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Foreword

SEBASTIAN RIDER-BEZERRA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Dear Reader:

You hold in your hands (or have on your screen) only the third issue that our journal has produced, but I trust one that you will find both fascinating and expertly assembled, full of interesting papers by a range of undergraduate students at diverse institutions in the United States and across the world, from Yale University to Trinity College, Dublin to the University of Toronto. Truly this is an unusual, even unprecedented, gathering of undergraduate talent that represents the best and the brightest—and the future of our profession.

I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank Professor Diane Johnson and the Classics department at Western Washington University, who provide the sponsorship that makes this journal possible. Their continuing support, even as this journal blossoms from its humble beginnings in one university, is something we are truly fortunate to have.

This issue represents my first as Editor-in-Chief, and I am very proud to present it to you now. The scope of this issue is smaller than in previous years, and intentionally so, to allow us to focus more intensively on the papers we do select. With this increased selectivity came the sad obligation to reject many excellent papers; yet I can now present this issue to you as representing the very finest of international undergraduate research and writing.

In the coming year, the journal intend to expand its outreach and call for papers, to strengthen its connection to undergraduate presentations at conferences and to win sponsorships from other institutions as well, hopefully with the goal of presenting a print edition alongside the digital by 2015. Similarly, we intend to strengthen our virtually defunct body of peer reviewers, and are actively seeking new readers both undergraduate and not to complement our editorial team. Furthermore, several new editors joined us in 2013, bringing years of editing experience and specific subject knowledge, and we come to the end of this academic year with the sure knowledge that we have left this journal better than we found it.

I hope you will enjoy reading this issue as much as I enjoyed publishing it.

Sebastian Rider-Bezerra
Yale University, 2013

Table of Contents

1. Treatment of Captives in Ancient Greek Warfare: A Vicious Circle	1
<i>Antony Kalashnikov, University of Alberta</i>	
2. The Development of <i>Culpa</i> Under the Lex Aquilia	8
<i>Adam Giancola, University of Toronto</i>	
3. The Role of Greek Cavalry on the Battlefield	22
<i>David Weekley, Patrick Henry College</i>	
4. Bernard of Clairvaux’s Writings on Violence and the Sacred	42
<i>Andrew Pedry, George Mason University</i>	
5. The Protocol of Vengeance in Viking-age Scandinavia	68
<i>Sefanit Tucker, Yale University</i>	
6. The Early Effects of Gunpowder on Fortress Design: A Lasting Impact	75
<i>Matthew F. Bailey, College of the Holy Cross</i>	
7. Auðun of the West-Fjords and the Saga Tradition:	94
Similarities of Theme and Structural Suitability”	
<i>Josie Nolan, Trinity College Dublin</i>	

Treatment of Captives in Ancient Greek Warfare: A Vicious Cycle

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The Nereid Monument in the Lycean tomb, dated to between 390 and 380 BCE, depicts a besieged city in which a woman is tearing out her hair in lament of her potential fate – rape, enslavement, and possibly death. The image testifies to the cruel and inhumane treatment of captives that often characterized ancient Greek warfare, particularly with respect to siege warfare. In ancient Greece, only the taking of a city resulted in a large number of captives, both combatants and civilians. This essay argues that the treatment of captives constituted a vicious cycle in which the defenders of city would resolutely resist the siege for fear of massacre, mass rape, and enslavement; this stalwart defense, in turn, would contribute to cruel treatment of captives when and if the city fell. I organize this paper in the following way: after outlining the treatment of captives in Greek siege warfare in general, I explore the options that defenders faced and examine the motives of cruel treatment of captives in the light of having faced hardened resistance during the siege. Lastly, I examine a possible limitation to this argument posed by the distinction Greek philosophers drew between Greek and barbarian combatants, but demonstrate the argument's continued validity despite this assertion.

The Nereid Monument in the Lycean tomb, dated to between 390 and 380 BCE, depicts a besieged city in which a woman is tearing out her hair in lament of her potential fate – rape, enslavement, and possibly death.¹ The image testifies to the cruel and inhumane treatment of captives that often characterized ancient Greek warfare, particularly with respect to siege warfare. In ancient Greece, only the taking of a city resulted in a large number of captives, both combatants and civilians.² This essay argues that the treatment of captives constituted a vicious cycle in which the defenders of city would resolutely resist the siege for fear of massacre, mass rape, and enslavement; this stalwart defense, in turn, would contribute to cruel treatment of captives when and if the city fell. I organize this paper in the following way: after outlining the treatment of captives in Greek siege warfare in general, I explore the options that defenders faced and examine the motives for the cruel treatment of captives in light of the attackers facing hardened resistance during the siege. Lastly, I examine a possible limitation

¹ Harry Sidebottom, *Ancient Warfare: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 25-8.

to this argument posed by the distinction Greek philosophers drew between Greek and barbarian combatants, but demonstrate the argument's continued validity despite this assertion.

The ancient historian Xenophon writes that "it is an eternal law the wide world over, that when a city is taken war, the citizens, their persons, and all their property fall into the hands of the conquerors."³ Indeed, once captured, combatants and civilians alike lost all legal status and became absolute possessions of their masters, their status as property reflected in the lack of a separate term in ancient Greek to distinguish human slaves from material 'booty'.⁴ From that point onward, they could be disposed of in whatever way best suited their captors. Most often, this took the form of massacre, rape, slavery, or ransom.

According to historian Yvon Garlan, captives were massacred in approximately a quarter of recorded cases, despite the moral dubiousness of killing civilians in Greek culture.⁵ One of the earliest recorded cases took place *circa* 511 BCE when Croton besieged its rival city Sybaris and, after taking it, killed all of its estimated 300,000 inhabitants.⁶ During the pillaging of a city, mass rape was customary; Greek literature in particular testifies to the horrors that women had to suffer.⁷ In Homer's *Iliad*, for example, Nestor specifically instructs the Greek forces to "let no man make haste to depart homewards until each have lain with the wife of some Trojan."⁸ Those who were not killed during or after the siege were usually enslaved, most often sold to distant places with little hope of returning home.⁹ At the same time, the option of being ransomed was reserved for a very limited segment of the population. Not only did it require funds significantly exceeding the slave-value of the person at stake, but also someone

² Michael M. Sage, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2003), 115.

³ Xenophon, *Cyrpaedia*, trans. L. Dindorf (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 199-200.

⁴ Yvon Garlan, *War in the Ancient World: A Social History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 71.

⁵ Garlan, 71; Sidebottom, 55.

⁶ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, trans. V. V. Latishev (Moscow: Moscow State University, 1993), 433-435.

⁷ Paul B. Kern, *Ancient Siege Warfare* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 158-62.

⁸ Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. A. T. Murray (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1928), 77.

⁹ Angelos Chaniotis, *War in the Hellenistic World* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 113.

outside the city would have to take a private interest in saving the individual, as all of the captive's property already belonged to the captor.¹⁰

There were only two options for a besieged force – to fight resolutely or to surrender – and given the fate that captives came to expect in ancient Greece, there could be little motivation for the latter. The Melian dialogue, recorded in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, reveals that relations between parties in a conflict were based on power, not on justice. As the besieging Athenians tell the deputies of Milos, "right... is only a question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must."¹¹ Consequently, surrendering only diminished the captives' bargaining power, as they would be putting themselves at the mercy of their subjugators. The risk was sometimes taken, but often did not pay off, as Thucydides' account of the massacre at Plataea during the Peloponnesian War illustrates. The Plataeans, who had fought the Spartans as Athenian allies, had surrendered before the superior forces before the town walls "under the understanding that the guilty should be punished, but no one without form of law."¹² After receiving the surrender, however, the Spartans conducted a mock trial and massacred all the male captives, selling the women into slavery.¹³

If the city was taken, its citizens sometimes decided death was preferable: according to historian Pasi Loman, on more than one occasion women killed themselves and their children in order to avoid the rape and enslavement that would follow.¹⁴ For example, in 310 BCE, Axiothea, wife of Nicocles, encouraged citizens to commit mass suicide rather than face capture by Ptolemy I; she even immolated herself to prevent the invaders from taking possession of her body.¹⁵ Therefore, men would fight

¹⁰ Chaniotis, 113.

¹¹ Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crowley (London: Scottiswoode and Co., 1874), p. 397.

¹² Thucydides, 206.

¹³ Thucydides, 218.

¹⁴ Pasi Loman, "No Woman No War: Women's Participation in Ancient Greek Warfare," *Greece & Rome* 51 (2004), 10.

¹⁵ Loman, 10.

relentlessly at the thought of not only what the enemy might do to their women and children, but also of what the women might do to their children and to themselves. Polyaeus writes of Phocian women who piled up wood for a funeral pyre and climbed upon the woodpile with their children in preparation for defeat; this sight inspired the Phocian men to fight with double vigor to fend off the besieging Thessalians.¹⁶ In such a way, the defenders, given the suffering they would endure if their city fell, had every motive to fight resolutely till the last.

Facing strong resistance from those avoiding captivity at all costs, the besieging force would have even further reason to treat captives harshly. One motivation stems from the value the Greeks placed on a reputation for brutality in discouraging rebellion among their subjects. For example, Cleon's speech advocating that the Athenian soldiers kill all of the male citizens and enslave the women and children of the rebellious city of Mitylene invoked imperial justifications. According to him, Mitylene should be made an example with which to intimidate other Athenian subjects in order to keep them in line.¹⁷

Another factor encouraging inhumane treatment of captives was the high price of sieges. Such operation were incredibly expensive, especially those which met hard resistance and lasted for a long time. They required wages and food for soldiers, fodder for horses, and copious supplies and material for siege-works, all transported to the troops via long supply lines, often making heavy use of naval transport. The siege of Potidaea in 432-430 BCE alone is estimated to have absorbed two-fifths of Athenian capital reserves.¹⁸ As such, the sale of captives into slavery may have been an economic necessity to offset the costs of such operations. It also may have been necessary in the larger context of

¹⁶ Polyaeus, *Stratagems of War*, trans. R. Shepherd (London: Georg Nicol, 1793), 362.

¹⁷ Thucydides, 194-5.

¹⁸ Sidebottom, 94.

a war; Nicias, for example, having captured the Sicilian town of Hyccara, sold its inhabitants for 120 talents, funds he badly needed to maintain his army.¹⁹

Another motive for a bloody reprisal on the besieged were the hardships that long sieges inflicted upon the attackers. As historian Victor Hanson has pointed out, Greek soldiers were culturally accustomed to a single short yet decisive battle that would determine victory or defeat.²⁰ Sieges, on the other hand, could be protracted affairs, especially if the defenders were energetic and committed. Not only would the besiegers be constant in danger of counterattacks, but they would also face the possibility of disease and starvation.²¹ Therefore, attackers who had endured the fear and danger of a lengthy siege would sack a city even more brutally in revenge for these hardships.²² Thus, citizens of cities subject to long, protracted sieges were more likely to receive harsh, cruel treatment from their subjugators if the city fell.²³ This relationship illustrates the vicious cycle of in the treatment of captives, which only encouraged overall violence.

Some historians have argued that Greek standards of warfare should be understood in a more nuanced way, appreciating the differing ways in the ancient Greeks treated captives they regarded as barbarians as opposed to those whom they regarded as fellow Greeks. Garlan notes that toward the end of the classical period, massacre and mass enslavement of captives “began to be condemned as too harsh, except... in the case of barbarians.”²⁴ Indeed, in *The Republic*, Plato argues that Greeks are naturally friends, and that it is only due to the “sickness” of Greece, manifested through factionalism, that they sometimes fight each other. Consequently, he argued that Greeks should exercise restraint

¹⁹ Kern, 151.

²⁰ Victor David Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (London: University of California Press, 2009).

²¹ Louis Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 129, 140.

²² Sidebottom, 94.

²³ Kern, 149.

²⁴ Garlan, 72.

and cause minimal damage to their fellow kinsmen, punishing only those guilty of instigating strife.²⁵

Likewise, Aristotle's *Politics* posits that one of the aims of warfare is in enslaving those who deserved to be slaves—that is, barbarians—and not in despotism over peers.²⁶

However, the distinction between barbarians and fellow Greeks that these philosophers espoused did not always reflect a distinction in practice. If anything, that there was a normative discussion of standards of war testifies to the existence of such a problem in the first place. However, even if cultural standards began to influence the treatment of Greek captives by Greek captors, the fact remains captives had no guarantee of humane treatment, their treatment subject to the whim of their conquerors. Several cases testify to the relative ease with which pragmatism and bloodlust could overcome traditional morals in war, such as in the treatment of religious sanctuaries and priests.²⁷

The brutal treatment of captives in ancient Greece most often drove the defenders of a city to resolutely resist the siege for fear of the consequences of surrender or defeat. The attackers would then have to wage a costly, protracted and frustrating siege that would, in turn, anger the besiegers, leading them to treat their captives even more cruelly in revenge if the city fell. While Greek authors argued that Greeks should not war with their kinsmen, instead exhorting Greeks to reserve such brutality for barbarians, such writings on this subject testify more to Greek besiegers' indiscriminately harsh treatment of captives than to any recognition of this distinction in practice. Thus, more broadly, one sees a vicious cycle of violence that characterized ancient Greek siege warfare. This example of violence begetting violence remains important today as an illustration of the consequences of warfare without guarantees of fair treatment for non-combatants and prisoners of war.

²⁵ Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937), 497-9.

²⁶ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 611.

²⁷ Chaniotis, 160-3.

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The Development of *Culpa* Under the Lex Aquilia

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The Lex Aquilia, likely passed by the jurist Aquilius around the year 287 BCE, superseded all previous laws of its kind under the Roman Republic. With an emphasis on the civil liability of damage to property, the Lex Aquilia represented the culmination of the rapid development of Roman law at the hands of the jurists. The notion of culpa as fault, from which the Roman jurists articulated an understanding of wrongfulness, is one such proof of this development. By defining culpa as a tool used by the jurists to expand their notions of liability, the jurists could conceive of a foundation of wrongfulness that was wide enough to support a variety of cases under the law. By tracing a brief history of the jurists' changing conceptions of culpa, and highlighting some of the major issues that they dealt with, it is possible to better understand the nature of the jurists' reasoning under the Lex Aquilia. This paper will argue that the development of the legal doctrine of culpa reveals the Roman jurists' insistence to articulate a more comprehensive classification of human behaviour before the law.

The enduring legacy of the Roman legal system in current models of law is a testament to the importance of an institution worthy of much consideration. The Lex Aquilia is one such gift. The Lex Aquilia, likely passed by the tribune Aquilius around the year 287 BCE, was said by the jurist Ulpian to have “completely superseded all previous leges, including the Twelve Tables, in so far as they dealt with damage to movable property; for there is no evidence that any other rules survived.”¹ Upon closer examination, this did not expressly mean that the Lex repealed earlier laws, but rather superseded them through the provision of better remedies.² With an emphasis on the civil liability of damage to property, the Lex Aquilia serves a broader purpose of indicating how the Roman legal system was anything but static in character. In addition, the Lex Aquilia (hereafter the Lex or Lex Aquilia) suggests that the development of the law was not defined by a mere historical shift, but rather progressed through the reasoned construction of the jurists. In this respect, the Lex Aquilia reveals the attempt of the jurists to move from a simple body of laws to the expansion of a complex and intelligently conceived legal system.

¹ F. H. Lawson, *Negligence in the Civil Law* (Oxford: University Press, 1950), 4.

One such evidence of the progressive nature of the Lex can be found in the emergence of the principle of *culpa*. In order for there to be civil liability, the jurists had to conceive of a foundation of ‘wrongfulness’ that could be wide enough to support a variety of cases under the law. This paper will argue that the development of the legal doctrine of *culpa* reveals the Roman jurists’ insistence to articulate a precise classification of human behaviour before the law. In an attempt to better understand the nature of the jurists’ reasoning under the Lex Aquilia, this paper will first trace a brief history of the developing notions of wrongfulness under the Lex. It will then proceed by defining *culpa* as a tool used by the jurists to expand notions of liability. Finally, this paper will look at the ways in which the emergence of *culpa* impacted the greater scope of the jurists’ rationale with regard to their use of an objective versus subjective standard for establishing Aquilian liability.

As previously mentioned, in order for a discussion to be had regarding the jurists’ understanding of *culpa* under the Lex Aquilia, an outline of the way in which the jurists arrived at such a principle is necessary. Since the Lex superseded all previous Roman legislations involving the law of delict,³ including the codified laws of the Twelve Tables, the jurists were able to expand notions of liability that had previously remained fixed. For instance, Table Eight of the Twelve Tables particularly addresses torts⁴ or delicts and imposes certain penalties for *iniuria*, the legal principle necessary for strict liability under Roman law.⁵ For the Romans, a defendant was liable if he acted *iniuria* or *non iure*, meaning ‘without right’.⁶ With this in mind, upon the enactment of the Lex, the jurists understood that, “where *damnum* had been caused, then either the plaintiff had to show that the defendant had not acted in pursuance of a right, or the defendant had to show that he had a right which justified the infliction of

² Lawson, 4.

³ Negligence or delinquency under an implicit, as opposed to explicit, contract.

⁴ Remunerative seizure of goods or possessions.

⁵ Lawson, 5.

⁶ Lawson, 14.

damnum."⁷ *Iniuria* not only provided a general principle for explaining liability, it also meant that Aquilian actions were restricted to those acts involving direct contact between the body of the wrongdoer and the thing that he killed or injured (*corpore corpori*).⁸ Gaius, commenting on the first chapter of Lex, states:

The First Section of the Lex Aquilia provides that: 'if anyone wrongfully [iniuria] slays a male or female slave belonging to another person, or a four-footed herd animal, let him be condemned to pay to the owner as much money as the maximum the property was worth in the year [previous to the slaying].' And it then provides that the action be for double against one who denies ability.⁹

As clarified in this first passage, the formula for Aquilian liability is *damnum iniuria datum* or 'loss wrongfully inflicted' where the presence of *iniuria* is necessary for establishing that the act is 'wrongful' and therefore 'without right.' Yet in the case of the First section where there is an assessment of 'wrongful slaying', it is clear that the issue of wrongfulness is restricted to a general principle, not grounded in specific circumstances. In Case 3 of Bruce Frier's *A Casebook on the Roman Law of Delict*, Ulpian introduces the need for a refined definition of the 'meaning of slaying'. He writes that

if someone who is excessively loaded throws down his burden and slays a slave, the Aquilian action is pertinent; for it was in his discretion not to burden himself so. For even if someone slips and crushes a slave with his burden, Pegasus says that he is liable under the Lex Aquilia if he

⁷ Geoffrey MacCormack, "Aquilian Culpa," in A. Watson, ed., *Daube Noster: Essays in Legal History for David Daube* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), 201.

⁸ Lawson, 14.

⁹ Ulpian, "The Edict," in *A Casebook on the Roman Law of Delict*, ed. Bruce W. Frier (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 4.

either excessively loaded himself or walked carelessly on slippery ground.

Here there is the suggestion that both lack of discretion and carelessness are requirements for the presence of *iniuria*.

Nonetheless, the jurists soon determined that there were grounds for a defendant to plead that, “although he had killed or injured the thing in question, he had done so under circumstances which made it impossible to do otherwise and was therefore not to blame.”¹⁰ Here there is cause to reference the Lex itself. The jurist Alfenus wrote that:

while several persons were playing ball, one of them pushed a slave boy when he tried to catch the ball; the slave fell and broke his leg. Question was raised whether the slave boy’s owner can bring suit under the Lex Aquilia against the person through whose push he fell. I responded that this is not possible, since the event is held to have occurred more by accident than by *culpa*.¹¹

From a legal standpoint, there is a clear development when Alfenus makes the distinction between accident and *culpa*. He is asserting not only the exclusion of accident from the general principle of *iniuria* that determines liability, but he is also making use of *culpa* as a newfound justification for liability. At the same time, from a historical standpoint, Alfenus status as a late Republican jurist suggests that his use of *culpa* as an explanation for ‘wrongfulness’ under the Lex is an indicator of a progressive shift in the Roman legal scheme.¹² Geoffrey MacCormack writes that:

by the late republic, interpretation of the [L]ex had produced a different result. A person was liable for *damnum* not just if he had acted *iniuria*

¹⁰ Lawson, 15.

¹¹ Alfenus. “The Digests,” in Frier, 89.

¹² Bruce W. Frier, *A Casebook on the Roman Law of Delict* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), xix.

but if he had acted with *dolus* and *culpa*. It is possible that a change in the onus of proof also occurred and that the plaintiff had to show that the defendant had acted with *dolus* or *culpa*.¹³

It is clear that the task of facing circumstances which did not fit under the original principle of liability led the jurists to arrive at further distinctions regarding the application of the first section of the Lex Aquilia. This need for clarification in turn fueled their pursuit of a fuller conception of liability.

Frier explains that, “in interpreting the Lex Aquilia’s requirement that loss be inflicted ‘wrongfully’ (*iniuria*), the jurists began requiring that a defendant’s conduct be characterized by *culpa* (literally ‘fault’ or ‘responsibility’) or, in some cases, by *dolus* (literally ‘malice’).”¹⁴ With this development, the jurists could characterize liability between intentional wrongfulness (*dolus*) and unintentional wrongfulness (*culpa*). The legal implications of this distinction are significant, since the jurists could now more easily account for an individual’s state of mind, physical abilities, and circumstances than the doctrine of *iniuria* previously had permitted.¹⁵

This development within the Lex Aquilia gave the later jurists the flexibility to broaden their gaze on the instances that might indicate or refute the presence of liability. Cases 65 and 66 in Frier’s Casebook exhibit this development with great clarity. In the case of demolishing a neighbour’s house in order to ward off a fire, the pre-Classical jurist Servius reasons that if the action is for wrongful damage, “and the fire had not reached there, the recovery is for simple damages, but if it had reached there, he ought to be absolved.”¹⁶ According to the view of Servius, there is no wrongful loss if the building would be destroyed in any case. This view is strictly an argument of causation, suggesting that *damnum iniuria datum* is contingent upon circumstances not directly related to the mental state of the defendant. In contrast, Frier gives the later view of the High Classical jurist Celsus, who writes that, “the action under

¹³ MacCormack, 201.

¹⁴ Frier, 40.

¹⁵ MacCormack, 202.

the Lex Aquilia then fails; for, driven by legitimate fear, he demolishes the neighbour's house to prevent the fire reaching his own. Whether the fire reached there or was put out first, he thinks that the action under the Lex Aquilia fails."¹⁷ In this light, it is clear that Celsus places much more emphasis on the newly emerging doctrine of *culpa*. By focusing on the conditions that might compel a person to cause damage, he is able to excuse them from the liability of wrongful loss.

It has been made clear that the emergence of the doctrine of *culpa*, while not immediately, developed out of the reasoning of the Roman jurists under the Lex Aquilia. Not only was the cause for liability clarified, but rather, the reasons that the jurists could give in response to questions of wrongful loss were expanded. More than before, the jurists articulated an increased awareness of the meaning of 'wrongfulness' in reference to the obligations imposed on an individual at 'fault'.

The development of *culpa* as a requirement for liability brings to mind the necessity of acquiring a better grasp of what this term came to mean in the practice of considering cases under the rule of the Lex. David Daube, in 'Roman Law: Linguistic, Social, and Philosophical Aspects,' writes that "Roman law is much admired for its three standards of liability: *dolus*, evil intent, *culpa*, negligence, and *casus*, accident. I deliberately ram your car with mine: *dolus*, I bump into your car from lack of care: *culpa*. A sudden tornado thrusts me into your car: *casus*." Daube argues that *culpa*, as it emerges from the jurists, is the basic principle of negligence. He cites the jurist Paul, who writes that *culpa* is grounded in the liability under the Lex Aquilia and is synonymous with *iniuria*, comprising *dolus* as well as negligence. As a result, *iniuria* is taken to mean both *culpa* and *dolus* with the exclusion of *casus*.¹⁸

Nonetheless, MacCormack in 'Aquilian *Culpa*', argues that the application of the doctrine of *culpa* can be interpreted in three different ways when bearing in mind the reasoning of the Roman jurists. He writes:

¹⁶ Ulpian, "The Edict," in Frier, 99.

¹⁷ Ulpian, "The Disputations," in Frier, 101.

¹⁸ David Daube, *Roman Law: Linguistic, Social and Philosophical Aspects* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1969), 146.

- (i) That *culpa* is negligence, the failure to exercise the care of bonus paterfamilias and that it has this meaning both in classical and in later law;
- (ii) that in classical law *culpa* expresses the causal connection between the act of damage and the person who committed it; sometimes this is expressed by saying that *culpa* means imputability. On this view the understanding of *culpa* as negligence is a product of the later law;
- (iii) that in classical and later law *culpa* expresses conduct which can be considered as a matter of reproach on the part of the individual.¹⁹

MacCormack responds with the argument that *culpa* cannot be limited to the meaning of negligence, since carelessness is among many other factors that help to constitute a fault (*culpa*).²⁰ Thus, in order to determine how the jurists conceived of *culpa* as a requisite to liability under the Lex Aquilia, one must make reference to the jurists' own writings on the Lex.

In Case 19, Paul writes that, "if a tree-trimmer threw down a branch from a tree and killed a passing slave... he is clearly liable if it falls on public land and he did not call out so that the accident to him could be avoided...for it is *culpa* not to have foreseen what a careful person could have foreseen, or to have called out only when the danger could not be avoided."²¹ This case clearly demonstrates how the jurists used *culpa* to refer to liability due to carelessness, whereby the onus lies on the defendant to show that they acted with a standard of care to ensure that damage to another's property would not occur. In this particular case, the jurists Paul and Mucius comment on how the standard of care of a tree-trimmer extends even into circumstances where he is working on private land, since in either case

¹⁹ MacCormack, 202.

²⁰ MacCormack, 202.

²¹ Paul, "The Edict," in Frier, 44.

it is foreseeable that he should shout beforehand to ensure that no one gets killed by the falling branches. The case is revealing since it shows the jurists' reliance on foreseeability as an effective measure for determining *culpa*.

Yet the question of whether negligence is the source of *culpa* or rather a mere component of *culpa* still persists. In Case 28, Paul describes the instance of a person setting a fire that unintentionally leads to the damage of another's grains or vines. He states that

we should ask whether this occurred by his lack of skill or carelessness.

For if he did it on a windy day, he is guilty of *culpa*.... Open to the same charge is someone who did not guard against the fire's spreading out.

But if he saw to everything that he should have, or a sudden burst of wind spread the fire out, he is free of *culpa*.²²

Paul's discussion provides new justification for the presence of *culpa*. In the first place, he notes that the act of lighting a fire on a windy day is demonstrative of a lack of skill (*imperitia*). Secondly, it was the carelessness of the defendant to watch it properly that is the mark of *negligentia*.²³ From this analysis it becomes evident that the case for fault (*culpa*) was not simply arrived at by the Roman jurists through the sight of negligence, but that an act of fault was completed when the individual liable was determined to have acted beyond his particular abilities. By extension, the claim of negligence as being a requirement for the presence of *culpa* still entails a consideration of the agent who is negligent, and what he could have and thus should have done otherwise.

Nonetheless, there still remains a strong correlation between the jurists' identification of negligence on the part of the defendant, and his resulting *culpa* as a requirement for liability. F.H. Lawson in his work 'Negligence in the Civil Law' reiterates this conclusion by stating that, "Under the Lex Aquilia even the slightest negligence counts. Whenever a slave wounds or kills with the knowledge of his

²² Paul, "The Edict," in Frier44.

master, there is no doubt that the master is liable to the Aquilian action. We take knowledge to mean here sufferance, so that a person who could have prevented an act is liable if he did not."²⁴ Lawson addresses a final point that is pivotal to the jurists' reasoning: an insistence on knowledge as a requisite for *culpa*. Beyond the obligation of foreseeable damage to property, there is also the consideration of a defendant's subjective capacity for knowledge. It is on this platform that Case 35 of the Lex Aquilia sheds light on this confusion. Ulpian writes:

Whether there is an action under the Lex Aquilia if a lunatic (*furiosus*) inflicts loss? Pegasus denied this; for what *culpa* can a person have who is not in his right mind? This view is exactly correct. Therefore the Aquilian action will fail, just as it fails if a four-footed animal inflicts loss, or if a rooftop falls. But also if a young child inflicts loss, the same will be held. But if an older child does this, Labeo says that because he is liable for theft (*furtum*), he is also liable in the Aquilian action; I think this view correct if he is already capable of wrongful conduct. The consensus among the three jurists is indisputable. *Culpa*, understood as fault, cannot be committed by a person with a mental incapacity to distinguish between right and wrong. Similarly, the claim for liability fails for persons who are unable to appreciate the consequences of their actions.²⁵

To merely assert that the Roman jurists conceived of *culpa* as pure negligent liability is to lose sight of the grander position that the jurists took in front of the problem of *iniuria*. Ultimately, the historical transition from *iniuria* to *culpa*, as extending from 'without right' to 'fault,' is not simply a more complex form of wrongfulness under the Lex. Rather, the question of negligence posed by the Roman jurists could only be asked if they had first probed the question as to whether the individual can be deemed negligent in the first place. To this regard, the doctrine of *culpa* does not merely prescribe a

²³ MacCormack, 207.

²⁴ Lawson, 127.

²⁵ MacCormack, 218.

standard of care, but must also address a defendant's capacities and subsequent duties that qualify his 'fault' under the Lex Aquilia.

Another intriguing aspect of the emergence of *culpa* under the Lex Aquilia is the way that it altered the lens from which the Roman jurists reasoned through a possible statutory action. Worthy of consideration is the possibility that *culpa* questioned the 'objective perspective' and introduced a 'subjective quality' into the formula for concluding Aquilian liability. Frier describes how the new emphasis on *culpa* and *dolus* invited a moral evaluation based on a subjective standard where the defendant's fault was determined with reference to their personal characteristics, incapacities, and circumstances. Nonetheless, Frier admits that juristic texts were likely understood objectively, with jurists asking not about what the defendant was individually capable of, but asking with greater priority whether they lived up to a standard of behaviour that was accepted by the Romans.²⁶

Frier suggests two alternative approaches that might have guided the reasoning of the Roman jurists under the Lex Aquilia. To properly determine which approach more accurately reflects the procedure of the jurists, there is a need to refer back to the cases. In Case 30, Paul describes a situation where a defendant slays a slave who he believes to be free. Despite the defendant's mistaken knowledge, it is held that he will be liable under the Lex Aquilia.²⁷ In order for the jurists to warrant liability, they had to decide whether the defendant's *culpa* was determined by his belief about the person he was killing, or rather was the quality the defendant possessed when he slayed the person that he thought to be free.²⁸ This distinction, in many ways, clarifies whether or not the jurists would have looked at the defendant's personal mistake as an *exceptio* to Aquilian liability, or rather as a mistake that was independent of the 'fault' of the defendant. Paul is very clear that the mistake of the defendant

²⁶ Frier, *A Casebook*, 40.

²⁷ Paul, "Sabinus," in Frier, 47.

²⁸ Paul, "Sabinus," in Frier, 47.

is irrelevant to his liability, and it is unmistakable from this case that the jurists' foremost priority was to satisfy an objective standard of wrongfulness, identified through the presence of *culpa*.

Yet it cannot be overlooked that the emergence of *culpa* placed new emphasis on a variety of subjective factors that might be used to confirm 'fault'. Lawson gives evidence in favour of the subjective theory, citing the Roman treatment of cases where damage under the Lex can be attributed to a defendant's lack of strength or skill.²⁹ Lawson then writes that such a theory is consistent with an objective notion of liability, "for a man who undertakes something beyond his strength or skill is normally not acting like a reasonable man; but it is easy to see that the form in which the maxims are couched suggests a moral blameworthiness that is not emphasized in the objective theory."³⁰

Lawson suggests that the presence of *culpa* indicates a greater consideration of the 'subjective perspective' yet argues that this admission is consistent with the Roman requirement for objective moral wrongfulness. This synthesis is most clearly shown in Case 31 of Frier's Casebook. Gaius writes that a muleteer unable to restrain the movement of his mules that trample over another's slave due to lack of skill is still liable for *culpa* under the Lex. Likewise, the same action is held if he cannot control the movement of his mules due to physical weakness.³¹ The most relevant component of this case emerges when Gaius subsequently writes that it does not "seem unfair to count weakness as *culpa*, since a person ought not to undertake something when he knows or ought to know that his weakness will be dangerous to another."³² As shown, the Roman jurists took into account the delicate balance between objective and subjective considerations in their efforts to determine a defendant's fault. While Gaius does not grant an *exceptio* in the case of physical weakness (*infirmitas*), he does however feel the need to give a justification to argue that the weakness of the defendant, preventing him from acting according to the duties of a reasonable person, must still comply with a standard of care that

²⁹ Lawson, 42.

³⁰ Lawson, 42.

³¹ Gaius, "Provincial Edict," in Frier, 48.

accommodates his *infirmitas*. Therefore, *culpa* emerges as the legal principle that combines individual capacity with an impartial model of wrongfulness necessary for establishing liability under the Lex.

The most revealing aspect of the nature of the Roman jurists' reasoning is the fact that there appears to be little to no tension when considering whether the presence of *culpa* ought to be approached from a subjective or objective view. As seen in the previous case, the insistence on considering all of a defendant's circumstances while still holding them up to a standard of 'wrongfulness' is indicative of the multi-faceted nature of fault in the eyes of the jurists. Reinhard Zimmerman, in his work 'The Law of Obligations: Roman Foundations of the Civilian Tradition' provides a similar conclusion:

It is apparent from these and other texts that the Roman lawyers approached the question of *culpa* in a casuistic manner. They did not try to subsume the facts of the individual case under a standardized test or formula. More particularly, they did not ask in each case whether the defendant ought to have foreseen the damage. Foreseeability or carelessness could be important issues, but they did not necessarily and conclusively determine the question of liability. The crucial issue was whether, more generally, the defendant had been at fault; whether, in other words, he had behaved on an evaluation of all the circumstances of the case and tended to be determined from an objective point of view.³³

In reflection, it seems clear that the doctrine of *culpa* emerged out of the desire of the jurists to determine fault by paying attention to a defendant's behaviour. This development represents a unique

³² Gaius, "Provincial Edict," in Frier, 48.

³³ Reinhard Zimmerman, *The Law of Obligations: Roman Foundations of the Civilian Tradition* (Cape Town: Juta, 1992), 1008-1009.

shift in the history of Roman law. J.M. Kelly confirms this point in his article 'The Meaning of the Lex Aquilia', writing about the profound innovations that the introduction of the Lex Aquilia had on the entire Roman legal tradition. He states that the Lex Aquilia arrived at a pivotal time in Roman legal history, since it brought forth the newfound recognition that acts of *iniuria* amounting to economic loss required special treatment.³⁴ On a similar note, the cultivation of the doctrine of *culpa* was innovative in that it articulated the Roman jurists' persistence to classify the complete liability of the person under the Lex Aquilia. This is most clear when considering the jurists' attempts to define both the obligations and capacities of a defendant.

From its historical basis, the origins of the doctrine of *culpa* as 'fault' are rooted in the earlier notion of *iniuria*, meaning 'without right', and developed to become a key source of liability for the Roman jurists. The presence of *culpa* too, practically applied, indicates a larger breadth of liability previously unknown to the Roman jurists under the Lex. Beyond a mere indicator for negligence, the doctrine of *culpa*, reinforced through the commentaries of the jurists, expands the notion of fault to include factors particular to the capacities of the defendant. By extension, the emergence of *culpa* in the Lex Aquilia may also be attributed to the great resolve on the part of the jurists to take into consideration the totality of the defendant at 'fault'. It was this tendency of the jurists to examine both the subjective experience of the defendant as well as the objective notion of wrongfulness that allowed them to form the basis of *culpa*, and thus liability under the Lex Aquilia.

³⁴ J. M. Kelly, "The Meaning of the Lex Aquilia," *Law Quarterly Review* 80 (1964), 81.

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The Role of Greek Cavalry on the Battlefield: A Study of Greek Cavalry from the Peloponnesian Wars to the Second Battle of Mantinea

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Historians usually argue that the Greek hoplite phalanx rendered cavalry ineffective until Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great began to employ cavalry as a shock weapon in the fourth century BCE. This assumption, however, assumes that cavalry are only truly powerful when they are used as a battering ram against enemy infantry. The evidence instead indicates that Greek cavalry could play a lethal role on the battlefield without charging into the waiting spears of enemy infantry. To illustrate the important role Greek horsemen played on the battlefield between the Peloponnesian War and the Second Battle of Mantinea, this paper examines the literary evidence provided by Thucydides, Diodorus, and Xenophon's accounts. There are two primary movements in this study of Greek cavalry, beginning first with an examination of Athens' campaigns in Thessaly, Thracian Chalcidice, and Sicily during the Peloponnesian Wars and then moving on to examine the battles at Sardis, Leuctra, and Mantinea. This paper aims to encourage other scholars to reconsider how historians should understand Greek warfare by showing how Athenian and later Spartan imperial ambitions fell apart because of cavalry.

Students of Greek military history tend to assume that cavalry played a marginal role on the battlefields of ancient Greece until the era of Philip and Alexander. Until recently historians have also assumed that the hoplite phalanx rendered cavalry obsolete on the Greek battlefield.¹ Few men wanted to risk impaling their expensive horse on a hoplite's nine-foot spear. This consideration, however, assumes that cavalry are only valuable as a shock weapon to shatter infantry formations. Yet if used to harass and to hit a body of spearmen in the rear or the flanks, cavalry can easily tear hoplite formations apart. Evidence indicates that Greek commanders understood the danger cavalry posed to infantry formations and under the right circumstances cavalry could reverse the tide of battle or turn a tactical victory into a strategic triumph. To show the important role that Greek horsemen played on the

¹ Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 183.

battlefield before Alexander the Great, this paper examines the decisive role cavalry played on the battlefield from the First Peloponnesian War in 460 BCE up to the Battle of Mantinea in 362 BCE.

Before the Persian Wars (492-450 BCE), the majority of battles in regions like Attica and the Peloponnese arose from border disputes.² These clashes were often arose from quarrels over which polis controlled a shrine or a farm on the border. These clashes were often of more concern to farmers than aristocrats;³ the wealthy knights likely saw little need to risk losing an expensive horse when the stakes were not high or did not concern them. The limited aims in Greek warfare before the Persian Invasions also meant there was little need for cavalry on the battlefield. In fact, conflicts were of such little consequence that hoplite warfare was almost ceremonial in nature.⁴ The limited nature of warfare in archaic Greece meant there was little need to pursue and to slaughter the retreating enemy.⁵ Instead, a battle of pushing and shoving might last up an hour until the defeated phalanx ran away. The victors might then pursue the defeated foe for a few minutes, but hoplites were likely already exhausted after an hour of sustained stabbing and shoving while encased in heavy armor and were probably incapable of sustaining a long pursuit.

The Persian Invasions changed Greek warfare in several ways, especially for Athens, and showed the power cavalry could wield on the battlefield. The arrival of the Persians, who could field massive armies of cavalry, forced the Greeks to fight a total war that raged from Athens to Thessaly. At Plataea, the Greeks had experienced the annoyance and the destructive power that cavalry could wreak against infantry under the right circumstances.⁶ The Athenians likely began to increase their cavalry forces after Plataea in response to their experiences in the Persian Invasions. In addition, after the Athenians began to devote their efforts toward imperial expansion, they clashed with the Boeotians, the Thessalians, and

² Hanson, *The Western Way of War*, 3-5, 32-33.

³ Hanson, *The Western Way of War*, 36.

⁴ Hanson, *The Western Way of War*, 35-37.

⁵ Hanson, *The Western Way of War*, 35-37.

⁶ Hdt. 9.18-23, 69.

the Chalcidians. These regions had large cavalry forces, at least by Greek standards, and Athens was forced to increase her cavalry forces from ninety to 1,200 *hippeis*.⁷ Since Athens incorporated wealthy cities into her league, she was also able to provide insurance for horsemen who lost their mounts in the service of the state, which likely made aristocrats more willing to serve in Athens' forces.⁸ Furthermore, the scope of warfare had changed. Before the Persian Wars, the polis had little need to compel its aristocrats to risk losing an expensive horse when a farm was at stake. The Persians, however, had sacked and destroyed Eretria and Athens, and their repeated invasions threatened the entire Greek world.⁹ As warfare in ancient Greece lost its limited scope and everyone began to have a stake in the outcome of the war, aristocrats started to play a more involved role on the Greek battlefield.

Unfortunately for Athens, her imperial ambitions fell apart due to Athens' enemies' deployment and use of cavalry at the most critical moments in her land campaigns. Victor Davis Hanson points out that in the Peloponnesian Wars, less than a half a dozen major battles occurred between hoplite phalanxes.¹⁰ Except for at the First Battle of Mantinea, cavalry played a critical role in determining the outcome of these battles.

Athenian operations in Thessaly and Chalcidian Thrace illustrate the critical role cavalry played in early Greek warfare. Although Athens likely began to strengthen its cavalry forces after the Persian Wars, it continued to rely on the Thessalians to provide cavalry.¹¹ The Battle of Tanagra (457 BCE) revealed the dangers of this dependence. During a Spartan expedition in northern Greece, the Athenians and the Thessalians engaged the Spartans at a town in Boeotia called Tanagra. According to Diodorus Siculus' account in his *Library of History*, the Thessalians switched sides and the battle ended as a

⁷ Leslie J. Worley, *Hippeis: The Cavalry of Ancient Greece*, (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1994), 68-70; see also J. K. Anderson, *Ancient Greek Horsemanship* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1961), 131; and Glenn Richard Bugh, *The Horsemen of Athens* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 66-67.

⁸ Glenn Richard Bugh, *The Horsemen of Athens The Horsemen of Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 37-38.

⁹ Hdt. 6.101.

draw.¹² That night the Thessalian cavalry hit the Athenian supply train, which drew the Athenian hoplites out for a second round of fighting.¹³ The Spartans then came up and the ensuing fight ended as a draw.¹⁴ Thucydides, however, who also provides an account of the battle in his summary of the First Peloponnesian War, states that the battle was a Spartan victory.¹⁵ As Thucydides lived during the battle and may have even had family members who fought in this campaign, it seems more reasonable to prefer Thucydides' verdict than that of Diodorus, who wrote centuries after the event.¹⁶ Thucydides, however, does agree that both sides sustained heavy losses.¹⁷ This mutual loss of life implies that the fighting was close, since decisive battles in the ancient world tended to end with the loser sustaining a disproportionate number of casualties. Thucydides also agrees that the Thessalians switched sides.¹⁸ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude based on Diodorus and Thucydides' accounts that the fight could have gone either way, and that the defection of the Thessalian cavalry likely played a decisive role in determining the battle's outcome.

To avenge their defeat at Tanagra, the Athenians attempted to place the exiled Orestes on his father's throne in Thessaly three years later.¹⁹ According to Thucydides, the Thessalians were unable to challenge the Athenians in a pitched battle, so the Athenians marched right up to Pharsalus and besieged the capital city.²⁰ The Thessalian cavalry, however, prowled around the besiegers' encampment. Their presence prevented the Athenians from sending out foraging parties, turning the

¹⁰ Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Random House, 2005), 208.

¹¹ Worley, 68.

¹² Diod. Sic. 11.80.2.

¹³ Diod. Sic., 11.80.3-5.

¹⁴ Diod. Sic., 11.80.6.

¹⁵ Thuc. 1.108.1.

¹⁶ Thucydides' parents were members of both the Athenian aristocracy and the Thessalian royalty. He likely had relatives who fought, perhaps even on both sides, at Tanagra; see Thuc., 4.104.4 and Plut., Cim. 4.1.

¹⁷ Thuc. 1.108.1.

¹⁸ Thuc., 1.107.7.

¹⁹ Thuc., 1.111.

²⁰ Thuc., 1.111.

besiegers into the besieged.²¹ This reversal forced the Athenians to break their siege and to withdraw from Thessaly by ship without attaining any of their objectives.²² Athens' failure to secure Thessaly for her side deprived Athens of an important ally in her later campaigns in Chalcidian Thrace. After their failures in Thessaly, the Athenians redoubled their efforts to build a cavalry force so that by the time of the Second Peloponnesian War (431 BCE), the Athenians could field one thousand cavalry and two hundred mounted archers.²³

During another expedition to subdue the rebel Chalcidians in Thrace (429 BCE), the Athenians dispatched a force of two thousand hoplites and two hundred horsemen to pacify the region.²⁴ The Athenians and the Chalcidian rebels met at the rebel city of Spartolus. In the initial phase of the battle, the Athenian hoplites defeated the Chalcidian hoplites, but the rebel cavalry and light troops defeated Athens' cavalry.²⁵ The issue hung in the balance when reinforcements arrived to support Spartolus. The light troops and the cavalry pressed another attack against the Athenian hoplite phalanx, and the Athenians were driven back to their baggage train.²⁶ Thucydides records that although the Chalcidian hoplites were unable to withstand the advance of the Athenian phalanx, the Chalcidian horsemen pressed the Athenian infantry on all sides with repeated charges.²⁷ I. G. Spence emphasizes the psychological terror that a charge by horses across a field could cause, intimidating their targets to such a degree that, often before the horsemen have reached the infantry, the formation has already begun to fall apart because some of the less disciplined infantry have broken formation to escape the onrush of steeds.²⁸ This impulse to escape the charging cavalry and the destruction caused by the javelins thrown by horsemen and peltasts likely created gaps in the phalanx formation. The horsemen also likely hurled

²¹ Thuc., 1.111.

²² Thuc. 1.111.

²³ Bugh, 66-67. See also Thuc. 2.13.8.

²⁴ Thuc. 2.79.1.

²⁵ Thuc., 2.79.2-3.

²⁶ Thuc., 2.79.4-5.

²⁷ Thuc., 2.79.6.

javelins at the Athenian hoplites, creating additional gaps in the Athenian formation before the Chalcidian cavalry smashed into the phalanx and fought with their spare javelins or swords. The Chalcidian cavalry repeatedly hammered the Athenian phalanx until the hoplites panicked and fled.²⁹ Under the traditional rules of hoplite warfare, the battle would have been over after Athens' hoplites had routed Spartolus' hoplites. The Chalcidians' use of cavalry and light troops together, however, not only averted defeat, but also allowed them to route and to pursue the Athenians, leaving 430 Athenian hoplites dead, the Athenian commanders slain, and the expedition shattered.³⁰

Later frustrated by the Spartan commander Brasidas' success in liberating her allies in the north, in 422 BCE, Athens dispatched the politician-turned-general Cleon to remedy the situation.³¹ After arriving at Eion, Cleon settled down to wait for reinforcements, but prolonged inactivity began to break down discipline in the Athenian ranks, which began to murmur against their commander.³² To restore discipline and his troops' confidence in his abilities as their general, Cleon decided to march his troops toward Amphipolis in order to reconnoiter Brasidas' position.³³ Cleon's expeditionary force included about three hundred cavalry, but Cleon may not have brought them on his reconnaissance march to Amphipolis, as Thucydides makes no mention of their presence in the battle around the city.³⁴ Brasidas had mercenary horsemen and three hundred Hellenic cavalry, who were likely drawn from the violently anti-Athenian Boeotian Confederation.³⁵ After Brasidas sallied from Amphipolis and trounced the

²⁸ I. G. Spence, *The Cavalry of Classical Greece: A Social and Military History with Particular Reference to Athens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 105-108.

²⁹ Thuc. 2.79.6.

³⁰ Thuc., 2.79.7.

³¹ Thuc., 5.2.1.

³² Thuc., 5.7.2.

³³ Thuc., 5.7.2-5.

³⁴ Thuc., 5.2.1 and 5.6-11.

³⁵ Sparta had only recently created a cavalry corps in response to Athenian naval raids, and she likely needed her cavalry to defend Laconia against the Athenian navy; see Thuc. 4.55.2. In addition, Thucydides mentions that the Spartans brought Boeotian cavalry to support their initial invasions of Attica; see Thuc. 2.22.2. These considerations make it likely that the Spartans, who never had a strong cavalry tradition (see Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.10-1), relied heavily on Boeotia to provide cavalry support for the Laconian infantry.

unprepared Athenians, the Athenian hoplites withdrew to a nearby hill.³⁶ There they repulsed the Spartan attacks two or three times until Brasidas' second-in-command, Clearidas, brought up his Chalcidian and Myrcinian cavalry and targeteers to attack the Athenian phalanx.³⁷ Under a barrage of missiles, the Athenian hoplites broke formation and fled, allowing the Spartans and their allies to slaughter the shattered Athenians.³⁸ Though the credit for the victory goes to Brasidas for his bold stratagem, the Chalcidian and Myrcinian cavalry played an important role in turning a tactical rout that chastised the Athenians into a strategic disaster that left six hundred of Athens' finest hoplites dead, the Athenian commander dead, and the Athenian expedition in tatters.³⁹

These disasters in the North deprived the Athenians of an important source of its income, just as Athens was running out of funds to wage the war.⁴⁰ Over the past nine years Athens had spent 5,600 talents of silver.⁴¹ With the further loss of income from cities like Amphipolis and the death of Cleon, Athens' most hawkish general and politician, the Athenians allowed Nicias to negotiate a peace with the Spartans in the winter of 422-421 BCE.⁴² Since the Athenians could not retake Amphipolis and the other rebel cities in the North by force, they would try – and ultimately fail – to regain those cities by diplomacy. Yet had it not been for their enemies' effective use of cavalry, the Athenians might have succeeded in northern Greece and might have been able to continue waging war.

Before moving onto examine how cavalry played a decisive role in the other theaters of the Peloponnesian Wars, it might be helpful to pause and examine the cavalry tactics the Thracians and Chalcidian Greeks used. The use of cavalry with light infantry in the North by the Thracians and the

³⁶ Thuc. 5.10.6-9.

³⁷ Thuc. 5.10.9.

³⁸ Thuc., 5.10.

³⁹ Thuc., 5.11. Ironically, Brasidas was unwilling to confront the Athenians in a pitched battle because the Athenians had dispatched their toughest hoplites with Cleon; see 5.8.2.

⁴⁰ Robert E. Gaebel, *Cavalry Operations in the Ancient Greek World* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 96.

⁴¹ Vincent Gabrielsen, *Financing the Athenian Fleet: Public Taxation and Social Relations* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 174-75.

⁴² Thuc. 5.16, 18.

Greeks in that region provides important information for how effective Greek commanders employed their cavalry. This Greek cavalry of this age were not the shock troops later used by the Macedonians.⁴³

The cavalry could pepper the enemy with javelins, but each horseman usually carried only two javelins.⁴⁴

To conserve ammunition and to increase the likelihood of a successful hit, the cavalryman likely rode up close to the enemy infantry before hurling his javelin.⁴⁵ The cavalryman probably had to approach the enemy infantry even if he had carried more javelins, since his reliance upper body strength to throw the javelin would restrict the rider's throwing range. However, the cavalryman's mobility allowed him to hurl his projectile with less risk than the darter or the peltast could.

After discharging his javelin, the cavalry likely remained close to the enemy formation to protect friendly skirmishers, providing that the enemy's light infantry and cavalry had been routed. Greek military history contains instances of hoplite commanders sending the fleetest of foot to kill peltasts who moved too close to the formation.⁴⁶ After running forward and then throwing javelins, the peltasts were likely a little worn out, so when the hoplites would charge forward in pursuit of the skirmishers, the more agile hoplites had a chance to catch and to kill some of the skirmishers.⁴⁷ Without cavalry to cut down the soldiers who left the safety of the phalanx, nothing prevented hoplites from running up and catching unwary peltasts. At battles like the Battle of Potidaea, cavalry likely kept close to the enemy infantry to prevent impetuous hoplites from rushing forward out of formation to chase away

⁴³ There is evidence that the Macedonians as early as the Peloponnesian Wars used their cavalry as shock troops; Thucydides describes the cavalry as being armed with a cuirasses and lance like spear charged the enemy light cavalry; see Thuc. 2.100.5.

⁴⁴ Gaebel, 29.

⁴⁵ Worley, 38; P. A. L. Greenhalgh, *Greek Warfare: Horsemen and Chariots in the Homeric and Archaic Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 38-39.

⁴⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.16 and 5.4.59. If, however, the peltasts were content to harass at a safe distance, they normally could evade the pursuit of the more heavily armored hoplites; see Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.4 and 4.5.14-5. Nevertheless, that the Spartan commanders were willing to order their hoplites to pursue the peltasts implies that the Spartan commanders believed that the hoplites could catch the peltasts; indeed, Xenophon confirms that this might have happened if Iphicrates had not ordered the Athenian peltasts to withdraw as soon as the Spartans dispatched hoplites from the phalanx in pursuit; see Xen. *Hell.* 4.5.15.

⁴⁷ See above note and Xen. *Hell.* 4.4.16 for an example of a successful pursuit of peltasts by hoplites.

peltasts.⁴⁸ The cavalry's proximity to the enemy infantry likely permitted the light infantry to stand closer to the enemy infantry than they otherwise would have, as the cavalry could now attack any individuals or small groups of men that broke away from the phalanx to attack the skirmishers. The reduction in range would probably have increased the accuracy and the effectiveness of the peltasts' attacks, which would also have made it more likely that any hoplite formation that they attacked would fall apart. When the phalanx lost cohesion, the cavalry could then run down the fleeing hoplites.

The battles in Boeotia, Thrace, and Chalcidian Thrace showed that the infantry were often at the mercy of the cavalry. Many historians assume that because Greek cavalry did not normally plow into infantry formations as did knights from the Middle Ages, cavalry did not normally play a decisive role on the Greek battlefield. This assumption arises from the belief that the violent crashes between hoplite phalanxes decided the outcome on the Greek battlefield. The evidence, however, demonstrates that this assumption dramatically undervalues the decisive role that cavalry played on the Greek battlefield. When operating with light infantry, horsemen could rip apart phalanxes that could otherwise hold out against other hoplites. The Spartans likely owed their victory at Tanagra to the defection of the Thessalian cavalry. Even when their infantry were routed, the Chalcidians' cavalry and light infantry defeated the Athenians. Horsemen also turned a tactical rout into a strategic triumph through the vicious pursuit of fleeing hoplites at Amphipolis. These victories won by Greek horsemen permanently crushed Athenian power in Thrace.

The earlier Boeotian victory at Delium provides another example of how the cavalry could turn a battle around. In 424 BCE, the Athenians invaded Boeotia and established a supply base near Delium. The Boeotian Confederation rallied, and under the command of the Theban *boeotarch* Pagondas, challenged the Athenians to fight.⁴⁹ Before the battle, the Athenian *strategos* Hippocrates left three

⁴⁸ Gaebel, 95-96.

⁴⁹ Thuc. 91.

hundred Athenian cavalry behind at the base at Delium.⁵⁰ The Athenians then split their remaining cavalry between both flanks.⁵¹ Pagondas placed a detachment by Delium to prevent the Athenian cavalry from sallying out and divided his remaining thousand cavalry and ten thousand light troops between both flanks.⁵² During the battle, the Boeotian left collapsed, but Pagondas dispatched two squadrons of cavalry around the hills to surprise the Athenians and to save his left flank.⁵³ The Athenians up till this point had been winning, but the sudden arrival of cavalry unnerved the hoplites on the victorious Athenian right flank.⁵⁴ Having just shoved and stabbed their way through a horrible mêlée, the Athenian hoplites on the right panicked at the thought that a new Boeotian army had arrived and that they would have to endure a second round of hard contact.⁵⁵ The right flank collapsed. Despite the advantage of attacking from the high ground and their superiority in depth, the Theban phalanx being twenty-five men deep compared to the Athenian phalanx's depth of eight men, the Boeotian hoplites on the right were unable to break the Athenian hoplites on the left. Instead, they had to be content with slowly pushing the Athenians down the hill.⁵⁶ Yet it was only after the seeing their right flank break that the Athenian left flank panicked and fled.⁵⁷ As the Athenian hoplites fled, the Boeotian and Locrian cavalry pursued and slaughtered the shattered Athenians.⁵⁸ Once again, the cavalryman, not the hoplite, played the decisive role on the battlefield.

Another instance of cavalry thwarting Athens' ambitions can be seen in the disastrous Athenian expedition to Sicily (415-413 BCE). Nicias warned the Athenians that Syracuse's chief advantages against the Athenians lay not with her hoplites and light troops, but with her horsemen and her ability to grow

⁵⁰ Thuc., 4.93.2.

⁵¹ Thuc., 4.94.1.

⁵² Thuc. 4.93.3-4.

⁵³ Thuc., 4.96.3-5.

⁵⁴ Thuc., 4.96.5.

⁵⁵ Thuc., 4.96.5.

⁵⁶ Thuc., 4.96.4.

⁵⁷ Thuc., 4.96.6.

⁵⁸ Thuc., 4.96.8.

grain at home instead of importing it.⁵⁹ Despite his own warning, however, Nicias never asked for horsemen.⁶⁰ Instead, he requested hoplites and triremes as well as archers and slingers to counter the enemy horsemen.⁶¹ Yet contrary to what Hanson argues, this exclusion of cavalry from his requested troops was not an indication that Nicias undervalued cavalry.⁶² The feasibility of bringing cavalry even in the Athenians' horse transport ships was a massive undertaking. Horse transport continued to pose logistical problems even into the eighteenth century CE; when the British army attempted to move horses from England to Boston during the American War for Independence, only 532 horses out of 856 horses survived the trip.⁶³ The Athenians under Pericles' command had transported three hundred cavalry to raid Epidaurus, but the trip across the gulf that separated Attica from the Peloponnese was a mere fifty miles; in contrast, the trip from Athens to Sicily was more than six hundred miles.⁶⁴ The Athenians likely recognized the dangers this distance would pose to their horses because when they finally did dispatch a sizable contingent of cavalrymen from Athens, they sent them without their mounts.⁶⁵ Also, while Pericles could not have hoped to procure cavalry in the Peloponnese, the Athenians seem to have been confident that they would be able to obtain cavalry once they arrived in Sicily.⁶⁶ Fears of Athenian imperial ambition, however, dissuaded Greek city-states in Magna Graeca from adequately supporting the Athenian venture.⁶⁷ The result would be disastrous for the Athenians.

Almost from the beginning of the Sicilian expedition (415 BCE), the efforts of enemy cavalry crippled the Athenian expedition's efforts in Sicily. The Syracusan cavalry first confined the Athenians to their camp, and at one point, the Syracusan cavalry rode down and slaughtered a great number of

⁵⁹ Thuc., 6.20.4.

⁶⁰ Thuc., 6.22.

⁶¹ Thuc. 6.22.

⁶² Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, 208.

⁶³ John Tokar, "Logistics and the British Defeat in the Revolutionary War," *Army Sustainment Magazine* September-October. 1999, accessed 8 December 2013, <http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/sepoct99/ms409.htm>.

⁶⁴ Thuc. 2.56.

⁶⁵ Thuc., 6.94.4.

⁶⁶ Thuc., 6.21.

⁶⁷ Thuc., 6.44, 79, 88.

Athens' light troops, which Nicias had been depending on to counter the Syracusan horse.⁶⁸ This disaster might explain why the Athenians were unable to drive off the Syracusan horse in later battles and could not press their pursuit of the defeated Syracusan phalanxes. Eventually, the Athenians were unable to move at all, and it is likely that any attempt to move their troops by sea would have ended disastrously, as enemy cavalry could attack the hoplites as they landed before they could form up into a phalanx. As such, the Athenians chose instead to send a double agent to the Syracusans to trick them into sending their cavalry away from the city so that the Athenians could land near Syracuse.⁶⁹ When the Athenian force landed, the Athenian commanders must have realized that they could not hope to conduct offensive operations until the enemy's cavalry were neutralized, so the Athenian commanders decided to fortify a position where the enemy could not attack their flanks and await the Syracusan attack.⁷⁰

Syracuse's cavalry consistently denied the Athenians the decisive victory they needed to end the campaign. From the winter of 415 BCE through the majority of the summer of 414 BCE, the Athenian hoplites consistently routed the Syracusan hoplites.⁷¹ Indeed, until the final days of the campaign, the Syracusans were on the verge of collapse.⁷² The Athenian commanders, however, failed to find a way to press their pursuit and to turn the tactical rout into a strategic victory. A massive disaster on the scale of what the Athenians suffered at Amphipolis or Delium could have been fatal to Syracuse's independence. The Athenians, however, lacked what the Chalcidians and the Boeotians had: abundant cavalry. In contrast, the Syracusans had an advantage in cavalry and used it effectively on the battlefield. The Athenian hoplites were forced to pursue the defeated Syracusan levies in formation because the Syracusan cavalry hovered around the Athenian phalanx. For example, at the battle near the Olympieum, the Athenians and their Argive allies split the Syracusan phalanx in half and routed both

⁶⁸ Thuc., 6.52.2.

⁶⁹ Thuc. 6.64-5.

⁷⁰ Thuc., 6.66.1.

⁷¹ Thuc., 6.70, 97, 98, 100-102; 7.5.

⁷² Thuc., 6.103.3-4.

halves.⁷³ The Athenians, however, were unable to exploit this tactical success because the Syracusans' cavalry stymied the pursuit of the infantry and allowed the Syracusan hoplites to withdraw unmolested.⁷⁴ The Syracusan infantry could also move with relative safety behind the Athenian lines because the Syracusan cavalry could restrain the enemy's infantry from moving quickly enough to block such a maneuver. Even after the Athenians defeated the Syracusan phalanx at Olympieum, they were unable to prevent the Syracusans from dispatching a force to garrison Olympieum, which was now behind the Athenian lines.⁷⁵ Syracuse's cavalry consistently denied the Athenians the decisive victory they needed to defeat Syracuse. Therefore, it may be said without exaggerating that the Syracusans owed their city's salvation to their horsemen.

Even after the Spartan military adviser Gylippus arrived with reinforcements from Corinth in the summer of 414 BCE, the Syracusan cavalry remained the decisive factor in defeating the Athenians on the land.⁷⁶ Gylippus restored morale and supplemented the Syracusan phalanx's ranks with Corinthian hoplites; nevertheless, the Syracusans were once again defeated by the Athenians hoplites in the initial vicious fighting between the Athenians' siege walls and the Syracusans' city walls.⁷⁷ Gylippus then realized that they had lost because he had chosen ground that did not permit his cavalry to participate effectively in the conflict.⁷⁸ Robert Gaebel points out that Sparta did not raise her own cavalry forces until she was forced to by Athenian naval raids on the coast of the Peloponnese, so it is remarkable that a Spartan recognized and admitted that cavalry were a critical military arm.⁷⁹ During the next sally, Gylippus deployed his troops in such a position as to permit the use of cavalry. In the ensuing battle, the Athenians lost, and the Syracusans extended their counter-wall beyond the Athenian siege wall. The

⁷³ Thuc., 6.70.2.

⁷⁴ Thuc. 6.70.3.

⁷⁵ Thuc., 6.70.4.

⁷⁶ Thuc., 7.5-6.

⁷⁷ Thuc., 7.5.2.

⁷⁸ Thuc., 7.5-6.

⁷⁹ Gaebel, 106.

ubiquitous Sicilian cavalry continued to patrol around the Athenians' camp, preventing the hoplites and the sailors from foraging or gathering firewood. As a result, Athenian morale plummeted, and after the Syracusans smashed the Athenian fleet, Nicias decided to retreat overland.⁸⁰ Though the Athenians managed to give the Syracusans the slip twice, the Syracusan cavalry were able to retard the Athenians' march enough that the Syracusan infantry caught up with them. At one point, the Syracusan cavalry reduced the Athenian retreat to six stadia, a distance of less than a mile, allowing their main force to overtake the demoralized Athenians.⁸¹ The Athenians were either slaughtered or captured and pressed into hard labor at the quarries.⁸² Those Athenians fortunate enough to survive were branded with the sign of a horse to remind them of the cavalymen who ensured their defeat at every turn.⁸³

The campaign in Sicily demonstrates that infantry could not effectively maneuver with enemy cavalry prowling around, ready to engage anyone who fell out of formation. The Athenians failed to turn tactical successes into strategic victories because the Syracusan cavalry could cut down individuals or pockets of hoplites that pursued their defeated infantry. As a result, Athenians had to move in formation, and movement in such circumstances, as seen when the Athenians attempted to flee from Syracuse, could be painfully slow. If the Syracusan cavalry could restrict the Athenian movement to 0.61 miles per day, it is no wonder that the Syracusan infantry could send troops to fortify positions behind the Athenian lines or prevent effective pursuits by Athenian infantry. Cavalry rendered the Athenian infantry helpless and dealt Athens her most crushing defeat on land during the Peloponnesian Wars, again proving their usefulness far and beyond what historians had previously thought.

After the Peloponnesian Wars, cavalry continued to play an important role in the armies of the ancient Greeks. The Battle of Sardis illustrates the progress in the development of Greek cavalry. In the

⁸⁰ Thuc. 7.13.2, 7.78.6.

⁸¹ This works out to .68 miles or 1.11 kilometers assuming that Thucydides used the Attic definition of a stadion as 185 meters.

⁸² Thuc. 7.86.2 and 7.87.1-2.

⁸³ Plut. *Nic.*, 29.1.

past, Greek horsemen had not normally attempted to challenge the superior Persian cavalry, and when the Greek horsemen did challenge the Persians, the Persians normally won.⁸⁴ Yet according to Xenophon's account of the battle at Sardis in the *Hellenica*, not only did the Ionian cavalry stand up to the Persian cavalry, but eventually the Persian cavalry even broke and fled. However, it must be said that Xenophon may have inflated the importance of cavalry to the Greek victory at Sardis. One must consider that Xenophon likely served as the commander of the Greek cavalry.⁸⁵ If this was the case, he may well have wanted to show the improvement in the Greek cavalry since he had assumed joint command. The dust kicked up by thousands of horse hooves would also have limited Xenophon's view of the battle. Finally, as Xenophon was writing more of a memoir than a history, his account naturally would have been limited to his own personal experience and interests.

After the Peloponnesian Wars, the Spartans dominated Greece. Sparta's allies, however, were furious that the Spartans had not imposed harsher terms on Athens after her final defeat at Aegospotami (405-404 BCE).⁸⁶ In addition, the allies resented Spartans' heavy-handed treatment; after Athens was defeated, the Spartans compelled their Theban allies to disband the Boeotian Confederation and to receive a Spartan garrison. As such, in 378 BCE, the Thebans assassinated the leaders of the pro-Sparta government in Thebes and evicted the Spartan garrison from the city.⁸⁷ In response, the Spartans declared war.⁸⁸ The two most important battles in this war between Sparta and Thebes were fought at Leuctra (371 BCE) and Mantinea (362 BCE).

The Battle of Leuctra illustrates the important role cavalry could play on the battlefield. The battle began with the Boeotian cavalry running roughshod over the Spartan cavalry throwing the

⁸⁴ Xen. *Hell.* 3.4.13-4.

⁸⁵ Thuc., 3.4.20. Xenophon is likely the "one other man" he says commanded the cavalry at Sardis under the Spartan king Agesilaus.

⁸⁶ Thuc., 2.2.19-20.

⁸⁷ Thuc., 5.4.2-12.

⁸⁸ Thuc., 5.4.13-14.

Peloponnesian horsemen back into the Spartan phalanx.⁸⁹ Xenophon writes that the Peloponnesian cavalry collided with and disorganized the Spartan hoplite formation at the same time that the Theban hoplites on the right crashed into the Spartans.⁹⁰ Historians tend to emphasize the disproportionate depth of the two phalanx formations as the decisive factor in the battle: the Spartan formation was twelve hoplites deep, while the Thebans' phalanx was fifty shields deep.⁹¹ Ultimately, the weight of the Theban phalanx and the slaughter of the Spartan commanders caused the Spartans to break, but one can see the role cavalry played by a quick comparison of Leuctra with Delium. At Delium, the Boeotian hoplite phalanx had a depth of twenty-five men, and they were unable to shatter the Athenians despite having the advantage of charging downhill.⁹² Military historians typically agree that the weight of the men in the middle and the rear of the phalanx pushing the man in the front was traditionally the key to victory in a fight between hoplites.⁹³ Yet the fact remains that the Athenian hoplites and later the Spartan hoplites initially held under tremendous pressure. Therefore, the weight of the Theban phalanx at Leuctra might not have been as decisive as previously supposed. It is possible that the Spartans may have chosen to die rather than to break, had it not been for the destruction of their leadership on that flank and the disorder in their ranks.⁹⁴ The Spartan phalanx lost cohesion when the Spartan cavalry stumbled back into the formation, causing men to move out of formation in order to avoid being trampled by their own cavalry. This panic happened at the same time that the Theban hoplites came crashing into the Spartans.⁹⁵ The hoplite phalanx's power depended on the formation's cohesion; if that was lost, not even Spartan hoplites could hope to hold back the tide. With no time to reorganize, the

⁸⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.13.

⁹⁰ Xen. *Hell.* 6.14.

⁹¹ Xen. *Hell.*, 6.4.12-3.

⁹² Thuc. 4.96.4.

⁹³ Hanson, *The Western Way of War*, 172, 174-76.

⁹⁴ Diod. Sic. 15.55.4-15.56.3.

⁹⁵ Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.13.

Spartans still put up a stubborn fight. One can only wonder what might have happened at Leuctra had the Spartan phalanx had not been disrupted by the retreat of its own cavalry.

Spartan hegemony over central Greece died at Leuctra, but Epaminondas decided to bring the war to Sparta. During his last invasion of the Peloponnese, the great general's every move had been successfully countered by the Spartans and their allies.⁹⁶ Epaminondas decided that before he withdrew for the harvest, he would confront the Spartan coalition at Mantinea in order to save his reputation and to restore his allies' confidence.⁹⁷ At the Battle of Mantinea, the Theban general Epaminondas placed a great deal of reliance on the cavalry, and they nearly turned the battle into the ultimate victory that Epaminondas wanted.

Xenophon states that Epaminondas pinned his hopes of victory on the success of the Boeotian cavalry.⁹⁸ At Mantinea, Epaminondas formed his cavalry into wedges, a formation that was optimal for smashing into other formations, and mixed light infantry in his cavalry formation.⁹⁹ These light infantry could hold onto the horse's tail and flank and run behind but slightly to the side of the charging cavalry.¹⁰⁰ This tactic allowed the Boeotian cavalry to overwhelm the enemy's cavalry with superior numbers and engage infantry like the Chalcidian cavalry had at Spartolus and Amphipolis. In the first stage of the battle, the numerical superiority of the Theban cavalry and javelin men allowed the Boeotians to run roughshod over the Athenian horse.¹⁰¹ The Theban cavalry then hit the Athenian hoplite phalanx in the flank, causing the formation to collapse. Thus, the Theban cavalry likely would have cut down a great number of the Athenian infantry, had it not been for the timely countercharge by

⁹⁶ Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.10-13, 15-17.

⁹⁷ Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.18.

⁹⁸ Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.24.

⁹⁹ Xen. *Hell.* 7.5.23-4.

¹⁰⁰ For an illustration on an Athenian frieze, see *The Landmark Xenophon's Hellenika* (New York: Anchor, 2010), 314. The light infantry man holds onto the horse's tail and flank, running slightly the side of the horse in order to avoid being kicked and takes long strides.

¹⁰¹ Diod. Sic. 15.85.4-5.

the Eleian cavalry.¹⁰² The Theban cavalry were likely disorganized by their pursuit of the Athenians and were unable to reform a line in time to receive the Eleian cavalry charge. The Eleian counterattack halted the Boeotian pursuit of the routed Athenians and finally turned the tide of the battle on that flank.¹⁰³

Despite the prevailing scholastic opinion to the contrary, the evidence indicates that cavalry, not hoplites, often played the decisive role on the Greek battlefield. The evidence presented does show that Greek cavalry could deliver punishing charges: at Spartolus, the Chalcidian cavalry hammered the Athenian phalanx with repeated charges, and at Mantinea, the Boeotian cavalry crashed into the Athenian hoplites on the right flank. Greek cavalry, however, were better equipped to engage the enemy with skirmish tactics and were ill-equipped to charge spearmen head-on. This shortcoming has caused many military historians to assume Greek horsemen were normally ineffective on the battlefield because cavalry could not be deployed as a shock weapon against hoplites. This thinking, however, assumes that cavalry are effective only when used as a sledgehammer, but as seen at the battles of Spartolus and Potidaea and in the history of other cavalry nations such as the Mongols, horsemen can be incredibly lethal without charging straight into the waiting spears of enemy infantry. Even Alexander exploited gaps in infantry lines to ride around in order to hit the enemy in the rear, and Macedonian cavalry did not normally charge into hoplite phalanxes head-on. Cavalry also played a critical strategic role in Greek warfare. As shown at Pharsalus and Syracuse, once one side gained cavalry superiority, the other side's infantry were effectively under siege. If Athens had deployed sufficient cavalry at Thrace or Sicily, the outcome of the Peloponnesian Wars may have been different. These examples should prompt scholars of ancient military history to reconsider the assumption that the hoplite was the dominant military arm in the ancient Greek military. Greek cavalry could and did play a decisive role on the battlefield, even if their use did not conform to the West's image of the armored knight plowing into

¹⁰² Diod. Sic. 15.85.6-7.

helpless infantry. As the above battle accounts illustrate, it was they, not hoplites, who were often the decisive force on the battlefield.

¹⁰³ Diod. Sic. 15.85.6-7.

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Bernard of Clairvaux's Writings on Violence and the Sacred

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Monk, exegete, political actor and reformer, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was not just a man of his times; he was a man who shaped his times. Bernard's writings on Christian morality and the transformation of the human spirit in the pursuit of God reverberated in his time and have remained influential through the Protestant Reformation and into the modern era. The apparent contradiction between his writings on love and those on warfare has resulted in an artificial separation of his writing by scholars; those who are studying monasticism or Bernard in general tend to ignore or gloss over his writings on violence, while those studying the Crusades, warfare, or masculine identity often only look at those writings while ignoring Bernard's less topical work. This separation of his writings, though convenient, conceals a deep continuity which runs throughout Bernard's corpus and cheats Bernard of his intellectual completeness. This paper explores Bernard's writings on the issues of physical and spiritual violence, demonstrates that they are a coherent part of his wider set of beliefs and shows that, when studied side by side with his other writings, they clarify his thoughts on acceptable monastic and Christian life.

Monk, exegete, political actor and reformer, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) was not just a man of his times—he was a man who shaped his times. Bernard was the son of an aristocratic French family, gifted with an unusually lettered education and drawn from young manhood into the monastic community. In his time he championed a monastic reform movement that swept the Western world and provided the oratorical spark that ignited the Second Crusade (1147-1149). Bernard's writings on Christian morality and the transformation of the human spirit in the pursuit of God reverberated in his time and have remained influential through the Protestant Reformation and into the modern era.¹

¹ This paper is an abridged version of a longer paper prepared in 2011 for the history department honors program at George Mason University titled "Violence and the Sacred in the Mind of Bernard of Clairvaux." Theo Bell, "Luther's Reception of Bernard," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (October 1995), 247. Pope Benedict XVI, "General Audience: Saint Bernard of Clairvaux" (speech, St. Peter's Square, Vatican City, 21 October 2009), accessed 15 December 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2009/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20091021_en.html. Order of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance, "Early Citeaux," accessed 15 December 2011, http://www.ocso.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=122&Itemid=178&lang=en.

A man sworn to earthly nonviolence, poverty and obedience, he was the product of a knightly family; he envisioned himself and his monastic brethren as spiritual soldiers on the front lines of a cosmic war. Bernard explored themes of spiritual and earthly violence throughout his many compositions; however, among the wide body of his surviving literature, he is best known for his influential writings on Christian love and his exegesis of the Song of Songs. The apparent contradiction between his writings on love and those on warfare has resulted in an artificial separation of his writings; those who are studying monasticism or Bernard in general tend to ignore or gloss over his writings on violence, while those studying the Crusades, warfare, or masculine identity often only look at those writings while ignoring Bernard's less topical work. This separation of his writings, though convenient, conceals a deep continuity which runs throughout Bernard's corpus and cheats Bernard of his intellectual completeness. This paper explores Bernard's writings on the issues of physical and spiritual violence, demonstrates that they are a coherent part of his wider set of beliefs and shows that, when studied side by side with his other writings, they clarify his thoughts on acceptable monastic and Christian life.

As will be discussed in more detail, Bernard's emphasis on personal transformation permeates all of his writings, including those intended for broad or institutional audiences. During Bernard's life, there were numerous reinterpretations of the monastic religious life; one of the most novel expressions of monasticism in the twelfth century was that of the *Pauperes Commilitones Christi Templique Solomonici*, the Poor Fellow-Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon. Colloquially known as the Templar Order, they represented a form of monasticism that, despite its novelty, Bernard supported. Bernard was an active participant at Pope Honorius II's 1128 Council of Troyes, when the Templars were

officially recognized and their Rule finalized.² Though the details of Bernard's contributions to the Templar Rule are not precisely understood, at the very least he was the council's primary editor to the *ad hoc* Rule that the Templars had been living under since their inception, if not the work's primary author.³ Whether Bernard authored the Templars' Latin Rule from his own inspiration or edited and codified an informal, preexisting set of regulations, the surviving Latin Templar Rule can be considered one of Bernard's works.

By personal request of Pope Eugene II in 1146, Bernard began compiling and preaching sermons in favor of the Second Crusade. He traveled across hundreds of miles preaching to wide and varied audiences; to those areas he was unable to reach in person he sent his sermons in the form of letters with the weight of the Pope behind his pen. Though he took up the Crusade's cause with gusto, when asked to lead the Second Crusade in person, Bernard vehemently turned down this position. His leadership was intended for a spiritual battlefield, as the monastic life was one of spiritual warfare, and his inviolate vows precluded translating his duties as a spiritual warrior into those of a physical warrior.

² It is interesting that in both the prologue to the *Templar Rule* and in Odo of Deuil's *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem* there are closely paralleling scenes where the preparations of the protagonists, Hugues and the King's nobles, respectively, are evaluated and criticized by the Pope or church officials. In neither case does this criticism appear to be genuinely intended to convey the idea that anything was truly wrong as much as it suggested the superiority of wisdom possessed by the church evaluators; the critique is less a reflection of the corrected than it is admiration of the correctors.

In the prologue to the *Templar Rule*: "And the conduct and beginnings of the Order of Knighthood we heard in common chapter from the lips of the aforementioned Master, Brother Hugues de Payens; and according to the limitations of our understanding what seemed to us good and beneficial we praised, and what seemed wrong we eschewed." From Judith Upton-Ward, trans., *The rule of the Templars: The French Text of the Rule of the Order of the Knights Templar*, (Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 1992), 21.

In the *Journey*: "The pope, moreover, confirmed the arrangements [for preaching the crusade] which were satisfactory and corrected many irregularities while waiting for the King to arrive." From Odo of Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem*, ed. and trans. Virginia Berry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), 17.

³ The view that Bernard was the Rule's author is supported by Malcolm Barber, "The Origins of the Order of the Temple," *Studia Monastica* 12 (1970): 219-40, 231; Stephen Howarth, *The Knights Templar* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), 52; and Thomas Parker, *The Knights Templar in England* (Tucson, Ariz.: University of Arizona Press, 1963), 3. The view that Bernard was an editor of a pre-existing "primitive rule" is supported by Desmond Seward, *The Monks of War: The Military Religious Orders* (Hamden, Conn.: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1972), 22-23; Edward Burman, *The Templars: Knights of God* (London: Crucible Press, 1986), 29; Peter Partner, *The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and Their Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 6; and Upton-Ward, *The Rule of the Templars*, 11.

However, this personal limitation did not preclude him from writing in support of the monastic Knights Templar, nor did it keep him from supporting or preaching for the Second Crusade.⁴

Scholarship on Bernard has picked up considerably since Jean Leclercq and H. M. Rochais edited the works of Bernard for publication in the *S. Bernardi Opera*. Among the many authors of subsequent scholarship, several have stood out by producing influential works; Leclercq and G. R. Evans are two such authors, whose *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France* and *The Mind of Saint Bernard*, respectively, have informed scholarship for decades.⁵ Leclercq's work helped cement the primary focus of Bernard scholarship on the issues of love, the monastic life, and the relationship between the human and the divine.⁶ Bernard's sermons on the Song of Songs, one of Bernard's most famous and influential series of tracts, holds a central place in *Monks and Love*, and it has continued to be one of Bernard's most-studied works as well as the work with which he is most often associated. Yet Bernard also wrote extensively on violence, and as Katherine Allen Smith reminds us in her *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, "divisions modern historians draw between the sacred and secular in the premodern world are more likely to reflect their own outlooks than those of their subjects, and that too neatly compartmentalizing the study of the past...can prevent us from appreciating the complexity of earlier worldviews."⁷

⁴ Bernard also may have been expressing concerns over his practical qualifications, but under the circumstances a spiritual interpretation of his opposition makes more sense.

⁵ G. R. Evans, *The Mind of Saint Bernard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983); Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979); Jean Leclercq and H.M. Rochais, eds., *Tractatus et Opuscula*, Vol. 3 of *S. Bernardi Opera*, (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963). Brian McGuire recently edited *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux*, Brill 2011, which was published after this paper was completed.

⁶ Michael Goodich, review of Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France*, *American Historical Review* 85 (1980): 377-78.

⁷ Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*, *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion*, Vol. 37 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011), 199.

The discussion of monasticism and sacred violence in the High Middle Ages has, as Smith points out, traditionally drawn a bright line between monks and secular warriors.⁸ However, during the High Middle Ages, the Peace of God movement, the Crusades and military orders all began to blur the boundaries regarding appropriate expressions of violence—that is, physical violence that could be committed with a minimal spiritual burden.⁹

Between 1126 and 1135 CE Bernard of Clairvaux penned *De Laude*, a tract which held up the nascent monastic military order of the Templars as a model of the Christian knightly life. Though the tract broke new ground in the religious justification of violence by professed monks, Bernard's typical eloquence and religious thoroughness expressed throughout *De Laude* made it a tract which can be used to explore the wider world of monasticism, reform, masculinity, and psychology in twelfth-century Western Europe.

Manuscript copies of *De Laude* were frequently held within larger collections of Bernard's writings, indicating that collectors of the period considered *De Laude* to be a work congruent with Bernard's other works.¹⁰ Despite *De Laude*'s inclusion with Bernard's other writings by his contemporaries, the fundamental difficulty that scholars have grappled with when interpreting *De*

⁸ Smith, 199.

⁹ Some prominent works on the Peace of God movement, the Crusades as an idea and the military orders (with a view towards their religious place as opposed to military or organizational studies) are:

Peace of God: Thomas Head and Richard Landes, ed., *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992); T. Head, "The Development of the Peace of God in Aquitaine," *Speculum* 74 (1999); J. Bowman, "Councils, Memories, and Mills," *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999).

Crusades: Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. Marshall Baldwin and Walter Goffort (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977); Andrew Holt, "Between Warrior and Priest, the Creation of a New Masculine Identity During the Crusades," in Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, *Negotiating Clerical Identities, Priests, Monks and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2010), 185-203; Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross, Crusading to the Holy Land* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008); William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia c.1095-c.1187* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2008); Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania University Press: 1991).

Military Orders: Giles Constable, "The Place of the Crusader in Medieval Society," *Viator* 29 (1998): 392-403; Tom Licence, "The Military Orders as Monastic Orders," *Crusades* 5 (2006): 39-53; Simonetta Cerrini, ed., *I Templari, la guerra et la santità* (Rimini, Italy: Il Cerchio, 2000): 7; Jonathan Riley-Smith, *Templars and Hospitallers as Professed Religious in the Holy Land* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

Laude is its apparent contradiction with Bernard's largely pacifistic writings. Though Bernard used martial rhetoric extensively in his other compositions, in *De Laude* he took the significant step of justifying to the world the redemptive value of a life centered on warfare by individuals who had taken monastic vows. Though the idea was not a novelty in ecclesiastical writing, the striking difference between Urban II's call to arms and *De Laude* lies in the nature of the persons engaging in warfare. Urban II was addressing secular knights; *De Laude*, while largely written to a secular audience, exhorts the spiritual value of warfare solely within the context of a monastic life. Understanding this dichotomy has been the driving force behind the scholarship which has addressed *De Laude* over the last forty years.

This scholarship would have us relegate *De Laude* to a position of singularity outside of Bernard's larger corpus, arguing that it was composed under unique circumstances and should not be seen as a part of Bernard's comprehensive intellectual whole. Scholars who have supported this opinion have tended to consider the idea of the Templars as fully Christianized warriors as an entirely novel concept, *De Laude* as a work of propaganda, and the Templars' link to the Holy Land as crucial for Bernard's support.¹¹

Another group of scholars, starting with the first modern examinations of *De Laude* in the 1970s and continuing to today, has concluded that *De Laude* represents an unusual but not anomalous part of Bernard's writings. Bernard's intellectual capability and conservatism, sometimes helpfully detailed by scholars of differing conclusions, lend credence to the notion that Bernard would not have supported the Templars unless he felt that their lifestyle were truly a valid path to God. These scholars largely

¹⁰ Leclercq and Rochais, 208.

¹¹ G. R. Evans, *The Mind of Saint Bernard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 22; C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism, Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (London: Longman, 1984), 167; William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia c.1095-c.1187* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2008) 84, 101; Norman Housley, *Fighting for the Cross, Crusading to the Holy Land* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008), 103.

interpret the Templars as a manifestation of a gradual Christianization of western warfare. They see *De Laude* principally as a work of spiritual guidance and emphasize Bernard's cautious and metaphorical treatment of the Holy Land in the second part of *De Laude*.¹²

The purpose of Bernard's voluminous and diverse compositions was to lead Christians closer to God. To Bernard, the relationship between the human and the divine revolved around the submission of the self, its sins, and its inherent selfishness in order to come to a state of universal conscious attention to God. An absolute focus on God would lead to an increasing love of God and mystical union with God as the purity of the divine came to replace the corrupt, worldly self-interest present in "normal" life.

The transformation from a world-focused and selfish individual to one whose focus was on the divine and whose actions reflected the immeasurable glory of God was a central idea in Bernard's writings. In his study of Bernard's writings on transformation, G. R. Evans marks Bernard's concept of personal reorientation, especially his ideas on austerity, as a vehicle for that change. To Bernard, the denial of fleshly desires and the completion of charitable actions, though valuable, were means to an end; a lifestyle of austerity, on the other hand, allowed the elimination of distractions from contemplating the divine. Thus, the devout Christian needed to combine material lifestyle changes with thought-process changes to effect a complete Christian life. This paradigm shift was a lifetime's pursuit, not the result of an initial conversion, and it was not an attempt to realize unaided human potential, but to become a reflection of the divine ideal laid out by Christ.¹³ Emphasis on personal, not institutional transformation permeates Bernard's writings; when Bernard tried to reform institutions it was for the

¹² Carl Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, trans. Baldwin, Marshall and Goffort, Walter (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 57; Jean Leclercq, *Monks and Love in Twelfth-Century France* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1979), 91; Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood, A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47.

¹³ G. R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (Cary, N.C.: Oxford University Press, 2000), 22. Drawing on *Quadragesima* 2.4.

purpose of creating or recreating organizations that would allow for personal transformation. This rationale holds true for his writings to Cluny, to crusaders, and to the military orders.

Bernard recognized that people could experience this transformation through different lifestyles, but he held that the monastic path was the surest. This surety in the monastic path was due to the required obedience, isolation and austerity, but also to a powerful sense of communal membership rooted in martial imagery that forced its participants to live a life focused on the divine.

Bernard wrote constantly about the monastic life. He addressed several themes with particular frequency, including obedience, love, and human transformation, but also the nature of the monastic life as spiritual warfare. All of these were addressed in his writings to Cistercian houses, Cluniac houses, and the Templar Order.

The emphasis on obedience as a hallmark of monastic life ran throughout the Benedictine Rule and was consistent in Bernard's thoughts. The utmost importance of obedience was elegantly summarized in Bernard's fiftieth sermon on the Song of Songs: "But listen to what our Lord commands us regarding our love of Himself: 'if you love Me,' He says, 'keep My commandments.'"¹⁴ A supreme love of God is expressed through obedience to His commands. In the monastic tradition, the abbot—or, in the Templar Order, the Grand Master—is the worldly representative of God in the lives of the monks. Thus, acting in obedience to the abbot or Grand Master reflected obedience to God and was also a means of displaying love and devotion to God.

In the very first sentence of the prologue to the Templar Rule, Bernard makes reference to obedience as a prime virtue of the Templar, one that would mark them as the disciples of a religious life, and which would become critical in his later justification of the Templars' acts of physical violence: "We speak firstly to all those who secretly despise their own will and desire with a pure heart to serve the sovereign king as a knight and...desire to wear, and wear permanently, the very noble armor of

obedience.”¹⁵ The language used in this call to the monastic life is very similar to the opening lines of the Benedictine Rule: “Now then I address my words to you: whoever is willing to renounce self-will, and take up the powerful and shining weapons of obedience to fight for the Lord Christ, the true king.”¹⁶ In both Rules the authors convey the message of total subjection to a martial lord, one who requires both obedience and valor in his service. Bernard spelled out the very purpose of the Templars in the last paragraph of their Rule:

It pleased the common council that the deliberations which were made there and the consideration of the Holy Scriptures which were diligently examined with the wisdom of my lord H[onorius], pope of the Holy Church of Rome, and of the patriarch of Jerusalem and with the assent of the chapter, together with the agreement of the Poor Knights of Christ of the Temple which is in Jerusalem, should be put in writing and not forgotten, steadfastly kept *so that by an upright life one may come to his creator.*¹⁷

In the prologue to the Benedictine Rule, Benedict similarly wrote: “Look, the Lord in His devotion to us shows us the way to life. Therefore, let us belt our waist with faith that leads to the performance of good works. Let us set out on his path with the Gospel as our guide so that we may be

¹⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, “Three Sermons on the Song of Songs,” in Pauline Matarasso, ed. and trans., *The Cistercian World: Monastic Writings of the Twelfth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 69.

¹⁵ *Primo eis dicimus qui corde casto suum arbitrium spernant et qui equites desiderant corde casto regi valido servient et . . . perpetuo arma oboedientiae nobilissima gerere desiderant* Latin translations of quotes from the Rule mine from the 1992 English translation of the *Templar Rule* by Judith Upton-Ward, 19.

¹⁶ *Ad to ergo nunc mihi sermo dirigitur, quisquis abrenuntians propriis voluntatibus, Domino Christo vero regi militaturus, oboedientiae fortissimo atque praeclara arma sumis.* Text from Dom Jean Neufville, ed., *The Rule of Benedict: Regula Benedicti*, ed. Dom Jean Neufville, *Sources Chretiennes*, 181-182, Reprinted ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 1.

¹⁷ *Concilio communi placuit ut rationes quae ibi factae sunt et deliberationem Sanctae Scripturae, quae sapientia domini H[onori] pontificis maximi ecclesiae Romanae et patriachae Hierosolymari diligenter probatae sunt assensu conventus canonicorum, una cum consensu pauperum Christi Templi commilitum, quod Hierosolymae est, debent describi et non in animo obliterabuntur et fideliter servatae ut vita probata ad creatorem iter sit.* Text from Upton-Ward, *The Templar Rule*, 21. Emphasis mine.

worthy to see Him who called us into His kingdom.”¹⁸ Both the Benedictine Rule and Templar Rule were set down as a path of faith and action which would lead to a personal and mystical relationship with God.

At their inception, the primary duty of the Templars was to protect pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land. By definition, then, the warrior-monks of the Temple were obliged to engage with the outside world in order to fulfill the duties of their purpose; a solitary existence within the cloister's confines would have curtailed their ability to engage worldly threats as was their *raison d'être*. Bernard recognized this inherent difference between the Templar and Cistercian purposes and tailored the Rule and *De Laude* to reflect those differences. Both documents stressed the obedience, poverty, and self-denial central to the Cistercian life, but they were markedly more silent in the area of travel and worldly contamination. The section of the Templar Rule called “On Brothers Sent Overseas” reads:

Brothers who are sent throughout diverse countries of the world should endeavor to keep the commandments of the Rule according to their ability and live without reproach with regard to meat and wine, etc. so that they may receive a good report from outsiders and not sully by deed or word the precepts of the Order, and so that they may set an example of good works and wisdom; above all, so that those with whom they associate and those in whose inns they lodge may be bestowed with honor. And if possible, the house where they sleep and take

¹⁸ *Ecce pietate sua demonstrate nobis Dominus viam vitae. Succinctis ergo fide vel observantia bonorum actuum lumbis nostris, per ducatum evangelii pergamus itinera eius, ut mereamur eum qui nos vocavit in regnum suum videre.* Text from Dom Jean Neufville, ed., *The Rule of Benedict: Regula Benedicti*, ed. Dom Jean Neufville, *Sources Chretiennes*, 181-182, Reprinted ed. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 4.

lodging should not be without light at night, so that shadowy enemies may not lead them to wickedness, which God forbids them.¹⁹

In this passage, travel is presented as a given, an unavoidable element of the Templars' existence. Significantly, many knights of the Order were recruited in the West and had to make the arduous journey across Europe to reach the Holy Land. As a result, many Templars were required to travel both within the Holy Land in execution of their duties and internationally to maintain the Order. The knights were told to mind their behavior both to protect their purity and the Order's reputation.

In a now-familiar pattern, Bernard portrayed the Crusades as an opportunity for inward reflection and meditation on God, an opportunity to turn events and places based in the material world into reasons for spiritual understanding that, if approached with the appropriate humility, would lead to growth.²⁰

Bernard took a similar approach with the Templars. As long-term residents of the Holy Land, they would be surrounded by these sites, and Bernard saw in that both a risk and an opportunity.²¹ The risk was that the Templars, like the crusaders or western monks distracted by their pilgrimage, would become focused on the physical locales; the opportunity was a chance for intense and constant reminders about the need for their strict devotion to the Christian life. For monks, crusaders, and Templars, Bernard's basic message was the same: the important journey is inward, and outward journeys are nothing more than an aid.

¹⁹ *Fratres qui per regiones varias missi sunt nitor debent leges regulae perservare ut possunt et sine opprobrio ad carnis et vini et ceterorum rationem vivere ut bonam famam hominum externorum excipiant, ne praecepta ordonis facto aut verbo maculis aspergant, ut factorum bonorum et sapientiae exemplum ad imitandum proponant; praecipue ut ii quibuscum conversantur et quorum in diversoria manent honorabentur. Et, si fieri potest, domus quo ad dormiendum morantur non debet nocte esse sine luce ne umbrae infestae eos ad nequitiam ducant, quam Deus prohibet.* Text from Upton-Ward, *The Templar Rule*, 28.

²⁰ William Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1905-c. 1187*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2008), 88.

Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History*. 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 124.

²¹ Malcolm Barber, *The New Knighthood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 46-47.

Bernard's differing recommendations on contact with the non-monastic world in his addresses to other monks and the Templars shows a philosophical flexibility without the need for compromise. Bernard was more comfortable with the stark separation between monastic and secular worlds found in the monastery, where all interaction was carefully limited and overseen. This care manifests in his writings to and on behalf of the Templars, but there was less of Bernard's stark warning against all contact that appears in his other writings, reflecting the inevitable concessions he made based on the Templar's role. These concessions do not mean that Bernard's acceptance of the Templars' contact with the secular was a foregone conclusion. Instead, it shows that Bernard was willing to expand some of the important Cistercian boundaries without feeling that the Templars had jettisoned something absolutely integral to the character of monasticism. As Evans describes Bernard's approach to issues that bordered on the unorthodox,

Bernard's concern was always the same when he encountered teaching [or monastic ideas] which appeared unorthodox; his first anxiety was not whether there really was unorthodoxy in what was being said, but the damage which might be done to those unable to understand the subtleties of the argument, and therefor likely to be misled into heresy.²²

The Templar Order's necessary possession of material wealth, including armor, weapons, and war horses, was a potential sign of unorthodoxy that could confuse "those unable to understand" and the knights themselves.

Bernard's praise for the Templars' austerity can be understood as both a parallel to the Cistercian ideal of austerity, which can be considered the most outward mark of Bernard's distinctive Cistercianism, and as a refutation of the secular materialism common in the knightly culture from which

²² Gillian R. Evans, *The Mind of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 83-84.

the Templars were drawn. The isolated and austere monastic life was designed to assist monks in their efforts to wean themselves from the world, and many of the clauses in the Benedictine and Templar Rules address specifics of self-denial. Self-denial was a vehicle to focus the mind on the divine reality that transcended the concerns of the flesh.

A perceived lack of austerity among his fellow monks was a source of regular concern for Bernard: “Alas, poor wretched monk that I am, why have I lived to see the monastic order come to this?”²³ Bernard criticized the monks of his day when he wrote, “I am coming to the major abuses, so common nowadays as to seem of lesser moment. I pass over the vertiginous height of churches, their extravagant length, their inordinate width and costly finishings. As for the elaborate images...”²⁴ In this work, “An Apologia for Abbot William,” Bernard draws a distinction between the inappropriateness of wealth in monastic communities and wealth in ecclesiastical churches, where “bishops are under an obligation both to the wise and the foolish.”²⁵ However, this transient and conditional acceptance of ecclesiastical expressions of wealth is not consistent in Bernard’s writings. In “On Consideration,” Bernard warns the Pope himself, “Much less should you be found pillowed in pleasures...”

Bernard’s condemnation of attachment to material wealth transcended the cloister’s walls. Despite his grudging acknowledgment that fools needed to be led to God with sparkling trinkets overseen by bishops, Bernard regularly condemned displays of wealth among secular society for the same reasons that he condemned it in monastic society: it was a distraction from the contemplation of God and an expression of vanity and worldly attachment. When Bernard focused on criticism of the secular warrior culture in *De Laude*, he used not only high-handed social and religious criticism, but also a kind of sarcastic belittling well-suited to the war-camps and campaign trails which his audience called home. This scorn was less expected from the mouth of a monk—and perhaps more effective for that:

²³ Bernard, *An Apologia for Abbot William* in *The Cistercian World*, 53.

²⁴ Bernard, *An Apologia for Abbot William* in *The Cistercian World*, 55-56.

²⁵ Bernard, *An Apologia for Abbot William* in *The Cistercian World*, 57.

You cover your horses in silks and dress your armor with swatches of flowing cloth; you figure your lances, shields and saddles; your bridles and your spurs you adorn with gold and silver and jewels; and with all this display, you rush only towards death, in shameful madness and shameless idiocy. Are these the tokens of chivalry or the trappings of women?²⁶

In contrast to this, he writes that the Templars:

...are wary of all excesses in food and dress; they concern themselves only with necessities...they live without private property... They swear off dice and gaming; they detest hunting, and take no pleasure in the absurd cruelty of falconry... They keep their hair short, having learned from the Apostle that it is shameful for a man to wear his hair like a woman. Never do they set and rarely do they wash their hair, preferring to go about disheveled and unkempt, covered in dust and blackened by the sun and their armor.

When battle is at hand, they arm themselves with faith within and steel without, rather than with gold, so that when armed, rather than prettified, they instill fear in their adversaries rather than incite their greed. They choose to have horses that are strong and quick, rather than showy or well-dressed. They attend to battle rather than

²⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae*, trans. David Carbon, in J. Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, eds., *Liber ad milites Templi de laude novae militiae*, in *S. Bernardi Opera*, Vol. 3 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963), 206-39, accessed 17 December 2012, <http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/chivalry/bernard.html>.

display, to victory rather than glory, and concern themselves to inspire fear rather than wonder.²⁷

These passages address the many dangers of worldly attachment and give insight into why Bernard condemned them. Bernard's attack on his audience's masculinity is an attack on the basic idea that material wealth displayed on one's battle-harness was manly, an idea that has roots in Western Europe stretching back to at least the Bronze Age.²⁸ Tradition aside, Bernard still attacked this idea with a comparison to frivolous female behavior, in unstated contrast to the manly austerity displayed by Christ, the Apostles and many of the warrior-heroes of the Old Testament. Bernard's attack on private property, falconry and hunting are attacks on the grounds and symbols of masculine aristocracy itself. Possessing private property led to the necessity of oath-taking or oath-receiving in order to protect and manage those properties—oaths and loyalties that would have been better served directed to God. Furthermore, property, being the foundation of wealth in Western Europe, was the prize and object of private wars that were a source of sin and mortal danger to their participants. Bernard was not just trying to change warriors' actions—he was trying to alter the very foundations of their identity and the nature of the things they valued.

In this effort, Bernard carried on with his consistent goal of turning people away from worldly distraction and toward an introspective pursuit of God. Bernard saw his contemporaries, secular and monastic alike, as Christians who all needed to reach the same selfless relationship with God. Monks had embarked on the safest route to reaching that relationship, but the basic necessities for achieving that relationship, austerity and obedience foremost among them, were common to all Christians.

²⁷ Bernard, *De Laude*.

²⁸ Jan-Heinrich Hunnefeld and Stefan Schwenzer, "Traditionen, Innovationen und Technologietransfer - zur Herstellungstechnik und Funktion älterbronzezeitlicher Schwerter in Niedersachsen," *Praehistorische Zeitschrift* 86, no. 2 (July 2011): 207.

Bernard's writings about the role of monks, crusaders and secular warriors in the context of violence and personal spiritual transformation show remarkable continuity and integration with his broader writings on the Christian life. Intrinsic to the Templar's novelty was the justification of violence done by professed monks. It is the apparent disconnect between Bernard's advice to the brethren of St. Anastasius to "seek humility before all things and peace above all things for the sake of the indwelling Spirit of God which rests only on the peaceful and humble"²⁹ and his support for a monastic order whose express purpose was to protect one group of people by killing others that has seemingly caused such discomfort to Bernard scholars. Yet the humility that is so important to Bernard's monasticism, connected as it is to the subjugation of self-will and the acceptance of discipline, is a common vein running through *De Laude*:

Christ's knights have discipline and never disdain obedience... [they] wear what [their Grand Master] has given them, and... they concern themselves only with necessities. They have a joyous and sober life... When battle is at hand, they arm themselves with faith within and steel without, rather than with gold... They are not unstable or impetuous [in battle]...³⁰

What separated the Templar from his secular peer on a spiritual level was the monastic purity that resulted in a Templar being "God's agent for punishment of evil-doers and for glorification of the good."³¹ In contrast, the lives taken by a secular knight were damnation to his soul and an abomination before God. Earlier writings and epic stories, from the exhortations of the Christian Roman emperors, to the Chronicles of the Carolingians, to the heroic figures of Beowulf and Roland, expressed the potential

²⁹ Bernard to the brethren of St. Anastasius, "Letter 388," in *The Letters of St Bernard*, trans. Bruno James, (Spencer: Cistercian Publications, 1998), 458.

³⁰ Bernard, *De Laude*.

for violence done in a way that was pleasing to God. Nevertheless, these earlier ideas did not bridge the gap between divinely accepted violence that was still seen as a source of impurity and violence that could be done within the divinely pleasing monastic lifestyle of the Templars.

Even before Bernard was ever approached by the Templars he wrote of monks as spiritual warriors, drawing on a common imagery from a shared social status in order to build resonance with his audience. More importantly, Bernard's use of warrior imagery was indicative of a powerful belief that monks were engaged in spiritual warfare, warfare that was no less deadly for its lack of physical wounds. Not only was Bernard's vision of monasticism a militant one, but the social views of divinely justified violence across Western Europe were beginning to change. In the writings surrounding the First and Second Crusade, both lay and religious writers explored the changing nature of violence in the context of highly religiously motivated conflicts. Bernard's ideas on violence and the sacred expressed in *De Laude* and the Templar Rule bring Bernard's ideals together with expressions of the most cutting-edge social expectations of the time.³²

Though writing as a spiritual counselor, Bernard opened *De Laude* with expressions of humility which bordered on deference. "To Hugh," he writes in one letter, "Christ's knight and master of Christ's knighthood, Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in name only..."³³ Though Bernard appears to be elevating Hugh spiritually, even perhaps to a plane above his own, he makes reference to the Templars as knights and not as monks four times within the title, greeting, and first line.³⁴ Despite the fact that the Templars

³¹ *Dei enim minister est ad vindictam malefactorum, laudem vero bonorum* (Rom. 13:4)

³² For a comprehensive analysis of martial imagery in monasticism, see Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture*.

³³ *Hugoni, militia Christi et magistro militiae Christi, Bernardus Clarevallis solo nomine abbas*. From *De Laude* in J. Leclercq and H.M. Rochais, eds., *S. Bernardi Opera Vol. III, Tractatus et Opuscula*. (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963).

³⁴ In the title: "*milites templi*." In the prologue's greeting: "...*militia Christi et magistro militiae Christi*..." In the prologue's first line: "*commilitonibus*." J. Leclercq and H.M. Rochais, *S. Bernardi Opera*, 213.

were a professed religious order following a rule that he himself had written in 1129,³⁵ right from the opening remarks *De Laude* clearly defines the Templars principally as knights. This was a sharp divergence from Bernard's focus on the Templars as a professed religious order in their Rule. Some prominent, if now dated, scholarship has suggested that Bernard's extensive use of "knight" in reference to the Templars indicates *De Laude's* intended purpose as spiritual guidance for all knights, Templar or otherwise.³⁶ This position seems to best incorporate the overall tone of the tract, Bernard's approach to spirituality, and the historical context in which *De Laude* was written.

In 1098 Urban II invoked the idea of Christian knights fighting a justified holy war against a heathen enemy. In Urban's rhetoric, the ideal knight was one who served as the sword and shield of the Church, fighting not other Christians, but heathen enemies who threatened the greater body of Christendom. Bernard refinement of these ideas by adding the layers of morality and justification contained within the Templar Rule allowed him to justify the idea of the warrior-monk. Bernard evolved the idea and institution by providing the religious justification to fit already-existing phenomena: warriors whom society viewed as acceptable to God. This refinement allowed Bernard, a reformer, to stand behind this established but contentious idea.³⁷

According to *De Laude*, three elements were needed for a knight's act of violence to be justified. First, the knight must have killed without the burden of base emotion: he must have been free from desire, hate, wrath, and all other emotions offensive to God. Second, the object of violence must have been a valid enemy. As expressed in *De Laude*, such an enemy needed to be evil and a threat to Christians. Finally, the knight must have been acting in obedience to God or his valid representative.

³⁵ "The Latin Rule was established in January 1129, at the Council of Troyes in Champagne. Hugh of Payns, the co-founder of the Temple, first explained the customs which he and his companions had followed until that time. The new Rule was then drafted in the light of extensive discussion among the ecclesiastics and seculars present. It attracted wide interest in monastic circles, especially among the Cistercians and the Victorines. [Latin]" *Regula pauperum commilitonum Christi Templique Salomonici*, ed. S. Cerrini. Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis (forthcoming) in Malcolm Barber and Keith Bate, eds., *The Templars, Selected Sources* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 31.

Presumably, all of these criteria needed to be met for divine justification; a partial meeting of the criteria was not enough. This is supported by Bernard's singling out the Templars as just in their killing but excluding by omission all other knights in the Holy Land. Thus, place and enemy alone are not enough; their internal monastic purity was a critical component in the Templar's justification. Bernard asserted the importance of emotive intent when he wrote that

The heart's disposition, not the fortunes of war, determine defeat or victory for the Christian... It is a joyless victory when you overcome a man but surrender to vice, and you vainly glory in having overcome a man when wrath or pride has mastered you. I know there are those who kill not out of a lust for revenge, nor a fever for conquest, but simply in self-defense; but I would not call even this a good victory, since dying in the flesh is a lesser evil than dying in soul. The soul does not die because the body is killed; rather, 'it is the soul that sins that will surely die.'³⁸

³⁶ Leclercq, *Monks and Love*, 89.

³⁷ When he protested against the unnecessary involvement of monastic or ecclesiastical persons in secular affairs.

³⁸ *Ex cordis nempe affect, non belli eventu, pensatur vel periculum, vel victoria christiani. Si bona fuerit cause pugnantis, pugnae exitus malus esse non poterit, sicut nec bonus fuerit causa pugnantis, pugnae exitus malus esse non poterit, sicut nec bonus iudicabitur finis, ubi causa non bona, et intention non recta praecesserit. Si in voluntate alterum occidendi te potius occidi contigerit, moreris homicida. Wuod si praeuales, et voluntate superandi vel vindicandi forte occidis hominem, vivis homicida. Non autem expedit sive mortuo, sive vivo, sive victoria, sive victo, esse homicidam. Infelix victoria, qua superans hominem, succumbis vitio et, ira tibi aut superbia dominante, frustra gloriaris de homine superato. Est tamen qui nec ulciscendi zelo, nec vincendi typho, sed tantum evandendi remedio interficit hominem. Sed ne hanc uidem honam dixerim victoriam, cum de duobus malis, in corpore quam in anima mori levius sit. Non autem quia corpus occiditur, etiam anima moritur; sed anima, quae peccaverit, ipsa morietur.* Bernard, *De Laude*.

In *De Laude*, enemies were deemed valid targets of attack if they were evil³⁹ and a threat to Christians.⁴⁰ Evil specifically referred to paganism,⁴¹ but Bernard acknowledged that conversion would have been preferable to killing:

Pagans would not even have to be slaughtered, if there were some other way to prevent them from besetting and oppressing the faithful. But now it is better that they be killed than that the rod of these sinners continue to imperil the lot of the just, preventing the just from reaching out their hands against iniquity.⁴²

“[Templar] chivalry is truly holy and safe,”⁴³ Bernard writes, contrasting it with secular chivalry, “when Christ is not the sole cause of chivalrous doings.”⁴⁴ Obedience in following the directives of Christ was thus central to righteous battle, and in both the Benedictine Rule and the Templar Rule, the abbot or Grand Master, when acting righteously, is frequently referred to as acting for his disciples as a representative of Christ. “Christ’s knights have discipline and never disdain obedience.”⁴⁵ This obedience was obedience to their Grand Master, and thus, to God.

As Leclercq so succinctly said of *De Laude* and of Bernard’s writings on the Song of Songs in 1979,

These more important writings also show that Bernard had a very precise and elaborate doctrine of war, of protocol for waging it in a just

³⁹ “...he is God’s agent of punishment of evil-doers...” “Clearly, when he kills an evil-doer, he is not a homicide...” Bernard, *De Laude*.

⁴⁰ “...[killings by a Templar are] the defense Christ provides for Christians.” Bernard, *De Laude*.

⁴¹ “The Christian glories in a pagan’s death, because Christ is glorified...” Bernard, *De Laude*.

⁴² *Pagani quippe trucidandos non essent si alio modo possemus eos prohibere quin fideles obsidant et opprimant. Sed nunc melior est eos necare ne virga illorum peccatorum sortem piorum in periculum mittant et prohibeant quin pii manus contra iniquitates ostendant.* Bernard, *De Laude*.

⁴³ *Quod [Templum] militarium est verum sanctum et tutum* Bernard, *De Laude*.

⁴⁴ *Cum Christus non est causa facti casti* Bernard, *De Laude*.

⁴⁵ *Milites Christi habent disciplinam castrensem et nunquam oboedientia spernunt.* Bernard, *De Laude*.

cause and with right motives. In this rather circumscribed area of his thought, he propounds a theology of restrained violence which is the outcome of a very deliberate reflection and meditation.⁴⁶

The concepts of sacred action were not static in the Middle Ages; they evolved with society, slowly in some periods and more dramatically in others. The High Middle Ages witnessed the Peace of God, the Crusades, and the development of the military and mendicant orders. Though each of these movements or institutions developed for their own reasons in response to particular temporal, social, and geopolitical forces, all of them are examples of the evolution of the sacred life in medieval Christianity. These movements all illustrate a trend toward social connectedness rather than isolation in the spiritual ideal; adherents were intended to be spiritually pure through isolation from the temptations of the world and the unacceptable behaviors of the common world, but they were to do so in increasingly physical contact with the rest of society.

Perhaps the most difficult issue for theologians during this movement was that of reconciling the need for a mechanism to ensure the spiritual purity of knights who wanted to engage in warfare pleasing to the Church and the egotistical nature of High Medieval knightly warfare, the worldly contact inherent in warfare and most importantly, the intense and sinful emotions evoked by war. The writings of Bernard of Clairvaux were instrumental in legitimizing the idea of the Christian warrior in this period, not only for the warriors themselves, but also for monks, priests and society in general. This shift in thinking relied upon casting physical warfare in the name of God as an extension of the internal struggle monks were already waging in isolation and providing clear guidelines for overcoming both moral and worldly challenges in a manner that would deepen, not alienate, the practitioner's relationship with God. Despite the military *raison d'être* of the Templars being the obvious difference between the Poor Knights of Christ and Bernard's Cistercian brothers, the intellectual continuity between these two

⁴⁶ Leclercq, *Monks and Love*, 91.

organizations was considerable. Bernard viewed both as expressions of Christian ideals that provided a model for their contemporary peers. Both he considered warriors, though the Cistercians were spiritual warriors and the Templars were physical warriors fighting a fundamentally spiritual war. Both lived according to very similar Rules emphasizing obedience, austerity, and focus on divine contemplation. Both communities were warned against imitating or interacting with the secular world, though Bernard showed flexibility in this regard as he developed the Templar's Rule. Bernard's preaching in the run-up to the Second Crusade also echoed the same intellectual and spiritual themes present in his monastic and Templar writings. Bernard's overall intellectual consistency between his monastic and Templar writings mean that these issues should be viewed as elements of a consistent corpus of writing and thought, not two disparate categories inappropriate for comparative examination. Reading Bernard as a whole person, a thinker whose disparate ideas reflect the complexity of his age and his intellectual sophistication, provides us with a model for examining other prolific luminaries. Beyond the immediate application of these conclusions to Bernard, a close comparative evaluation of his writings begins to illustrate the enormous impact that one man had in articulating the theology of war. Over the next several decades, Bernard's theology of war became integrated into the accepted Western European notion of just war. While asserting that Bernard was singularly responsible for this point of view ignores the long, building tradition which was so well expressed in his writing, his writings were undoubtedly a watershed moment in the development and articulation of Western Europe's theology of war.

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The Protocol of Vengeance in Viking-age Scandinavia

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The Protocol of Vengeance in Viking-age Scandinavia seeks to discuss by whom and against whom vengeance was condoned in Northern Europe, namely Iceland, between the 9th and 10th centuries. In spite of both modern and contemporaneous portrayals of an excessively violent people, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate the specific cases in which Viking society condoned and employed violence. To this effect, the paper will use particular examples from several major sagas, the only written records of pre-Christian Scandinavia, to outline the precise nuances of violence that corresponded with particular circumstances and stature of the individuals involved.

From historical sources such as the *Annals of St. Vaast* to personal accounts from scholars like Alcuin of York, it is evident that the even the contemporaneous conception of Vikings included images of senseless barbarians who attacked the innocent, mainly Christians, and left behind nothing but devastation.^{1,2} Violence in Viking society, however, was not haphazard, but rather part of an organized system of action developing over three centuries, based on the individuals involved in a feud and the corresponding method of settlement. Violence, especially in the form of vengeance, was both the opportunity and means for preserving honor in Viking-age Scandinavia and followed concrete principles. A protocol of appropriate vengeance can be proposed which, along with the examination of extenuating circumstances, can facilitate the comprehension of the rare written accounts of early Scandinavia, including *Njal's saga*, *Egil's saga*, *Hrafinkel's saga*, *Gisli's saga*, and the *Vinland sagas*. Though the events of the sagas took place largely in the tenth century, they were not transcribed by the Scandinavians

¹ Peter Halsall, "The Annals of St. Vaast," in *Medieval Sourcebook: Three Sources on the Ravages of the Northmen in Frankland, c. 843-912* (Fordham University, Aug 1998), <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/843bertin.asp>, from *The Internet History Sourcebooks Project*, accessed 12 September 2012, <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/index.asp>.

² Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants, and Missionaries in the Remaking of*

themselves until the late thirteenth century resulting in the influence of later social and political forces on the historical accounts. However, the sagas are the most proximate records of Viking-age Scandinavia and are thus extremely valuable to understanding this protocol of vengeance.

Contrary to the external interpretations of Viking culture, some as early as the tenth century from foreigners such as Ahmad Ibn Fadlan, early medieval Scandinavian society was largely based upon solid principles of honor and self-rule, particularly in Iceland and Greenland. Disputes often occurred over land, resources, or power, yet were often resolved legally. In Iceland, for example, these disputes could be taken to the Althing, a forum presided by elderly wise men.³ If a just settlement, however, could not be agreed upon, these fairly isolated conflicts could easily snowball into a broadened, long-running feud because of the Viking code of retribution, which demanded appropriate action against a slight to one's honor or injury to a relative. Violence, even murder, perpetuated this cycle of revenge. This code of retribution can be broken down further into the following dimensions: the individuals involved, the appropriate actions as deemed by Viking society, and any extenuating circumstances, such as supernatural strength or the wronged party's reluctance to seek revenge.

The first element concerns the matter of who exacts revenge. This responsibility often falls upon the most closely related male kin present. Ties of obligation existed in several forms, for example between a father and his sons, between brothers, and between brother-in-laws. By removing the murder weapon from the victim's body, the individual agrees to the duty of seeking vengeance as evidenced in *Gisli's saga*: "[Thord] told [Gisli] to pluck the weapon out of the wound, for in those days it was a settled thing that the man was bound to avenge the slain who took the weapon out of the wound."⁴ Gisli immediately complies with the code of avenging Vestein's death by removing the weapon. This process rarely becomes a matter of contention when another individual is present. In this

Northern Europe (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2012), 14-5.

³ "The History of Iceland," *Travelnet*, 2006, accessed 1 April 2012, http://www.travelnet.is/about_iceland/history/.

instance, though another man named Thord is in the room, it is not appropriate for him to carry out the action as, firstly, he exhibits cowardice by claiming fear of the dead, and secondly, he is not compelled to be as invested in this matter since Gisli is Vestein's brother-in-law and is, thus, mandated by protocol to act. This scenario is not unlike Sam avenging the death of his brother, Einar, after Hrafnkel slays him for riding his horse in *Hrafnkel's saga*.⁵

Occasionally, the individuals involved are not always so closely related or culpable. An extenuating circumstance can occur at the end of a chain of murders and revenge where the last individuals brought into the conflict before a resolution have little stake in the original issue. An example is in Hrafnkel's conflict with Sam, which originally started after the slaying of Einar. It escalates to the point where the innocent Eyvindr is killed despite having no cause and little involvement in the death of Sam's brother.⁶ These exceptions are quite rare.

Secondly, the protocol of revenge is generally contingent upon the status of the initiator of the dispute. The more powerful the perpetrator, the more likely the victim's family would settle for compensation. If the initiator was of a far more elevated status than the victim and his family, the chain of retribution could be swiftly ended with a monetary compensation. An excellent example is in *Egil's saga*, when Thorolf is killed in battle because King Athelstan separates him from his brother Egil. Though Egil is furious, he understands that he cannot kill the king without suffering social and political ramifications. Instead, he displays extreme moodiness until he is granted a gift of a gold band from the king himself. "He [Egil] drew one eye-brow down towards the cheek, the other up to the roots of the hair... he would not drink." Finally the king relents and draws "his sword from the sheath and takes from his arm a gold ring large and good...reaches over the fire [and hands it]to Egil." This seems to be

⁴ "Gisli's saga." Chapter 8, in *Icelandic Sagas*, 2007, http://sagadb.org/gisla_saga_surssonar.en, from *The Icelandic Saga Database*, accessed 1 April 2012, <http://sagadb.org/>.

⁵ "Hrafnkel's saga." in *Icelandic Sagas*, 2007, http://sagadb.org/hrafnkels_saga_freysgoda, from *The Icelandic Saga Database*, accessed 1 April 2012, <http://sagadb.org/>.

sufficient compensation as Egil sat down because “he drew the ring on his arm, and his brows went back to their place.”⁷

An alternative approach of settling a dispute when the slayer is too strong is compensation in the way of blood-money. A relative of the slain individual could petition at the Althing for monetary compensation and a mediator would communicate between the families of the slayer and slain. The amount offered would correlate with the closeness of the individual with respect to the petitioner and importance of the individual in society. This option was accepted when the victim’s family was lower in status than the murderer out of fear of further conflict. Another reason for this type of settlement is if the murderer was thought to possess supernatural strength such as a *berserker*. These relatively rare individuals possess ferocious strength, oftentimes unleashed in uncontrollable fits of rage.

Thirdly, taking vengeance against a relative of biological ties or foster alliances is strictly prohibited. In the Vinland Sagas, Freydis, Leif’s sister, orders the slaying of two brothers, Helgi and Finnbogi, in Vinland for no apparent reason. Rather than react in outrage to Freydis’ hindering of the settlement process, Leif does not raise a finger against his sister. Instead he claims, “I do not have the heart to punish my sister Freydis as she deserves, but I foresee that her descendants will enjoy little prosperity.”⁸ As if the gods agreed, fate ensured that “it turned out as he said, for from that time on, no one thought anything but ill of them.” It is clear that Leif acknowledges the wrong in her actions but cannot commit another grievous error, the murder of a sibling, to compensate.

The confounding factor of supernatural strength can also compound the impropriety of killing a relative. When Egil’s father, Skallagrim, attempts to kill his own son in a *berserker* rage, his efforts are barely thwarted by Egil’s nanny, whom he chases off a cliff. He even throws a boulder after her to

⁶ "Hrafnkel's saga," Chapter 6, in *Icelandic Sagas*, 2007, http://sagadb.org/hrafnkels_saga_freysgoda, from *The Icelandic Saga Database*, accessed 1 April 2012, <http://sagadb.org/>.

⁷ W. C. Green, *Egil's saga*. Forgotten Books, 2008. 133.

⁸ "Vinland Sagas," Chapter 15; accessed 1 April 2012, http://archive.org/stream/voyagestovinland013593mbp/voyagestovinland013593mbp_djvu.txt.

ensure her death: “Skallagrim hurled after her a great stone, which struck her between the shoulders, and neither ever came up again.”⁹ Though Egil is furious, it is not appropriate for him to attempt to kill his own father, nor is it practical, due to Skallagrim’s supernatural strength. Thus he decides to exact revenge by killing his father’s favorite worker. “He went into the fire-hall, and up to the man who there had the overseeing of work and the management of moneys for Skallagrim, and was most dear to him. Egil dealt him his deathblow.” Though the workman meant much to Skallagrim, he could not deny that it was just compensation for his action. “Skallagrim spoke not a word about it then, and thenceforward the matter was kept quiet.”¹⁰

Another extenuating circumstance is hesitance to exact revenge, which can be construed in two ways. The more common way is similar to Freydis’ plans to coax her husband into action against the alleged wrongs she suffered by Helgi and Finnbogi by attacking his honor: “You are such a measly man that you would never avenge either my disgrace or your own. I am certainly finding out how far I am from Greenland. But, if you do not avenge this, I am going to separate from you.” She drove her husband to his wits end until “he could no longer bear her reproaches.”¹¹

Rarely, reluctance to participate in violence is a sign of nobility and wisdom as in *Njal’s saga*. After her children were called “little dungbeards” and her husband was called “the beardless one,” Bergthora flew into a rage. She threatens the honor of all the men in her family, even her children. “If you don’t avenge this insult, you can’t be counted on to avenge any!” she directs at Skarphedin, her son, and Njal, her husband. Njal, however, responds calmly: “Slow but sure, mother! And so it is with many things that try men sorely. There are always two sides to a quarrel, even though we avenge this insult.”¹² Thus, Njal does not exhibit cowardice because he hesitates to fight, but he demonstrates his good sense

⁹ W. C. Green, *Egil’s saga* (Forgotten Books, 2008), 95.

¹⁰ W.C. Green, *Egil’s saga* (Forgotten Books, 2008), 96.

¹¹ “Vinland Sagas,” Chapter 13, accessed 1 April 2012,

http://archive.org/stream/voyagestovinland013593mbp/voyagestovinland013593mbp_djvu.txt.

¹² Lee Hollander, *Njal’s saga* (Ware, Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Editions, 1999), Section 88.

and wisdom by stating it is most likely not warranted or that the insults stem from an unknown cause or trap.

The intricacy and complexity of vengeance demonstrated by the major sagas can be broken down into these repeated elements facilitating their comprehension. The first pattern is that the more closely related by blood, the greater the need to avenge another's murder. The second is that the more powerful the perpetrator, the more likely the victim's family will settle for monetary compensation. Third and most importantly, vengeance through murder is not employed against one's own family. Though these trends are not all encompassing, they must be given more credit than just serving as motifs in thousand-year-old texts. They illuminate the limited written record of the Scandinavian past. Thus, the elucidation of such facets is essential to forming an accurate picture of Viking-age Scandinavia.

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The Early Effects of Gunpowder on Fortress Design: A Lasting Impact

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The introduction of gunpowder did not immediately transform the battlefields of Europe. Designers of fortifications only had to respond to the destructive threats of siege warfare, and witnessing the technical failures of early gunpowder weaponry would hardly have convinced a European magnate to bolster his defenses. This essay follows the advancement of gunpowder tactics in late medieval and early Renaissance Europe. In particular, it focuses on Edward III's employment of primitive ordnance during the Hundred Years' War, the role of artillery in the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, and the organizational challenges of effectively implementing gunpowder as late as the end of the fifteenth century. This essay also seeks to illustrate the nature of the development of fortification in response to the emerging threat of gunpowder siege weaponry, including the architectural theories of the early Renaissance Italians, Henry VIII's English artillery forts of the mid-sixteenth century, and the evolution of the angle bastion. The article concludes with a short discussion of the longevity and lasting relevance of the fortification technologies developed during the late medieval and early Renaissance eras.

The castle was an inseparable component of medieval warfare. Since Duke William of Normandy's 1066 conquest of Anglo-Saxon England, the construction of castles had become the earmark of medieval territorial expansion. These fortifications were not simply stone squares with round towers adorning the corners. Edward I's massive castle building program in Wales, for example, resulted in fortifications so visually disparate that one might assume they were from different time periods.²²³ Medieval engineers had built upon castle technology for centuries by 1500, and the introduction of gunpowder weaponry to the battlefields of Europe foreshadowed a revision of the basics of fortress design. However, the transformation from medieval castle to Renaissance fortress did not occur overnight. Witnessing the technical travesty of early gunpowder weaponry would hardly have

²²³ For extensive discussion of these and other English castles, see R. Allen Brown, *English Medieval Castles* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1954); N. J. G. Pounds, *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); D. J. Cathcart King, *The Medieval Castle in England and Wales* (Portland: Areopagitica Press, 1988).

convinced a European magnate to bolster his defenses. But castles could not resist the onslaught of artillery for long. Constantinople's impenetrable double walls fell to Ottoman ordnance in 1453 and from that moment on traditional medieval European defenses became increasingly obsolete. For the latter half of the fifteenth-century engineers raced to develop the mightiest fortification style possible. Expansive defensive building programs such as Henry VIII's fortification of England's southern coast illustrate the slow, cautious process that characterized the development of early Renaissance fortification. By the time the ideal formula of walls and platforms was reached, the castle had been relegated to a vestige of the past.

The final years of the fifteenth century are attractive milestones for historians of any discipline. Christopher Columbus' expeditions, the completion of the Reconquista, and Charles VIII's invasion of Italy all characterized the following hundred years. Unsurprisingly, many military historians find the foundations of the development of Renaissance warfare within the first French incursions into Italy. J. R. Hale's interpretation, which has attained widespread acceptance, points to the political circumstances of the era in both France and Italy. Both regions were reeling from centuries of political instability, and were ripe for the development of new types of weaponry. For Hale, the development of new defensive systems was a direct response to the emergence of gunpowder, and was geographically confined to Italy and France.²²⁴ Thomas Arnold, in his recent survey of Renaissance war, expands Hale's geography to include Burgundy, Switzerland, and the Holy Roman Empire. In particular, Arnold focuses on non-Italian architectural innovators such as Albrecht Dürer, the German artist and engineer whose theories influenced the blueprints of many later fortifications.²²⁵ Beyond geographical constraints, however, Arnold's basic argument holds true to Hale's interpretation.

²²⁴ J. R. Hale, "The Early Development of the Bastion: An Italian Chronology c. 1450–c. 1534," in *Renaissance War Studies* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1983), 6.

²²⁵ Thomas F. Arnold, *The Renaissance at War* (London: Smithsonian Books, 2005), 30–49.

Bert Hall's survey of Renaissance warfare also remains in line with Hale. He points to Pisa's first employment of a *retirata*, a freestanding emergency earthwork barrier and ditch formed behind a battered stone wall, as evidence that Italians were familiar with the dynamics of gunpowder warfare by 1500.²²⁶ Hall emphasizes the lagging of fortification development relative to that of offensive artillery.²²⁷ Indeed, the defensive capabilities of gunpowder were slow to be realized, but other recent works cite specific examples of early architectural prowess that seem to break the trend. Michael Dechert focuses on the works of Francesco di Giorgio in Naples, which, to some degree, embraced gunpowder's defensive potential.²²⁸ While Francesco's fortifications remained a far cry from the symmetrical star forts of the seventeenth century, early attempts at gunpowder defense provide much insight into the development of structures that truly revolutionized siege warfare.

The concept of fortification was nothing new to Renaissance commanders. For centuries, the primary mode of exerting control over a geographical area had been the castle. Charles Oman, in his pioneering, yet sweepingly general discussion of medieval warfare, classifies castles as a product of feudal relations. Defense was the base of feudalism, Oman posits, and the castle was the necessary physical manifestation of the militant political system.²²⁹ Later historians would refine Oman's assessment. R. Allen Brown, for example, shows that a castle's fabric reflected its location and intended function. Thus, different fortifications would serve divergent roles, based on location and necessity. For Brown, medieval castles achieved tactical, ad-hoc ends, not widespread strategic ones.²³⁰ Another notable view is that of Helen Nicholson, who highlights that castles were offensive rather than defensive: indeed they would protect those inside, but they would also exert political and social power

²²⁶ Bert S. Hall, *Weapons & Warfare in Renaissance Europe* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 171.

²²⁷ Hall, 155.

²²⁸ Michael S. A. Dechert, "The Military Architecture of Francesco di Giorgio in Southern Italy," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49, no. 2 (June 1990): 162.

²²⁹ C.W.C. Oman, *The Art of War in the Middle Ages A.D. 378–1515* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1885), 58, 68.

²³⁰ R. Allen Brown, *English Medieval Castles* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1954), 191.

over the surrounding countryside, subjugating the populace.²³¹ Renaissance fortresses certainly retained this quality of social domination; at Siena a fortification was constructed, but was torn down by angry citizens only a few years later.²³²

To find the roots of military and fortification development through the Renaissance, one must consider the initial contact between Europeans and gunpowder. Edward III brought primitive ordnance along for the early battles of the Hundred Years' War, though he most likely used them for psychological effect, or, as Albertus Magnus put it, "making thunder."²³³ By Edward's time, the crowned heads of Europe had at least some awareness of the existence of gunpowder, if not its potential role on the battlefield. Artillery may have even seen limited use in sieges before the Hundred Years' War; Walter de Milemete's 1326 *Treatise* depicts primitive cannon alongside the traditional siege armament of his era.²³⁴ Milemete's cannon resembles a vase, suggesting a heavy East Asian influence on early ordnance.²³⁵ Western Europe did not drive the early years of gunpowder innovation, and thus the technology did not generate the novel acclaim that surrounded purely European creations like Gutenberg's printing press. Gunpowder, despite its potential for noise, quietly and slowly found its place on the battlefields of Europe.

The fourteenth-century introduction of gunpowder hardly produced an instantaneous universal adoption of artillery, and contemporary military architecture provides tactile proof. Magnates continued to build fortifications in the medieval style, with wall height favored over thickness and

²³¹ Helen Nicholson, *Medieval Warfare* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 80.

²³² Arnold, 52.

²³³ Kelly DeVries, "Gunpowder and Early Gunpowder Weapons," in *Guns and Men in Medieval Europe, 1200–1500* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002), 125.

²³⁴ Walter de Milemete, *The Treatise of Walter de Milemete: De Nobilitatibus, sapientiis, et prudentiis regum*, ed. M. R. James (London, The Roxborough Club, 1913), 133–40, Accessed 14 January, 2012, <http://www.archive.org/stream/cu31924032172029>

²³⁵ Arnold, 30.

extensive machicolation emplacements to repel enemies at its base.²³⁶ For fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century defenders, the old system of fortification was not a problem in the face of artillery bombardment, as the first gunpowder weapons could achieve little more than preceding siege engines. During the final month of the 1375 siege of the English castle St.-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, the French employed four artillery pieces and were able to maintain reliable gunpowder supply routes from Paris.²³⁷ Froissart comments that the English took refuge in their flanking towers, indicating that the French ordnance was unable to penetrate St.-Sauveur's curtain wall.²³⁸ Indeed, the besiegers realized the ineffectiveness of attacking the walls, and instead turned their artillery to a high angle, targeting the relatively fragile wooden rooftops. The castle surrendered only a few days after two extra cannons were brought to the field, purportedly due to the fact that a stone had crashed through the roof of the English commander's quarters during the night.²³⁹

The siege of St.-Sauveur-le-Vicomte characterizes early gunpowder warfare. The French ordnance there filled the role of the trebuchet: an engine that could hurl stones high into the air so as to arch over a curtain wall, harassing the inhabitants of a fortified place. Gunpowder resulted in a successful siege at St.-Sauveur, but not due to any penetration of the castle walls. This form of victory, too, is reminiscent of the traditional medieval siege. Historians have long noted that a besieger's most reliable weapon was the threat of starvation itself.²⁴⁰ Dwindling victuals represented imminent death to a garrison, and the earth-shaking guns placed outside the walls of St.-Sauveur-le-Vicomte only lessened those defenders' resolve. The armament of the besieger was changing, but the basic paradigm of medieval war remained untouched.

²³⁶ Oman, "The Art of War in the Middle Ages," 57–8.

²³⁷ Hall, 56.

²³⁸ Jean Froissart, *Oeuvres: Chroniques* (Lettenhove), 8:342, cited in Hall, 57.

²³⁹ Hall, 57.

²⁴⁰ Oman, "The Art of War in the Middle Ages," 59.

Almost eighty years after the French took St.-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, artillery would reveal its full potential to Europe and the Near East. In 1788, Edward Gibbon recognized the decisive role of gunpowder during the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.²⁴¹ Later historians do not dissent: Charles Oman confirmed Gibbon in 1898, as did Mark Bartusis in 1997.²⁴² These writers emphasize not only the centrality of artillery in taking Constantinople, but also that the fall of the city marked the beginning of gunpowder's prominence on European battlefields. Kelly DeVries, however, challenges this thesis by considering the fall of Constantinople within the wider backdrop of Western Europe.

The Byzantines were certainly familiar with artillery by 1453, but economic conditions prevented production from reaching numbers comparable to their Eastern and Western neighbors. The Byzantines acquired most of their ordnance through gifts and lending, while the opposing Ottoman guns were home-built.²⁴³ It is well established that during the Siege of Constantinople, both sides employed gunpowder. What gave the Ottomans an edge, posits DeVries, was shrewd leadership, not technological superiority.²⁴⁴ Mehmed II's 1453 siege was not an impromptu affair. Kritovoulos recounts that the Sultan had long "prepared for greater things [...] everything contributed to the plan he had before him."²⁴⁵ Some time before the campaign, the Ottoman ruler hired at least one Hungarian gun-maker who had become disgruntled with Byzantium's refusal to provide an adequate stipend. In only

²⁴¹ Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, III: ch. 68, accessed January 14, 2013, <http://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/index.htm>.

²⁴² Charles Oman, *A History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages: Volume II: 1278–1485* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1924), 357–9. Mark C. Bartusis, *The Late Byzantine Army: Arms and Society, 1204–1453* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 335.

²⁴³ Kelly DeVries, "Gunpowder Weapons at the Siege of Constantinople, 1453", in *Guns and Men in Medieval Europe, 1200–1500*, 350–2.

²⁴⁴ DeVries, "Constantinople," 345.

²⁴⁵ Kritovoulos, "From the History of Mehmed the Conqueror," in *The Islamic World*, ed. William H. McNeill and Marilyn Robinson Waldman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 316–17.

three months, the engineer had produced ordnance capable of gouging a six-foot hole in a stone wall.²⁴⁶ Indeed, gunpowder weaponry had progressed since St.-Sauveur-le-Vicomte.

Mehmed II had the ordnance he needed to take Constantinople, and he laid siege. But he did not simply start shooting. The sultan positioned his artillery in tactical locations surrounding the city, targeting gates and long sections of wall.²⁴⁷ Mehmed also quickly realized that maintaining his massive siege required reliable supply trains. These caravans, already armed and traveling through enemy lands, provided convenient attack forces for other Byzantine forts.²⁴⁸ The commander even commissioned ad-hoc gun modifications, building an accurate anti-naval mortar to his own specifications.²⁴⁹ Mehmed was keen to use his assets for multiple roles, resulting in an extremely efficient and effective fighting force on multiple fronts, which he could maintain almost indefinitely. After only fifty-five days, the Ottoman guns punctured the ancient walls of Constantinople, and the Sultan absorbed the Roman Imperial title which had existed for almost a millennia and a half.

Mehmed II's successful employment of artillery demonstrates gunpowder's potential by 1453, but does not reflect the average understanding of the technology across Europe. Almost two decades after the fall of Constantinople, in a region supposedly accustomed to gunpowder warfare, ignorant mistakes continued to doom military expeditions. In 1472, the Duke of Burgundy initiated a siege at Beauvais. His two bombards fired a shot each, and managed to blow a hole in the defenders' gate. But the besiegers ran out of projectiles after those two shots, forcing them to relinquish the siege.²⁵⁰ Despite the clear advantage that commanders of ordnance may have expected, artillery did not exempt its owner from careful military planning.

²⁴⁶ Michael Ducas, *Byzantine History*, in *The Siege of Constantinople, 1453: Seven Contemporary Accounts* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1972), 70–2, quoted by DeVries, "Constantinople", 356.

²⁴⁷ DeVries, "Constantinople," 357.

²⁴⁸ DeVries, "Constantinople," 358.

²⁴⁹ Ducas, 90, cited by DeVries, "Constantinople," 360.

²⁵⁰ Kelly DeVries, "The Impact of Gunpowder Weaponry on Siege Warfare in the Hundred Years War," in *Guns and Men in Medieval Europe, 1200–1500*, 227.

If the fall of Constantinople is to be the archetype of successful early artillery command, then the basic defensive layout should be designed to counter such an attack. Christine de Pizan, in the first decade of the fifteenth century, already had some ideas that would have benefited the Byzantines. *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, Christine's revival of Vegetius' Roman legionary field manual, fits gunpowder weaponry into the familiar framework of late medieval warfare. To defend against increasingly commonplace explosive weapons, Christine suggests surrounding defensible locations with a deep ditch, building a double wall, and filling said wall with the displaced dirt. Likewise, she suggests that the walls be jagged, not straight, so as to allow for flanking fire from defenders.²⁵¹ A quick glance at a map of Constantinople reveals alarmingly straight double walls. Although the ancient walls were thick and high, they were obsolete in the face of Mehmed II's artillery.

Christine's commentary on defense is short. Writing during the early years of gunpowder warfare, she had a fuller grasp of artillery's offensive role. The *Architecture* of Leon Batista Alberti expands on Christine's wall design, adding several options for use against specific types of attack. Interestingly, although the architect presents a fort able to utilize and repel gunpowder weapons, he rarely conveys the superiority of cannon over traditional siege machines.²⁵² Alberti's idealized fortress is star-shaped, with relatively low walls. The walls enclose the most fortified part of the fortress, the central tower. This tower, according to the architect, should be taller than any other part of the fortification.²⁵³ Surrounding the walls is a large ditch, either water-filled or completely empty. Until this point, Alberti's fortress strongly resembles that of Christine.

Alberti suggests some additional armaments to bring his fortress up to date with gunpowder warfare. Possibly his most revolutionary proposition is the addition of small loop-holes at the base of

²⁵¹ Christine de Pizan, *The Book of Deeds of Arms and of Chivalry*, trans. Sumner Willard, ed. Charity Cannon Willard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 105–6.

²⁵² Hale, "Bastion," 12.

²⁵³ Leon Batista Alberti, *The Architecture of Leon Batista Alberti*, trans. James Leoni (London: Edward Owen, 1755), 87.

walls. This would allow defenders to provide flanking fire upon besiegers located at the base of walls.²⁵⁴ It is necessary to note that the bases of walls were not left unprotected for the entire medieval period, only to be defended during the Renaissance. Medieval castle builders utilized wall-topping protruding stonework galleries, or machicolation, to gain a vertical vantage point against the besiegers. The introduction of gunpowder produced higher horizontal battering forces than ever, thus rendering the relatively fragile machicolation obsolete.²⁵⁵ Alberti's ingenious solution not only embraces the defensive capabilities of gunpowder, but also presents a creative means to overcome the obsolescence of an almost ubiquitous fortified structure. The architect's base concept would eventually evolve into the most powerful and best remembered Renaissance defensive structure: the bastion.

Another of Alberti's influential suggestions is that the outside face of a fortress' outermost wall should be angled, not vertical. This, the architect argues, serves not only to reduce the impact of horizontal artillery missiles, but also to destabilize any attempt at siege ladder use.²⁵⁶ This angled wall architecture is later referred to as scarping – Alberti does not use the term.²⁵⁷ Machicolation and scarping are incompatible forms of architecture. Machicolation placed atop a scarped wall would prove useless, since the scarping angle would prevent any vertical fire from reaching the base. Thus, the architect's loop-holes become increasingly necessary. Alberti supposes that a heavily fortified central tower should provide the best possible balance of defensive and offensive capabilities. Though this architect does not give many specifics regarding his central tower, later experts would take up his concept in an attempt to improve it.

The allure of Alberti's early suggestions for fortification lies in his relatively simple structures. Princes who already had existing castle networks could not simply tear down old fortresses and put up

²⁵⁴ Alberti, 87.

²⁵⁵ Hale, "Bastion," 9–10.

²⁵⁶ Alberti, 87.

²⁵⁷ Hale, "Bastion," 9.

new ones, as such a building program would prove preclusively expensive. Instead, a prince could add Alberti's structures to preexisting castles. The Castello Nuovo in downtown Naples serves as an example of castle improvement. The Angevins originally constructed the castle in 1279, though little of its original form remains extant. During the mid-fifteenth century, the Aragonese added huge barrel towers, allowing for relatively effective flanking fire from the top of one tower to its neighbor's base. A decade later, a low outer wall was added with significant scarping. This structure remains today, and its juxtaposition with the older wall reveals the sharp contrast between medieval and renaissance wall styles. The scarped wall is high enough that ladders would have difficulty stabilizing, yet low enough to act as a defensive artillery platform.²⁵⁸ Eventually, a large ditch was added outside the scarped wall, resulting in a system of defense almost identical to Alberti's prescription.²⁵⁹

The later years of the medieval era saw the castle's strongest point transition from the central keep to one or more gatehouses.²⁶⁰ As has been shown, much of the initial development in gunpowder defense was heavily rooted in medieval tradition. Thus, the builders of many early artillery fortresses opted for a single strongpoint, echoing the late medieval gatehouse or early medieval keep. A strongpoint, in order to house gunpowder weapons, was usually tall and multi-tiered, with an open top for the largest guns. This layout is called an artillery tower.²⁶¹ Many defenders soon found the artillery tower to provide too limited a vantage point, as only distant targets were subjected to the most intense fire coming from the highest gun platform. Builders therefore adopted a new architectural form, the bastion. In comparing the two structures, Hale posits that the artillery tower represents a defensive focus, and the bastion an offensive.²⁶² Though the bastion would take many forms during its long life, its definition prescribes its basic function. To be a bastion, a structure must jut outwards from the fortress,

²⁵⁸ Arnold, 48.

²⁵⁹ City of Naples, "Castel Nuovo," accessed January 15, 2013, <http://www.comune.napoli.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/EN/IDPagina/1372>.

²⁶⁰ Brown, 69.

²⁶¹ Arnold, 46.

²⁶² Hale, "Bastion," 10.

and must house hidden, thickly defended flanking artillery aiming down the wall, so as to provide supporting fire to a neighboring position.²⁶³ The prestigious angle bastion came to a sharp point, putting it at odds with the lobed artillery towers. This form was quite popular with architects during the sixteenth century onwards, but was by no means ubiquitous. Transitional fortresses reveal the varied, sometimes strange schemes that late medieval and early Renaissance engineers attempted before the centralized power of the artillery tower was distributed evenly to several bastions.

Near the end of the fifteenth century, a prince with tight coffers might have opted for a *Castello Nuovo* style fortress, simply retrofitting an older castle with new technology. A prince who sought the best possible fortification, with little to no restraint on monetary expenditure, would construct a brand new fortress in the latest style. The fortress plans of the Sienese artist and architect Francesco di Giorgio present transitional takes on defensive designs.²⁶⁴ Most of his notable activity took place in Aragonese Naples between 1484 and 1497. During his short career Francesco made great strides in improving gunpowder defense. The coastal Aragonese fortress at Taranto represents his take on defensive design. The location was not new: the Byzantines and Angevins both had castles there. Francesco and the Aragonese, however, redesigned the entire site. They leveled much of what had been a traditional quadrangle castle, dug a deep ditch to allow seawater to flow around the fort, and added two large protuberances. One massive triangular structure faces the sea, while an even larger projection on the opposite side provided defense from land assault.²⁶⁵

Some would consider it overstatement to refer to the structures at Taranto as bastions, so the term proto-bastion is appropriate. The triangular fortification jutting out into the sea is indeed very close in design to the bastion proper. Its angular shape allows for an extremely wide field of fire, but it lacks the embedded flanking guns that define the bastion. The larger structure protruding towards the

²⁶³ Arnold, 54.

²⁶⁴ Dechert, 162.

²⁶⁵ Dechert, 168–9.

land is representative of an architectural class in between an artillery tower and a bastion. Its acute triangular shape would certainly provide an adequate vantage point, much like an elongated triangular bastion. But during its life as a battlement, the structure encapsulated a large three-tier artillery tower. Interestingly, the artillery tower was positioned between two smaller drum towers, which could provide flanking fire.²⁶⁶ Indeed, the large artillery tower at Taranto shows that the ideal of mutually supportive flanking fire was present in the minds of late fifteenth-century architects. It would, however, be some time before the means of the science of fortification could achieve the ideal ends.

Francesco's proto-bastions arrived at the perfect time for Italy. He produced his treatise on architecture in 1495, during the first years of France's long period of military incursions into Italy.²⁶⁷ This period saw an enormous upswing in interest in fortification technology throughout the peninsula. It was the age of the best-remembered Italian Renaissance engineers, including Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. The competition for patronage drove technological innovation. A glance at Michelangelo's bastion concept sketches is evidence enough that these men imagined designs far-fetched from the medieval tradition, yet grounded enough in reality so as to attract the attention and commissions of magnates.²⁶⁸

The princes who commissioned new forts, mostly Northern Italians, were quickly becoming accustomed to gunpowder warfare and realized the defensive potential of supportive fire. Patrons not only required flanking fire, but also expected aggressive, converging lines of sight far beyond the limits of the walls. Michelangelo's early sketches mix curved and angled walls, but he soon abandoned most curves in favor of diagonal lines.²⁶⁹ Diagonally oriented straight walls allowed for deliberate converging fire on a distant target, whereas a curved design assigns one gun to each radial point outside the

²⁶⁶ Dechert, 169.

²⁶⁷ Hale, "Bastion," 19.

²⁶⁸ Vincent Scully Jr., "Michelangelo's Fortification Drawings: A Study in the Reflex Diagonal," *Perspecta*, 1 (Summer 1952): 41–2.

²⁶⁹ Scully, 43.

fortress. Indeed, it seems that Michelangelo eventually had lost all confidence in curved fortification design. In 1529 he was put in charge of the construction of Florence's new defense system. He immediately proceeded to iron out all the initially planned curved walls, modifying the original design proposed by Machiavelli.²⁷⁰

Michelangelo's developments drove European military architecture towards star fort symmetry. One notices that much of the important innovation in fortification technology originated in Italy.²⁷¹ Indeed, sixteenth century Italian fortresses simply technologically outclassed their Northern European counterparts. Henry VIII, for example, constructed his extensive coastal defense network of "device forts" while Michelangelo was active. Henry fortified his southern coast in two stages beginning in 1539 and 1545, in response to the fluctuating threat of a Catholic military campaign in England. In 1538, Francis I of France and Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire entered into a precarious peace, which Pope Paul III hoped to mold into a Catholic alliance against the newly independent English Church.²⁷² At the start of his construction program, Henry VIII indulged in hiring some expensive Italian engineers, but mainly relied on homegrown English architects and his own mental "devices." Thus, angle bastions were nowhere to be seen. But while these English fortifications lacked the cutting-edge features of their Italian counterparts, their strength lay in their numbers and raw firepower. Indeed, by the end of 1540, twenty-four new fortifications had been finished and garrisoned.²⁷³ Henry's early device forts do not possess angular layouts in any respect. Most are low-lying, with heavily fortified curved gun platforms in

²⁷⁰ Hale, "Bastion," 25–6.

²⁷¹ Hale, "Bastion," 29.

²⁷² J. R. Hale, "Tudor Fortifications: In Defence of the Realm, 1485–1558," in *The History of the King's Works*, ed. H. M. Colvin, vol. IV (Part II), (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1982), 367.

²⁷³ Hale, "Tudor Fortifications," 373.

radial, flower-like orientations.²⁷⁴ Hale, in his work on the coastal edifices, goes as far as to call the fortresses transitional in comparison to their contemporary Italian counterparts.²⁷⁵

Why, then, should Italy have been the incubator for Renaissance defensive architecture? It cannot be that military conflict was unique to Italy, for the crowned heads of Europe had been feuding for as long as anyone could remember. Hale's position states that Italy's particular situation, a small peninsula with many small, constantly changing principalities and pinprick wars, formed a perfect incubator for the development of defensive architecture. Following the first French invasion of 1494, this preexisting process accelerated to match the power of the superior French ordnance.²⁷⁶ So, the advancements in Renaissance military architecture were born of necessity.

Henry VIII constructed his fortifications out of perceived necessity, like the Italian princes. This king, however, lacked the military experience that drove the advancement of fortification technology throughout Italy. During his thirty-eight year reign, Henry only spent several months on military campaigns that tended to be ill-advised and unsuccessful.²⁷⁷ The king's understanding of gunpowder fortification grew between 1539 and 1545, and the chronology of his device forts represents a microcosm of early Renaissance fortification development. The structures of the 1539 program device forts reflect an understanding of gunpowder defense that straddled medieval and Renaissance schemes. The concentric, flower-shaped, rounded designs at Forts Deal, Walmer, Saint Mawes, and Pendennis are conducive to harboring immense firepower, but leave pockets of indefensible ground at the base of each lobed gun platform.²⁷⁸ This layout was typical of early artillery fortifications. Henry and his advisers were certainly accustomed to the rounded design: many existing English river defenses employed circular gun towers, as did continental fortifications such as Normandy's Mont St. Michel and

²⁷⁴ Hale, "Tudor Fortifications," 382; Arnold, 61.

²⁷⁵ Hale, "Tudor Fortifications," 377.

²⁷⁶ Hale, "Bastion," 6.

²⁷⁷ A. F. Pollard, *Henry VIII* (New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1951), 53–4.

²⁷⁸ Hale, "Tudor Fortifications," 377, 383.

the Aragonese-updated Castello Nuovo.²⁷⁹ The reluctance of fortress designers to abandon the rounded tower design in favor of the angle bastion demonstrates the tenacity of medieval castle technology. Round towers afforded castles the advantage of mutual flanking defense and mitigated the potential destructiveness of mining, a siege strategy that sought to bore a tunnel underneath a wall's corner so as to weaken its structural integrity or completely demolish it. Henry and his designers initially saw the rounded layout as a dependable utilitarian design that could easily translate its medieval offensive and defensive advantages to the new challenge of gunpowder warfare.

Henry VIII's 1545 coastal fortification program embodies a sharp shift away from the round designs that characterized the 1539 buildup. During his abbreviated 1543–44 military campaigns in France, the king encountered the powerful, angle bastioned defenses of Francis I. Cutting-edge Italian fortifications had influenced French forts, and later, Italians themselves oversaw their construction.²⁸⁰ This continental experience seems to have encouraged Henry's willingness to experiment with new fortification designs. And experiment he did: the products of his 1545 construction program were as diverse as those of the 1539 program were uniform. Fort Southsea, constructed to secure the Solent and the harbor at Portsmouth, adopted a rectangular design with two triangular bastions projecting inland and seaward. The Isle of Wight's Fort Sandown, only ten miles south of Southsea, presents a vastly divergent layout. The central keep is square and features three different varieties of bastions: semicircle, square, and angular.²⁸¹ The use of these disparate bastions on a single fort reflects the particularly English advancement of fortification design. Henry and his architects did not adopt the Italian design outright and without investigation, as the 1545 building program was a process of experimentation. By the time Henry constructed his final device fort, Yarmouth, the results of his experiment had arrived: the square fortification featured a landward arrow-shaped angle bastion in the

²⁷⁹ Hale, "Tudor Fortifications," 381.

²⁸⁰ Hale, "Tudor Fortifications," 384, 386.

²⁸¹ J. A. Donnelly, "A Study of the Coastal Forts Built by Henry VIII," *FORT* 10 (1982): 118.

Italianate style, allowing for a wide radius of fire, as well as flanking defense from land attack. Yarmouth still left much room for improvement, as the solitary bastion lacked any flanking fire for its own defense.²⁸² Later English fortifications more closely resembled their Italian counterparts. The development of fortification under Henry VIII provides insight into the slow, steady advancement that brought the medieval castle into the age of gunpowder.

Once the bastion form had developed to the point of near-perfection and diffused across Europe, it remained almost the same for centuries. The renowned French defensive expert of the seventeenth century, Vauban, made extensive use of the Renaissance bastion. The architect almost entirely relied on the generations of study that preceded him, coming to the conclusion that bastions were most effective with angles somewhere between seventy-five and ninety degrees.²⁸³ The bulk of his innovation involved rethinking the space on either side of the bastion. Vauban acknowledged the many generations of architects before him, digging large ditches outside his fortress walls. He would take the ditches a step further, though, adding floodgate systems to create temporary water-filled moats.²⁸⁴ In essence, however, Vauban's creations remained true to their mid-sixteenth-century roots.

Even the early borders of the United States of America could not have been secured were it not for the fortification developments of Renaissance Italy. The famous Fort Ticonderoga of upstate New York, built by the French in 1755, retains bastions that would have almost seemed too simple to Michelangelo.²⁸⁵ Boston Harbor's Fort Warren, which is open to the public, retains its five angle bastions. The fortification styles developed in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italy remained current until the advent of the machine gun in the early twentieth century. Amazingly, some Renaissance defensive schemes remain effective today. The sconce, a lesser-known Renaissance

²⁸² Peter Harrington, *The Castles of Henry VIII*, (Botley: Osprey Publishing, 2007), 32.

²⁸³ Paddy Griffith, *The Vauban Fortifications of France* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 23.

²⁸⁴ Griffith, 24.

German emplacement outside the walls of a fortress, was constructed as a small earthen or masonry doughnut, serving essentially the same purpose as a modern pillbox or bunker.

Castles and their successors visually share little in common. The castle majestically stands out from its environment, its walls perpendicular to the ground and its battlements imposingly overhanging its high walls. The Renaissance fortress is a much squatter form. Its sloping walls and jutting bastions are barely discernible against its low, wide, dark silhouette. However different the two defensive measures may appear, though, their builders strove to achieve the same purpose: to defend an enclosed area, as well as the immediate surrounding countryside. Construction programs like Henry VIII's device forts that spanned both space and time demonstrate the reluctance of fortification builders to blindly adopt novel design schemes. Fortress development was not haphazard – it was the result of interplay between careful, calculated modifications and actual military experience. One must hand credit to the Italian designers of fortifications. The Italian focus on classics and liberal arts compelled theorists and architects to revive ancient treatises on fortification that led to the formulation of the angle bastion. Necessity, though, was the commanding force behind the castle's evolution into the Renaissance fortress. Princes and kings sought to maintain their lands, and the rise of gunpowder weaponry rendered much of medieval fortification obsolete. The paradigm of defense never changed, but the means to achieve it transformed completely. The longevity of early sixteenth-century innovations in fortress design stands as confirmation that the leaders, thinkers, and architects of the Renaissance truly achieved a rebirth of fortification.

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Auðun of the West Fjords and the Saga Tradition: Similarities of Theme and Structural Suitability

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This paper evaluates the story of Auðun from the West Fjords, a þáttr dating from the Sturlunga period of medieval Iceland. It compares the short prose narrative to the much longer sagas in terms of their mutual concerns with kings, peace, and the place of Iceland in a larger Christian world, all of which would have been of major topical importance during the probable period of composition. Building on these common themes, a consideration is offered of the stabilizing nature of Auðun on the societies he passes through and how this relates to his identification as a lucky man. It is established that the story is optimistic and even quixotic. The þáttr, therefore, with its highly patterned, happily ended and usually amusing nature, combined with its brief and enclosed structure is the perfect form to carry such a story, in contrast to the longer, more diffuse sagas.

The tale of Auðun from the West Fjords is a *þáttr*, or short prose tale, about an Icelander's journey to Denmark to give a bear to the king, after which he goes on a pilgrimage to Rome and subsequently returns to his home country. The major features of the text are four encounters with two kings, during which Auðun conducts himself with utter aplomb and imperturbability. The themes of the text are surprisingly similar to those of the sagas, given the vast differences between the two forms. Concerning kings, for example, the distinct genres share a well-founded ambivalence. Tied up with the theme of kings is an interest in travel and a common project to integrate Iceland into a larger world-history, in an attempt to establish the equality of the younger nation. The text also has a preoccupation with peace and justice, a reflection of the social concerns of the Age of the Sturlungs, when the tale is likely to have been written down, possibly more so than the concerns of the period it depicts. However, a desire for balance and mutual contentment is reflected in the choice of *þáttr* as a form. This is a concern shared by many of the sagas, but hardly emphasized as neatly by their sprawling structures. Many of these themes are brought together in one of the most insistent assertions of the text. Auðun's

luck and the form which it takes is vital to an understanding of the idealism of this text, which, without being didactic, is almost utopian in the worldview it portrays. It is this worldview that ultimately divides it from saga tradition.

The most notable recurring feature of the text is Auðun's meeting with the two kings, Sveinn of Denmark and Harald of Norway. The attitude of thirteenth-century Icelanders to kings has been much discussed and is difficult to pin down. Certainly, as early as Ari Thorgilsson and *Íslendingabók*, kings have featured heavily in Icelandic literature. There is even a suggestion within that text that Ari was a class of royal biographer.²⁸⁶ On the other hand, in the same text, the lawspeaker at the Althing advises his fellow Icelanders not to bicker like kings, but to adhere to peace instead.²⁸⁷ What emerges from this very early text is something of an ambivalent attitude towards kings which can only have grown more confused as relations between Norway and Iceland advanced. The dating of this story is tricky because its earliest extant version appears in *Morkinskinna*, a manuscript which dates roughly from the end of the thirteenth century.²⁸⁸ This manuscript is not, however, believed to represent the original text, which is thought to have come from the first thirty years of that century.²⁸⁹ To complicate matters further, the general assumption has been that some of the *þættir* of the text are interpolations from some point between these two dates, giving us a date range for the story's composition of somewhere between, roughly speaking, 1220 and 1275.²⁹⁰ However, there is reason to suggest that Icelanders maintained a suspicion of kings for this entire period. As early as 1218–20, according to Diana Whaley, Snorri Sturlusson was involved in a planned attempt to subjugate Iceland orchestrated by the king of

²⁸⁶ Ármann Jakobsson, "The Amplified Saga: Structural Disunity in *Morkinskinna*," *Media Aevum* 70, no. 1 (2001), 389; accessed 20 March 2013, <http://rptcd.catalogue.tcd.ie/ebsco-web/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=fd82fd-fd-a51d-4a55-8c4b-8551faf188f8%40sessionmgr14&vid=2&hid=17>.

²⁸⁷ Siân Grønlie, *The Book of the Icelanders: The Story of the Conversion in Viking Society Web Publications* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2006), 9; accessed 24 January 2012, <http://www.vsnrweb-publications.org.uk/Text%20Series/IsIKr.pdf>.

²⁸⁸ Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade, (trans.), *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings, 1030–1157* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 2000), 5.

²⁸⁹ Andersson and Gade, 6.

²⁹⁰ Andersson and Gade, 13.

Norway.²⁹¹ In 1262 Iceland finally came within the sphere of Norwegian rule.²⁹² Therefore, for the entire probable period of composition for this text, Icelanders had excellent reason to be highly suspicious of kings generally, and particularly Norwegian ones. This attitude is reflected in *Egil's Saga*, for example, when King Harald attacks Þorolf who, as the reader knows, has never been disloyal to him.²⁹³ Yet this *þáttr* treats kings with a remarkably positive attitude. Perhaps the most striking instance of this is when Harald allows Auðun to continue his journey,²⁹⁴ but this instance is by no means the only example. Auðun is also defended by Sveinn from the unscrupulous Aki,²⁹⁵ given money for a pilgrimage,²⁹⁶ and honored and given riches beyond his wildest dreams.²⁹⁷ The polar bear, which is heavily over-identified, in many ways exemplifies this attitude to kings. Given its centrality to the story, it clearly holds a fascination and also represents all the potential for wealth and honor that Auðun could ever need. On the other hand, it is still a bear and inherently dangerous. Furthermore, it demands loyalty and, if it starves, Auðun is expected to starve with it:

*Ok máttu á þat líta, at dýrit mun deyja fyrir þér, þars it þurfuð vistir
miklar, en fé sé farit, ok er búit við at þú hafir þá ekki dýrsins.*²⁹⁸

Here, the unscrupulous character Aki implicitly offers Auðun a deal. Unless it is accepted, he implies, his bear will die, taking with it Auðun's source of potential wealth. In good saga tradition, as

²⁹¹ Diana Whaley, "A Useful Past: Historical Writing in Medieval Iceland," in *Old Icelandic Literature and Society*, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 181.

²⁹² Helgi Þorláksson, "Historical Background: Iceland 870–1400," in *A Companion to Old Norse Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 136.

²⁹³ Bernard Scudder, trans., "Egil's Saga," in *The Sagas of the Icelanders*, ed. Örnólfur Thorsson (New York: Penguin, 2001), Ch. 22.

²⁹⁴ "Þáttr Auðunar Vestfirzka," in E. V. Gordon, ed., *An Introduction to Old Norse, 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 130.

²⁹⁵ Gordon, 131.

²⁹⁶ Gordon, 132.

²⁹⁷ Gordon, 133–4.

²⁹⁸ Gordon, 131. And you must then acknowledge that, that the animal must die before you, since it needs a lot of food, unless you get money, and then the situation will be that you have no animal. (All translations from Gordon's text are my own).

shown by the final chapter of the saga of King Hrolf Kraki for example,²⁹⁹ he will eventually die with the fallen provider.

However, it seems inaccurate to claim, as Jakobsson has, that this is a story which simply allows for the greater elucidation of the kingly qualities of Sveinn and Harald.³⁰⁰ It is true that this text is embedded in *Morkinskinna* which would imply a dominating theme of royalty, but it is also a story in its own right and deserves to be treated as such. As Rowe and Harris state, its occurrence in other manuscripts indicates a certain amount of independence.³⁰¹ Harald and Sveinn are not purely literal, but also represent the compass of Auðun's journey which is important in itself. There are several verses in *Hamavál* which show that a journey is a way of acquiring wisdom and hence respect.

A man must go to many places
travel widely in the world,
before he is wise enough to see the workings
of other man's minds.³⁰²

Furthermore, travel, combined with a visit to a king's court, is an excellent way of earning honor, as Judith Jesch notes.³⁰³ Auðun's journey has even created a story which will guarantee his immortality for generations to come. It is not, as Jakobsson claims, Auðun who acts as typical Icelander in a story about kings,³⁰⁴ but Harald and Sveinn who act as typical kings in a story about an Icelander. They are simply channels for the honor and riches that travels tend to bring in any case. Auðun's travels to various courts and thence to Rome also establish the primacy of Iceland in the tale, considering that it is there he chooses to remain having seen the best of Norway, Denmark and Rome. This is a common

²⁹⁹ Gwyn Jones, trans., *Eirik the Red and Other Icelandic Sagas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 307–18.

³⁰⁰ Ármann Jakobsson, "Royal Biography," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 40.

³⁰¹ Elizabeth Ashman Rowe and Joseph Harris, "Short Prose Narrative (þátr)," in *A Companion to Old Norse Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 467.

³⁰² Patricia Terry, trans., *Poems of the Vikings* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1969), 15.

³⁰³ Judith Jesch, "Geography and Travel," in *A Companion to Old Norse Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 120.

³⁰⁴ Jakobsson, "Royal Biography," 33.

theme for *þættir*³⁰⁵ and reflects the impulse of peripheral Iceland to establish itself among more central powers, a particularly strong motivation after the introduction of Christianity.³⁰⁶ This impulse, as Sørensen points out, is one of the functions that textualization fulfills in an Icelandic context,³⁰⁷ including the sagas. Literally at the center of the tale, we have the journey to and return from Rome, as Miller notes,³⁰⁸ but radiating outward from this central journey are the encounters with Sveinn, the encounters with Harald, and finally, on the peripheries, Iceland. It is Iceland which encloses and frames the entire narrative. Indeed, Auðun arrives in the central part of the story, Norway and Denmark, with a white bear. This wild traveling companion, as Miller states, is the single greatest signifier of the periphery.³⁰⁹ However, the Icelander arrives back home bearing all the marks of the center: a boat, silver, and possibly a bald head as a souvenir of his trip to Rome as a pilgrim. Yet all of these things are still contingent on the bear and never would have become associated with Auðun without it. It lurks behind the symbolism of centrality, a constant reminder of the edge. Similarly, Auðun leaves the physical bear in Denmark, never to be seen again, yet a constant reminder of the ability of the peripheral to survive and even thrive in the center. Each is thoroughly integrated into the other and thus the text closes the gap between here and there. Indeed, even narrating the events of the lives of foreign kings claims them for Iceland, interpolating them into a storytelling tradition that probably formed a part of the national identity.³¹⁰

One of the other characteristics which define the Age of the Sturlungs, which roughly covers the range of possible dates of composition for this text, is conflict.³¹¹ A concentration of power in the hands

³⁰⁵ William Ian Miller, *Audun and the Polar Bear: Luck, Law and Largess in a Medieval Tale of Risky Business* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 20.

³⁰⁶ P. H. Sawyer, *Kings and Vikings: Scandinavia and Europe* (London: Methuen, 1982), 11.

³⁰⁷ Meulengracht Sørensen, "Social Institutions and Belief Systems in Medieval Iceland (c. 870–1400) and their Relationship to Literary Production)," Margaret Clunies Ross, trans., in *Old-Icelandic Literature and Society*, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000), 14.

³⁰⁸ Miller, 50.

³⁰⁹ Miller, 145.

³¹⁰ Sørensen, 11.

³¹¹ Þorláksson, 149.

of just a few *goðar*, or local magnates, over the course of the twelfth century contributed to the outbreak of war around the year 1235, which ended in Iceland coming under the power of the king of Norway.³¹² As Helgi Þorláksson notes, the treaty that ended Iceland's independence contains the word "peace" no less than four times.³¹³ This impulse toward peace is extremely clear in *Auðun*, where everyone is generous and clement. The malefactor Aki is ejected from the tale, but even this expulsion is managed in a merciful manner, as he is outlawed when he might have been executed:

*Ok þat væri makligt, at þú værir drepinn; en ek mun nú eigi þat gøra, en
braut skaltu fara þegar ór landinu, ok koma aldri aptr síðan mér í
auglýn.³¹⁴*

The pacifism of the text is even more striking as, as Harald points out,³¹⁵ there is actually a protracted war going on between Norway and Denmark at the time that it is set. Miller notes that though the *þáttr* has a happy ending, hostilities are far from being ceased between Sveinn and Harald at this point in the wider narrative.³¹⁶ Yet, as Miller goes on to argue, the two kings seem to be using *Auðun* to conduct an elaborate gift giving competition between them which acts as a non-violent version of war.³¹⁷ Jakobsson suggests that this *þáttr* is a precursor of the eventual peace between the kings.³¹⁸ This event may indeed foreshadow peace, as is the case in the family sagas according to Þorláksson, because the thirteenth-century author is looking back from his own position in a war-torn Iceland to a fictionalized past where people had restraint.³¹⁹ As Ólason notes, the troubles of the

³¹² Þorláksson, 148.

³¹³ Þorláksson, 150.

³¹⁴ Gordon, 131. And it would be fitting that you were killed; but I shall not do that now, but you must at once go quickly out of the land, and come never again into my sight.

³¹⁵ Gordon, 130.

³¹⁶ Miller, 67.

³¹⁷ Miller, 64.

³¹⁸ Jakobsson, "Royal Biography," 32.

³¹⁹ Þorláksson, 150.

thirteenth century probably encouraged textual nostalgia for a perceived age of social stability.³²⁰ This nostalgia would also explain the interest in justice as is evident in the text's two explicit references to fairness.³²¹ Many episodes in the sagas demonstrate this impulse towards peace and balance. In general terms the gory feuds, which fuel the sagas through the constant endangerment of honor and social standing, are focused on a return to the state of balance which preceded them.³²² The constant give and take of violence is, in a very literal sense, about getting even.

Yet despite the concerns the sagas share with this text, the *þáttr* is clearly the more appropriate form for the story. A *þáttr* has an opportunity for unity that is not open to the sagas, where the sheer multiplicity of characters makes it impossible for every single one to get exactly what they deserve, and difficult for the reader to keep track of them even if they did. Furthermore, the *þáttr* traditionally has a happy ending,³²³ whereas the ending of a saga, happy or not, is necessarily bound up with all of the adventures and misadventures which preceded it. This happy ending implies a finite pattern which legitimizes the ideology of the text by vindicating it. The short tale is, overall, highly patterned. The symmetry of the narrative structure creates a circle which legitimizes itself by its own perfection. Far more than is the case in the sagas, *þættir* tend to be characterized by a concentration of hilarity. It is always difficult to tell where humor lies in a society to which one is not native, but certain elements of Auðun do seem to be intentionally funny or else the story becomes, at moments, uncomfortably grim or even dull. Sveinn's masterful use of understatement when Auðun decides to go home is potentially hilarious in light of the fact that Auðun has just rejected the offer to stay with him permanently:

*Þetta sýnsk mér undarlíga kosit.*³²⁴

³²⁰ Véstienn Ólason, "Family Sagas," in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 11.

³²¹ Gordon, 130, 131.

³²² Ólason, 102.

³²³ Miller, 2.

³²⁴ Gordon, 133. That seems to me an odd decision.

It is amusing to visualize the expression of Harald as Auðun refuses to hand over his treasured bear or that on the faces of the retainers when Sveinn admonishes them for laughing at the unfortunate Icelander. Miller suggests that Harald's one-upmanship in the gifts he proposes he would have given to Auðun in exchange for the bear could be read as humorous, depending on whether the reader thinks he is sincere.³²⁵ Laughter is an excellent way of uniting a group and levelling out social distinctions, which is clearly important if, as Sørensen suggests, Icelandic audiences of his period were heterogeneous.³²⁶ After all, everyone can enjoy a good joke. Furthermore, Auðun's circular journey insists on leaving everything in its proper place. The greatest of treasures, the bear, is with the most generous of kings, Sveinn. The ring is with a noble man to whom Auðun owed a favour, Harald. The marks of honor are with the honest man, Auðun, and Auðun himself is back with his mother in Iceland.

In a text which is so concerned with everything being in its rightful place and minimizing conflict, it is remarkable that Auðun is allowed to wander around being generally objectionable in the company of kings. After all, he is not a *skald*, or court poet. Neither is he a warrior. He has no apparent talent which would mark him as a useful man for a king to have around. The simple reason for this is made explicit by the text itself: Auðun is a *gæfumaðr*, or a "lucky man."³²⁷ Miller points out the obvious objection to this classification: that is, that Auðun is three times very close to dying, twice in extreme discomfort.³²⁸ It might also be noted that although the profits of Auðun's voyage are huge, he does have to work extremely hard to get them. It is no easy task to move a polar bear from Norway to Denmark via King Harald's court. The key to this may lie in the different conceptions of the phenomenon of good fortune held by modern and contemporary readers. Whereas luck to us signifies an external force, capricious and changeable, luck to an Old Norse audience appears to have been, as Sommer suggests,

³²⁵ Miller, 62.

³²⁶ Sørensen, 26.

³²⁷ Gordon, 135.

³²⁸ Miller, 76.

an inherent character trait.³²⁹ Furthermore, as Grönbech has argued, people seem to have had various kinds of luck for specific circumstances.³³⁰ From whence Auðun's luck derives is yet another question that begs an answer, and it is related both to the text's obsession with kings and its preoccupation with balance. Grönbech argues that the luck of kings is particularly strong and can even be transferred to others if the need should arise.³³¹ The way Miller reads the text, Harald is an embodiment of Auðun's luck,³³² and it is true that Sveinn wishes him luck on his travels,³³³ which, according to Grönbech, implies that a little bit of the king's good fortune has been transferred to the Icelander.³³⁴ At his first meeting with Auðun, Harald simply observes as Auðun is leaving that he might turn out to be fortunate:

*Ok kann þat vera, at þú sér gæfumaðr.*³³⁵

This might be a prediction, a blessing or both. It is only at the very end of the *þáttr* that we get confirmation that Auðun is known to have been a lucky man. It seems likely that the luck of the kings does rub off on Auðun. It is undeniably because of them that he survives his trip and returns laden with riches. Yet Auðun had to be quite lucky to receive luck from the kings in the first place. If Harald's final comment on Auðun's luck is a prediction, carrying with it a sense of blessing, then some form of fortune must have saved him from the king's wrath before Harald lent him his.

Auðun's luck, on closer inspection, is an aspect of his character and also pertains to a specific realm. It is a species of tact. This conception of luck occurs in several family sagas where characters' fates depend on having or lacking it. In *Njal's Saga*, for example, Skarphedinn wanders from booth to booth at

³²⁹ Bettina Sebjerg Sommer, "The Old Norse Concept of Luck," *Scandinavian Studies* 79, no. 3 (Fall 2007), 275; accessed 23 March 2012, <http://web.ebscohost.com.elib.tcd.ie/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&hid=18&sid=e590032e-b583-44c4-af7d-2ca972f34da7%40sessionmgr15> [accessed 23/03/12], 275.

³³⁰ Vilhelm Grönbech, *The Culture of the Teutons*, vol. 1, trans. W. Worster (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), 127.

³³¹ Grönbech, 133.

³³² Miller, 76.

³³³ Gordon, 134.

³³⁴ Grönbech, 147.

³³⁵ Gordon, 130. And it could be that you should be a lucky man.

the thing insulting people,³³⁶ which results in disastrous isolation for him and his family. An even more extreme lack of tact is evident in *Grettir's Saga* when Grettir bursts into a hut, terrifying and indirectly killing its inhabitants.³³⁷ In *Egil's Saga*, Arinbjorn mentions that “fortune alone will determine what comes of this,” but the fortune turns out to be his own personal diplomacy. It is he who soothes King Eirik and tells Egil to write the *drappa*,³³⁸ or complimentary poem, for that irascible monarch. Skarphedinn, Sommer proposes, has bad luck because he killed his foster-brother Hoskuld,³³⁹ but in any case his people skills are appalling. Grettir has bad luck because he is cursed, but his troll-like manners means he is even less able to win people’s affection than Skarphedinn. Arinbjorn, on the other hand, is lucky. This is partly doubtless because of his loyalty to King Eirik, which he is careful to point out.³⁴⁰ Indubitably, there is something in Grönbech’s theory that luck and honor are identical;³⁴¹ certainly they are bound up with each other. Yet there is a subtler edge to the Icelandic definition of luck of this sort. After all, Grettir is not dishonorable. He only goes to the hut to get fire and he gets his curse fighting a pagan *draugr*, or zombie.³⁴² Arinbjorn lies quite merrily to Eirik, explaining that Egil had come all the way to England in search of forgiveness.³⁴³ The trick is that he flatters the king, saying no one could bear his wrath, even if they were nowhere near him,³⁴⁴ and also pressures him not to allow the queen to dictate his actions.³⁴⁵ In this light, it can be seen that Auðun’s luck is a self-fulfilling prophecy. He is good with people, which is a form of luck, so people help him, which is another form. In this way the bonds of honor and kinship that Grönbech stresses are perpetuated and the structure of society is strengthened. Though Auðun appears to be wandering around threatening to spread chaos, he really acts as an

³³⁶ Sir George W. DaSent, *The Story of Burnt Njal* (London: J.M. Dent, 1957), Ch. 118.

³³⁷ Jesse Byock, trans., *Grettir's Saga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 109–10.

³³⁸ Bernard Scudder, trans., “Egil’s Saga,” in *The Sagas of the Icelanders*, ed. Örnólfur Thorsson (New York: Penguin, 2001), 112.

³³⁹ Sommer, 288.

³⁴⁰ Scudder, 114.

³⁴¹ Grönbech, 153.

³⁴² Byock, 102.

³⁴³ Scudder, 111.

³⁴⁴ Scudder, 111.

³⁴⁵ Scudder, 112.

enabler for all of the things which make society strong while also maintaining his freedom. This story, then, represents a utopian model of society in which people are good to each other, and that goodness results in peace and mutual prosperity.

Auðun's *þáttr* shares many of the preoccupations which the sagas exhibit. There is a general concern about, and simultaneous fascination with, kings. There is also an impulse to travel and thus win wisdom and fame, the latter also, possibly through contact with royalty. There is an impulse to return to an idealized past where, though in the sagas it seems very brutal, recognizable rules applied and were kept to. However, where sagas spin outward in an ever-expanding narrative, the *Morkinskinna* text of Auðun is short and highly patterned, giving a sense of structure and order. It is also consistently amusing in a way which sagas cannot be, thus promising a momentary homogeneity of audience, even if that audience is a mix of classes or backgrounds. The happy ending rounds the tale off with a naturalization of the events portrayed, implying an acceptance of them. Several of these aspects are drawn together in the idea of Auðun's luck which follows him through the text pruning and strengthening society through simply treating people as they want to be treated. On the whole, this text is as quixotic and charming as Auðun himself, reflecting many of the concerns of the sagas, but in an optimistic, even idealistic manner, reflected by the particular form.

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