Unexpected Tensions: Social Conflict from the Viking Age to World War II
Hartje Award Winner

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On April 10, 1998, lawmakers in Northern Ireland attempted to put a stop to thirty years of sectarian violence with the Good Friday Agreement. Over the past three decades, Catholic Republicans and Protestant Unionists engaged in heavy fighting that turned the streets of Belfast into a battleground. The policy sought to reverse many of the injustices ingrained in the Northern Irish state. However, while the current peace process created progress towards relieving the tension on an official level, the contradictory communal identities within the state have remained intact, resulting in unresolved prejudices.

The Troubles in Northern Ireland stem from an issue of conflicted communal identities. Catholic views towards Unionists were jaded by decades of socio-economic oppression and by a government that was explicitly forged to serve Protestant people in a Protestant state. Throughout the Troubles, civil rights advocates complained that it was difficult for them to gain proper representation or to “maintain the balance of parties in Parliament” because of “the distribution of religious denominations throughout Northern Ireland.” At the same time, Northern Irish Protestants felt their way of life threatened by the possibility of Catholic emancipation and integration into the government. By the time the Good Friday Agreement was signed, each group had developed its own mythology of hate towards the opposite group, an oral history of tragedy that sustained the anger.

In theory, the arrangement that the negotiators wrote would create policies to bridge this hatred and solve these problems. The Agreement called for a Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive to provide a Northern Irish government in which both Republicans and Unionists would have the opportunity to work together. Throughout the negotiation process, tensions between the Northern Irish and British governments eased. Now, many government officials in Ireland and the United Kingdom, notably David Cameron and Enda Kenny, believe “Anglo-Irish relations are at an ‘all-time high.’” While tensions still exist, the efforts of the North-South Council and British-Irish Council have helped the two governments find commonalities on which they can forge their relationship.

However, the Assembly was ineffective in the long run. Continuing IRA activities caused Unionist leadership to refuse cooperation, preventing any major decisions from taking place. The British government stepped in several times to continue the state’s functioning. By the time the Assembly was formed, the Northern Irish people were split at the roots in national identity. Politicians struggled to convince their voting base that agreement was in their best interest. Indeed, much “of the antagonism between the two communities was based on preconceived notions of the other.” While the peace process that set up this assembly made an effort toward finding common ground between these two groups, the result was not effective in providing a long-term solution. This is the key to understanding the effects of the Good Friday Agreement. While living conditions have become markedly better for citizens of Northern Ireland and the warzone-like quality of the cities has ceased, officials’ efforts have been unable to completely eliminate the community’s discriminatory ideology. Even by 2013, “Northern Ireland [had] not carried out any socio-economic justice to redistribute resources between the two communities.” The process of the economic reform left many working class individuals with just as few opportunities as they would have had during the conflict due to hardened beliefs of social norms. With the lack of forced dialogue between the Republican and Unionist groups in the community, “it has become apparent that sectarian feeling has not only failed to dissipate but may even have hardened in some districts” and that the contrasting communal identities remain a strong part of Northern Irish society.

Political antagonisms remain rife and factional allegiances...
within the community continue to be strong. Instead of the
hoped outcome, the contradictions and judgments between
the two communities persist.

The Good Friday Agreement was able to produce
some success in alleviating relations between Republicans
and Unionists within the government. However, attempts
to remove tension within the community itself through
civil rights reform has not managed to cure the North of
the deeper prejudices that sparked much of the conflict
in the first place. Instead, this discrimination upon which
Northern Ireland was founded has remained intact. While
the peace process made advancement towards addressing the
contradicting views within Northern Ireland’s government,
it failed to break down the differing communal identities
between Catholics and Protestants, leaving deep fissures
remaining in the state.

Endnotes

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2 “Anglo-Irish Relations ‘at Peak’,” The Belfast Telegraph,
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Whether it be the annual carnival preceding Lent or the feast days of their patron saint John the Baptist, Renaissance Florentines wildly prepared for—and indulged in—the splendors and exuberance that these types of celebrations fashioned. “The whole city is engaged in preparing for the feast,” said Gregorio Dati, a prominent silk merchant, on the feast of St. John the Baptist. “Everyone is filled with gaiety.”

Religious celebrations as such were open to the entire community, no matter if the citizens were part of the aristocracy, the clergy, or even the lower class. Not only were the festivities intended for the public, but they involved people of all trades and skills: architects, astrologists, craftsmen, painters, poets, sculptors, and more. However, despite the unifying effect of public celebrations on the entire Florentine community, the events themselves were managed by an elite group of the aristocracy, leading to an exhibition of strong class divisions and tensions.

There were numerous festivals and feast days celebrated during this time in Florence, such as the feasts of Cosmas and Damian in September, the feast day of St. Barnabas, May Day, Epiphany, Palm Sunday, and the anniversary of the battle of Campaldino. While many feast days revolved around religion, others sprang from political scenarios. The anniversary of the battle of Campaldino celebrated the Guelphs’ defeat of the Ghibellines, and the feasts of Cosmas and Damian represented the reaffirmation of Medici power. What happened throughout Florence politically, and even in the rest of the nearby countries and city-states, generally affected which festivities were celebrated. Cosimo I civically celebrated the anniversary of his election, for example, and it is unlikely that this was celebrated as extravagantly after the Medici reign diminished.

The Tensions Hidden Beneath Religious Festivities and Carnivals: A Social Analysis of Public Celebrations in Renaissance Florence

Kristen Brady

Documents speaking on those events than the lesser known feasts, and thus more that can be learned about the way the classes and groups interacted.

According to Gregorio Dati, Florence began preparing for the feast of St. John the Baptist at least two months in advance. Adjacent celebrations such as weddings were planned to coincide with these feast days, as joining them would bring more honor to their patron saint. Honoring the deceased was, in fact, of primary importance to these festivals. “Mass and meal,” wrote historian Richard C. Trexler, “the propitiative and assertive aspects of the affair, were viewed as equal parts of the total honor paid the deceased.” This not only helps us to understand why the processions associated with the carnival often had allegorical themes and decorations associated with death, but gives insight into why celebrations possessed seemingly hypocritical facets of debauchery, secularity, and ceremony. Bonfire dances and solemn church services all led to the same goals of respect, honor, and group solidarity. This resulted in both licentious and lavish celebratory affairs which offer insight into the conflicts that ballooned, especially considering that these events required total unity between the church and the aristocracy and among the social classes themselves.

A Power Struggle Between the Church and Community

The carnival, one of Renaissance Florence’s most anticipated celebrations, was a three-day string of festivities, games, and processions that preceded the period of Lent. Carnival typically began with the ornate masquerades of songs specific to the festival called the bufole. In 1546, on Shrove Tuesday of the carnival alone there were six processions, all with varying themes. A contemporary letter writer recounted some of the lavish aspects of the festivities: “This was so rich and well
decked out that I could not describe it if I tried.” However, de’ Medici in 1545 on the subject of fireworks ordered by government and the local duke who held vital positions important to question where the Florentines got their rhetorical and allegorical meanings behind them, it is expensive physical decorations and processions, and the Given the excessive amount of elaborate and disunity, their interpretation and hope for the threat from similar to the painting of the seven deadly sins mentioned the Florentine carnival was the allegorical procession.” Despite the wide array of events, Walter B. Scaife be as extensive as the list of festivities themselves. Derived the ecclesiastical community exercised its control over the court and its penal system during the feast days of St. John the Baptist, keeping their judgment in constant reminder at the back of the minds of citizens and, potentially, even the Medici or other dukes and aristocratic families. It was customary that the church granted a small number of prisoners full absolution on the feast day. Records account that one year, a man named Anastasio di Ser Domenico di Ser Salvo Gaia murdered his own mother with a piece of wood. He was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment for his crime. However, because he was deemed insane at the time of the murder, his punishment was reduced. This is a fascinating example of a plea of insanity in a court system where it is typically thought that insanity and fugue played little factor in punishment, especially in a time of concern for witchcraft and sorcery. The court decided that if he went along with a ceremony on the feast day of St. John the Baptist, presented himself before the Baptistry with a torch in his hands (with several other ceremonial factors), he would be granted full absolution. 14 While they could have granted him absolution for insanity in the first place, the judges did not want to encourage or perpetuate any ideas among the citizens that they could be granted absolution for similar crimes. The church, it seemed, was employing its ability to grant mercy, but it can perhaps be questioned whether their “mercy” was an ease on their conscience or a way to demonstrate their power to the public.

Nonetheless, the religious aspects of the feast of St. John the Baptist haven’t always appreciated, and sometimes were publicly scorned by adolescents or the lower class. A piece of writing from Piero Parenti accounts the mass before the carnival began, and then delves into an explanation of several impediments that affected the morning procession led by Girolamo Savonarola. Parenti wrote of the first incident: At the bridge of Santa Trinita, where rock-throwing ordinarily occurred, the procession was impeded, but Messer Luca Corina, a doctor [of law], was not ashamed to draw off his mantle and reply, with stone in hand, to any who impeded the procession, that for the faith he would put his life on the line This was accounted the greatest foolishness, since such action was neither necessary nor suitable for him. 15 While it is logical that there would be plenty of people like Piero Parenti who enjoyed the religious aspects of such celebrations and felt it ignorant to even acknowledge the ruckus and distractions that others created, it is not surprising that there were also Florentines who hurled around dead cats in order to block a religious procession. 16 We cannot know for certain whether comparable incidents occurred in result to a lack of respect for the church, Savonarola himself, or simply as a means of mischief, but such actions did lead to a fear among the Signoria for civic divinity. Fra Timoteo Bottonio recorded that preachers could not enforce a ban on rock-throwing during the carnival, no matter how many people were killed in its participation each year. 17 This call into question how much control the church really had over what happened at their own religious festivals. “Lorenzo Medici and other celebrated men wrote songs to be sung with the street amusements of the day, and paid their share of the expenses of the great public entertainments someone who puts on a costume for a masquerade, and dressed in silk and gold looks rich and powerful and then, when he takes off the mask and the costume, it is still the same as he was before.” 18 In a particular instance of disunity, during the annual carnival the clergy did not participate at all in the processions. Considering that the clergy were usually involved along with the rest of the community in the festivities, this was a sign that there were deep internal conflicts among the church, the religious orders, and the man with all the power at the time, Cosimo I. In Dati’s account, the religious procession included clerics, priests, monks, friars, religious orders, and recluses. 19 How might the procession be affected without any number of these important religious players? And what would thus say to the townsfolk? Plaisance writes that “their absence may be of less moment than the presence of Presbytery and Cosimo and the religious orders was not good at this time. The following August, in fact, the Dominicans would be expelled from the convent of San Marco.” 20 Looking at what may have been missing from the usual festivals year by year may give us a glance into the hints of discord among the Florentine community. Or, similarly, looking at why the ceremonies were cancelled might tell us something about a community that planned two months in advance for a festival for which “the whole world rejoices,” it shows up as a very large red flag when the events themselves do not actually happen. 21 Treder remarks that postponements and cancellations usually only happened when there was a severe disunity among the city. There was a general concern that, with such dances and parades, the people gathered there were even larger disorders or riots. “The danger that a gathering might display the weakness of the public authority was, however, only one part of a larger whole,” writes Treder. They were also concerned that “a public scandal would not have pleased the honored sani...” Disorder was in some sense a demonization of divine weakness as well as a challenge to divine and temporal authority. 22 The carnival and the feast of St. John the Baptist were instances when Florence presented itself not only to the direct community, but to the outside world. It is possible that “Florentine civic identity was most clearly described through the ritual presentation of the city to visiting dignitaries and ambassadors. In such cases, the presentation of a united civic front through a procession that involved the city’s multiple collectivities assumed a vital political importance in terms of the city’s credibility with the outside world.” 23 In this view, impediments to a festival, such as the slogging of dead cats through a religious procession, would indicate a weakness to visitors from other countries or cities, and might even be enough to rile up questions of strength of the rival states of Milan or Naples. The idea of presenting to the foreign public a strong united front of the church, the state, and the citizens could almost be seen as a militaristic defense strategy. On a smaller scale, there was also the concern that these large gatherings would stoke the flames of tension and the communal breaking of city laws and regulations. Not only could there, at any time, grow friction between the confraternities or the old families of Florence, but there was always the potential of the common populace to get into trouble with the authorities. Sharon Strochick remarks that crowded streets and fairs opened up grounds for same- sex encounters, which was strictly prohibited under the
government. Because of these possibilities for riots and illegalities, both the Signoria and the familia played important roles in the ceremonial life of Florence. Whether it be restlessness of the common people or questions of their public image to foreign states, Florence was very cautious to hide its inner agitations behind the masks used in its buffoonery.

Gender Tensions: Women Behind Windows

All of these ceremonies happened on the common, mundane, public streets of Florence: the everyday, for several days a year, became exquisite and magnificent by the passing of processions, masquerades, and animals right next to the markets, guilds, churches, and homes. It was an extraordinary event for the entire city, but not every Florentine got to experience its splendor at the same level of involvement. During most of the processions, women were forced to watch from the windows of their homes. According to Strocchia, the vertical distance also buffered spectators in an important way and reinforced Florentine gender ideologies. The physical gap separating streets and windows protected the purity and safety of “respectable” women who listened to the bawdy Carnival songs directed at them by street singers; the purity and safety of “respectable” women who listened to the bawdy Carnival songs directed at them by street singers; the purity and safety of “respectable” women who listened to the bawdy Carnival songs directed at them by street singers. However, for the upper class and noble women, the streets during the more raucous, bawdy, licentious parts of festivals were almost completely off-limits, unless a lady wanted to tarnish her reputation and dance with the lower class girls at the bonfires. For the aristocratic women, a unique type of public sphere was permitted to them; however, that sphere was primarily made up of the Medici Palace for dinners, balls, and theatricals that went along with the feast of St. John the Baptist and the carnival. Theoretically, though women rarely ventured over their own threshold, all of these precautions were done to preserve their honor. Their enclosed domain was, in a sense, due to the fact that women were held to a far higher accountability for their purity than Florentine men at the time, although it can be questioned whether they were viewed more as “objects of furniture” or exemplars of chastity far beyond that of men. No matter how male Florentines truly viewed women, there can be little doubt that these women felt left out of the majority of celebrations, and no declaration of honor can make up for the missed amusements that they only witnessed from afar in their high Florentine windows.

Conclusion

Festivals such as the feast of St. John the Baptist and the carnival preceding Lent were some of the world’s greatest religious celebrations during the time, connecting all social, religious, and political aspects of the community in one large commoration butchierous and solemn. While there were quite easily hundreds of tensions, quarrels, and dangers pulping through the city during those three days of carnival, keeping the clergy on their toes, the Signoria on the watch, the Medici staking claim over their purchased prowess, it can also be determined that, at the same time, Florence was one of the most united city-states of the time, and not only for their front of magnificence and beauty. The glamer and glory may not be exactly what meets the eye in the accounts of star-dazzled citizens, but Renaissance Florence was a community that enjoyed celebrating together, reigning in every aspect of art life with games, plays, feasts, and songs. At the start of the day, they joined in communion together for a dignified ceremony to celebrate their passed patron saint. Despite all these “negative” behaviors, both the “positive” changes, in which Florence was still a community that could pull together, annually, creating one of the world’s most renowned and ravishing celebrations that attracted dignitaries from countries sea away.

Endnotes

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To understand the class divisions within Florence, it is important to take note of the social and economic structures prevalent within the city. Florentine social classes were primarily based on constructions of wealth, with the rich magnate occupying the ruling seats, and a middle and lower classes had when bonded together. For the first time during the Renaissance, the ability of the popolo minuto to “make certain demands by means of petitions, which were just and reasonable” became apparent.

The first significant demonstration of the power this “underground” possessed came during the Ciompi revolt of 1378. During the events of that summer, when the wool workers managed to gather their power together to overthrow the government, the Signoria and other magnates became acquainted with the power the lower classes had when bonded together. For the first time during the Renaissance, the ability of the popolo minuto to “make certain demands by means of petitions, which were just and reasonable” became apparent.

During the 14th century, the oligarchy began to “assimilate the undisciplined and undisciplinable poor to the familiar image of the rogue” in Florence firmly stamped terror into ruling minds, a fear that continued throughout ensuing centuries as the effects of this revolutionary event continued to reverberate in the magistrate’s minds. The revolts of 1378 demonstrated, among other things, the strong sense of identity that the lower classes could create, an identity that Samuel Cohn, Jr. describes as similar to that of working class unions during the industrial revolution. Indeed, the growing communal identity of the lower classes was an increasing concern of the magnate, a threat from outside the city. This fear aggravated a more and more prejudiced view of the lower classes, whose “evil” and “laziness” increasingly became a matter of fact in the minds of the ruling class. By the end of the fourteenth century, the oligarchy began to “assimilate the undisciplined and undisciplinable poor to the familiar image of the rogue” and to associate poverty with criminal intentions.

While the events itself shook the magrate, the demonstration of mob power within Florence firmly stamped terror into ruling minds, a fear that continued throughout ensuing centuries as the effects of this revolutionary event continued to reverberate in the magistrate’s minds. The revolts of 1378 demonstrated, among other things, the strong sense of identity that the lower classes could create, an identity that Samuel Cohn, Jr. describes as similar to that of working class unions during the industrial revolution. Indeed, the growing communal identity of the lower classes was an increasing concern of the magnate, a threat from outside the city. This fear aggravated a more and more prejudiced view of the lower classes, whose “evil” and “laziness” increasingly became a matter of fact in the minds of the ruling class. By the end of the fourteenth century, the oligarchy began to “assimilate the undisciplined and undisciplinable poor to the familiar image of the rogue” and to associate poverty with criminal intentions.
dealings, and urban development. Indeed, in the court trial of Giovanni and Lusanna, in which the later accused the former of breaking their marriage contract, the lower social status of Lusanna contributed to the factors leading to her eventual loss of the case, by the determination of the Pope. While Giovanni was declared by all but the plaintiff to be an honorable man, many wished for Lusanna that “the devil take her soul for she has brought shame and dishonor to [her] family.”

The Lusanna story also indicates the classifications of good and evil that the magnate assigned to male and female members of the popolo minuto. While men who did not have a job were considered lazy and a detriment to society, women who actively left their home on a regular basis became associated with promiscuity and prostitution. Such actions were considered more inexcusable to wealthy women, but “the poor did not and could not possess honor.”

To regulate the roles of poor men and women within Florence, the government issued strict sumptuary laws restricting the clothing that certain classes could wear, claiming to protect the populace against “the barbarous and irrepressible bestiality of women, who not considering the fragility of their nature, . . . force their men . . . to submit.” Such an assumption of guilt is evident in the strict, hurtful communicated in court records such as this one. This visual separation preempted other forms of separation between the wealthy and the underground.

Despite these prejudices, there were several attempts prior to the seventeenth century to give relief to the poor. The church provided social welfare, meals, and workhouses for disenfranchised individuals. Confraternities distributed alms; at times, members of the underground who were wrongly accused in court even found a friendly witness to testify for their innocence. When one Angelo di Taddeo Guidi was accused of violently attacking a man, a witness provided testimony that “Angelo attacked Miniato because he had been most grievously injured by him [and] . . . is a pauper and cannot pay that fine.” While many of these efforts were headed by the church, powerful families within Florence also sponsored many poor relief efforts. The Medici, who were eager to equate their name with good Florence also sponsored many poor relief efforts. The church provided social welfare, meals, and workhouses for disenfranchised individuals. Confraternities distributed alms; at times, members of the underground who were wrongly accused in court even found a friendly witness to testify for their innocence. When one Angelo di Taddeo Guidi was accused of violently attacking a man, a witness provided testimony that “Angelo attacked Miniato because he had been most grievously injured by him [and] . . . is a pauper and cannot pay that fine.” While many of these efforts were headed by the church, powerful families within Florence also sponsored many poor relief efforts. The Medici, who were eager to equate their name with good

Social and Physical Separations of Rich and Poor

However, the fact that the underground was not being provided for is clear from the revolts that ensued throughout the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. The economic recession of the fourteenth century reverberated harshly on the popolo minuto, evident by the fact that “poverty rates of 50 to 70 percent maintained pressure on wages.” The effects of the plague, the economic downturn, and a lack of representation in the political sphere all contributed to the discontent growing in the minds of the populace. While Niccolò Machiavelli, author of Florence Histories, did not necessarily condone the violence used by the Ciompi, he did admit that “we are on our way to a sure acquisition, because those who could hinder us are disunited and rich.”

The Signoria’s refusal to fully address these demands, or provide fairer taxes, more relief during the plague and the famine, and increased support of those in power, ultimately led to the Ciompi revolt and increased the gap between the wealthy and the poor.

Even after the Ciompi revolt, political revolts continued into the fifteenth century, if only in smaller, more personally centered struggles. The fear of this is shown by one warning to the lords of Florence that “if [they] don’t do something, [they] will discover that no one in Florence will be able to save [them] and . . . there will be an uprising.”

Grain workers, cloth laborers, and other poor workers who felt uncompensated by the government’s policies continued to protest the actions of their government. The Signoria and other ruling bodies took responsive action, in some cases ordering that “since not all are quiet, and in order to install fear into some, foot soldiers should be hired.” The combination of law and force was often used in attempts to control the underground. While the revolts and uprisings of the post-Ciompia era were more controlled and less impactful than that of 1378, the government evidently still worried about a repeat of those events.

The reasons for this fear were well grounded. During the Ciompi revolts, the underground of Florence for the first time “had some form of illegal institutional identity, betrayed in their flag” and developed a community identity amongst the protesters. This identity came largely through the validation that the lower classes attempted to add to the campaign. The use of their flag, uniting the various guilds under one order, was perhaps the more important step toward creating a community among the protesters. To the protection of the most disadvantaged that the underground had the word “liberty” on it—represented a bonding of their various guilds under a common goal. Indeed, under this flag, the Ciompi were more loyal and disciplined than under the flag of their own guilds. Uniting under Michele di Lando and the Otto government also allowed the Ciompi to believe in their ability to unite as a force and to “cut across older communal networks of association, which [challenged] the domination of a state that was still medieval.” This growing sense of identity terrified the upper class, as they realized the ease with which the Ciompi could gather support and form a revolt against the power of the wealthy.

It is for this reason that the Florentine underground was so influential on the upper class. Though some historians choose to focus only on the upper class as the driving force of social structure during the time, “a statistical analysis of social networks of association among laborers and artisans . . . have shown that their social structure and community organization were not so static as historians have assumed.” In addition to encouraging some social welfare programs and reforming of the tax code, the effects that the underground’s uprising had on the government were significant in furthering the political progress of Florence. In response to the revolts, the government established the Otto di Guarda in 1378 to use a network of spies to detect plots before they could come into fruition. In addition, the government granted amnesty to many political exiles, a measure they would have never taken without their desire to control the lower classes. These policies contributed to a new political environment within Florence. A tense political atmosphere of secrets, plotting, and distrust emerged amongst the magnate, one that Buonaccorso Pinti demonstrated in his own diary. When Pinti and his brother agreed to help the Abbot of S. Piera a Ruota in Valdambra instate one of their sons as abbot of the monastery, they had caused the government a “new conspiracy” and “would not rest until by force or trickery they had got their hands on the abbey.” This political environment of conspiring was born partly from this Otto network, revealing the effects of the poor on Florentine policy. 1494 saw another result of the government’s efforts to prevent future revolts with a more democratic government, and while the oligarchy may have quelled one rebellion itself, the episode revealed a shifting mentality within the city.

The magnate also addressed their fear of the lower classes by creating new policies that developed rituals of separation within the city. First and foremost, the government forced the Ciompi “to give over their flags to the Palace . . . because understanding that obedience to this demand would remove their distinctive flags from their unifying flag, the poor were forced to recognize the leadership of magnate. In addition, the ruling body used rituals such as feasts, religious holidays, and processions as means through which to unify the city, more specifically the poor towards the main culture of Florence. Paradis that celebrated Florence and Christianity were especially popular because these universal ideals could appeal to the entire city and thus were key to the magnate’s attempts to bring the populace back under their control. However the government recognized the gamble they were taking by relying on processions to increase public unity—processions “were absolutely necessary for social order yet endangered it, for the procession was a social order.” While the processions could bind together the poor under the banner of Florence, it also gave the popolo minuto a gathering place to breed further discontent. Still, the magnate was willing to take this risk in order to preserve the current balance of power.

These social separations were coupled by similar physical manifestations of the magnate’s fear. While not an intended measure of separation put forth by the government, the urban geography of Florence began to reflect the desire of the upper class to separate from the underground, with the poor pushed the margins of the city and streets increasingly segregated by economic status. Through the use of mapping, powerful families and government officials were able to paint a new image of the city. Figure 1 especially shows how a certain powerful family was eager to create “a new Medici Florence, a city reborn with the arrival of the Medici dukes” and revealed how urban constructions of the time were “outdated modes of cartographic technique that favored bias and fictive distortion to symbolize the city.” Yet, these constructions, however inaccurate to the
layout of Florence, did demonstrate a trend within the city towards pushing the poor further towards the margins, away from the eyes of the magnate. Evidence in the 1427 catasto shows that a household's address and gross income had a significant correlation. Though the neighborhoods did see a degree of overlap between classes, “the physical changes that reflected the upper class' perceived criminality of all the popolo minuto.

The prevalence of these crimes was not hard for the wealthy to believe. In fact, “by the sixteenth century, poverty had become associated with sin, a totally new development.”8 Separated from the wealthy through their clothing, address, and political representation, the popolo minuto took on the role of the scapegoat or the “other” in the eyes of the magnate. Francesco Guicciardini in his account of the Florentine poor called the class “an insane animal, full of a thousand errors, of thousands of confusions, without taste, without refinement [diletto], without stability.”9 Reactions such as this further reveal assumptions about the poor's evilness and the ease with which the magnate associated them with criminal activity.

In order to deal with this “criminal poor,” the government created a new judicial system as part of the Otto di Guardia that focused more on approval from the masses than it had in the past. While certain crimes, such as rape, adultery, and sodomy; increased after the installation of the Otto, most crimes, such as homicide and theft decreased from the 1350s to 1380s. The magnate's new judicial system attempted to reduce “the number of witnesses reluctant to testify in criminal and civil cases”10 and to keep urban peace “through systematic court initiative rather than by private agreement or clan agreement.”11 These attempts to make the justice system more accessible to the lower classes serve as another example of the shift in awareness the magnate were making. In order to ensure the satisfaction of the poor and prevent popular uprising, these methods became a common feature of Florentine courts.

The lower classes also began to be associated with sorcery and the occult. While Florence did not experience a witch frenzy like other European cites did, there is no doubt that it was touched by the fear. In one 1375 case against the condemned witch Monna Caterina di Agostino, the women's acts were said to have caused “disorder, tumult, and scandal … in the city of Florence between the citizens of this city.”12 While this reaction may seem somewhat melodramatic by modern standards, the issue was obviously of grave seriousness to the magnate at the time. Other instances show that “the authorities viewed these cases with the utmost gravity [and] … in both cases, the principals were sentenced to death.”13 Through these incidents, the upper class assigned devilish characteristics to the poor. These trials reveal an obsession on the part of the magnate to characterize the unholy, criminal nature of the poor and to separate themselves from the “other” of the popolo minuto.

What this criminalization ultimately reveals, however, is the fear that the magnate felt towards the poor. Stemming from the enormity of the 1378 Ciompi Revolt, the upper class began to see the popolo minuto as a disrupter of the social order of Florence and feared the political upheaval that a unified force of the poor could cause to the system. Because of this preoccupation, the actions of the poor forced the ruling class to shift their political attentions toward issues of the less wealthy. This influence on policy and political thought played a significant role in the development of the Renaissance, just as much as the influence of Lorenzo Medici, Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio, or Leonardo da Vinci. Endnotes

6 Connell, Society and Individual, 304.
The Ospedale Degli Innocente: A Microhistory

Hannah Hunt

In many history courses, the Ospedale degli Innocenti is presented as an architectural feat, summarized as the first designated orphanage in western Europe, and passed over. Scholar Eugino Battisti writes, “In [1419] the Silk Guild began building the Spedale degli Innocenti in Florence… The Innocenti is included in every survey and handbook of architectural history. It is also Brunelleschi’s architectural debut and, as such, is expected to shed light on his later development. What’s left to be said?”

What’s left to be said? A lot.

What Battisti and others overlook is the fact that the Innocenti did much more for the city of Florence and held a life of its own that extended far past Brunelleschi’sarched loggia. It became a small city in itself, run by administrators with the aims of helping orphaned or abandoned children to become integral members of Renaissance Florentine society with the help of their marriages—to name a few functions.

Many, however, assume the building was nothing more than a single-purpose orphanage, housing the abandoned youth of Florence. It is important to realize that this building played a large role in capturing the culture of Florence, and to understand the origins of the Innocenti as a whole to see how it fulfills its role as an institution and microcosm of Florentine society. This was most obviously seen in the building’s conception, headed by the Silk Guild, its construction, run by Filippo Brunelleschi and Francesco della Luna, its roles as an orphanage, seen through the increase in baptisms across Florence due to its opening, and the economical roles it took on in providing positions to the women of Florence as well as giving back to the community.
extensive research on the Innocenti and its charges, found one case: a mother abandoned her child because the father had died. The child, who was left at the Innocenti in 1462, was named Giovanni da Scotia, “John of Scotland.” She said that he had been born from her and her legitimate husband who had died at Santa Maria Nuova. She said that they were from Scotland and that the boy was one year to fourteen months old—at least as far as we could understand, since we could not understand her language very well.10

This and other cases led Gavitt to the question the structure of the Florentine family, stating, “Fathers seemed incapable of, or ill suited to, the task of raising children in the mother’s absence. Certainly the late weaning of children … may have made Florentine fathers fear starvation.” Yet this still begs the question of the absence of support from any kind of extended family structure. This could be because of the low status of illegitimate children in Florence at the time. Whether the child of slave and master or an adulterous rendezvous, these children were frequently abandoned with condemnation. Many parents, especially those of the upper classes, abandoned their children at the care-giving homes or other hospitals before the Innocenti’s inception to avoid the social disapproval of raising them.11 For example, “a Florentine who turned over a child … explained that he did so not because of poverty or an unwillingness to care for the infant, but it is much more fear of scandal that could take shape if such a thing were known.”12

Without the Innocenti, these children would be left to seek shelter, counting on the Italian hospitality of their neighbors more than anything. Most of the charges in the Innocenti appear to have been infants, needing extensive care. Even those parents who could find wet nurses for their children still at times engaged in infanticide.13 Those older children who wandered the streets could stumble into bad neighborhoods or gangs.14 The south side of Florence had tough neighborhoods, “home to many of those charged with … rapes, assaults, and frauds.” This put children “in danger of going adrift.”15

With such city-wide crime, child prostitution for young girls, and general poverty, it is clear that orphans “were truly unfortunate, truly outside the familial organization of Florence, and … were first among the liminal lay groups of Florence to assume a formal public role in the salvational work of city ritual.”16 With children on the streets, it increased their risk of falling ill and spreading such diseases as tuberculosis, which was a ravaging illness among the urban population of northern Italy.17 Ultimately, in a desperate attempt to aid the other all-purpose hospitals in the area, the Silk Guild of Florence looked to build a revolutionary home for these abandoned children.18

Construction of the Innocenti

Space for the new Innocenti was hard to find, however. Florence was a constantly expanding city, experiencing dramatic population growth due to its military endeavors and fluctuating economy. “The location of […] new hospitals depended on the availability of land, and the tendency to build on the edge of built-up areas; the Innocenti looked out over a series of gardens and fields toward the city walls rapidly built up as [they] developed the city.”19 The images of the Innocenti that one may find today in Florence are dramatically different from the building at the time of its construction in terms of the environment surrounding it, as “the urban sprawl [of Renaissance Florence] had little overall organization (beyond the grid pattern at the core that was predetermined by the city’s Roman foundation) and few points of focus to pull parts of it together.”20 Therefore, the children of the Innocenti could have been surrounded by numerous environments, and the expansion of the city must have been taken into consideration by the Silk Guild when selecting an architect. Humanist Poggio Bracciolini was quoted as saying, “I think [there are] several men of our own time who have earned great renown by doing remarkable things, and their names will be known through the ages.”21 and many scholars would agree that his evaluations of the men during the Florentine Renaissance is true—especially for the craftsmen. The silk guild had 1,000 florin from the city to start the construction of the foundling home, and they chose Florence’s future favorite architect for the job: Filippo Brunelleschi.22

Brunelleschi took the credit for the design and construction of the Innocenti, but the building would not have survived if it were not for the expansions added by his former apprentice, Francesco della Luna, in 1427—a year after Brunelleschi left the project. During Brunelleschi’s time on site, he worked to design the Innocenti to include a church, a central courtyard, separate entrances for women and men, a dormitory on the first level, offices, a reception hall, refectory, kitchen, infirmary, and dormitory for the women living there, as shown in figure 1.23 However, when building, Brunelleschi was only on the project to supervise the loggia and a handful of basic rooms. It was Francesco della Luna who added:

- a narrow courtyard, the southern wing with a common room for the nursing women, a refectory hall, service space for the refectory and kitchen, and the actual kitchen were begun in 1427. Along with the infirmary, a service kitchen for the infirmary, a central courtyard, an infirmary laundry room (beneath the infirmary), and a covered passage to the chicken coop.24

When Brunelleschi left the project in 1426, the Innocenti was minimal. There was no separate refectory, no kitchen, no infirmary, no laundry, no separate day room for the nurses to gather away from the hoards of screaming infants to be housed in the spedale.”25 Yet Brunelleschi is still attributed to the full construction of the building. Truly, Francesco della Luna was the one who finished the Innocenti and erased

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Figure 1: Filippo Brunelleschi’s design for the Ospedale degli Innocenti is shown in bold lines; the shaded lines show the modifications to his original design. From Lawrence Kahn, “The ‘Ospedale degli Innocenti’ and the ‘Bambino’ of the American Academy of Pediatrics,” Pediatrics 110, no. 1 (July 2002): 175-80.

Figure 2: Loggia, Ospedale degli Innocenti.
they had the facilities they needed to operate (and also some debt to repay as the additions cost an additional 2,000 florins). 25 Perhaps Brunelleschi received credit because he was the first to be considered rooted in the logical ideal of proportions and city planning, but in terms of the Innocenti, his influence is seen mostly in the loggia.

The loggia itself hangs as a sort of culmination of public and private space on the building. Loggias in the Italian tradition are meant to provide a public space for citizens to meet and talk, and tended to house important decision-making and discussions beneath their arches. 26 The loggia of the Innocenti, however, works to harmonize the differences of the public and private spaces. It allowed for shelter for parents and children from the heat, as well as a place for discussion and visitation, as some parents returned to speak with the children they left there. 27 The loggia itself operates on a 2:3 width to height ratio of each arch. 28 The façade covers the main entrance, service doors, and a dormitory entrance as well! The elevated height of the Innocenti—elevating nine stairs to reach the entrances—gives the space a feeling of power, pride, and a strong sense of antiquity.

The bambini or child figures on the façade of the loggia were not Brunelleschi’s doing, but that of Andrea Della Robbia in 1487. “Four decades after Brunelleschi’s death” (see figure 2). There are ten figures in total, seven of which are fully wrapped and swaddled. 29 This leaves three left unwrapped or partially wrapped, and freestanding in their embossments (see figure 3). One may assume that this free-stance pose is meant to represent the freedom that the bambini find through living at the Innocenti, liberated from whatever class status their families held outside the walls. They represented the importance of independence and legitimacy in Renaissance Florence, and the gift that living in the Innocenti gave these children. By 1445, the Innocenti was ready to open its doors.

**Effects of Opening the Innocenti**

After the doors of the Innocenti opened in 1445, there was a surge of baptisms registered for the city:

- Between 1445 and 1485, for example, only for two years, 1479 and 1480, did the percentage of admissions to the Ospedale degli Innocenti to baptisms in Florence exceed 10 percent (for 1479 the figure is 13.9 percent for 1480, 11.0 percent).
- By contrast, the average for the years 1531-9 was 21.9 percent, and during the famine of 1539, the percentage of baptisms in Florence exceed 10 percent (for 1479 the figure is 13.9 percent for 1480, 11.0 percent).
- The orphans were given the chance to feel like full, normal citizens of Florence, and therefore increased their instruction, guided by the philosophy that “the students should learn to live frugally, but neatly and clean, and to be content with little. They should be protected from all forms of dissipation.” 30 The goal was to prepare the boys for an apprenticeship and the girls for a spot in domestic services or in the crafts of weaving and cloth manufacturing so they could accumulate a small dowry outside of what the Innocenti was able to give them. 31 The children’s education was institutionalized, meaning that the Innocenti would need to provide tutors or add the duties of education to the nurses’ loads because there was no confraternity or boy’s school to take the children. 32 Girls living in the Innocenti had a different type of education, typical to that of the women of the Renaissance, but different from the boys’ grounding in arithmetic and business principles. Girls were encouraged to pursue domestic arts such as sewing, weaving, cooking, and cleaning.

Apprenticeships for children of both genders doubled as a foster system if a family could not be found in its own right. 33 A child would seek an apprenticeship around the ages of thirteen or fourteen. The “child’s apprenticeship was much like fostering. Up to half the boys and perhaps a third of all girls left the parental home to spend a few years as an apprentice or domestic servant in the homes of others, and the percentages moved higher with the orphaned children of both sexes.” 34 This was done as a way to care for the children, but also level the playing field in comparison to the boys still with their families. Those legitimate sons were typically inducted into a boy’s schools during the later half of the fifteenth century to learn arithmetic, accounting, measures, and language, as well as participate in other activities such as music and theater. 35 The sons of the elite still living at home with families would also be encouraged to learn Greek and Latin with a private tutor, while the boys of the Innocenti probably only studied Italian. “This put the boys of the Innocenti at a disadvantage in comparison to their elite peers, but also gave them a strong foundation of a typical Florentine education.”

Outside of the classroom there was potential that the Innocenti’s boys still participated and attended city festivals and played games such as calcio, a sport similar to football that was played more with the fists than hands. They also enjoyed several horse races, or palio, throughout the city, families becoming spectators of the race, the horses owned by the wealthy of Florentine society. 36 These would be days where the orphans were given the chance to feel like full, normal citizens of Florence, and therefore increased their
loyalty to their homeland more than any textbook could, thus rounding out their education.

As the Innocenti grew, its administrators implemented a number of additional duties and privileges for its residences. Women were able to work in household services to earn money toward their wages. In addition to the basics of grammar, arithmetic, and such practical skills as weaving, music was also taught. The Florentines believed that “in rapid measures made the body alert and trained it to adopt graceful attitudes.” It exercised and nurtured the mind, corrected the voice and rendered pronunciation soft, accentuated, grave or sonorous. The girls who were given lessons and excelled were allowed to continue their practices as long as it helped to grow their character into one that was acceptable beyond the walls of the Innocenti. The girls were also taught “the exceptional women who achieved learning in the period were praised for, as marvels of their sex. But … in each instance praise was invariably accompanied by words of admonition for her skill with a needle.”

The emphasis on needlework and weaving was so important in the Renaissance education of women that the Innocenti discovered a way to profit from their efforts by opening a tapestry workshop. It was through selling tapestries that the Innocenti hoped to repay some of their debt to the city from its construction and maintenance. The “workshop at the Innocenti, even though directed by a former male founder, also functioned to keep the hospital’s girls and women gainfully employed, as is clear from the petition opening a tapestry workshop. It was through selling tapestries that the Innocenti hoped to repay some of their debt to the city from its construction and maintenance. The “workshop at the Innocenti, even though directed by a former male founder, also functioned to keep the hospital’s girls and women gainfully employed, as is clear from the petition. For example, Roy Porter and Mikhail Teich wrote that, between 1375 and 1550, Florence was one among many contributors to the cultural life of Italy. If the Renaissance, however, is taken to mean not the sum total of Italian culture but the attempt to turn away from the recent medieval past and return to the ways of ancient Rome and Greece, then Florence’s particular contribution was little short of astounding. The most striking examples of this movement to revive antiquity in Renaissance Florence are still visible today [such as] Brunelleschi’s loggia for the Foundling Hospital." Here, Porter and Teich overlook the entire history of the building attached to the loggia, and only appreciate the Innocenti for its exterior and not its interior—serving beauty as skin deep, as the saying goes. The beauty of the building was in fact in the Innocenti as a whole. Despite the debt the institution incurred, it worked to give back and improve Florentine society by caring for the abandoned children, participating in the large cloth industries, giving citizens a place for charity as well as employment, and ensuring that Florentine patriotism continued in the hearts of their educated, middle-class citizens. The Innocenti has continued its long history of fostering youths for nearly five and a half centuries, from 1530–1540 (alone) the foundling home of the Innocenti took in 5,400 children, with 1,000 of those in 1539. That’s 5,500 children who could have wound up as prostitutes or criminals with little education, as well as potentially a strong disdain for their homeland due to lack of assistance with the help of the orphanage. All this being said, one must wonder why most scholars give this institution’s microhistory such little attention when discussing Florentine history and society.

Conclusion
It is clear from the evidence that the Innocenti was far more than just the first orphanage in western Europe. With its educational efforts, social implications, and economic impact, the Innocenti played a strong role in Florentine society. Too many educational efforts, social implications, and economic impact, the Innocenti played a strong role in Florentine society. Too many scholars give this institution’s microhistory such little attention when discussing Florentine history and society.

Endnotes
3 Ibid., 47.
4 Ibid., 49.
8 Ibid., 192.
10 Ibid., 110.
11 Ibid., 112.
12 Sullivan, The Ospedale degli Innocenti, 43-44.
14 Nicholas Terpstra, Last Gods: Sex and Death in Renaissance Florence (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 38.
17 Battini, Filippo Brunelleschi, 33.
22 Ibid., 176.
23 Battini, Filippo Brunelleschi, 53-54.
24 Ibid., 51.
25 Ibid., 60.
28 Ibid.
30 Kahn, The Ospedale degli Innocenti...
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34 David Michael D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy. The Hospital of Siena, 1480-1530 (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 77.
35 J. L. Vives, On Assistance to the Poor ed. A. Tobriner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 43.
36 D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy, 71.
37 Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 377.
38 D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy, 72.
39 Ibid., 11-12.
40 Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 377.
43 Gavitt, Charity and Children in Late Renaissance Florence, 164.
45 Vives, On Assistance to the Poor, ed. A. Tobriner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 43.
46 D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy, 71.
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48 D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy, 72.
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50 Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 377.
53 Gavitt, Charity and Children in Late Renaissance Florence, 164.
55 Vives, On Assistance to the Poor, ed. A. Tobriner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 43.
56 D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy, 71.
57 Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 377.
58 D’Andrea, Civic Christianity in Renaissance Italy, 72.
Section II.

Forgotten Stories: Cartoonists and Kings

The Viking Age is one that conjures up a plethora of fantastic images for the modern observer. Vivid scenes of raiding brutality by Viking warriors are among the first of these imaginings, but they only tell part of the greater story. The Viking world was one of nuanced complexity, wherein these raids only reflected small segments of the greater tale, and where the raiders themselves more frequently self-identified as farmers or poets than warriors. Scandinavia during this Age experienced a profusion of culture, as it witnessed the growth of numerous interconnected cultures and saw a proliferation of trade and other interactions with the continent. The Viking Age (dating from approximately 800-1100) was one with far-reaching implications and lasting effects for a multiplicity of peoples, and it deserves to be remembered as such, rather than any of the more simplistic views that have since emerged.

The societies emerging during the Viking Age featured incredibly complex social hierarchies and systems of rule, which have often gone unnoticed by the masses. Further, these complexities have occasionally been overlooked even by the historians tasked with the study of these subjects, who have chosen instead to try to compartmentalize Viking age leaders into created constructs. These false constructs are detrimental to historic inquiry, and they defy the Scandinavian world as those leaders knew it. Rather, historians must endeavor to represent this period, as with all others, as the complicated, diverse setting it was.

Nowhere is historians' difficulty with accurately portraying the Viking Age more evident than in the case of Scandinavian kingship. Kingship in the Viking Age was far different than many other systems of monarchy with which one may have familiarity. For the people of this age, kingship was not necessarily a hereditary position; rather it was a title that could be acquired through warfare or something resembling an election at an Althing (or other similar gathering). Rather than following a fixed precedent, the nature of kingship was known to change from one generation to the next, as circumstance dictated. While it is certainly true that Scandinavian countries progressively grew more reliant on hereditary rule, particularly coinciding with the consolidation of these countries, the Viking Age is rife with successions by unrelated leaders.

Yet this dynamic nature of the kingship is only one limiting factor in terms of understanding and conceptualizing leadership of this age. Rather than there being only one king for each country or kingdom, the Viking Age was littered with an abundance of kings, each of whom fell somewhere into a hierarchical system of kings, with lower kings answering to higher kings and vice versa. This in itself is not unique, as it was systems such as these that constituted a need for terms such as “High King,” but such constructs are often unfamiliar for modern audiences.

While this system is not altogether unlike other hierarchical systems that would later emerge throughout Europe, it is important to note that these respective leaders were each termed kings, or roughly so. The term konungr was used indiscriminately for each of these leaders, and is most closely translated into the English word king. Yet this terminology has proved maddening to many historians, who often instead change konungr to mean “prince,” “chiefman,” or even “sub-king” or “petty king” as they see fit. While these variants can help conceptualize Viking leadership, they do misrepresent the world as the Vikings saw it, particularly the changes to “prince” and “chiefman.” While “petty kings” or “sub-kings” are classifications that would not be found in Viking Age, these terms do better encapsulate the hierarchical system as it was than do other terms. Even so, this is a diminished understanding of kingship from how the Vikings themselves would have viewed it.

Further muddying the waters is the fact that modern historians are not the only people to have given these leaders different appellations. Later translators have been prone to
change the titles of Viking kings to “chieftains” as well, as they, too, found it necessary to make changes to better reflect their own views or culture. The quest for well-represented Viking kingship is also one that is troubling, as even (nearly) contemporary sources have a tendency to disparage these leaders, calling them “king[s] only in name” or other derogatory titles. To be certain, a good deal of the disdain in this and other contemporary accounts does come from the fact that the sources are Christian, and they recount raids upon their people. This fosters no small degree of hostility between the two sides, which tends to manifest itself within the pages of Chronicles or other Histories. Yet beyond this more immediate bias, there is also an underlying one, which is borne out of a fundamental misunderstanding of the Scandinavians and their people, which frequently led to the idea that any sea raid was nothing but a blot on the name of the king and the nation, a notion that was perpetuated both to the Scandinavians simply as “heathens,” “Northmen,” or “Danes.” While these descriptions are colorful, and very telling of a great deal else, they offer very little insight into the specific nature of who was raiding. While this is sufficient to show they were Viking attacks, there is nothing indicating whether the raiders were sea kings or mere raiders. It is all but certain that some (if not many) of these attested synchronous or contemporaneous raiders were in fact sea kings, yet it is impossible to gauge who fell into either category based on the extant chronicled information. To be fair, it certainly makes sense that the people being raided were in no rush to find out by whom exactly they were being pillaged, yet this is remains an inherent difficulty in this research which must be addressed.

So what was a sea king, exactly? The sources are at odds over their definition, so it is best to begin with an examination of the oldest, nearest to contemporary works to see what the later historians were working with. For this, there is no better source than Snorri Sturluson’s work, the Heimskringla, which is a history of the kings of Norway. Though Norway is the focus of Sturluson’s work, there is also a great deal of interconnectivity with the rest of Scandinavia within it, and it is thus of great merit to research beyond Norway, much as many of the Icelandic Sagas are equally telling of Norway.

Unfortunately, it must be mentioned that the Heimskringla is frequently dated to approximately 1230, and many of Sturluson’s contemporary saga writers are also dated to the thirteenth century, leaving a considerable gap between the time of their composition (and in most cases, subsequent recording in written form) and the subject of the work. Such a significant gap (at times spanning up to three hundred years) must be taken into consideration, and it is sometimes difficult to tell whether the information being related is an accurate depiction of the Viking Age, as it is purported to be, or a closer indication of Scandinavia during the time of composition. This is something that must be taken into account and an issue that stands as the biggest difficulty with these earliest sources. Despite this, they may still prove useful in research so long as these considerations are taken into account.

Moreover, in Sturluson’s extensive work, there are only eight mentions of sea kings, which would seem to be a hindrance to research. Further, of the eight sea kings who are mentioned, six are only mentioned in passing, as part of kennings for something else (irrespective for ships or waves). This leaves only two (somewhat) detailed accounts of the lives of sea kings, which is admittedly significantly less than one would hope. What is a great deal that can be gleaned from what has been mentioned, even the passing references to the kennings. That Sturluson can simply say, “And the steerer of storm-tossed/Steeds of Atli oft did,” with the expectation that his audience will implicitly understand that Atli was a sea king, and he is thus referenced as such is remarkable. Many few people even today have garnered enough fame to be considered synonymous with their profession or title, making the fact these people are so well-known in an age of oral tradition all the more astonishing. As such, these passing mentions are actually telling of the wide-spread nature of sea kings, as well as the fact that some of them garnered considerable fame, even to the point of becoming synonymous with their title.

Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that these names of sea kings were fairly commonplace amongst their contemporaries, meaning they were recognized by their peers unanimously, despite the frequency with which their names appeared in this culture. Such acclains and instant recognition are indicative of this being a widespread, or at the very least widely recognized, phenomenon. They also indicate a wealth of knowledge on the subject that has seemingly since been lost, or perhaps never explicitly recorded at all. While such implicit messages should generally be avoided in historic inquiry, here they are necessary, if only to prove that there was a great amount of information or knowledge at one point extant on the topic, even if they have been since lost to time. Further, it should be noted that this notion of sea kings in kennings was not limited to Sturluson’s work, as the Younger Edda contains two thula (segments) that referenced sea kings in kennings, one twenty-four times and the other a staggering seventy-six times. With that being said, the two remaining accounts from the Heimskringla present many of the same problems as well, found fault with Viking terminology and made changes on sea kings and provide a remarkably vivid and nuanced look into the world of Viking sea kingship. The first of these accounts, that of Haki, describes his path from sea-kingship to a far greater office, that of king of Sweden. The account begins by describing Haki and his brother, Hjalkr, as being “of great fame. They were sea-kings and had a great fleet. Sometimes they joined forces, at others they fought separately. Many men of valor followed each of them.” This fascinating excerpt seems to indicate not only sea kingship, but also a form of joint kingship (or capitancy, at any rate) as they were described as having only one fleet between them. This concept of shared rule was certainly not foreign to medieval politics, though it certainly was something of a rarity amongst the Scandinavians, and it is impossible to definitively tell whether this truly was shared kingship or not, as each their having a war band seems to indicate otherwise.

However, for Sturluson, the only item of note between the brothers is Haki’s eventual ascension to the Scandinavian throne, which also belies the reason for which the Heimskringla does not offer more of these poisoned accounts of sea-kings, as he is only truly concerned with their land-based counterparts. That sea-kings could evolve through successful warfare into kings of large portions of land, as is the case with Haki (and also Solvi, the other sea king to be extensively mentioned, who also ascends the Swedish throne) is fascinating, but likely did not happen with frequency, as evidenced by the fact that only two such instances are recorded in the Heimskringla.

In true Viking fashion, Haki acquires this kingdom through bloodshed, facing off against the established king Hugleik on the Fyri Plains. Sturluson is careful to describe both kings and armies as valiant and worthy before reaching the critical moment wherein “King Haki entered the shield wall of King Hugleik and killed him and both his sons.” Immediately after this destruction of his royal opponent, the Swedes fled, and King Haki conquered the lands and made himself king over the Swedes. He remained three years in the land, but while he remained there in peace, his champions left him and went on Viking expeditions and thus amassed spoils for themselves. It is unclear what became of Haki after these three years, whether his peaceful reign was ended through death or skirmish, or whether, as the implication seems to be, he simply left the land, but at any rate Haki is not heard of again throughout the remainder of the Heimskringla. It is difficult to account for what may have caused this sudden

Thus, the literal meaning is that the names of sea kings were only eight mentions of sea kings, which would seem to be a hindrance to research. Further, of the eight sea kings who are mentioned, six are only mentioned in passing, as part of kennings for something else (irrespective for ships or waves). This leaves only two (somewhat) detailed accounts of the lives of sea kings, which is admittedly significantly less than one would hope. What is a great deal that can be gleaned from what has been mentioned, even the passing references to the kennings. That Sturluson can simply say, “And the steerer of storm-tossed/Steeds of Atli oft did,” with the expectation that his audience will implicitly understand that Atli was a sea king, and he is thus referenced as such is remarkable. Many few people even today have garnered enough fame to be considered synonymous with their profession or title, making the fact these people are so well-known in an age of oral tradition all the more astonishing. As such, these passing mentions are actually telling of the wide-spread nature of sea kings, as well as the fact that some of them garnered considerable fame, even to the point of becoming synonymous with their title.

Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that these names of sea kings were fairly commonplace amongst their contemporaries, meaning they were recognized by their peers unanimously, despite the frequency with which their names appeared in this culture. Such acclains and instant recognition are indicative of this being a widespread, or at the very least widely recognized, phenomenon. They also indicate a wealth of knowledge on the subject that has seemingly since been lost, or perhaps never explicitly recorded at all. While such implicit messages should generally be avoided in historic inquiry, here they are necessary, if only to prove that there was a great amount of information or knowledge at one point extant on the topic, even if they have been since lost to time. Further, it should be noted that this notion of sea kings in kennings was not limited to Sturluson’s work, as the Younger Edda contains two thula (segments) that referenced sea kings in kennings, one twenty-four times and the other a staggering seventy-six times. With that being said, the two remaining accounts from the Heimskringla present many of the same problems as well, found fault with Viking terminology and made changes on sea kings and provide a remarkably vivid and nuanced look into the world of Viking sea kingship. The first of these accounts, that of Haki, describes his path from sea-kingship to a far greater office, that of king of Sweden. The account begins by describing Haki and his brother, Hjalkr, as being “of great fame. They were sea-kings and had a great fleet. Sometimes they joined forces, at others they fought separately. Many men of valor followed each of them.” This fascinating excerpt seems to indicate not only sea kingship, but also a form of joint kingship (or capitancy, at any rate) as they were described as having only one fleet between them. This concept of shared rule was certainly not foreign to medieval politics, though it certainly was something of a rarity amongst the Scandinavians, and it is impossible to definitively tell whether this truly was shared kingship or not, as each their having a war band seems to indicate otherwise.

However, for Sturluson, the only item of note between the brothers is Haki’s eventual ascension to the Swedish throne, which also belies the reason for which the Heimskringla does not offer more of these poisoned accounts of sea-kings, as he is only truly concerned with their land-based counterparts. That sea-kings could evolve through successful warfare into kings of large portions of land, as is the case with Haki (and also Solvi, the other sea king to be extensively mentioned, who also ascends the Swedish throne) is fascinating, but likely did not happen with frequency, as evidenced by the fact that only two such instances are recorded in the Heimskringla.

In true Viking fashion, Haki acquires this kingdom through bloodshed, facing off against the established king Hugleik on the Fyri Plains. Sturluson is careful to describe both kings and armies as valiant and worthy before reaching the critical moment wherein “King Haki entered the shield wall of King Hugleik and killed him and both his sons.” Immediately after this destruction of his royal opponent, the Swedes fled, and King Haki conquered the lands and made himself king over the Swedes. He remained three years in the land, but while he remained there in peace, his champions left him and went on Viking expeditions and thus amassed spoils for themselves. It is unclear what became of Haki after these three years, whether his peaceful reign was ended through death or skirmish, or whether, as the implication seems to be, he simply left the land, but at any rate Haki is not heard of again throughout the remainder of the Heimskringla. It is difficult to account for what may have caused this sudden
disappearance, whether Sturluson is expecting his audience to recognize that Haki has likely become a thing of the past, or perhaps he simply felt it to be irrelevant to his overall work (which was, after all, concerned primarily with the kings of Norway).

Regardless of the cause for this sudden departure from the scene, there is a great deal that may be learned from Haki’s story. The foremost of these is that he was able to ascend to the throne of Sweden through violence and yet thereafter hold it quite peacefully. This is likely owed (at least in part) to the fact that he effectively eliminated all claimants to the throne by killing Hughke’s sons, but it is also indicative of the nature of Scandinavian kingship during the time, that there would be no retribution for an alien ruler who acquired their power by force. This instance shows that this violence seemed to be of little consequence in securing a king to a landholding one (or if there was, it was not deemed worth noting). The final piece of interesting information comes from the aforementioned implication that Haki may have simply left Sweden, as a departure of such magnitude would be entirely out of place with modern conceptualizations of kingship, while perhaps also illustrating an under-represented phenomena of Viking Age kingship. Such a departure would also lead to questions such as what may have catalyzed such a departure. Was it due to his desire to return to sea (for economic or other reasons) or some other motive (such as the pursuit of wealth or power elsewhere)? However, it is critical to remember that such speculations are based purely on conjecture rather than concrete information.

Also interesting to note is the fate of Haki’s brother Hagbarth, who had disappeared from the scene by the time of his brother’s Swedish conquest. Hagbarth provides another example of a sea king’s interaction with the land dwellers, as it seems that by this time Hagbarth had become entrenched in a forbidden romance with Syggi Sargardsdotir and subsequently hanged by Syggi’s father. This account was evidently widespread in the north at the time, as Sturluson is able to reference Hagbarth twice in kennings, each time Solvi is introduced as a “sea-king … who was at that time harrying in Sweden. He ruled over [a part of] Jutland.” It is perplexing that Solvi is identified as a sea king who also owns (a significant portion of) land, as this seems not to have been typical of sea kings. It is difficult to gauge whether he would have been identified as a sea king had he remained in isolation from the land. While it only seems to allude to his subsequent attack on Sweden. At any rate, “he led his fleet to Sweden. King Eystein was then being entertained in the district of Lofund. King Solvi came upon him in his hall when he was least expecting it, and burned him inside his hall with all his followings.” Unlike Haki, however, this did not mark the end of Solvi’s conquest.

Instead Solvi proceeded to Sigtuna and demanded to be proclaimed king and be received as such; but the Swedes collected an army to defend their land, and there ensued a battle so great that it was said to have lasted more than eleven days. King Solvi was victorious and ruled over Sweden for a long time, until the Swedes betrayed and slew him.

This harrowing account shows a great deal more conflict with the stranger king, likely coinciding with the strengthening and (marginal) consolidation of Sweden, as the Swedes were able to assemble an army even without their king. The ultimate deposition of the king likely is borne out of Solvi’s failure to eliminate all claimants to the throne, as it is Eystein’s son who succeeds the throne following Solvi’s evidently treacherous death.

The cases of Solvi and Haki show that greed and ambition were strong motivating factors for sea kings, just as with most Vikings, as is evidenced both in these rare conquests and the more typical raiding. Solvi is also noteworthy for showing the interconnectivity of Scandinavia during the Viking Age, as he hails from Norway, has holdings in Denmark, and ultimately gains sovereignty in Sweden. Solvi and Haki are noteworthy for another reason as well, as they both are living examples of the problems that arise when historians attempt to neatly compartmentalize Viking rulers. Neither Haki nor Solvi nearly fit even the unorthodox mold of sea kingship, as Haki may well have been a joint king with his brother for a time and Solvi is deemed more typical of what we imagine when we hear the term,”sea king.” Despite these discrepancies there will no doubt give many historians fit, they were clearly not problematic for the people of the Viking Age, who accepted the concepts of kingship and rule as highly fluid entities which were liable to change with the circumstances of the day.

While these accounts provide tremendous insight into sea kings, there is no mention of the more typical sea kings, and the acclaim that several of them were able to achieve, they do not answer the most fundamental question about these people, namely what defined a sea king. It appears Sturluson, as with many of his saga writing contemporaries, is frustratingly relying on his audience’s presupposed knowledge of the subject rather than explicitly stating what made a sea king a sea king. While this is only anachronistic from a practical standpoint, as nobody wants to be lectured on something they already know, it creates a real issue for historians, who do not possess the requisite knowledge to implicitly understand such nuances.

It is for this very reason that a vivid excerpt from the Youngling Saga is so telling, as it records, “There were many sea-kings who ruled over many men, and had no land. He only was only thought to fully deserve the name of sea-king, who never slept under sooty rafter and never drank at the hearth corner.” This is an telling passage, and one that seemingly speaks to a widespread practice, which corroborates Sturluson’s work. This passage also clearly sets the guidelines for one to be considered a true sea king, guidelines that have noticeably been ignored by several historians, who prefer to characterize these kings in their terms rather than accept the characterization that has been attributed to them. Another interesting tenet of kingship is revealed in St. Olaf’s Saga when it relates, “As soon as Olaf got men and ships, his warriors gave him the name of king, for it was the custom that host-kings, who went on Viking expeditions, if they were king-born, should be given the name of king, although they ruled over no lands.”

It was this very cavalier attitude toward whom was given the title “king,” not always on clear grounds, that has led many historians to hold a similarly dismissive view of kingship in this era, regardless of the information they have received from the age itself (or close to it, in the case of the saga).

Such reticence to accept these guidelines has caused a great deal of dissension amongst historians concerning sea kingship, for whom the debate still rages as to what precisely quantified it. These debates are largely pointless, and have done little to nothing to advance our understanding of the premise, at times even leading the discussion backward. This is by no means a call to accept the arguments from further衍deliving into the premise of sea kingship, as is evidenced by the dearth of information on the subject.

For the few historians who have delved into the topic of sea kings, the title has all too often been relegated to simply mean “the chieftains of the raiding expeditions of the Scandinavian vikings” during the Viking Age. Even Paul Du Chaillu, whose book includes the revelatory passage from the Youngling Saga, disappointingly proceeds this passage by saying simply: “the commander of a ship was called a sea-king,” a partial classification that would seem to incorporate several of these captains who were not truly sea kings.22 To be fair, Du Chaillu does go on to stipulate that: “as soon as a king’s son or some other prominent man had acquired a number of war-ships, he was at once called king by his companions. These men roamed wherever they pleased, plundering every man’s land, their estate was upon ‘Ran’s Land’; the ships were their houses.”

While this more extensive definition does rectify the leniency allowed by the earlier explanation, half definitions like the former are a key contributing factor to the continuation of this debate. Such definitions have been embraced by Paul Sinding, who misleadingly uses the term sea-king in the subtitle for one of his books. It soon becomes evident, however, that for Sinding the term is nothing more than a kenning, and not merely for captains, but for Viking raiders in general, an error regardless of how one chooses to quantify sea kingship.

These two examples represent a few of the issues with this debate and its roots, but also the stunning lack of attention the subject has been given by scholars, particularly of late. This is truly a topic that has been largely forgotten by history; a far cry from the days of old wherein sea kings were synonymous with their watery domain. Here is an issue that has largely eluded or gone unnoticed by historians, and thus ought to be a tantalizing prospect for future study, as there promise to be breakthroughs in the field, so long as one can navigate the nuanced terminology and embrace the entirety of the sources available, although further discoveries (particularly textual) could also prove to be illuminating. These scholars must also be skillful and wary enough to avoid being dragged into the age-old debate that has so plagued the field.

Yet this debate is by no means arbitrary, as, depending on one’s definition, the term sea king either represents a
fairly large percent of the Viking Age population (particularly those whose names are known to us, such as Egil, Ragnar Lodbrok, etc) or it could be reserved for a much smaller group, those who made permanent (or at the very least, significant) residence at sea, rather than seasonal raiding. This latter definition is certainly more closely aligned with the Ynglinga Saga’s description, and seems also to correlate with the Heimskringla’s description, which has an air of importance associated with the title that seems to outweigh that of a mere captain. Even so, there are several potential points of contradiction, such as whether Haki and Solvi would have retained the title sea king after ascending to the Swedish throne, or whether they “shed their sea king skin” and became more conventional kings after that, much like Robert Ferguson’s argument concerning Harald Hardrada and the kungshov. Regardless of these several issues, the evaluation given by the Ynglinga Saga seems to be by far the most compelling and complete description available and most in line with how the people of the Viking Age would have identified the concept.

As such, it ought to be stated that the sea kings of the Viking Age were far more than merely ship captains or casual raiders. Saeckoning, actual saecocking, were a different breed entirely, one who made their residence and earned their livelihoods aboard their ships. These men earned the title of king through their mastery of men and their prowess and comfort atop the waves. Yet these sea kings, bold and confident, could be significantly shaped by the narrative and manipulation of the public’s perception towards a specific group. If an artist can do this well, or if he receives a certain degree of recognition if not in name, then at least in style. Raemaekers and Low shaped public perception of the Germans, initially in the countries they drew for, then eventually expanding abroad to other Allied nations. Raemaekers’ approach appealed to the Allied public’s emotional responses through his depictions of German atrocities. Low focused on political events unfolding at the time, often ridiculing Hitler, while still portraying Germany as a nation worth a thousand words.”

The Pictorial Stylings of Louis Raemaekers and David Low: A Comparison of Anti-German Cartoons from World War I to World War II

Melissa Newman

It is early in World War I, and the verdict has come back. Louis Raemaekers has been acquitted for treason. However, that was not the outcome the Germans wanted. This led to them placing a bounty equivalent to $3,000 on Raemaekers’ head. Similarly, just after World War II ended, a list came to light detailing the people who would be the first to die at the hands of the Nazis if they had succeeded in invading England. David Low’s name was towards the top. What type of people are Raemaekers and Low that would warrant such hostility from the German government? Politicians? Generals? In these two instances, they were cartoonists. Louis Raemaekers and David Low were wanted dead by Germany in World War I and World War II respectively because of the cartoons they published in their countries and abroad, which damaged the public opinion of Germans.

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“Pictorial Stylings of Louis Raemaekers and David Low: A Comparison of Anti-German Cartoons from World War I to World War II” by Melissa Newman
offensive, but drawing them in a way that exaggerated their weight and height and their humors way and without having to explicitly put it into words.

Caricatures can be used in this humorous context to help the audience identify the particular person the cartoonist is drawing. Kemezis describes caricatures as a cartooning technique involving the “exaggeration or distortion of features,” which Victor S. Naivsky adds is noted in stereotypes. Kemezis goes further to state that “political cartoons are specific; they depend on the viewer’s recognition of the characters, subjects, and events depicted.” In such instances, caricatures can act as an act in recognition. According to cartoon historian W.A. Coupe, “a theoretical understanding of political caricature involves an understanding of caricature itself.” Looking at the way a person’s features have been distorted can tell you not only how they were perceived, but also what the artist is hoping to convey by choosing to exaggerate specific features. Applying how that political cartoons, such as those included throughout this article, certain elements in the scene or the positioning of the figures can tell the viewer what the artist is choosing to highlight in addition to uncovering his overall message.

Charles Press also argues that a repeated theme in cartoons is the way in which the artist highlights the contrast between what is the reality and what could be considered as the ideal. However, Tower suggests, “political cartoonists work best ‘against’ rather than ‘for’ a subject.” This idea is particularly relevant when thinking about the political cartoons that appeared during wartime. Rallying the population against an enemy is much easier than rallying them for a particular wartime policy. You can dispute the need or effectiveness of victory gardens, but you cannot dispute the (potentially gruesome) deaths of hundreds of your country’s soldiers at the hands of the enemy. German historian Eberhard Demm claims that political cartoons actually play a new function during wartime: “its task is to mobilize the population both morally and intellectually for war, explain setbacks, confirm beliefs in the superiority of the fatherland and proclaim the hope of final victory.” This change in function is in contrast to their previous antagonism of society and the government during peacetime. The cartoonists’ focus shifts from issues within their country to issues outside of their country.

Something that is utilized in cartoons—during both peace- and wartime—is the continued focus on a particular subject matter, such as a country’s leader. Thomas Rowlandson was the first to introduce a regular cartoon character in his pieces in 1812. Also around that time, James Gillray invented many of the stock characters for different countries. For example, the Frenchman and the Englishman are still being used today. Portraying a recurring character combined with using the stock characteristics to easily define a particular country has been highly influential in the way people view and understand cartoons, because it shapes their view of that country or figure—a view that was possibly nonexistent before—into whatever the cartoonist or government wanted the image wams. Some might argue that shaping the public’s views in such a way would not be possible or effective. However, David Turley explains that if you delivery this information to do not have any prior knowledge, it is easier for the audience to suspect that what they are being fed was exaggerated or untrue. This makes the cartoonists’ jobs easier, because they only have to help the public form an opinion instead of change it. However, that is not to say that all cartoonists can easily produce an effective cartoon.

Defining what makes a “good” political cartoon is difficult instead. Press argues that it is easier to identify a “bad cartoon.” To put it simply, it all comes down to the strength of the message that is presented. For example, if a cartoon has a message that the audience can recognize as disingenuous, then it is a “bad” cartoon. The cartoonist can have highly developed artistic skill, but if their message lacks genuine sentiment or has a contrived enthusiasm, it cannot be considered a “good” cartoon. Press says “artistry is supplementary and contributory rather than central” to a cartoon, and that it should not contain “unnecessary complications in its imagery or its title.” In other words, the message needs to be concise, powerful, and straightforward.

Up until the end of the nineteenth century, magazines were the preferred medium in which artists would publish their cartoons. However, around the turn of the century, there was a switch to newspapers as the source for cartoons. Tower claims this was for two reasons: the first being that the cartoonists were “so powerful that they made enemies,” the second that the cartoonists were lured away from the magazines because the newspapers hired them to illustrate cartoons every day instead of only once a week. This then led to new techniques in cartoons, such as a heavier use of symbols to quickly sum up a political situation (e.g. the Republican elephant or the Democrat donkey). With this switch to newspapers and an increased use of symbols, political leaders were also depicted more in comics. Eberhard Demm revealed the advantage of using them: “The great strength of a political caricature is the enemy countries” (e.g. kings, politicians, generals) to the public against the desired enemy. Personifying these leaders allowed “hatred [to be] directed against a concrete person, depicted as ridiculous or horrid, and then by transfer of emotion, against the country as such.”

Dutch artist Louis Raemaekers directed considerable hatred towards Germany and Kaiser Wilhelm II because he “noticed how Hitler made plain his ambitions for a greater Germany and domination of Europe” and included those seemingly unfathomable ambitions into his cartoons. Low took Hitler seriously in the 1930s when others did not, giving him “remarkable insight as events unfolded” and ultimately earning him a reputation for predicting the events of the war.

Like Raemaekers, Low faced outside pressures because of the effectiveness of his cartoons. Before World War II officially started, German and British leaders met multiple times on the basis of maintaining a good relationship. Benson explains that it was because such meetings that British foreign policy personnel pressured Low’s editors and consequently Low himself to tone down his cartoons. Lord George, who met with Joseph Goebbels, told the Evening Standard’s manager that “as soon as a copy of the Evening Standard arrives, it is pounced on for Low’s cartoon, and if it is of Hitler, as it generally is, telephones buzz, tensions rise, fewers mount, and the whole governmental system of Germany is in uproar.” Unable to subdue Low’s cartoons of Hitler, it later became public knowledge that “Low’s name had been highly placed on the Nazi death list” and had Germany succeeded in invading Britain. While these cartoonists share many similarities in terms of their beginnings and overall importance during the wars they were drawing in, the contexts for which they each drew were vastly different, which therefore affected the styles in which they drew their cartoons.

Louis Raemaekers

World War I began in the summer of 1914 after Serbian nationalist Gavrilo Princip assassinated the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Austria-Hungary then declared war on Serbia, and each country’s chains of allies entered the war as well, creating what would be called the “Great War.” Throughout the war, Germany was the main aggressor. They made the first real military move of the war by attacking France in launching their Schlieffen Plan that involved an assault through neutral Belgium. This was met by outrage from the Allies, eventually pushing Britain into joining the World War I by declaring war on Germany.

Germany’s push through Belgium also sparked the indignation of cartoonist Louis Raemaekers. Raemaekers was born in the Netherlands to a Flemish father and German mother in 1869. He was fluent in German, Flemish, French, and English, which would later prove useful with the widespread popularity of his cartoons. In 1909, the
Amsterdam Telegraph began publishing his cartoons, but according to an article by Franklyn Peterson, Raemaekers began publishing cartoon attacking Germany in 1907. It was not until almost a decade later—during World War I—that people began to take notice.27

Raemaekers’ cartoons depicting the atrocities committed by the German army on their trek through Belgium was one of the first instances where his cartoons received widespread attention. So strong were Raemaekers’ opinions about the German atrocities in Belgium that he illustrated a booklet written by Emile Cammaerts that described the acts committed by the Germans.28

Depicting atrocities became a major focus in Raemaekers’ cartoons. According to Baker, Raemaekers’ cartoons were meant to ‘[draw] particular attention to the physical characteristics of the depicted Germans in order to emphasize their ridiculousness or their loathsome nature.”29

One of the common themes Raemaekers would draw on in his cartoons was that Germans were subhuman and animalistic; for example, depicting Germans as savage apes. Another common depiction used by Raemaekers and other war propagandists was the threat Germans were to the innocent—nominally depicted as white women. Finally, Raemaekers used Kaiser Wilhelms II in his cartoons to act as the figurehead or source of blame for all of the death that the war caused.

In “See the Conquering Hero Come,” Raemaekers draws the Germans as primitive and ape-like (figure 1).30 This cartoon actually distinguishes Germany’s primitive and ape-like features from each other: leading the pitiful pack is a man wearing nothing but a cape and warrior skirt; two gorillas are holding up the end of the man’s cape and trudge along in his wake; and a vulture dripping with blood flies above and slightly behind the man. The man encapsulates the visage of a barbarian well with his scraggly beard, his bare feet and chest, the heads of his victims hanging from his belt, his “scepter” (which is really a child’s hand stuck on the end of a stick), and his look of “ineffable self-satisfaction.”31

This entire portrayal conveys to the audience that Germans are an unintelligent, brutish people who cruelly kill their enemies.

Several of Raemaekers’ popular images throughout the war show an ape-like German brutally attacking a weaker, feminized country—a common portrayal utilized by Allied propagandists during World War I. One specific example comes from Kultur in Cartoons, a collection of Louis Raemaekers’ works. Entitled “Germany and the Neutrals” (figure 2), the focus of the cartoon is on the large ape in the center; we know the ape represents Germany because he wears a belt that reads, “Gott mit Uns” (“God with us” in German). His large hands are on the dead bodies of naked women—“the Neutrals”—who are meant to represent neutral countries, like Belgium, that the Germans swept through. He still has one gigantic hand smashed down over one of the women’s heads, which is surrounded by a pool of blood. The neutrals are depicted as women to convey their innocence and weakness in the matter. Their naked bodies also show that they were defenseless against their attacker. It is meant to create sympathy in the audience to see women fall victim to such a horrible beast. The implied sexual threat to the naked women in the cartoon is meant to arouse indignation in the viewers and fear for the safety of their own wives, sisters, and daughters. There is a skeleton in the background as well. The ape is bearing his teeth and looking to his left, as if there is someone approaching out of the shot. The primitive violence rampant in this image is meant to convey to the audience that the Germans will beat down anyone who gets in their way, even the innocent and defenseless neutral.32

This violent and gruesome portrayal was meant to “inspire hatred of the enemy [in addition to] enraging public opinion against Germany.”33 Raemaekers often portrayed countries weaker than Germany as innocent women to trigger an incensed response to the horrible events happening during World War I. In figure 3, nothing is left to the imagination: the Germans’ cruelty is obvious and grotesque in their disemboweling of a female France’s limbs. France is tied to a wooden post. One of her legs and both of her arms have been cut off and are now lying on the floor in front of her. Her clothes are torn to shreds and one of her breasts is exposed. While this is a color image, the only color that really sticks out is the red of France’s hat and her blood. The blood is smeared over the coat of the man performing the amputations—perhaps a crazy German doctor—and scattered across the floor. In this image, the feminine character is meant to represent not only innocence, but also pride. This is seen in the defiance of her expression, despite the fact that her neck is tied to the post as well, further constraining her movement. Raemaekers exploits the woman’s innocence and vulnerability by showing the Germans sadistically cutting off her limbs. The Germans’ male power—manifested through the restrained and scantily dressed France—dominates their female counterpart and shows that she cannot resist Germany, who clearly has the upper hand.34

Similarly, Raemaekers published a cartoon in 1914 with the caption, “How I Deal with the Small Fry” (figure 4).35 It depicts Kaiser Wilhelm II crouched over the incapacitated bodies and of female “Belgia” and “Luxemburg.” The way his body takes up almost the entire frame further communicates the domineering and powerful position he holds. The Kaiser’s right knee is in Belgium’s back and his right hand is restraining the back of her neck as he clenches his sword high in his left hand. His left foot is stamped down on the back of Luxembourg. With a murderous gleam in his eye, it is apparent that the Kaiser is about to bring down his sword and kill Belgia, followed

Figure 1: Louis Raemaekers, “See the Conquering Hero Come,” in Kultur in Cartoons (New York: The Century Co., 1917), 161.

Figure 2: Louis Raemaekers, “Germany and the Neutrals,” in Kultur in Cartoons (New York: The Century Co., 1917), 47.

Figure 3: Louis Raemaekers, “We Must So Destroy France That She Can Never Again Resist Us,” in America in the War (New York: The Century Co., 1918), 145.
by Luxemburg. Again, Raemaekers' rampant use of female subjects falling victim to the brutalities of Germans such as the Kaiser aims to stir up an emotional response in the viewer, making them want to channel all of their energies to crushing Germany, in turn saving these women. In this instance, Kaiser Wilhelm II has become the personification of the German army that committed horrible atrocities in their invasion and occupation of Belgium and Luxemburg. He is the one to blame for the atrocities committed; therefore it was him that Raemaekers chose to draw committing them.

One of the most famous and deadliest battles of World War One was the Battle of Verdun. This eleven-month struggle in 1916 had over half a million casualties on both sides.35 The ongoing stalemate was caused by the futile method of trench warfare. Each side dug a network of trenches stretching hundreds of miles from which they would fire back and forth at each other. The stretch of land between each side's trenches was referred to as "no man's land," and it was in those tens of yards that hundreds of thousands of soldiers lost their lives. Upon receiving the order from their officers, soldiers would charge out of their trench and rush at the opposing one in a fruitless attempt to overtake it. However, being an above-ground target with only a helmet and a rifle, it was easy for the opposing side to mow down the soldiers charging at them while they stayed protected in their trench. Lines would move back and forth constantly and infinitesimally so as to give neither side a clear lead. Constantly replacing the ever-growing casualty list of soldiers by throwing more out into no man's land resulted in the high death toll and stalemate seen at Verdun.

It is in this context that Louis Raemaekers drew a cartoon entitled "A Higher Pile" with the caption, "Crown Prince: 'We Must Have a Higher Pile to See Verdun, Father'" (figure 5). In this cartoon, Kaiser Wilhelm II is looking through a set of binoculars and his son is behind him, peering over him on tiptoes into the unseen distance. They stand atop a huge pile of dead bodies; the bodies look all to be German soldiers, indicated by the spiked German helmet most of them seem to be still wearing. The pile of bodies continues in a wide, rough line extending into the background of the scene. The only other landscape is the remains of a barbed wire fence, which was a common defense in no man's land to make the rush to the opposing trench even more difficult for the soldiers. With the caption and overall scene of this cartoon, Raemaekers is implying the triviality with which the German leaders regard human life and that they are disconnected from the destruction they have created. After all, the Kaiser and his son stand on a pile of their fallen men with only a regard for their next move. The next move that will surely and needlessly cost more men their lives this imagery and pathos convey that the Kaiser does not even care about the lives of his own men, begging the question, why would he show any more humanity to his enemies when he doesn't show it to his own? This was a quintessentially contorted battle, which according to this particular cartoon was only good for accumulating massive piles of human bodies for the heartless Kaiser have a good vantage point for the next fight. Raemaekers used his impassioned feelings about what was happening in World War I to stir up similar feelings in his viewers by portraying Germans as apelike beasts that would prey on innocent women and portraying the Kaiser as being manifestation of the death and destruction caused by German armies.

Even though Raemaekers' cartoons were originally published in the Amsterdam Telegraf, "they were reproduced in every country on the globe."36 The propagandistic cartoons that he produced were meant to catch the eyes of millions and convince them of Germany's treachery; in turn compelling them to support the war effort against the Germans. David Low's cartoons were similarly circulated. He was drawing for a newspaper four days a week, where his cartoons were "syndicated to a hundred and seventy journals worldwide."37 This contributed to each cartoonist's vast popularity by expanding their audiences outside of their localities, thereby implanting their ideas and messages in the minds of people all over the world.

David Low

Eventually knighted in 1962, David Low was born and raised in New Zealand. He was inspired early in life by British cartoons that had been imported to New Zealand, and he imitated their styles. In 1902, he published his first cartoon at the young age of eleven in the Christchurch Spectator, his school's paper. By the time Low was twenty, he was a cartoonist in Australia for the Sydney Bulletin. Soon after the end of World War I, Low emigrated to London, landing a job with the Star in 1919. It was not until 1927 that Low moved over to the Evening Standard, which was where he published all of his famous cartoons throughout World War II.38

World War II began on September 1, 1939, when Germany invaded Poland. However, in the years leading up to the formal declarations of war, Germany was making many changes politically, militaristically, and economically. In 1933, Adolf Hitler was elected German Chancellor under President Paul von Hindenburg. After Hindenburg died in 1934 at the age of 87, Hitler dismissed the democratic government that elected him by declaring Germany to be in a state of emergency. This allowed Hitler to suspend citizens' civil rights, which was done with the purpose of restoring Germany to its former glory before World War I and the Treaty of Versailles. When Germany surrendered and World War I ended, they had been forced to pay billions of dollars for the war and pay the Allied nations billions of dollars in reparations, thereby destroying their economy. Hitler played on the emotions of a struggling nation by telling the German people he could give them jobs and food if they put their trust in him. Now in this totalitarian state, Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles, eliminated political opposition, and began annexing bordering nations that he felt needed to be united with Germany.39

Meanwhile, the rest of Europe watched. Britain and France made attempts to discourage Hitler from invading other nations, but fearing another world war, they adopted the policy of appeasement. Through it all, David Low was publishing cartoons. However, his unremitting mockery of Hitler—unsurprisingly displeasing to Hitler himself—also caused problems with the British in their policy of appeasement. The Nazis banned the Evening Standard in Germany as well as any other paper publishing Low's cartoons. When Lord Beaverbrook travelled to Germany in an attempt to lift the ban in 1933, "the Nazis told him that the Evening Standard would remain banned as long as Low was its cartoonist."40 Then in 1936, the British government pressured Low to "tone down" his cartoons so as to not "affect [Lord Beaverbrook's] personal relations with the Nazis while on his visit to the [Berlin Olympic] Games." Stanley Tiptoe, the Assistant Editor at the Evening Standard, said they did not want anything published in the newspapers that would "prejudice international peace and, particularly, the good relations between all the countries now represented in Berlin." The situation escalated into actual censorship; the Evening Standard's editor Percy Cadell refused to publish one of Low's cartoons because "we do not want . . . to run
what will seem to be a cartoonist’s campaign against the dictators... I suggest, therefore, that for the present you avoid the dictators altogether.” Low was told by his editors to not draw Hitler and Mussolini and even had his work including the dictators refused for publication so that the British government would not offend Germany, thereby maintaining peace with them. Knowing now that none of these attempts to diminish Hitler’s militaristic actions would be even remotely successful, it seems ridiculous that the present government would go to such lengths to subdue a cartoonist. However, it also shows how powerful those images were and the influence they had over those who saw them. One month before the Olympic games began, Low produced a cartoon entitled, “Stepping Stones to Glory” (figure 6). In the cartoon, the “Spineless Leaders of Democracy” are piled on top of each other, making Glory” (figure 6).

steps are meant to indicate further unknown actions that Hitler has already passed the first couple of steps, and looking awkward and ridiculous. Low draws Hitler in this cartoon as almost juvenile. Hitler has a ridiculous expression on his face because his tongue is sticking out; his fingers are pointed in different directions to draw our attention to the action of thumbing his nose, a childish action, and even though the goose-step can communicate military threats, it would be quite difficult to do going up the stairs without looking awkward and ridiculous.

Hitler has already passed the first couple of steps, and the question marks and exclamation points on subsequent steps are meant to indicate further unknown actions that Hitler will be making to get to the top. The first three figures have their faces turned away from the Allies, making the audience more aware of the Allies’ passivity. Low’s depiction of Hitler goose-stepping—a German army march—conveys his increasing threat of military force. He is also thumbing his nose, a sign of derision and contempt, which is most likely directed towards the democratic world leaders who is he stepping on to get to his end goal of “Boss of the Universe.” He is also sticking out his tongue as he is thumbing his nose, another way in which Hitler is mocking the Allies and showing his complete disregard for them. Low draws Hitler in this cartoon as almost juvenile. Hitler has a ridiculous expression on his face because his tongue is sticking out; his fingers are pointed in different directions to draw our attention to the action of thumbing his nose, a childish action, and even though the goose-step can communicate military threats, it would be quite difficult to do going up the stairs without looking awkward and ridiculous.

This entire scene is meant to criticize the passivity of the Allies and how their current handling of the situation will only perpetuate Hitler’s impression that he can walk all over the Allies. Low asserts that this will eventually result in Hitler ruling the world. Of course, that is a bit dramatic, but it shows the path these small steps are leading towards and what the outcome could be if Hitler continues unobstructed. Low is attempting to warn the public that this type of continued inaction will not end well for anyone. While he is commenting on Hitler’s actions, this cartoon is more so meant to highlight and criticize the Allies that are allowing it to happen. It is almost as if their compliance and passivity is what is causing Hitler to take such actions. If the Allies were not compliantly lying down en masse, forming this easy staircase for Hitler, he would not be able to fulfill his end goal.

While Hitler was often the subject of Low’s cartoons throughout World War II, the focus of his cartoons is not as easily categorized into a common theme as Raemaekers’ were, seeing as Low’s cartoons were focused more on specific topics rather than broad circumstances. Low used his cartoons to comment heavily on the political matters of the time—such as his displeasure with appeasement—always inserting some hint of sarcasm or satire to amuse the audience and keep them interested. In this sense, Low’s drawings more fully follow Plessy’s definition of a social cartoon in that they seek to amuse by making a frustrating social or political issue more tolerable. Raemaekers’ cartoons very clearly fell under the categories of political cartoon and propaganda, because they had a firm position on a subject and sought to lead their audience into a specific action or opinion based on that position. This difference in technique in depicting the enemy is full on display when comparing the cartoons of Raemaekers and Low. Kenmirtz asserted that “techniques vary with subject matter,” which is exactly what is seen with Raemaekers and Low. Raemaekers takes the approach of vilifying the enemy: the cartoonist portrays the enemy as a boorish buffoon, while Low played on Hitler’s “impassioned” personality by often depicting him making wild gestures, though Low also frequently showed Hitler as a purveyor of death like Kaiser Wilhelm II. While their purposes were the same—to turn public opinion against Germany—their focuses were fundamentally different, shaping the techniques each cartoonist employed. This created differently negative perspectives of the Germans in the eyes of the viewers.

Despite the many facets of Low’s cartoons, I will be focusing on his depiction of Hitler because what was giving him the most trouble as well as increased his fame. Low himself conceded that Hitler’s severe displeasure at his cartoons only fueled him to continue. It was especially the way in which Low portrayed Hitler—a “full of braggadocio fool”—that seemed to irk the dictator so much. Low acknowledged, “No dictator is inconvenienced or even displeased by cartoons showing his terrible person stalking through blood and mud…. [It] feeds his vanity…. What he does not want to get around is the idea that he is an ass, which is really damaging.” There has been debate among scholars as to which is a more effective way of portraying the enemy: drawing them as dangerous monsters or as ridiculous fools. Both aim to turn the public against the enemy, but the opinions they have of said enemy will be vastly different. When portraying the enemy as an atrocious beast (like Raemaekers did in World War I), the viewers will see him as a serious threat and respond with animosity. Conversely, if one tries to discredit the enemy by depicting him as a blundering fool (like Low does in World War II), those being discredited will respond with animosity. It also runs the risk of the primary viewers not necessarily understanding the enemy for the threat they actually pose: he will be seen as an easily crushed opponent, and perhaps not with the seriousness the situation calls for.

This contrast in technique is particularly noticeable when examining Raemaekers’ and Low’s cartoons. Out of the Raemaekers cartoons discussed above, only figure 1 (“See the Conquering Hero Come”) shares a similarity to Low’s style. Raemaekers is attempting to discredit the Germans by drawing them as ridiculous oafs, with their primitive dress and the leading figure’s unintelligible, smug expression. However, at the same time, Raemaekers employs the characteristic of portraying them as subhuman by drawing the latter two as apes. With that characterization comes the idea of barbarity, and from that, a fearfulness for their amoralistic brutality. In this particular cartoon from
Raemaekers, the scary violence is not as immediate—even though there are detached heads and skeletons in the scene—because of the blank expressions of the primitive natives. The same type of barbarity and carelessness for humanity is present in the following cartoons of Raemaekers as well as most of the cartoons he published throughout World War I. Raemaekers tended to rely on the barbarity of the Germans as the fuel to portray his subjects instead of drawing them as fools as Low tended to do. The difficulty here is that one cannot judge if it was Raemaekers or Low who agreed with those scholars who hold that drawing the enemy as foolish tends to not elicit the correct reaction from the audience.

Low was quite the opposite; he preferred a hint of subtle humor in his cartoons instead of emphasizing the shocking content. Emotions are not always rational, so instead of trying to capture both despair and frustration in one witty sentence or trying to deflate morale by inserting a caption meant to invoke anger, Low would highlight the domineering Germany and the savageness with which he is treating the innocent, defenseless woman. The justified indignation of such horrible acts fueled the public's hatred of the Germans and its tragic images still in the public's head, cartoonists such as Raemaekers would synthesize such horrible acts with the satire of political propaganda in World War I; it was these “hate cartoons” that were brought forth in such abundance in the shape of allegorical images and atrocity jokes … [i.e.,] pictures of babies on bayonets.44 However, Low does not touch on that at all. Low wants the emphasis to be on Hitler and his caption instead of the depressing and atrocious behavior that was exhibited. Why? This fundamental difference in focus demonstrates the difference thirty years has made. What worked for pictorial propaganda in World War I is different than what worked in World War II. With the collective memory of World War I and its tragic images still in the public’s head, cartoonists such as Low sought to shape people’s perceptions in a different way. Emotions are not always rational, so instead of trying to solely create blind hatred, the public was informed through witty political cartoons in addition to propaganda to shape their opinions against their enemies. That is not to say that people were not shown horrible images, but perhaps there was a realization that showing only those types of images can deflate morale. In addition, if there was more humor inserted into the situation, it might lighten the depressing mood and make the news of all of the terrible events slightly more bearable.

“In Occupied Territory” combats that potential deflation of morale by inserting a caption meant to invoke a wry sense of humor during a depressing situation, keeping with how social cartoons operate. In the cartoon, Hitler looks at Himmler and says, “Why don’t they like us, Heinrich?” This cartoon was published in July 1942 and therefore reflects the despair of the time with a little cheek. This was when it was clear that Hitler was having the Einsatzgruppen and the SS round up Jews to be killed or deported to concentration camps to be killed later. What Hitler says in the caption is perhaps a legitimate question for him, due to the neutral expression on his face, but is turned into a ridiculous comment by drawing the people he has had killed directly behind him. This dry sense of deadpan humor was a way to cope with the terrors that one was seeing or hearing about on a daily basis. While it does not make the viewer lightheartedly laugh, it still allows them to grin at the grim situation. Low’s recognition of this and his ability to capture both despair and frustration in one witty sentence was what made him and his cartoons so popular. He was able to synthesize such horrible acts with the satirical political figures’ actions to inform and subtly influence the public and its perception of Hitler and Germany.

Later that year in December 1942, Low published a more somber cartoon commenting on what was happening to the Jewish population under Hitler’s command (figure 9). “I’ve Settled the Fate of Jews”—“and of Germans,” Hitler is depicted as a monstrous beast, skulking in front of the cloaked Nemesis—the Greek goddess of divine retribution—with an open-topped train car packed full of people in the background. The train car is labeled “Jews to deport.” There is debate among scholars as to what extent the Allied governments and public knew that the Holocaust was happening in 1942, but based on this cartoon, it is clear that people like David Low took notice of what was happening or suspected to be happening to the Jews that the Nazis were deporting.

Heavens. With one fist raised and the other pointing back at God, Hitler shouts his proclamation printed in the caption. Hitler’s tiny frame fits entirely on God’s pinky finger and his screaming with his arms above his head could be a way to make himself seem large and threatening, even though God clearly has the upper hand. The intent here is to exaggerate the scene and Hitler’s overall exuberance to diminish his reputation. It is difficult to believe someone’s seemingly far-fetched proclamations; however, Low himself stated that he took Hitler’s claims seriously and drew about them. While insulting Hitler by depicting him as an overly exuberative, tiny man who is no threat for God, Low is also bringing more awareness to Hitler’s claims and the seriousness of them. The difficulty here is that one cannot judge if it was cartoons like this one that confused the public into thinking Hitler was a silly and outrageous man instead of a fanatical man capable of atrocious acts.

A few years later, in July 1942, Low came out with another cartoon entitled, “In Occupied Territory” (figure 8).45 Hitler and Heinrich Himmler—head of the SS—are in the foreground on the right, and behind them are five people who have been hanged. Below them lies a pile of bodies— their predecessors. Those who are hanged have their hands tied behind their backs, and their heads and necks are just above the top of the picture, so the viewer cannot see them. Is this perhaps to spare the public from the grotesque image of a broken neck hanging from a rope? Raemaekers would have drawn something like that to stir up an emotional response to the treachery, perhaps focusing on a woman and showing her naked or with her clothes in tatters like in figures 2-4. Raemaekers would have highlighted the dominating German and the savageness with which he is treating the innocent, defenseless woman. The justified indignation of such horrible acts fueled the public’s hatred of the Germans in World War I; it was these “hate cartoons” that were brought forth in such abundance in the shape of allegorical images and atrocity jokes … [i.e.,] pictures of babies on bayonets.44 However, Low does not touch on that at all. Low wants the emphasis to be on Hitler and his caption instead of the depressing and atrocious behavior that was exhibited. Why? This fundamental difference in focus demonstrates the difference thirty years has made. What worked for pictorial propaganda in World War I is different than what worked in World War II. With the collective memory of World War I and its tragic images still in the public’s head, cartoonists such as Low sought to shape people’s perceptions in a different way. Emotions are not always rational, so instead of trying to
In the cartoon, there is a boxcar filled with Jews in minimal to no clothing—it is difficult to tell because the cartoon only shows the tops of their heads. They are packed into the car so that there is little to no room for them to move, as if they were herded into the train car like cattle.\(^4\) They all have distressed expressions on their faces, and some of their arms are stretched up in worry and prayer due to the hopeless situation. Hitler stands crouched in the foreground and is caricatured as a beast. The man is definitely Hitler based on the haircut and facial structure, but he is growling and has devilish pointed ears that contort his face. Hitler is hunched over in a wide stance with his arms spread out like an ape. His hands are rough-looking and claw-like with his fingertips coming to points. He looks as if he is transforming into a ferocious ape before the sinister-looking Nemesis.

The goddess Nemesis is facing away from the audience; the only part of her that is not covered by her cloak is her hands, which look bony and harsh. Based on the way the cloak hangs off of Nemesis, she appears to be quite thin, or perhaps the cloak is much too large for her. The goddess of divine retribution exacted punishment for those who showed arrogance towards the gods. She is writing a list labeled, “The horrors to be repaid.” Professor Binita Mehta describes the scene as Nemesis standing “watch, keeping record of Hitler’s hubris and cruelty” that he must pay for. Later Mehta says that Low “implies the whole of Germany, embodied in Hitler, in the destruction of the Jews…. The cartoonist draws the dictator in an animal-like position, representing the lack of humanity in the perpetrators of the Holocaust.”\(^5\) This cartoon is meant to signify that while Hitler has determined the fate of the Jews (i.e., slaughter), Nemesis is taking account of it all and therefore determining the fate of the Germans as well.

It was in early 1942 at the Wannsee Conference that German officials came up with the “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem,” which was to exterminate all the Jews of Europe. By the end of 1942, when Low published this cartoon, the Germans had begun implementing their plans by deporting Jews to death camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, and Sobibór, on a large enough scale that the rest of the world took notice. With Low’s cartoon, he is commenting on these horrors and the inhumanity of Hitler who is sending thousands of Jews “to the slaughterhouse.” Surely no human being could commit such a horrendous act against his fellow man; therefore, Hitler has been transformed into an ape-like beast. This change in tone of Low’s cartoons from witty and cheeky to horrible and grave demonstrates just how seriously he viewed the situation and wanted others to view it. While “Stepping Stones to Glory” served as a warning as to what not defying Hitler might lead to, there was a goofy and humorous element to it. However, three years later Hitler’s true colors and aggression have become apparent, and the situation Low depicts in the “Fate of Jews” cartoon is deadly serious. There is no place for humor; millions are being carted to their deaths.

Low’s depiction of Hitler here is more in line with something one would see from Raemaekers. The German leader looks very animalistic and savage, skulking in front of a Death-like figure. His features are distorted, making him appear more threatening and terrifying. This man is a monster to be feared. Similar to “How I dealt with the small fry” (figure 4), it is clear that Germany’s leader is directly responsible for the fate of these innocent people. While in figure 4, Kaiser Wilhelm II is drawn overwhelmingly large to indicate his role and the image’s overall focus, figure 9 recognizes that same sense of blame and responsibility even though Hitler is not the only focus, indicated by his smaller size (comparatively to the Kaiser in figure 4).

Even when first viewing the image, Hitler is not the first sight that catches one’s eye: it is the beaucor of Jews being led “to the slaughterhouse.” Low meant it to be this way because while he wants people to know that Hitler is responsible for an unhinkable act, it is happening to thousands of people. He wants us to identify with those carted off to their deaths and the immorality of it all. Our focus should be on saving them—surely Hitler will be made to pay for his atrocities if not by the Allies than by a higher power—because it is happening now and it must be stopped. Low goes much farther with his imagery and message in his cartoons than Raemaekers. This again brings up the debate as to whether a simplistic and direct message is more effective than a witty or detailed one. The difference thirty years can make in terms of experiences that have shaped a person’s worldview has clearly affected the cartoons of Raemaekers and Low.

Conclusion

David Low’s relentless mockery of Hitler is plainly seen in his cartoons, earning him not only wide respect and recognition, but also a top spot on the Nazi death list. Louis Raemaekers was in a similar position in World War I with his portrayal of German atrocities, as there was a large cash reward for anyone that could deliver him to the Germans. Had the Allies failed in beating the Germans in the world war, the lives and histories of these outspoken cartoonists might have been forgotten. While their names still might not be instantly recognizable today, the fame they acquired during their times for the works they created will be deservedly remembered by scholars and those who lived through it.

Endnotes

2 Ibid., 13.
8 Tucker, Cartoons and Lampoons, 14.
10 Tucker, Cartoons and Lampoons, 20, 22.
“The Rhineland is a region of land between Germany and France, centered around the Rhine river. It was meant to act as a buffer zone between the two countries, which was why the Treaty of Versailles stipulated for it to be demilitarized: “All territory to the west of a line drawn fifty kilometers to the east of the Rhine shall be disarmed and dismantled.”

Appeasement was adopted with the desire to avoid another war like World War I. With an estimated 38 million casualties, World War I devastation was still quite poignant in everyone’s collective memory. The British and French tried to “appease” Hitler by initially attempting to negotiate, but eventually giving in to his demands. Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, ensured “peace in our time” after putting the appeasement policy into action in 1938. He met with Hitler and agreed to Hitler’s demand to annex the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain did this without consulting the Czechoslovaks or the French.


Ibid., 37–8.


Ibid., 37.

Ibid., 41.


Emile Cammaerts, Through the Iron Bar: Ten Years of German Occupation in Belgium (New York: John Lane Co., 1917).


Louis Raemaekers, “Germany and the Neutralists,” in Kultur in Cartoons, 37.

Demm, “Propaganda and Caricature,” 181.

Louis Raemaekers, “We Must So Destroy France That She Can Never Again Resist Us,” in America in the War (New York: The Century Co., 1918), 145.

Louis Raemaekers, “How I Deal with the Small Fry,” in Raemaekers’ Cartoons, 297.


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