

## Lauding the Locality: Urban Architecture in Medieval Sieneese Painting

by Robert Galantucci

*In no other painting tradition do we find architecture represented with such a tender intimacy, figures juxtaposed against the deep space of street or interior with such a freshness of compositional invention.<sup>1</sup>*

In the twelfth century, Siena was no longer part of the Etruscan or Roman empires; it had gained its independence as an autonomous city-state. With fierce competition from its powerful neighbor Florence and its anti-imperial rivals, the Guelfs, Siena was faced with political and economic warfare from its very creation as a self-governing territory. As a result of this external pressure, the city developed an intense patriotism. This civic sentiment can be seen in the city's architectural presentation, as well as in the depictions thereof, which remained key subject matter in Sieneese art for the rest of the city's history.

Beginning with Guido da Siena's *Cruxifixion*, which featured Siena-inspired architecture, urban cityscapes became a consistent subject of medieval Sieneese painting. This new concern among the arts is described by author Judith Hook as an exploration of "the way in which man inhabits the buildings he constructs... [and] in the actual building process by which the urban environment was created."<sup>2</sup> As seen in the work of Duccio, followed by Simone Martini, and culminating with Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Allegories of the Good and Bad Government*, architectural forms and depictions of the commune itself were shown in Siena's art as a vehicle to exalt the city. Looking into the backdrops of medieval art compositions, it becomes obvious that portraying the commune was an opportunity artists seized to portray their communities and their participation in public life. While Siena's art was still far from the naturalism that came to be in the Renaissance revival of aesthetic tastes from antiquity, a new emphasis on being accurate to reality was evident.<sup>3</sup> This development was manifested in a 'social realism' wherein the artists were unwilling to separate their livelihoods from the art they produced. Painters, sculptors, and architects alike were part of the guild systems and the commune; the relationship between an artist and Siena was one through which he or she was willing to articulate the ideals and aspirations of his city, since almost every aspect of life was intimately bound with the collective life of the city around him.<sup>4</sup> Unlike in the fifteenth century when artists were seen as individualists, thirteenth and fourteenth century painters were active citizens with civic responsibilities and allegiances. The patriotic

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<sup>1</sup> Hayden B.J. Maginnis, *The World of the Early Sieneese Painter* (University Park Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Hook, *Siena, A City and Its History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 119.

<sup>3</sup> The Byzantine tradition in Italian art made no attempt to depict the earthly world. Because the subject matter was usually religious and the characters divinities, the trend was often to illustrate these scenes in fantastic settings, as opposed to the Renaissance's return to science and reason, thus more rational settings. (for example, cities and farms, not heavenly or imagined, golden backgrounds).

<sup>4</sup> Hook, 101.

attitude present in medieval Siena encouraged illustrations of urban settings with details attributable to Siena and the way of life in the city. Communal values, and in turn the physical community itself, was so much a part of Siennese culture that its aesthetic representation was inevitable. At the advent of Renaissance, establishing an accurate and rational setting within an artwork was already a predominant trend; however this phenomenon manifested itself in an especially intimate way in the art of pre-fifteenth century Siena. As nationalistic sentiment in the medieval age dramatically increased, painters in Siena began to put more emphasis on the subject matter that appealed most to the both the people and the patrons – the city itself.

Painters in Siena were artisans whose salaries greatly varied, from the wealthy Ambrogio Lorenzetti to the poor and relatively unknown Guido Cini. In a community that was willing to put so much emphasis on appearance and decoration, painters were in high demand for both private and civic commissions. Also, on account of Siena's ruling body, the Counsel of the Nine, and their apparent obsession with urban renewal and urban aesthetics, physical location became a key element in future painting. In this modernizing medieval period, wherein the city prospered greatly, the painting guild became an economic force just as its blacksmith, merchant and assorted guild counterparts did. As art historian Hayden Maginnis observes:

...the wealth of Siena had been created by joint ventures, and as the organization of everything from government to confraternities to pious bequests expressed the conviction that collective effort was of greatest efficacy, so painters understood the benefits of alliance.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the strong presence of the guild systems, nationalism was also present in the visual art employment statutes of the city. Artists from abroad were required to pay a fee in advance if they operated in Siena, and local artists were discouraged from seeking foreign assistants.<sup>6</sup> Providing jobs for its own citizenry, and allowing Siena's art to remain entirely Siennese—in subject matter, patron, and artist—were two goals that the medieval government held paramount. Also contributing to the close relationship within the city-state's labor organizations, the various professionals, including the painters, generally resided in one geographical location. It is in this context that the so called 'schools' of painting were to develop. Siena's artists were not only partners in guilds – they were also members of the same *contradas* (street divisions). Essentially, they were neighbors.

Duccio di Buoninsegna, as the city's foremost painter, acclaimed as the father of the Siennese school of post-Byzantine painting, was given what is arguably the most

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<sup>5</sup> Maginnis, 91.

<sup>6</sup> Maginnis, 85.

significant civic commission for a painting in the commune's name, the *Maesta* (Fig 1).<sup>7</sup> Art before this point in Siena's history was concerned above all with the sacred relationship between God and Man and its associated iconography. Duccio's representation of the Virgin brought a new secondary focus into mainstream painting, the role of Mary as 'protector' of the city. The religious content of art, and the impact that it was forever to have on the city's aesthetics, cannot by any means be overlooked; conversely, the new nationalistic mindset insisted that religion could serve the commune. As scholar Frederick Seymour wrote:

The conception of the mission of Art, hitherto limited to one purely religious...seems widening to open a fresh chapter, to be concerning herself with the moral character of man, with his development in this mortal sphere[his daily life].<sup>8</sup>

Hook notes that separation between church and state was a foreign idea in the Middle Ages, writing, "the lines between the sacred and the secular were blurred or nonexistent," and this close relationship between religion and government was evident in civic art.<sup>9</sup> Moving toward these ends, Duccio treated civilization itself as a vital subject, worthy of the same focus that spirituality also held in art.

**Figure 1**



<sup>7</sup> Enzo Carli, *Sieneese Painting* (New York: Scala Books, 1983), 10-1.

<sup>8</sup> Frederick Seymour, *Siena and Her Artists* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), 130.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce Cole, *Sieneese Painting From Its Origins to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers Inc., 1980), 43.

The communal values and duties of the Sieneese were fully applicable to the artists; for instance, the city Council of the Nine instructed Duccio di Buoninsegna to locate water and then place wells in the most applicable locations.<sup>10</sup> Even Siena's most reputable and in-demand painter was not exempt from his commitment to the commune. One duty, the one to his city, logically influenced his other obligations as a painter, thus Duccio's apparent initiative in including Sieneese characteristics in his compositions. One cannot deny the distinctive presence of his city in both his everyday life and in his paintings. *The Maesta*, a commissioned work and an excellent example of the Civic Christianity<sup>11</sup> that was so popular in Siena, serves as a constant reminder that Siena was a city of the Virgin and as such, sacred and secular matters often overlapped. After all, the citizenry insisted that it was the strength of both the commune and the Virgin that had allowed Siena to overcome Florence in the battle of Montaperti.<sup>12</sup> In *The Temptation* panel of the painting (Fig 2), Christ is being lured by Satan to control all kingdoms of the world. In Duccio's depiction, one sees several rather generic hilltop cities, but under closer scrutiny a reference to Siena is observable. Historian Timothy Hyman asserts:

The dark brick roads leading in under the city gates are painted in transparent burnt sienna – a pigment refined from the reddish clay out of which the city itself is built... [it] also provided the graded pinks of the roof tiles.<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 2**



In this instance, the artist had no choice but to indicate his city's appearance, for he was using a natural pigment that was exclusive to his location. Nevertheless, elsewhere on

<sup>10</sup> Hook, 27, 103.

<sup>11</sup> So-called 'Civic Christianity' is a term used to define the relationship between religion and the state in Siena; the dichotomy between the two is a result of the Siena's firmly religious nature as well as its sympathies to the empire.

<sup>12</sup> John White, *Duccio: Tuscan Art and the Medieval Workshop* (Great Britain: Thames and Hudson, 1979), 95.

<sup>13</sup> Timothy Hyman, *Sieneese Painting The Art of a City Republic* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2003), 9.

the *Maesta*, Siena, without a doubt, is manifested in the painting intentionally. For example, the panels *Entry into Jerusalem* (Fig 3) and *Healing of the Blind Man* (Fig 4) both exhibit characteristics of Sienese architecture such as open and closed balconies with wooden supports; in Curt Weigelt's words, Duccio enriched his paintings "with a keen perception of his surroundings, even in small details, while in the superimposed architectural settings we find a striking reminder of the stages of the Mysteries."<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Duccio was the same citizen who was fined for not appearing at a mandatory summoning of military forces and obstructing streets and disturbing the peace, but that did not hinder his paying tribute to the commune in his art.<sup>15</sup>

**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**



In spite of the acclaim Duccio received both in the medieval age and in the modern era, his life was not one of excessive luxury or leisure. Unlike the treatment that Renaissance painters were to receive years later, Siena's artists under The Nine were laborers. Social mobility was a possibility, and artists ranged from self-taught wall painters to masters who were fortunate enough to own a shop and have pupils working for them. The aesthetic concerns of the commune did undergo drastic changes, and in response the appreciation for the artist also increased.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps another professional, one that could be more easily replaced, would not have fared so well when facing scrutiny for failing to perform his civic duty. In that regard the city's best artists were

<sup>14</sup> Curt Weigelt, *Sienese Painting of the Trecento* (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 13.

<sup>15</sup> Maginnis, 60.

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the City Counsel's general emphasis on aesthetics see Hook's *Siena*. For specific legislations requiring citizens to comply with certain visual elements in architectural structures see Duccio Balestracci and Gabriella Piccinni, *Siena Nel Trecento: Assetto urbano e strutture edilizie*, edizioni clusf (Florence, It: Cooperativa Libreria Universitatis Studii Florentini) and W. M. Bowsky, *The Finance of the Commune of Siena 1287-1355* (Oxford:1970), 20.

avored. But the city did come first, and with that in mind the administration certainly was not going to hinder the most talented artisans from creating an artwork by which the commune could gain much fame. This ‘Common Good’ could not be escaped in any aspect of civic life, and even Duccio’s rebellious spirit and distant travels could not cleave him from his Siennese roots. Artists lived among the other workers, and painters often lived in the immediate vicinity of other painters.<sup>17</sup> Because of the strong communal sentiment, Siennese painting, even sacred subject matter such as the *Maesta*, is not void of Siena’s civic presence. The painters, their guild affiliates, and more generally the other citizens, had one goal: to produce acknowledgement of their city’s greatness. As historian Lodovico Zdekauer writes, they “lived to earn their living; they lived for their trades, for their children, and above all, for their country.”<sup>18</sup>

Duccio is often lauded for his accurate portrayal of urban settings. However, while his work certainly contains elements consistent with the appearance of medieval Siena, it is also fair to say that he was not purely realistic. Where Duccio allowed local factors to influence his work, he was not making a concerted effort to reproduce the specific scenery of his surroundings.<sup>19</sup> The first Siennese painter actually to visit, on multiple occasions, the places he was commissioned to paint, was Simone Martini.<sup>20</sup> Art historian Cecilia Jannella explains that Simone’s process enabled him to be “very accurate in his depictions of town scenes and details: arcades, mullioned windows and rooftops (and also the interior of a house) [all] offer us a very realistic picture of 14<sup>th</sup>-century Siena.”<sup>21</sup> Martini’s role in Siennese civic life is significant to his production of works depicting diverse social classes. He held the position loosely defined as “official painter of the city”, and he continued to be commissioned by the commune to depict subject territories.<sup>22</sup> Simone’s work on the Northeast wall in the Sala del Mappamondo of the Palazzo Pubblico (Fig 5) is a testament to his ability to record feats of the administration’s foreign policy. These secular commissions were executed for 38 lire and 8 soldi—quite low compared to other remunerations of the time.<sup>23</sup> It is probably fair to assume that the administration itself deemed what the appropriate payment would be. A wealthy and established artist, Martini would have accepted the commission simply for yet another opportunity to engage in high-visibility civic work.

As an important member of the art world, both in Siena and abroad, Simone Martini was able, effectively and confidently, to combine the French Gothic style with his local architectural conventions. The *Altarpiece of Blessed Agostino Novello* (Fig 6), which was done after he returned to Siena, appeals to a sense of community and religious fervor. The architecture, as Frederick Hart writes, “wood-grain balconies, nail studded doors, and views into staircase halls recapture the Siena of Simone’s day.”<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the scene illustrates a real democratizing ingredient to his art. The upper left panel, *A Child Attacked by a Wolf* (Fig 7), includes a background view of the city from outside the crenellated walls. Included are assorted styles of architecture in a compact version of a

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<sup>17</sup> Maginnis, 193.

<sup>18</sup> Lodovico Zdekauer, *The Life of Old Siena* (Siena: Tipografia Sociale, 1914), 9.

<sup>19</sup> Hyman, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Cecilia Jannella, *Simone Martini* (Italy: Scala/Riverside, 1989), 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Maginnis 14, 124-9.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Frederick Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc., 1987), 100-1.

Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



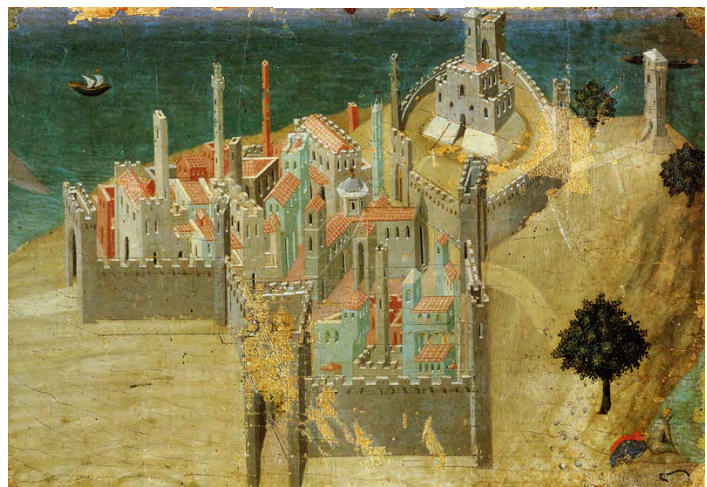
city which in many ways is reminiscent of Siena. The setting of the scene immediately beneath it is where Simone's willingness to depict his commune without an upper-class bias becomes evident. The saint is not in a courtly bourgeois setting; he is on the streets with the company of typical and modest citizens. Even as one of Siena's most affluent artists, Simone did not lose sight of the importance of all classes within society, and it is this nationalism that he exhibits in this painting. He allows the city itself to be a co-protagonist in the good deeds of a religious man.<sup>25</sup>

Further interest in urban realities can be observed in several small commissions done by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. These works were not as politically or socially motivated as his more celebrated works done in the Palazzo Pubblico, however they show his desire to delve into recreating the world in which he lived. The *St. Nicholas Predellas* (Fig 8) are splendid examples of the artist emphasizing the interaction between humans and their milieu. While perspective had not yet become precise and realistic, the settings are convincing enough to make the viewer feel as though he or she were inside the rooms with the figures. Moreover, the houses do not seem simply to be sliced open; they are increasingly naturalistic. Observing all of the panels at once, one can see that the architecturally-framed compositions are what allow the different narratives to remain cohesive despite various settings.<sup>26</sup> On a more macro scale, Lorenzetti also depicted cities from a birds eye view to capture how entire communities interact with their environments. Enzo Carli argues that *Seascape* and *City by the Sea* (Fig 9) are either records of Sienese territory holds that may be part of a larger image or adornments for a coffer; most importantly, these two images are thought to be Western art's first isolated examples of landscape painting.<sup>27</sup>

**Figure 8**



**Figure 9**



<sup>25</sup> Jannella, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce Cole, *Sienese Painting From its Origins to the Fifteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1980), 148-50.

<sup>27</sup> Carli, 46.



Nowhere in Siena's art was the commune more exalted than in Lorenzetti's frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico. The everyday occurrences of the city were depicted by order of the Nine, and they are known as the *Well-Governed City* and the *Ill-Governed City Frescoes* [detail] (10/11 respectively), appearing in the very chamber where the administration met. According to the city as Lorenzetti depicts it, when a government is effective, the citizenry is employed and active, and patrons and architects are no exception. In the Bad Government section, buildings are crumbling and the city is a trap. The city's walls, usually devices to protect the citizens from external threats are now no longer effective, stealing is taking place inside the city, and all of the extensive efforts The Nine had made to beautify the city are deteriorating.

**Figure 10**



**Figure 11**



*The Fresco of The Good Government* immediately draws attention to the degree to which Lorenzetti was able to epitomize the appearance of medieval Siena. As Frederick Seymour writes, “were Ambrogio to return to his Siena again, he would have no difficulty in finding his way about her streets.”<sup>28</sup> Most artists who incorporated cityscapes into their work were attentive enough to observe simple structural facts and color hues common to Siena, but Lorenzetti’s detail achieved an unprecedented precision. Even the most subtle of architectural features are depicted truthfully. The accuracy of the balconies, porches, and upper-storey additions to the houses’ brick facades can all be confirmed by parallels to the study of Sienese architecture by Duccio Balestracci and Gabriella Piccinni.<sup>29</sup> The wooden *sporti*, the materials, and even the growing favor of round arch supports are clearly documented.<sup>30</sup> Typical concerns with building can also be observed; for example, the city strictly limited the use of *tettoie* and wood roofing in fear of fires and required certain workshops to have brick ceilings.<sup>31</sup> Even habits that are characteristic of Sienese life, such as laundry hanging from windows, are documented in the Good Government frescoes.<sup>32</sup> To tell the viewer that this city is most certainly Siena, Ambrogio placed the she-wolf, the official emblem of Siena at the point where the urban area of the city meets the landscape.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Talamone, Siena’s commercial port can be seen in the sea far off in the distance. Judging by these frescoes, artists plainly were patronized by the commune to show the good deeds and achievements of the leaders.

Although it was forbidden, Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s frescoes portray nine women dancing in a circle, celebrating peace and righteous governing. Hyman suggests that to Lorenzetti they represent “a fundamental image of social well-being – *the dolce vitae riposata*, the *bonhuer de vivre*, that follows from communal freedom and justice.”<sup>34</sup> These women celebrate the excellent state of their community, while men on the rooftops are furiously building another fine specimen of architecture for the city. Under The Council of the Nine, the citizens were undoubtedly going to have a presentable city; every aspect of architecture and urban planning was addressed legally. The aesthetically ideal city that the council aimed to create was precisely what Lorenzetti reproduced in the *Well-Governed City*.

Architecture, which was once a background feature of painting, became a vital element to the composition of paintings and the functioning of society. The city, literally, was an element of Sienese life, truly created and maintained in the name of the Common Good. When Sienese painting was once largely focused on the Byzantine tradition of a purely religious art, setting was of little importance. However, when the populous firmly established a unified identity in the thirteenth century, secular concerns began to arise more prominently in art and architecture. For the painting guild, the city of Siena was not only commissioning much of their work; it also became an archetypal subject matter.

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<sup>28</sup> Seymour, 133.

<sup>29</sup> Duccio Balestracci and Gabriella Piccinni, *Siena Nel Trecento: Assetto urbano e strutture edilizie*, edizioni clusf (Florence, It: Cooperativa Libreria Universitatis Studii Florentini).

<sup>30</sup> Duccio Balestracci and Gabriella Piccinni, 91-2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> G Chierci, “La casa senese al tempo di Dante”, *Bulletino Senese di Stonz Parcia XXVIII* (1921), 355.

<sup>33</sup> Timothy Hyman argues that the Cathedral, which would have also been unmistakably Siena’s, was added later by a different artist.

<sup>34</sup> Hyman, 84.

Duccio initiated this trend by portraying Mary as a regional protector, and by integrating Sieneese characteristics into the setting of his biblical narratives. Developed by Simone Martini, among others, and then ultimately epitomized by the work of Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the artistic community, and its patrons, paid tribute to the commune.

In the Frescoes of *Good and Ill Government* the condition of living for Sieneese people, and the state of their architecture, appear to be parallel with each other. If the government failed to do its duty and exalt the Common Good, and did not maintain a strong communal morality, the people and their homes would similarly decay. Sieneese medieval painting exhibited a shift in emphasis away from Byzantine ethereal backgrounds, towards more earthly settings. Artists began to strive to imitate the most beautiful known aesthetics of the physical world, meaning that for Sieneese painters, the depiction of their city's architecture inevitable.

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## The Chariot: A Weapon that Revolutionized Egyptian Warfare

by Richard Carney

Egypt is one of the oldest civilizations in the world, with a history spanning thousands of years. During one epoch, known as the New Kingdom (approximately 1570 to 1085 BCE), Egyptian pharaohs actively sought to expand and strengthen their empire with a military that mastered the art of chariot warfare. Egyptians, however, did not invent the chariot and the weapons of the Bronze Age, but were introduced to them by outside invaders at a time when the Egyptian military was centered on the infantry. At the time of the invasion, Egyptian weapons were obsolete compared to the rest of the world. The introduction of the horse and chariot in Egypt was a turning point in its history. With these new weapons Egypt was able to transform its military into one of the largest and most powerful in the world, allowing Egyptian pharaohs to expand their control and influence in the world.

Around 1700 BCE an outside nation, known as the Hyksos, invaded Egypt and slowly took control both militarily and politically. The Hyksos people introduced to Egyptians the horse, chariot and modern Bronze Age weapons. The chariot developed around 2000 BCE, and the Indo-Iranians were the first to use a chariot similar to those of the Hyksos—“light, two wheeled and spoked.”<sup>1</sup> Use of the chariot spread through trade, travel, conquest, and migration. The Hyksos began their invasion of Egypt around 1720 BCE during the Middle Kingdom (2040 to 1645 BCE). The Middle Kingdom was weakening both militarily and politically, and the army was incapable of protecting itself from outside attacks. The Hyksos invasion was not a single military event, for it was some fifty years before the Hyksos established absolute control over Egypt. However, there is no doubt that their military superiority was a major factor in their takeover.<sup>2</sup>

As Historian Richard A. Gabriel writes, “The Egyptian soldier confronting the Hyksos must have been terrified by these new weapons.”<sup>3</sup> Egyptians had never been exposed to weapons such as the composite bow, the penetrating axe. The composite bow was probably first used by the military of Naram Sin, ruler of the Akkadians from 2254 to 2218 BCE. This bow had a range two hundred yards greater than the Egyptian bows, and it was smaller, lighter and more powerful.<sup>4</sup> At the time of the Hyksos invasion the Egyptians were still using the blade axe, which was far less powerful than the socket penetrating axe of their enemy. The discovery of bronze made the axe more powerful, but it was not until around 2500 BCE, when the Sumerians began to make the socket and the blade into one piece, that the full power of the penetrating axe was utilized. This method of axe production was also used by the Hyksos, while the Egyptians were still using the old style of axe production. The socket penetrating axe became, as Gabriel

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred S. Bradford, *With Arrow, Sword and Spear: A History of Warfare in the Ancient World* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2001), 13.

<sup>2</sup> Troy Fox, *Who Were the Hyksos*, <http://www.toureygypt.net/featurestories/hyksos.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Gabriel, *Armies of Antiquity*, 63.

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

writes, “one of the most devastating close combat weapons of the Bronze and Iron ages.”<sup>5</sup>

The superior weapons of the Hyksos were amplified by the poor body armor of the Egyptians, which made them far more vulnerable to blows than the well-protected Hyksos. A blow from the outdated Egyptian mace was not powerful enough to penetrate the armor being used by Hyksos’ soldiers.<sup>6</sup> However, as important as superior weapons and armor were to the Hyksos victory, neither was as important as the chariot. The original Hyksos chariots were probably drawn by two horses and carried two soldiers. One man would drive the chariot while the other fired his bow or threw his spear. Missiles could be launched from a stationary position or while in motion. The effect of these chariots on the Egyptian army has been compared to that of the tank on twentieth-century warfare.<sup>7</sup>

The name “Hyksos” was once thought to mean “shepherd kings” but this is now regarded as incorrect. The scholarly consensus is that the Hyksos were called *hekaw khaset*, or “rulers of a foreign land” by the Egyptians during the invasion. It is from this that the Greeks derived the term “Hyksos.”<sup>8</sup> By 1720 BCE these foreign rulers established their capitol in the city of Avaris, in the northeastern Delta, and by 1674 they had taken the ancient city of Memphis, a key city to controlling Upper and Lower Egypt. Once in power they maintained strict control and established a line of Hyksos rulers in Upper Egypt. The rest of Egypt remained only under tribute to the Hyksos rulers. While they established their own governmental positions they decided to keep many Egyptian traditions intact.<sup>9</sup> They brought some of their own gods, but mostly they honored those of the Egyptians.<sup>10</sup>

Little archaeological evidence is found to describe the time of Hyksos rule. The information provided by Egyptians, who did not want nor appreciate outsider rule, is likely biased, and much of what was recorded can be considered propaganda that at least stretches the truth. One example comes second-hand from a Jewish historian named Josephus, who claimed to quote an Egyptian named Manetho, who recorded what happened during the Hyksos invasion:

...invaders of obscure race marched in confidence of victory against our land. By main force they easily seized it without striking a blow; and having overpowered the rulers of the land they burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods and treated all the natives with cruel hostility, massacring some and leading into slavery the wives and children of others.<sup>11</sup>

From archaeological evidence at Egyptian religious sites it seems, perhaps not surprisingly, that most of what Josephus quoted from Manetho is not true. The Hyksos did not ravage the country and burn the temples, and there is not any evidence of the

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<sup>5</sup> Gabriel and Metz, *Sumer to Rome*, 60-61.

<sup>6</sup> Gabriel, *Armies of Antiquity*, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Leonard Cottrell, *The Warrior Pharaohs* (New York: GP Putnam's Sons, 1969), 57.

<sup>8</sup> David O'Connor, “The Hyksos Period in Egypt”, ed. Eleizer D. Oren (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum, 1997), 48.

<sup>9</sup> Bradford, *Arrow, Sword, Spear*, 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 21.

<sup>11</sup> John Van Seters, *The Hyksos: A New Investigation*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 121.

Hyksos acting ruthlessly and forcing people into slavery. The Hyksos appear to have ruled in a manner very similar to the Egyptian rulers. However, foreign rule is almost always less palatable, and it would have been very easy to want to vilify the Hyksos.<sup>12</sup>

While the Hyksos were ruling Upper Egypt, Theban Kings still maintained their throne in Lower Egypt. These Theban kings had to pay tribute to Avaris but were able to act independently from the Hyksos kings. With the introduction of the composite bow and the chariot, the Egyptians gradually began to realize their potential to dominate warfare. However, it took time for the Egyptians to acquire the necessary horses and chariots to challenge the Hyksos, and the Hyksos would rule for two hundred years before the Egyptians could reconquer their kingdom.<sup>13</sup>

At the beginning of the Seventeenth Dynasty Egyptians were attempting to preserve their own customs and religion after 200 years of Hyksos domination. In Thebes, King Seqenenre still worshiped the Egyptian god Ra and encouraged his people to do the same. The Hyksos King Apopi, of Avaris, was angered by Seqenenre's defiance<sup>14</sup> and sent a messenger to Seqenenre demanding that the Thebans cease the worship of Ra. The assertion of authority by Apopi angered the Egyptians began to revolt against the Hyksos.<sup>15</sup> Exactly what happened next between Apopi and Seqenenre is unclear, but it is evident that there was some kind of battle between the two kings. Archaeologists have discovered Seqenenre's skull with horrible wounds that appeared to be caused by a spear or an axe.<sup>16</sup> However, despite Seqenenre's evident demise in battle, the revolt marks the beginning of the expulsion of the Hyksos by Egyptians attempting to regain their own land.

King Seqenenre began a quest that his successors would continue. His son Kamose would take the throne and wage war against the Hyksos by land and by sea. In 1954 Labib Habachi, an Egyptian archaeologist discovered the "victor stela," an artifact that relates Kamose's account of his campaigns: "I overthrew them, I razed his wall, I slew his people...my soldiers were like lions with their prey, with serfs, cattle, milk, fat and honey, dividing up their possessions."<sup>17</sup> Kamose ordered his army to defeat the enemy and to destroy their cities in a total war campaign against the "rulers of a foreign land." The new revolt against the Hyksos was demonstrating success but Kamose did not live to see his enemy fall. His successor, Ahmose I would be left with the task of bringing Egypt back to the Egyptians.

Ahmose I ushered in the eighteenth pharaoh dynasty and a new era in Egypt without the Hyksos in power. He led Egyptian armies to victory against the Hyksos using the same weapons the Hyksos used to conquer Egypt. Moreover, over a period of some 200 years, the Egyptians had mastered the use of bronze, greatly increasing their artillery power,<sup>18</sup> and they had developed a military with professional skills that would

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<sup>12</sup>Fox, *Who Were the Hyksos*, www.touregypt.net.

<sup>13</sup> Bradford, *Arrow, Sword and Spear*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> Bradford, *Arrow, Sword, Spear*, 21-22.

<sup>15</sup> Cottrell, *Warrior Pharaoh's*, 95-96.

<sup>16</sup> Peter A. Clayton, *Chronicle of the Pharaoh's: A Reign by Reign Record of the Rulers and Dynasties of Ancient Egypt*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 96 shows his skull, discovered in 1881 with five head wounds with four of them indicating that he was on his right side when he received the deadly blows. Also Bradfords, *Arrow, Sword and Spear* shows his skull that was preserved by his people after the battle.

<sup>17</sup> Cottrell, *Warrior Pharaoh's*, 59.

<sup>18</sup> Fox, *The Chariot in Egyptian Warfare*, www.touregypt.net.

surpass those of the Hyksos.<sup>19</sup> The account of Ahmose I's campaign against the Hyksos is told through the conquests of a great warrior in the Egyptian army named Ahmose son of Ebana. His tale, found in his tomb at el-Kab is the only existing account of the final blows that expelled the Hyksos. Ahmose served his namesake King Ahmose in battles against the Hyksos at Memphis and at the three sieges on Avaris. As a young soldier he served on a ship called "Offering" and was later sent into Lower Egypt where he marched behind the King's chariot. Ahmose earned respect as a great warrior, and for his victories he was handsomely rewarded with gold, slaves, and land.<sup>20</sup> These rewards evidenced a new Egyptian focus on the military and value for military prowess. The account of Ahmose son of Ebana, while priceless as the only remaining primary source, is likely skewed and embellished to reflect personal glory rather than a true retelling of the revolt that removed the Hyksos, resulting in some substantial gaps in our knowledge of what happened. However, we do know that after the Egyptians regained control, the new Pharaohs began to rebuild their empire and expand it more than ever before.<sup>21</sup>

Undoubtedly, Egyptian use of the horse drawn chariot had been fundamental to their success in expelling the Hyksos. Not only had Egyptians adopted the chariot—they had nearly perfected it, constructing by the fifteenth century "the machine into the finest in the world."<sup>22</sup> The new Egyptian chariot, as we know from archeological evidence, was made of flexible wood and leather and was faster, stronger, and used more efficiently in battle than its Hyksos counterpart.<sup>23</sup> Previous chariots, such as the Hittite chariots, were made of solid wood with solid wood wheels held together by pegs, making them very heavy and hard to maneuver. In contrast, the Egyptians built chariots light enough to be carried by two men, or one man if necessary. Also, early chariots featured axles in the front or middle of the chariot platform. In order to increase the speed, stability and maneuvering capabilities, the Egyptians moved the axle to the rear of the platform. The Egyptians also innovatively and effectively placed archers in the chariot during battle. Over time the use of the chariot became intrinsically linked to the use of the composite bow.<sup>24</sup>

The mobility and efficiency of Egyptian chariot warfare ultimately changed the way the pharaohs ruled their kingdom, making them more imperialistic than had previously been possible.<sup>25</sup> Armies of the Old Kingdom typically ceased to advance once they reached the end of their borders; the Pharaohs of the New Kingdom did not. After the expulsion of the Hyksos, they began to pursue an offensive military campaign. The Egyptian army pursued the Hyksos into Retenu, also known as Canaan and elsewhere. Landscapes and terrain that had previously been too difficult for infantry units were now accessible to chariot squadrons. For the first time, Egyptian armies pursued invaders

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<sup>19</sup> Bradford, *Arrow, Sword and Spear*, 22.

<sup>20</sup> *Egypt: Ahmose son of Ebana - Autobiography*, [http://members.tripod.com/~ib205/ahmose\\_ebana.html](http://members.tripod.com/~ib205/ahmose_ebana.html).

<sup>21</sup> Gabriel, *Armies of Antiquity*, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Gabriel and Metz, *Sumer to Rome*, 76.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Drews, *The Coming of the Greeks: The Indo-Europeans Conquests in the Aegean and the Near East*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 84-85.

<sup>24</sup> Gabriel and Metz, *From Sumer to Rome*, 76-77. Pictures and reconstructed chariots also found at the website by Troy Fox, [www.touregypt.net](http://www.touregypt.net).

<sup>25</sup> Arther Ferril, *The Origins of War: From the Stone Age to Alexander the Great* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1985), 45.



outside Egyptian borders.<sup>26</sup> The New Kingdom revolved around these offensive, mobile armies.<sup>27</sup>

Little is known on the organization and structure of the Old and Middle Kingdom armies but it is evident that the new weapons and increased numbers of soldiers required the New Kingdom army to be highly specialized and controlled. No longer could the army consist of local infantry with minimal training, as both the composite bow and the chariot, the weapons that had made conquest possible, required extensive training and specialization. The army was divided into two principal units—chariot and infantry. Chariot units were comprised of elite soldiers and usually consisted of squadrons of twenty five, while the infantry had regiments of about two hundred men.<sup>28</sup> Despite the enormous importance of the elite charioteers, the military and its tactics still focused on the infantry, setting Egypt apart from its neighbors. As historian Troy Fox writes, “While the enemies’ chariots were built to defeat the opposing infantry, the Egyptian chariots were designed to provide their own foot soldiers with a defense from the enemies’ chariots.”<sup>29</sup> Once in battle, the charioteers were usually deployed first to serve as a shield for the infantry units. The rapid chariot advance allowed the infantry to follow and attack once the enemy was in their reach, which in turn allowed the Egyptian army to gain control of the battlefield quickly and decisively.<sup>30</sup>

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty, three pharaohs, often called “the Fighting Thutmosids” on account of their names, established Egypt as a world power.<sup>31</sup> Thutmose I began his reign at around 1524 BCE. Prior to his rule, the Egyptian army had created a protective buffer zone around Egypt, serving also to help establish contact with other Near East kingdoms. Thutmose I led his army into Mesopotamia, to a place known as Naharin, in the kingdom of Matanni on the Euphrates River. Here Thutmose I enslaved the so-called “dirty ones, the foreigners hated by the god.”<sup>32</sup> He also led his army to Nubia where the powerful Egyptian army faced a worthy adversary. Ahmose son of Ebana, the great warrior who helped to expel the Hyksos, also participated in these Nubian campaigns. The Ahmose accounts tell of how Thutmose I “became enraged like a leopard. His majesty shot, and his first arrow pierced the chest of that foe. Then those enemies turned to flee... a slaughter was made among them; their dependants carried off as living captives.”<sup>33</sup> The accounts of Thutmose I and Ahmose are probably biased, however it is apparent that the Nubians were vanquished, allowing Egypt to establish power in Nubia.

Thutmose II succeeded Thutmose I to the throne. His rule was brief, but he was able to maintain Egypt’s power in Nubia, while advancing into Syria-Palestine.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Robert B. Partridge, *Fighting Pharaoh’s: Weapons and Warfare in Ancient Egypt* (Manchester, U.K.: Peartree Publishing, 2002), 192.

<sup>27</sup>Ferrill, *Origins of War*, 52-53.

<sup>28</sup>Gabriel and Metz, *From Sumer to Rome*, 14.

<sup>29</sup>Troy Fox, *The Chariot in Egyptian Warfare*, [www.touregypt.net/featurestories/chariots.htm](http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/chariots.htm).

<sup>30</sup>Gabriel, *Armies of Antiquity*, 66-68.

<sup>31</sup>Cottrell, *Warrior Pharaoh’s*, 61.

<sup>32</sup>Bradford, *Arrow, Sword and Spear*, 22.

<sup>33</sup>*Egypt: Ahomose son of Ebana - Autobiography*, [http://members.tripod.com/~ib205/ahmose\\_ebana.html](http://members.tripod.com/~ib205/ahmose_ebana.html).

<sup>34</sup>Cottrell, *Warrior Pharaoh’s*, 72.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. 75.

Thutmose II was succeeded by Queen Hatsheput, who maintained peace but allowed neighboring countries to grow in strength and number. The Hittite kingdom of modern day Turkey began to threaten the relatively new Egyptian rule of their lands.<sup>35</sup> While the Hittite rebelliousness was troublesome, it did not directly affect Egypt proper. However, when Hatsheput died, the King of Kadesh saw an opportunity to press his advantage by seizing control of Megiddo and using it as his base for strategic attacks on Egypt.<sup>36</sup> Little could the King have known that the new pharaoh, Thutmose III, would become one of the greatest warrior pharaohs in history. When Thutmose III heard that the King of Kadesh had a plan for attacking Egypt's holdings in Syria-Palestine, he seized the element of surprise and mobilized his army to attack Kadesh. The army that Thutmose III gathered for this advance on the people of Kadesh was built on "divisions of five hundred men with twenty companies in each division and five platoons in each company...[that] could march at a rate of about fifteen miles a day."<sup>37</sup> The Egyptian army, with chariot speed, made it to Gaza in about nine days. Somewhat sidetracked from a mission to the neighboring city of Joppa, Thutmose was informed that his army had gathered at Megiddo.<sup>38</sup> Thutmose chose to use the element of surprise and executed a plan of attack contrary to the advice of his generals and advisers by leading the army through a small and narrow pass to Megiddo. The plan was successful, catching the army of Kadesh off-guard. Upon seeing the massive army of the Egyptians the army of Kadesh scattered and retreated within the city walls. However, instead of quickly destroying the enemy in battle the Egyptian troops began to loot the camps. What should have been a quick victory became a siege on the city of Megiddo that lasted seven months.<sup>39</sup> Finally, the Egyptians built an enormous wooden wall around the entire city, rendering Megiddo helpless. The city surrendered. Strengthened by this victory, Thutmose continued to battle against the Matanni in northern Syria and would go on to lead campaigns in Lebanon. In total, Thutmose III led his army on seventeen campaigns. All were successful.

Thutmose III expanded the Egyptian empire further than any previous pharaoh and firmly established his place as one of the greatest Egyptian warrior pharaohs. Two hundred years later, Ramesses II would again utilize the chariot demonstrate Egypt's military prowess. When Ramesses II, or Ramesses the Great, acceded the throne around 1279 BCE, he was fully aware of the great history of his kingdom. His father, Sety I, had taught him to appreciate the past and to honor those great warriors that came before him. Sety had made rebuilding the military a priority during his reign, and Ramesses was a well-trained soldier who accompanied his father on campaigns with the Egyptian army. He wanted his army to resemble that of Thutmose III. Ramesses II continued the military restoration begun by his father and led his army into another great chariot battle at the city of Kadesh.<sup>40</sup>

The battle of Kadesh, took place around 1274 BCE. Both sides, the Egyptians

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<sup>36</sup> Ferill, *Origins of War*, 54.

<sup>37</sup> Bradford, *Arrow, Sword and Spear*, 24.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 25.

<sup>39</sup> Cottrell, *Warrior Pharaoh's*, 82.

<sup>40</sup> Rita A. Freed, *Ramesses the Great*, (Memphis, TN: 1987), 41.

and the Hittites, had large chariot-centered armies. The Hittites had been interfering with Egypt's power in Syria and had attempted to establish their own system of rule. When the Hittites gained control of the city of Kadesh, Ramesses II immediately began to mobilize his army for attack.<sup>41</sup>

However, the Hittites, led by the wise military leader King Muwatalis, anticipated the Egyptian attack. Muwatalis gathered his army, thought to be some twenty thousand men, equal to the size of the Egyptian army. Both the Egyptians and the Hittites had similar weapons including the penetrating axe and the composite bow, but the Hittite chariot was different than the Egyptian chariot. Hittite chariots were much heavier and were designed to carry three men, as opposed to the light-weight chariot of the Egyptians which only carried one or two men. The Hittites also employed their chariots differently, using them to charge at the enemy with the three men, a driver, spear thrower, and a shield bearer. While the lighter and more maneuverable chariots of the Egyptians could outrun the Hittites, the heavier chariot gave the Hittites a decisive advantage in head-to-head battle.<sup>42</sup>

The Egyptian army traveled at a great speed and arrived at Kadesh in only a month. The army was divided into four divisions: Amon, Ra, Ptah and Set, with Ramesses II leading the Amon division. As Ramesses approached Kadesh, just past the Orontes River, his army captured two Hittite spies sent to tell the Egyptians that the Hittite army had not yet arrived at Kadesh. Deceived by the misinformation of the spies, Ramesses set up camp outside Kadesh to await the Hittite army, which was actually only fifteen miles away on the opposite side of the city. When the Hittite chariots attacked, the surprised, scattered, and confused the Ra division, scattering them in all directions. The Ra division fled to the camp and encountered Ramesses' Amon division. Ramesses deserves enormous credit for what happened next, although perhaps not as much as is accorded him by Egyptian stories and artwork, found in the Ramesses temples of Abu Simbel and at Karnak. According to these sources, Ramesses boarded his chariot and single-handedly charged the Hittites and slew close to two thousand of the enemy:

Then His Majesty arose like his father Mont and took the accoutrements of battle, and girt himself with his corselt...His Majesty started forth at a gallop and entered into the host of the fallen ones of Khatti, being alone by himself, none other with him...found surrounding him on his outer side 2500...not one of them stood firm to fight him.<sup>43</sup>

Hyperbole notwithstanding, it is very likely that Ramesses the Great demonstrated exemplary leadership skills and was able to rally his troops to in their time of panic. Because the Egyptian chariots were lighter and faster, they were able to regroup quickly or escape quickly when necessary. However, even with Ramesses' leadership and the mobility of light chariots, the Egyptians ultimately unable to defeat the Hittites who sought refuge behind the strong city walls of Kadesh. Ramesses was forced to accept

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 41.

<sup>42</sup> Partridge, *Fighting Pharaoh's*, 247.

<sup>43</sup> Cottrell, *Warrior Pharaoh's*, 117. Translated from a temple erected by Ramesses II in his own honor.

defeat, and the two kingdoms signed a peace treaty that was honored for many years.<sup>44</sup>

The battles of Megiddo and Kadesh both demonstrated the changes that had occurred in Egypt after the adoption of the chariot. The military of the Old and Middle Kingdoms would never have been able to stage offensive attacks on the same scale as the New Kingdom. Not only were the weapons not available, but there were no leaders as capable as Thutmose III and Ramesses II. The chariot enabled New Kingdom pharaohs to fight offensive campaigns outside of Egypt's borders and gave rise to some of the greatest battles in history. New weapons and technology allowed Egypt to begin an era of kingdom building. Adopting the chariot enabled the Egyptian army to become more offensive and allowed the pharaohs to expand their kingdoms, and gain wealth and power in the world. Before the chariot, Egypt had existed for over fifteen hundred years without aggressively pursuing campaigns its borders, but the introduction and, most importantly, the near perfection of light-chariot warfare, made the Egyptian military one of the most powerful in the world and allowed Egypt to seek an active role in the world.

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<sup>44</sup> Ferrill, *Origins and War*, 56-60.

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***Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions.* By Frank Lee Holt. (University of California Press. Pp. 217, \$47.25).**

Undoubtedly one of the most fascinating figures in human history, Alexander the Great continues to be the subject of numerous movies, books, and television documentaries some 2,300 years after death. When he died abruptly at age 33 from a mysterious illness, Alexander was in Babylon, heading home after more than a decade of whirlwind conquests that took him to the ends of the known world and beyond. In his lifetime, he was an emperor, legend, and demi-god to millions of people. As part of the machinery of that empire, millions of coins were minted bearing his image. These coinages today represent some of the most durable and direct primary sources of Alexander, and as such they are extremely valuable to historians. For the last century, numismatists, or professional analysts and historians of coins and medals, have been intrigued in a relative handful of large medallions that bear both the image of Alexander and depictions of war elephants. What these images represent has been a mystery and source of spirited debate within the numismatic community. In 2003, Professor Frank L. Holt made a bold and interesting attempt to quell that debate with his book *Alexander the Great and the Mystery of the Elephant Medallions*.

Holt divides his book into three principal areas of interest: a narrative account of Alexander's campaigns in India, specifically the decisive Battle of the Hydaspes; a numismatic scholarly history of the so-called elephant medallions; and finally Holt's own conclusions about those medallions.

To general students of history, the narrative section of the book may be the most appealing. After an arduous and exhausting journey of conquest, in India, thousands of miles from home, Alexander and his men seemed to have met their match. On the opposite of the Hydaspes River was a powerful military, armed with war elephants and led by King Porus—a charismatic leader and a giant both literally and figuratively. The Greeks and Macedonians of Alexander's army could scarcely have imagined or conjured in their dreams a beast such as the elephant. Holt does a particularly good job of imparting to the reader what it must have been like to encounter such strange, massive animals: "In an age that can magically bring extinct dinosaurs to life, we have mentally reduced our largest living land animal in scale and significance. But prior to Dumbo and Dinomation (TM) not much could astonish us more than an elephant." (p. 80)

So astonishing were the elephants and army of Porus that when Alexander routed him in a muddy, rain-soaked battle on the banks of the Hydaspes, special medallions were apparently minted to commemorate the victory. Inevitably lost to the ages, the first medallions were rediscovered in the late nineteenth century by Muslim merchants near the Oxus river in Pakistan. They eventually were bought in 1897 by a renowned numismatist named Augustus Franks, who published the medallions for the world to see. Thus began the intriguing and sometimes contentious numismatic history of the Elephant Medallions. At various points, scholars have argued or debated over almost every aspect of the medallions and the significance of their perplexing images. Holt appears conscious of wanting to remain above the fray by first making the best case for each argument and then delivering the scholarly consensus, while divulging relatively few of his own opinions. The result is a meticulous and even-handed catalogue of scholarly opinion regarding the medallions.

The final two chapters of the book, however, are indeed devoted to Holt's own conclusions. Skilfully written, incorporating the best narrative and analytical elements

of the previous chapters, Holt relieves the suspense and gives the reader what he has been craving—the answers to the riddle.

Only time will tell if Holt's conclusions prove correct, or if they themselves will become footnotes in the book of some future numismatic historian. Nevertheless, Holt has written a thorough and concise history about a fascinating topic, and this book is well-worth reading for anyone interested in numismatics, archaeology, Alexander the Great, or ancient history.

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***Napoleon: A Penguin Life.* By Paul Johnson. (Viking Books, 2002. Hardcover, Pp. 190, \$19.95.)**

Paul Johnson provides a concise look into the military life and legacy of Napoleon Bonaparte. Johnson's main focus is to illustrate how the legacy of "Napoleon" was born and why the historical figure deserves so much attention, especially since more books have been written about him than any other person in history—save Jesus Christ. Johnson never provides a concrete answer as to why Bonaparte has achieved monolithic status in the realm of history, but he does effectively argue that perhaps it is because the totalitarian state of the twentieth century was the scion of Napoleon's nineteenth-century endeavors.

For Johnson, it is of paramount importance that his readers understand the distinction between Napoleon the legend and Bonaparte the man. Bonaparte rarely referred to himself as Napoleon and typically signed papers using his surname. Bonaparte was an impatient, selfish, mendacious, and terse man who was unfaithful to his two wives. Napoleon was the innovative military commander who led the first military coup d'état, experienced fantastic defeat at Waterloo, was exiled to St. Helena, and died of the ulcer that has made him famous in most portraits. These two personas make up the same man, but Johnson's point is that most people only think of the latter, rarely the former.

It is Bonaparte's legacy that has fascinated individuals for the past two hundred years, and its impact on the twentieth century cannot be underestimated. Johnson believes and compellingly argues that Bonaparte was the archetype that twentieth-century totalitarians followed. For example, Bonaparte took advantage of propaganda, and he produced fake election figures. Also, in the wake of the Revolution, Bonaparte was able to have "an absolute concentration of authority, first in a parliament, then in a committee, finally in a single tyrant . . . and a universal teaching that such concentration expressed the general will of a united people, as laid down in due constitutional form, approved by referendum" (p. 30). Perhaps Bonaparte's greatest contribution to Europe was German nationalism, of which Hitler later took advantage to become the worst despot in European history.

Johnson appropriately states throughout that "Bonaparte was not an ideologue but an opportunist who seized on the accident of the French Revolution to propel himself into supreme power" (p. ix). However, while Johnson certainly believes that Bonaparte was not able to accomplish what he did solely by himself, one should not think that Bonaparte became a significant historical figure by way of luck. The military man's natural talent in mathematics and his profound imagination, which enabled him to plan detailed attacks across unknown terrain just by examining small maps, created the image of the "self-made man," as Emerson described him (p. 185).

Overall, Johnson provides his readers with a detailed examination of Bonaparte's military endeavors, his personal achievements and shortcomings, and his enduring legacy. And while selling Louisiana to the US for four cents an acre and enacting the unsuccessful Continental System best demonstrate Bonaparte's occasional myopia, Johnson believes these to be anomalies among Bonaparte's numerous achievements, both good and bad. Interestingly, the typical person does not think of Bonaparte as a tyrant, at least not in the same way as Stalin and definitely not like Hitler, yet Johnson

contends, “No dictator of the tragic twentieth century . . . was without distinctive echoes of the Napoleonic prototype” (p. 186). Johnson’s text is a good starting point for anyone interested in learning more about Napoleon Bonaparte, and because it leaves its readers with many questions, it will inspire those who are so motivated to continue researching this historical figure who has achieved mythic status.

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***The Emperor of China: Self Portrait of K'ang-hsi.* By Jonathan D. Spence  
(New York: Random House, Inc., 1974. Pp. 256, \$10.50)**

Jonathan Spence's work stands in a genre apart from that of historical fiction, biography, or historiography. Drawing on memoirs and letters written by the Emperor K'ang-hsi himself, Spence (current president of the American Historical Association) uses these primary sources to synthesize a sort of posthumous autobiography, a "collected works" that reads like a story. While strict fidelity to the Emperor's own arrangements is not maintained, the resulting work perhaps gives us more insight than would a standard autobiography written contemporaneously. *The Emperor of China* is useful both as a literary view of the inner sanctum of eighteenth-century Chinese politics, and as a glimpse into the mind of the most powerful man of his era. Spence divides the book into themes that frequently materialize throughout K'ang-hsi's writings: "In Motion"--a section on action associated with governing, "Ruling," "Thinking," "Growing Old," "Sons," and a final section on K'ang-hsi's valedictory. Taken as a whole, analysis of these themes forms a picture of the Emperor as a ruler, a father, and as a man.

"In Motion," the first section, is primarily concerned with K'ang-hsi's exploits as a warrior, hunter, and a general. He describes his prowess as a hunter, saying, "Most ordinary people don't kill in a lifetime what I have killed in one day (9)." He is proud of his talent in using the bow, owing his skill to tutelage received as a boy. He notes that had his teacher not corrected him despite his status, had he been satisfied with "good enough," he would not possess the skills he had cultivated. This became a common theme with K'ang-hsi—the value placed on diligence and high standards, and an unwillingness to settle for mediocre.

One of the most interesting sections of the book, "Growing Old," details K'ang-hsi's musings on aging, and the deterioration of the body and mind. This aspect of the emperor is often minimized in Chinese history in order to preserve the dignity of the office. However, in his valediction, K'ang-hsi openly discusses his weaknesses and physical degeneration. This version was not read publicly, and the image of the emperor as omnipotent force stayed intact, but the words we read in the future are a valuable insight. Medicine is discussed extensively, especially which types of medicine or practitioners are to be trusted.

"Sons" is the most painful part of K'ang-hsi's memoirs, as it chronicles the slow but steady disintegration of the K'ang household. The heir-apparent, K'ang-hsi's son by an Empress, falls into behavior patterns completely antithetical to his fathers' teaching. This illustrates the problems with dynastic progression in China, and further explains the political intrigue involved as sides are taken and alliances made. The Emperor is notably

anguished that he must spend the latter part of his life agonizing over the exploits of his son and heir. His frustration is clarified in the final section, the valediction.

Spence presents the original version of K'ang-hsi's edict, which was written in 1717 as the Emperor was nearing the end of his life. It contains reflections on the major successes and minor failures of his rule, but also trepidation about the age to come. In it he does not name a successor, and expresses deep exhaustion with his position. He is resigned to his fate, and that of his country. This version was not read, however, to the court upon K'ang-hsi's death. The "final" edited version does name a successor, and conveys a tone of confidence and invulnerability rather than the musings of an old man. This rewrite is evidence of a bureaucracy eager to maintain its power through the fabricated words of a popular ruler. It is interesting historiographically to compare the two valedictions, as Spence does at the end of the "final." He notes that it is more or less a cut-and-paste job of the original, which is interesting in light of his construction of the book itself. However, Spence, it seems, is truer to the source than the editors of the valediction. Characteristically, Spence introduces subject matter that begs to be studied from more than one angle.

*Emperor of China* is scholarly prose, leaving the historically-minded reader satisfied, provoked, and thoroughly impressed.

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***The Reshaping of Everyday Life: 1790-1840.* By Jack Larkin. (Harper Perennial. New York, NY. 1989. Pp. 349, \$14.95).**

From 1790-1840 families experienced dramatic change in regards to the political and geographical formation of the United States of America. While the broad sweeping changes in America seemed immediate on the macro level, the changes on the individual level were much more gradual—it took time to for the political changes, higher standard of living and technological advances to effect the general population. In *The Reshaping of Everyday Life*, Jack Larkin presents a social history of the individual in their varying regional and economic statuses by incorporating the “spirit of reform” that swept across America during the turn of the eighteenth-century.

The book is organized categorically with each chapter depicting different aspects of American society. These categories include, but are not limited to work, economy, social life, religion, fashion, etc.; and the individual chapters are arranged chronologically, revealing the growing social inequalities amongst regions and classes.

In 1790 the population was at four million people while more and more families sought opportunity in the west after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The underpinnings of the economy flowed from the hands of farmers in the rural north, agricultural south, and the western frontier. But by the 1840s the very foundation of American society was changing. The population reached seventeen million, the urban population grew eight-fold, and the role of the farmer shifted from self sufficiency, to the production of raw materials for commercialized products.

Reform had varying implications for different regions, genders, and races. The North was the focal point of culture and commerce and acted as the catalyst of change for the south and the west. Initially, in the 1790s America was composed of small, scattered towns with local and regional economies bound to seasonal patterns and rhythms; but the rise of industrialization removed production from the home to the factory. Local economies opened up to national markets, and the role of the artisan dwindled in significance. In the context of these broad changes, Larkin incorporates the daily behaviors and experiences of American society.

Whether explaining the rhythmic sounds of the textile mill, the nature of religious revivals, the development of the modern homes, or the obscure interactions that took place at the local pub, Larkin allows the reader to experience what day-to-day life was like during the early years of the American republic. He reveals these aspects of society through diaries, census reports, birth certificates, government documents, and archaeological artifacts. While these accounts might seem meticulously dull, the book flows with ease, making the book an enjoyable read.

Larkin does an excellent job of depicting “everyday life” from 1790-1840, although, purposely, it is at the expense of the political developments of the time. Ultimately, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life* is an excellent illustration of social history, and is a necessity to understanding the development of American history and society.

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***The Silent Revolution and the Making of Victorian England.* By Herbert Schlossberg.  
(Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000. Paperback, Pp. 405, \$25.95.)**

In his introduction, Herbert Schlossberg sets up the problems that have plagued historians of Victorian England: 1) the historians themselves are typically unsympathetic to the Victorian Era because they do not understand how Victorian culture came about, 2) they disregard religious and intellectual views as appropriate sources of determining the mindset of a secular society, and 3) they often misunderstand and erroneously use the term “revolution.” Thus, Schlossberg attempts to explicate English culture before Victorianism, illustrate the value of relying on information from religious figures and intellectuals, and demonstrate that England did experience a revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, which created “the culture of Victorianism . . . before Victoria was crowned in 1837” (p. 1).

Schlossberg begins with the state of England during the 1700s, which was utterly decadent. The church was a farce, alcohol consumption led to licentiousness, overall morality was abject, and paganism was popular among the upper class simply because it was fashionable. He then compellingly argues that England must have experienced a revolution because the Victorian Era could hardly be described in the above ways. In order to demonstrate how the revolution occurred and who was responsible for it, Schlossberg examines the cultural influence that individual religious figures, philosophers, and literati had on England. He begins with John Wesley, whom Schlossberg describes as an antecedent of the religious revival that was about to occur in England, and continues with other religious innovators, such as William Wilberforce, John Henry Newman, and Thomas Arnold.

Eighteenth-century English society needed to sober up because while “the governing ethos of the day preached morality (or moralism) in the Church . . . much of society’s behavior was grossly immoral” (p. 45). Schlossberg focuses on, *inter alia*, the Tractarian Movement, which was the first major step toward creating Victorian England and of which Newman was a large contributor. The Tractarians were influential because they restored the Anglican Church, in part by studying Catholic history but also by rejecting societal changes, such as “conscious secularity of the high-born and educated, . . . [and] the antisupernaturalism that was widespread in the Church,” that originated with the Enlightenment (p. 79). With this discussion, Schlossberg further demonstrates the ecclesiastical strides that occurred before Victoria became queen.

The main point of Schlossberg’s text is that once England experienced a religious revival, “it had a profound influence on intellectuals whose writings in turn were widely embraced by people who did not listen to (or read) sermons . . . “ (p. 135). Such intellectuals included John Locke, Sir Walter Scott, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and their writings allowed Christian morals to permeate every facet of the culture, from literature, philosophy, art, and music, to politics and education. As Schlossberg states, aside from the Bible, *Pilgrim’s Progress* and *Paradise Lost* had the greatest effect on English society. Therefore, Schlossberg reveals his thesis: the secular influence on religion is what ultimately revolutionized English society from approximately 1750 to 1850.

Without a doubt, Schlossberg presents a compelling argument that forces his readers to reconsider the traditional belief that England was able to avoid revolution during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. England may have avoided the kind of revolutions that occurred in continental Europe, but culturally it is clear that she experienced significant changes from one century to another. And with this conclusion, Schlossberg reaffirms a

universal truth: change, whether overt or subtle, is inevitable. Victorian England wasn't made by Victoria; the England that she would inherit was already long in the making.

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