.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>98</sup> Stol, “Women in Mesopotamia,” 129.

<sup>99</sup> Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna Queen of Heaven and Earth*, 44.

<sup>100</sup> Kramer, “Inanna and Sulgi,” 18.

<sup>101</sup> Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia*, 114–15.

<sup>102</sup> Stol, “Women in Mesopotamia,” 140.

<sup>103</sup> Kramer, “‘Inanna’s Descent to the Nether World’ Continued,” 363.

<sup>104</sup> Gertrud Farber, “Old Babylonian Childbirth Incantation,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 43, no. 4 (October 1984): 314.

<sup>105</sup> Porter, “Ishtar of Ninevah and Her Collaborator,” 42.

<sup>106</sup> Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East*, 400.

<sup>107</sup> Meador, *Inanna Lady of Largest Heart*, 99.

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# Influential Women of the Mongol Empire

Terri Paulsen

Power within governments is not always what it appears and leaders are not always the man or woman at the top. Those who are connected intimately either through marriage or birth, or even friendships, often are the ones who wield the power behind the person or group who is the presumed head of governments. Modern governments typically exist as having a strong leader, either by election, monarchy or theocracy, and have supporting cabinets or ministers who advise the leader, and it is certainly not uncommon for leaders in current society to have strong female leaders who have attained high office through legitimate means. The concept of powerful women in government is not unusual even in a male-dominated society, but during the early medieval period, specifically the Mongol dynasty period, women could never attain the role of khan, even if they were the direct descendants of the royal Chinggisid family. However, they could influence government and politics in ways that were undoubtedly more instrumental in shaping the dynasty than the khans themselves.

Historians have recorded the genealogy of Chinggis Khan and the most common lineage chart only provides the names of Chinggis Khan's sons. The problem with these charts is that Chinggis Khan and his many wives had several daughters, many of whom were married off to distant tribes to secure alliances. Even though most dynastic charts focus on the male descendants of Chinggis Khan, historians have recorded the names of some of these daughters, validating the authority they had relating to their lineage. But the most powerful women of the Mongol dynasty were actually the women who were married to the khans, for they were not just advisors to their husbands; two of these dynamic women impacted politics in ways that historians would agree were unforeseen by even Chinggis Khan himself. Because of the respect women in general were given in Mongol society, traditions in regards to wives' inheritance rights, and the absence of a clear mandate regarding rules of succession, two women were able to shape the Mongol dynasty by

powerfully swaying the outcomes of the election process at two different *quriltais* (political assemblies). These two women, Törögene Khatun, or queen, and Sorqoqtani Beki, or princess, each married to sons of Chinggis Khan, either ruled as regent upon their spouse's deaths or managed their deceased husband's territory, making them quite powerful and influential in politics in ways that Chinggis Khan's own daughters were not.

## Overview of the Lives of Mongol Women

A brief overview of the customs of the Mongols, including observations of women is provided by Friar Giovanni DiPlano Carpini who was commissioned by Pope Innocent IV in 1245 to "offer baptism to the Tartars and tell them of Christianity."<sup>1</sup> Carpini's mission also included completing an ethnographic study of the Mongols for the purposes of discovering their intentions toward the west, and he describes many interesting observations of the Mongol women that include their dress and their abilities as archers and as horse riders, all of which was very similar to the men. Because the Mongols were a nomadic tribe, the women were expected to be skilled in archery and horse riding as they were often in charge of the tribes when the men were hunting or at war. Carpini describes the language the women use as "coarse and vulgar" and they often times "get very drunk," but are "chaste" and without "scandal."<sup>2</sup> Mongol men could have as many wives as they wished and could even buy them. It is interesting that women were expected to provide for the tribe and be as tough as the men, yet could still be considered property to be bought or sold. Jennifer Holmgren points out that not all women and or wives were purchased for a price or used for the building of alliances; many wives were women who had been captured during raids, and sometimes there was simply an "accidental meeting" that probably accounted for a great number of marriages among the average Mongol nomads.<sup>3</sup> Regarding the living arrangements in Mongol society, Carpini notes that while

the women had to share their husbands, they never fought with each other and understood that one wife would be the primary wife and that she was “foremost among them and he stays with her more than with the others.”<sup>4</sup> Carpini did not write about many noblewomen but he did make observations as to the wealth of the nobles and khans and we can assume that the women who were in these families were provided with more luxuries than the average Mongol woman might have had. Several historians note that the size of the tents in which nobles lived were usually significantly larger than the average, and Carpini relates that the tents of Güyük’s wives were made of “white felt [and] were quite large and beautiful.”<sup>5</sup>

### **Hö’elün and Börte: The Women Responsible for Shaping Chinggis Khan**

The mother of Chinggis Khan, Hö’elün khan, had no luxuries when Chinggis Khan was a boy, but was still able to provide for her sons and is credited with saving their lives after her husband was killed by a rival tribe member. The account of Hö’elün and her children’s survival is eloquently detailed in a poem in *The Secret History of the Mongols*. There has been much debate as to when *The Secret History* was written, with many scholars providing valid points arguing their ideas, but Igor De Rachewiltz believes *The Secret History* was written in 1228, one year after the death of Chinggis Khan, with subsequent texts completed at later dates.<sup>6</sup> Despite the many controversies surrounding the date it was written, *The Secret History* provides a framework for how the Mongols viewed women and Hö’elün in particular. She is revered as the mother of Temüjin because of her fierce strength in keeping her family alive as well as being a woman who continued her nurturing even after Temüjin was elected as khan. *The Secret History* includes a poem which describes Hö’elün as “a clever woman ... tying tightly her belt to shorten her skirt ... gathering crab apples and bird cherries” after she and her children were ostracized following the death of her husband, Yesügei.<sup>7</sup> David Christian explains the matriarchal respect the Mongols had by relating stories from the *Secret History* that include how Hö’elün “rebukes” Chinggis Khan and how she “chased after him and disgraced him into pardoning his brother.”<sup>8</sup> Christian argues that because *The Secret History* has so many stories of Hö’elün it is reflective of the Mongol “willingness to treat the judgment, as well as the endurance and fortitude of women with respect.”<sup>9</sup>

Börte’s story is similar to Höelün’s in that they were both from the Onggurut tribe and both had been kidnapped

by rival tribes. Temüjin met his bride-to-be when he was just nine years old and she was ten. His father, Yesügei, took him to the Onggurut tribe to arrange the marriage when Temüjin was a boy because that was the tribe of his mother, Hö’elün. *The Secret History* tells the story of Yesügei being received by Börte’s father, Dei Se en, who believes that daughters and granddaughters of his tribe were born to be khatuns because of their “beauty” and their ability to be “intercessors.”<sup>10</sup>

Börte was Chinggis Khan’s primary wife, and while he had several wives and many children, Börte was important in the making of the Mongol dynasty because it was Temüjin’s rescue of her after she was kidnapped by the Merkit tribe that brought him to the attention of other clan leaders. Christian explains that because Temüjin was able to form a steppe coalition to help in the successful rescue of Börte, and the fact that they utterly destroyed the Merkit tribe in the process, the rescue and battle “transformed Temüjin’s status” on the steppe.<sup>11</sup> Rash d Al-Din recounts a different story about Börte’s kidnapping. He does not tell of the tribal alliance Temüjin made to get her back, but he does state that while she was held captive by the Merkit tribe, she was treated with “respect and consideration” and that she was “exceedingly beautiful and capable.”<sup>12</sup> Rash d Al-Din states that she was held by the Merkit tribe and then escorted back to Temüjin, with no mention of warfare on the part of Temüjin to get her back. While Rash d Al-Din is the only source to not describe Temüjin’s battle to get Börte back, it reaffirms the idea that women were respected and capable within the Mongol and steppe culture. Most secondary sources repeat the former story of Börte’s rescue, which enhanced the strength of Temüjin’s alliance building capabilities and reinforced the idea that he was willing to brutally exterminate opposing tribes.

While Börte’s rescue provided Temüjin the opportunity to demonstrate his *qut* (divine mandate to rule) at the beginning of his domination of a new era on the steppe, Hö’elün set the standard by which women were viewed, respected, and accepted in Mongol society. Because of her perseverance as a strong and powerful woman surviving on the steppe, along with the reality of what the average woman was capable of in regards to contributing to and care for steppe tribes, other women were recognized as nearly equal to men in life on the steppe. George Lane argues that steppe life was difficult for men and women alike, and because women performed duties similar to men, they were considered to be more equal and given more rights when compared to women who lived in sedentary populations,

who faced more oppression during this time period.<sup>13</sup> This respect for women helped enable Törögene and Sorqoqtani achieve their goals in regards to the election of their sons as khans, as well as allowed them to rule as regent or to administer their spouses’ estate upon the deaths of their husbands.

### **Törögene and Sorqoqtani Beki: Women Who Changed the Course of the Mongol Dynasty**

Törögene was the sixth wife of the Great Khan Ögödei, who was elected khan after the death of Chinggis Khan. Ögödei became khan in 1230 and he died in 1241, leaving Törögene to act as regent and allowing her to rule from 1241 to 1246. Her position as sixth wife should have excluded her from being regent, but she was the mother to the eldest son of Ögödei, Güyük, and this garnered her the rank of regent. As regent, Törögene took her position quite seriously and she instituted changes to the administration that were highly aggressive. Rash d Al-Din states that as regent Törögene “displaced all the great officers because no *quriltai* was held as the princes did not appear and meet together.”<sup>14</sup> Rash d Al-Din’s statement reflects two major points in the regency of Törögene: She dismissed ministers of Ögödei and replaced them with men she believed would serve her more adequately and she delayed the *quriltai* until she had the votes she needed to get her son, Güyük, elected as khan. The *quriltai* is the event that takes place when a new khan is elected. All great khans are to be present for the election of a new khan, thus it took considerable time for the *quriltai* to proceed because of the distance people had to travel to reach the *quriltai*.

Ata-Malik Juvaini states that Törögene was a “very shrewd and capable woman,” and she secured the support of the Chaghatai line who agreed that because she was the mother of the eldest son, she should rule as regent until a *quriltai* could be held, but that “the old ministers should remain in the service of the court, so that the old and new *yasas* [laws] might not be changed from what was the law.”<sup>15</sup> However, once Törögene was secure in her position, she made changes to the administration by replacing those ministers she did not like, specifically Yelü Chucai and Mahmud Yalavach.<sup>16</sup> By making these administrative changes, she effectively changed the *yasa*, permitting the new minister’s undersecretary, Sharaf al-Din, to tax widows and orphans. Timothy May points to the law recorded by Juvaini that stated “there is no charge in the law of God nor impost in the *yasa* of Chingiz-Khan” in reference to the taxation

of widows and orphans.<sup>17</sup> While Törögene ruled as regent she “executed decrees” with the same authority that a great khan would have and Rash d Al-Din attributes her ability to control the empire to her habit of using bribery to attain her goals. She “wooed the hearts of kinfolk and emirs with all manner of gifts and presents.”<sup>18</sup>

While the Mongol administration was changed under the regency of Törögene, her most significant action was in the calculating manner in which she was able to get her son Güiyük elected as khan. As stated earlier, Törögene had the support of the Chagatai line in all matters, and Juvaini states that after the death of Ögödei, it was Törögene who took control of the empire by notifying Ögödei’s brothers of his death and that someone needed to administer important affairs of the Mongols, such as “the army and the court” and the “interests of the people.”<sup>19</sup> The Chaghataids agreed that Törögene should rule as regent and Juvaini states, “until a *quriltai* [can be] held, it was she that should direct the affairs of the state.”<sup>20</sup> Törögene, however, went against Ögödei’s wishes regarding who should inherit the throne upon Ögögei’s death. According to René Grousset, Ögödei had initially wanted his third son, Kucha, to inherit the throne but he died before Ögödei. Ögödei then named Kucha’s eldest son, Shiramün, to become Great Khan upon Ögödei’s death.<sup>21</sup> But Törögene “disobeyed [Ögödei’s] command and elevated Güyük to the Khanate.”<sup>22</sup>

As with other medieval nomadic tribes, the issue of succession caused not only unrest within the tribes, but often battles for succession led to outright civil war among brothers, uncles, and cousins. When Chinggis Khan named his successor as Ögödei, his third born son, he began a new tradition on the steppe, which had previously seen the eldest son or brother be the successor to the throne. Because there were no real traditions or laws that clearly dictated the line of succession and she was ruling as regent, it was easy for Törögene to disregard Ögödei’s wishes. Rash d Al-Din asserts that Ögödei accepted the seat of khan at the 1246 *quriltai* “on the condition that henceforth the Khanate shall be settled in my family.”<sup>23</sup> Because Törögene ruled as regent she was able to secure the support of the all the Chinggisid families except that of Batu in her attempt to have her son Güyük succeed Ögödei, despite Ögödei’s explicit wishes that he be succeeded by his grandson, Shiramün.

Törögene is also thought to have created a level of corruption surrounding the issuance of *ortaghs*, or passports, that allowed merchants to use *yams*, or the postal service, at the same price as bureaucrats. Because the merchants were issued these *ortaghs* at the same price as bureaucrats they paid

a smaller fee, which caused an economic hardship on nomads who lived near a *yam*.<sup>24</sup> This corruption is another reason Törögene's regency is so harshly judged.

Sorqoqtani Beki was the primary wife of Chinggis Khan's youngest son, Tolui, and after his death, she inherited his territory and was the administrator of his estate, giving her great power. While she never ruled as regent she was nearly as powerful as Törögene and similarly she was able to get her son, Möngke, elected as Great Khan after the death of Ögödei. However, her actions differ in the area of administering the *yasa* set forth by Chinggis Khan. Firstly, Sorqoqtani Beki was given much power as she inherited the *ordos* (realms) of her husband Tolui when he died. This is significant because it reflects the Mongol pattern that women are considered equal to men and included in inheritance matters, even when they are not direct descendants of Chinggis Khan. Carpini states that camps were not broken up upon the death of princes, but were given to wives to rule.<sup>25</sup> Peter Jackson notes that *The Secret History* stated, "Yesüi Khatun, one of [Chinggis Khan's] wives, was given a large part of the Tangut people in the recently subjugated kingdom of Hsi-Hsia."<sup>26</sup> These sources are the foundation on which the high standard to which women were held and reflect the responsibility, power, and trust they were given in ruling Mongol territory. *The Secret History* also relates that Yisüi Khatun "respectfully" advised Chinggis Khan as he was going to war that it was important for him to "designate a successor" and he agreed, stating, "no one has advised me like this," further showing that Mongols valued the advice of women.<sup>27</sup>

Secondly, as Tolui's primary and favorite wife, Sorqoqtani Beki inherited the Tolui *ordos* in approximately 1233. Sorqoqtani Beki is mentioned by Carpini as being "higher and more powerful among all the Tartars than any except the emperor's mother [Törögene] and Bati."<sup>28</sup> Rash d Al-Din states that Sorqoqtani Beki's sister, whose name is not given, was Batu's mother, which created an alliance between the Jochid and Toluid lines that would eventually change the destiny of the dynasty.<sup>29</sup> Rash d Al-Din describes her as "intelligent and able and towered above all women in the world, possessing . . . virtue, modesty and chastity." Rash d Al-Din further compares her to Hö'elün in that she "[trained] her children" in the same manner as Hö'elün.<sup>30</sup> But more importantly, primary sources by Rash d Al-Din and Juvaini repeat the belief that Sorqoqtani Beki obeyed the law, stating, "Sorqoqtani Beki and her sons, [they] did not swerve one hair's breath from the *yasa* and law of their ordinances." Juvaini is referring to the *quriltai* to be held after the death

of Ögödei and is comparing Sorqoqtani to Törögene in her maneuvering to get Güyük elected as the next khan, ignoring Ögödei's wishes. Juvaini also writes that even Güyük held Sorqoqtani Beki and her sons in higher esteem than other royal family matters and "in all his speeches Güyük Khan used to hold them up as an example. . . . Them he praised and lauded."<sup>31</sup>

Because Sorqoqtani Beki was held in such high esteem, her opinion was respected and it allowed her to influence the shaping of the dynasty in a similar fashion as Törögene. Rash d Al-Din states that Sorqoqtani Beki became aware of a plot against Batu from Güyük and sent a warning to Batu, but Güyük died before he reached Batu's camp, which left the Mongols in the position of having to elect another khan. Just as Törögene was able to influence the *quriltai* and had the power to rule, Sorqoqtani Beki did as well, and Weatherford argues that in terms of who was most influential in shaping the Mongol dynasty, "she stands second only to Genghis Khan himself."<sup>32</sup>

As stated earlier, when Ögödei accepted the khanate, he did it on the grounds that his line would continue to be the ruling line and this was accepted by all the Jochid, Chagataid, and Toluid lines at Ögödei's accession. However, after Güyük's death, Sorqoqtani Beki, who had the backing of Batu, the eldest living son of the eldest son of Chinggis Khan, and who "had the right to nominate a new ruler," agreed to hold the *quriltai* at Batu's *ordos*, creating a conflict with Törögene and the remaining Ögödeids who wanted the *quriltai* held at the traditional location of "Chingiz-Khan's capital."<sup>33</sup> According to Rash d Al-Din, Sorqoqtani Beki wanted her son Möngke to be the next great khan and she knew that the "others" — the Ögödeids and Chagataids — would not go to Batu because they were in conflict with him and they demanded the *quriltai* be held in the traditional place of Qaraqorum. As a result, she sent Möngke to Batu, who "swore allegiance to him and set him up as Qa'an."<sup>34</sup> Because of these maneuvers, Sorqoqtani Beki, with the help of Batu, effectively changed the royal line of the Mongol dynasty from the Ögödeid to the Toluid line, which in turn would later cause a civil war. Current historians have a view of Sorqoqtani Beki that is not as complimentary as those of Rash d Al-Din and Juvaini. Jackson describes her actions in regards to Möngke becoming khan as a power grab, or coup, and states, "it was Tolui's line which seized upon the imperial dignity in 1251." He further argues that "Möngke's accession and the overthrow of the lines of Ögödei and Chaghatai" was the beginning of a clear division of territory and

resources that favored the Jochid and Toluid lines and largely eliminated the Ögödeid and Chaghataid lines.<sup>35</sup>

### The Ruling Daughters of Chinggis Khan

While Törögene and Sorqoqtani Beki were the two most influential ruling women in the Mongol dynasty, other women, including Chinggis Khan's daughters, were given power to rule subordinate tribes by being married into these tribes, creating alliances based on marriage. This was not an uncommon practice among the nomads, dating back as far as the Tsiung-Nu, but because the Mongol territory was so vast, these daughters who were used to secure alliances were a true extension of Chinggis Khan. One of the most significant ways of securing an alliance was through the practice of one-way and two-way marriages. One-way marriage was the marriage between a Mongol princess to a member of a lesser tribe, giving her power to rule over that tribe, and a two-way marriage was the practice of Mongol princesses marrying princes of allied tribes, as well as princes from that tribe or dynasty marrying into the Mongol dynasty. The two-way marriage carried a more conciliatory tone of alliance than the one-way marriage. Chinggis Khan and Börte had several children, and Chinggis Khan had several children with his other wives as well. Several of the children were girls who would be used to help secure alliances through marriage. Many of these daughters of Chinggis Khan would be sent to far away lands to rule in his stead, and while these daughters were placed in marriages to be used to "establish or strengthen the military relationships with every marriage partner," they were in reality used "as pawns" by Chinggis Khan in controlling his empire.<sup>36</sup>

Primary sources vary about the number of daughters Chinggis Khan had and used in marriages for political gain, but three daughters in particular are noted to have been advised personally by Chinggis Khan to "become one of [his] feet. . . . [They] should be [his] helper."<sup>37</sup> His daughter Alahai-Beki was initially married to the chief of the Öngüt tribe and ruled over a substantial area that included "not only the Öngüt tribe, but also all territories of Northern China."<sup>38</sup> Not only was Alahai-Beki's marriage used as political strategy, but she was forced into levirate marriages, after the death of her first husband, the chief, in order to maintain the Chingissid hold on the Öngüt tribe. Levirate marriage implies that a widow is obliged to marry her deceased spouse's brother and he is obliged to marry her. In this case, Alahai-Beki married her dead husband's son, then his nephew, then her second husband's son, in order to preserve the hold the Mongols had on this area.<sup>39</sup> This demonstrates

that the daughters of Chinggis Khan were placed in marriages that enabled them to rule for the Mongol dynasty, regardless of their own personal desire, but they understood that the common goal was to keep control of the tribes via these marriage alliances, therefore strengthening and growing the Mongol dynasty. It also indicates that the Mongols, or at least Chinggis Khan, understood the value of marriage alliances. Zhao points out that Chinggis Khan and his successors never married his daughters to his own generals because he had already secured the loyalty of his generals; marriage alliances were not necessary within his own tribe.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, Ögödei had proposed that Sorqoqtani Beki marry Güyük after the death of Tolui, which would have strengthened the bond between the Ögödeid and Toluid line and perhaps changed the course of history, but she declined.<sup>41</sup> Holmgren suggests that levirate marriage "was not an obligatory institution . . . and that elite women had some choice in the matter."<sup>42</sup> It is clear that Sorqoqtani Beki had more power being the widow of Tolui than a wife of Güyük.

Jack Weatherford relates that sources that include B. Baljinniyam indicate that an "unidentified" daughter was married to "Arslan Khan of the Karluk Turks" who lived far to the west, near the Ili Valley, in approximately 1211. Chinggis Khan removed the title of khan from Karluk's name and replaced it with "guregen, son-in-law, or prince consort."<sup>43</sup> Weatherford asserts that while this daughter's name had been "censored" from *The Secret History*, this story illustrates the elevation of Mongol princesses over the khans of subordinate tribes in that the Mongols were aware of how titles were perceived and that the Mongol princesses were required to "outrank" whoever they were married to in the subordinate tribe. According to Weatherford, Arslan would later join Genghis Khan on a campaign, leaving the "unidentified" daughter to rule Arslan's "homeland," which was the "Mongol gateway to the Muslim lands to the south."<sup>44</sup> Weatherford explains the difficulty in identifying this daughter by concluding that she was "Tolai, a name that formed a euphonious set with Tolu" and the that *Yuan Shi* mentions a daughter of a similar sounding name being married to Arslan's son.<sup>45</sup>

A third daughter by the name of Checheyigen was married to "Inalchi, the son of Khutuqa-Begi of the Oirat tribe," who were known as the "People of the Forest," in approximately 1207.<sup>46</sup> Weatherford argues that while this daughter was in the least sophisticated marriage because of the location of the tribe compared to the other daughters who might have ruled over the Silk Road or in Northern

China garnering them more luxuries and interactions with more developed cultures, Checheyigen was successful in combining the Oirat tribe with the Mongol tribe, making the Oirat the “first non herding tribe to join Genghis Khan.”<sup>47</sup>

Weatherford argues that the daughters of Chinggis Khan were used as “shields around the Mongol homeland.” The three daughters mentioned in this essay were all married into tribes whose geographical locations created a triangle that Weatherford claims was a “phalanx” that gave Chinggis Khan security to know that Mongols ruled all points of the empire, allowing him the freedom to “move outward from the Mongol steppe.”<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

There were many variables that shaped the Mongol dynasty, but it is clear that women, especially those most intimately connected to the sons of Chinggis Khan, played a significant role in how the dynasty evolved. Because of the liberal inheritance rules that benefitted the wives of Mongols, Törögene and Sorqoqtani Beki each “received a portion of property from her husband’s share of the family patrimony.”<sup>49</sup> With the inheritance of property came resources and power and each woman used her power to influence the outcomes of the *quraltai* by either bribery or using the alliance and support of other lines to sway the outcome of the election, changing the course of the Mongol dynasty, while disregarding the wishes of Ögödei. While both Chinggis Khan and Ögödei named their successor and attempted to set up a clear line of succession, the Mongols were no different from other nomadic tribes when it came to succession, and Holmgren correctly concludes that when a strong father dies, “his death [leaves] power and authority in the clan dangerously fragmented.”<sup>50</sup> This is demonstrated clearly in the Mongol dynasty by the actions following the death of Güyük when Sorqoqtani Beki and Batu staged their coup, taking power away from the Ögödeids that created a divide among the families that led to virtually independent states.

While Törögene and Sorqoqtani were undoubtedly the most powerful women of the early Mongol period, Chinggis Khan’s daughters played an important role as well, but to a lesser degree. They were used to secure alliances with rival tribes and ruled with the authority given to them by their father. Although they were important rulers for the Mongol dynasty,

Chinggis Khan’s daughters were left in the far reaches of the empire and their power only extended as far as

the areas in which they lived. Timothy May states that travelers from the west were quite astonished and “clearly uncomfortable with the idea of a woman openly issuing governmental orders” as “female rulers,” which was unusual among sedentary populations, but was normal in the Mongol empire, and is reflected by their power women held.<sup>51</sup> While Mongol women could never become khans, their influence shaped the structure of the Mongol empire and changed the course of history.

## Endnotes

<sup>11</sup> Friar Giovanni DiPlano Carpini, *The Story of the Mongols Whom We Call the Tartars*, trans. Erik Hildinger (Boston: Branden, 1996), 17.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 51,

<sup>33</sup> J. Holmgren, “Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices in Early Mongol and Yüan Society, with Particular Reference to the Levirate,” *Journal of Asian History* 20 (1986): 127-92.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>66</sup> Igor De Rachewiltz, trans., *The Secret History of the Mongols: A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*, trans. (Leiden: Brill, 2004), xxxiii.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 18-19

<sup>88</sup> David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 421.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 421.

<sup>1010</sup> De Rachewiltz, *Secret History*, 15.

<sup>1111</sup> Christian, *A History of Russia*, 391.

<sup>1212</sup> Rash d Al-Din, *The Successes of Genghis Kahn*, trans. John Andrew Boyle (New York: Columbia, 1971), 97-98.

<sup>1313</sup> George Lane, *Daily Life in the Mongol Empire* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006), 232.

<sup>1414</sup> Rash d Al-Din, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, 178.

<sup>1515</sup> Ata-Malik Juvaini, *Genghis Khan: The History of the World Conqueror*, trans. J. A. Boyle (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 240.

<sup>1616</sup> Timothy May, *The Mongol Conquests in World History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 50.

<sup>1717</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>1818</sup> Rash d Al-din, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, 176.

<sup>1919</sup> Juvaini, *Genghis Khan*, 240.

<sup>2020</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2121</sup> René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 268.

<sup>2222</sup> Rash d Al-Din, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, 19.

<sup>2323</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>2424</sup> May, *The Mongol Conquests in World History*, 120.

<sup>2525</sup> Carpini, *The Story of the Mongols*, 106.

<sup>2626</sup> Peter Jackson, “From Ulus to Khanate: The Making of the Mongol States c. 1220-c. 1290,” in *The Mongol Empire and Its Legacy*, ed. Reuven Amitai-Preiss and David O. Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 19.

<sup>2727</sup> De Rachewiltz, *The Secret History*, 182.

<sup>2828</sup> Carpini, *The Story of the Mongols*, 64.

<sup>2929</sup> Rash d Al-Din, *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, 99.

<sup>3030</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>3131</sup> Juvaini, *Genghis Khan*, 255-256.

<sup>3232</sup> Jack Weatherford, *The Secret History of the Mongol Queens: How the Daughters of Genghis Khan Rescued His Empire* (New York: Crown, 2010), 103.

<sup>3333</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>3434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3535</sup> Jackson, “From Ulus to Khanate,” 28.

<sup>3636</sup> George Qingzhi Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy and Cultural Expression: Mongolian Royal Marriages from World Empire to Yuan Dynasty* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 36-37.

<sup>3737</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>3838</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3939</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>4040</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>4141</sup> Holmgren, “Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices,” 163.

<sup>4242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4343</sup> Weatherford, *The Secret History of the Mongol Queens*, 64.

<sup>4444</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>4545</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4646</sup> Zhao, *Marriage as Political Strategy*, 39.

<sup>4747</sup> Weatherford, *The Secret History of the Mongol Queens*, 66.

<sup>4848</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4949</sup> Holmgren, “Observations on Marriage and Inheritance Practices,” 131.

<sup>5050</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>5151</sup> May, *The Mongol Conquests in the World*, 236.

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Section III.  
Review Essay



Job with sons and daughters, from *Bible Historial*, 1372.

HISTORIAL???

# The Evolution of Childhood's History

Keri Heath

When Philippe Ariès published his book *Centuries of Childhood* in 1960, he likely had no idea that his work would launch decades of discourse and conversation about the history of childhood. His assertion of childhood as a modern invention, as a life stage unrecognizable to historical peoples, was both supported and attacked by historians that followed him. In works such as Barbara Hanawalt's *Growing Up in Medieval London*, Steven Ozment's *Flesh and Spirit*, Rudolph Bell's *How to Do It*, and Emily Coleman's "Infanticide in the Early Middle Ages," the concept of historical childhood as a recognized stage of growth is explored. Through the use of various sources, the majority of these analyses determined a conclusion vastly different from that of Ariès. The generally held view of historical childhood has shifted away from an unrecognized life stage towards the belief that childhood was a key step in the development of medieval children. Since Ariès developed his thesis, historians have come to understand historical childhood to be similar to modern childhood in the sense that this life stage was neither horrible nor ideal during the Middle Ages.

At the time that Ariès wrote *Centuries of Childhood*, a revival of macrohistory was taking place across the scholarly world, a trend represented in Ariès's piece. His assertion that "there was no place for childhood in the medieval world"<sup>1</sup> and that "the indifference was a direct and inevitable consequence of the demography of the period"<sup>2</sup> is a broad one. Ariès focuses on making wide assertions about childhood from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries to the twentieth century, avoiding detailed work about the nuances and details of children's lives. By taking a macrohistorical view of the topic, Ariès looks only at general trends and beliefs held by all of society, rather than by individuals. From this approach, Ariès concluded that medieval people saw children as little adults who never experienced a childhood stage. Using a focus on material culture, Ariès's argument is based primarily on the conclusions he draws from paintings, clothing styles of the

time, and works of fiction. While these sources provide for an interesting analysis, they are not sufficient to use as a base for a wide sweeping statement about childhood during the time period because these sources are at risk of subjectivity and can be misinterpreted based on personal opinions. While this issue alone is enough to punch a hole in Ariès's argument, another problem arises due to the fact that the author did not use sources from the time period he was addressing.

However, though Ariès's ideas about childhood do not draw from objective fact and thus have a somewhat unconvincing argument, his book does set the historical stage for a decades-long discussion about the true nature of historical childhood. A counterargument in this dialogue to Ariès's belief is outlined in Barbara Hanawalt's *Growing Up in Medieval London*. Hanawalt writes her book in direct response to Ariès, claiming that "the Middle Ages did recognize stages of life that correspond to childhood and adolescence."<sup>3</sup> While she engages primarily in social history to show the heavily social aspect of growing up during the Middle Ages, Hanawalt also utilizes economic history and cross pollination to illustrate her point. By approaching the topic of childhood from several angles, Hanawalt reveals that her thesis can be upheld with respects to multiple disciplines, creating a more convincing argument. In addition, the entirety of her book is centered on the skepticism of postmodernism and is reflected in her adamant doubt throughout the work of Ariès and insistence that "socialization of children and young people into polite society occupied an important segment of medieval London culture."<sup>4</sup> The main reason that Hanawalt's argument is so convincing rests in the fact that she uses a broad spectrum of sources, court records, coroner's reports, government documents, and letter books, accurate to the time period, sources that she states Ariès ignores completely. Granted, she does leave out material about negative aspects of a child's life, such as abuse of orphans, death of unsupervised children, and strict education for adulthood; Hanawalt's agenda is decidedly to show medieval childhood



in a positive light. However, she provides a solid opposition to Ariès's thesis, as well as establishes the convention for future historical books about childhood: the organization of information in order of birth to adulthood.

Yet not all modern works about medieval childhood carried such a defined agenda as did that of Hanawalt. Rudolph Bell, in his book *How to Do It*, refrains entirely from presenting his own beliefs about childhood to readers and gives minimal commentary, instead providing readers with text from primary sources and allowing them to make their own conclusions. Bell uses only advice manuals for the sources in his book, a choice that has both benefits and drawbacks. While these sources represent the ideal that society strives towards, it also may leave out some of the harsh realities that are associated during the time with raising children. Instead, Bell simply focuses on the concerns that the manuals specifically bring up and makes observations about the texts, such as how odd it is that "authors who wrote in such detail about how to select a wet nurse . . . would be so silent about how parents should check on a child put out to a wet nurse."<sup>5</sup> This tendency marks Bell as one who works primarily from a historicist position, presenting the past on its own terms. At the same time, Bell sometimes admits that when looking "back five hundred years . . . , we may be struck instantly by similarities with modern concerns,"<sup>6</sup> revealing that he holds some presentist views about his work, comparing the past to the present. Yet Bell's book is primarily objective and advances the discussion of childhood by allowing readers to observe the continuity of childhood through their own interpretation of sources about ideal parenting.

However, not all of the literature written about childhood since Ariès's thesis was published upholds the recognition of a childhood; Emily Coleman's article "Infanticide in the Early Middle Ages" paints an extremely different picture from that of Hanawalt and Bell about what childhood looked like. In analyzing population and tax documents for farms and manors during the time, Coleman comes to the conclusion that female infanticide resulted in the low numbers of women and girls. While Coleman admits that "the killing of children of some years . . . would surely be difficult to explain,"<sup>7</sup> she insists that farms only supported a certain number of females and that "it would not be difficult . . . for a baby to be exposed, or simply smothered in the home."<sup>8</sup> She reaches many of these conclusions by drawing on statistical history and making analyses from the population numbers. In some sense, Coleman's methods are comparable to those of Ariès because she uses psychohistory

to draw conclusions about people's history based on her evidence. Yet, what makes Coleman's point more convincing than Ariès's is her willingness to qualify her own statements with counterarguments through her admitted use of presentism and the recognition that there may be other factors accounting for the smaller number of females in the tax documents. Even with these concessions, the reader leaves the article with a sense that Coleman would agree with Ariès that children in the Middle Ages were not highly valued and that childhood was not a recognized part of development. Coleman's article is important to the study of childhood because it reminds historians that medieval childhood was not wholly positive.

Steven Ozment, in his book *Flesh and Spirit*, somewhat agrees with this idea. Following Hanawalt's convention of moving chronologically through a child's life in a book, Ozment explores childhood on a much more personal level. Rather than the official documents used by other historians, Ozment uses personal journals, diary entries, and letters to show that "the family of the past was neither as wholesome as the romantics portray it, nor as cruel as the cynics suspect."<sup>9</sup> This anti-Whiggist approach to studying childhood is most similar to Hanawalt's method in the sense that Ozment also uses various forms of cross-pollination, including social, economic, anthropological, and intellectual history. However, Ozment's work differs from that of Hanawalt in that Ozment takes a more intimate look at the lives of his subjects, giving the text a definite style of historicism. In *Flesh and Spirit*, readers can dive straight into the minds of people living in the time and learn from firsthand accounts that the failures of a father's children "may have distressed their father just as deeply and their successes pleased him just as much."<sup>10</sup> Ozment's tendency to accept history for how it is presented illustrates that children were both a joy and a job to parents and that historical childhood had its ups and downs. The fact that parents worried in this way about their children proves the existence of a childhood and Ozment's book contributes further to the discussion by giving a firsthand, personal look at how the integration of childhood into society affected life in that time.

Since Ariès published his view about the nonexistence of a childhood in the Middle Ages, historians have used a variety of methods to analyze his statement. While those such as Hanawalt steadfastly oppose Ariès, others such as Coleman have come to accept parts of Ariès's thesis. As these authors have shown us, many types of documents can be used to determine ideas about childhood of the past, including legal documents, tax records, material objects, and personal

writings. While each of these authors approaches the subject with varying degrees of presentism and historicism, each analyze the source with some amount of cross-pollination and social history. By examining the differing views of childhood, it can be established that a recognized childhood did exist during the Middle Ages and that it was similar to modern ideas of the life stage in the sense that it was neither terrible nor perfect.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>5</sup> Rudolph Bell, *How to Do It: Guides for Good Living for Renaissance Italians* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999), 131.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

<sup>7</sup> Emily Coleman, "Infanticide in the Early Middle Ages," in *Women in Medieval Society*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1976), 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>9</sup> Steven Ozment, *Flesh and Spirit: Private Life in Early Modern Germany* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), x.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

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