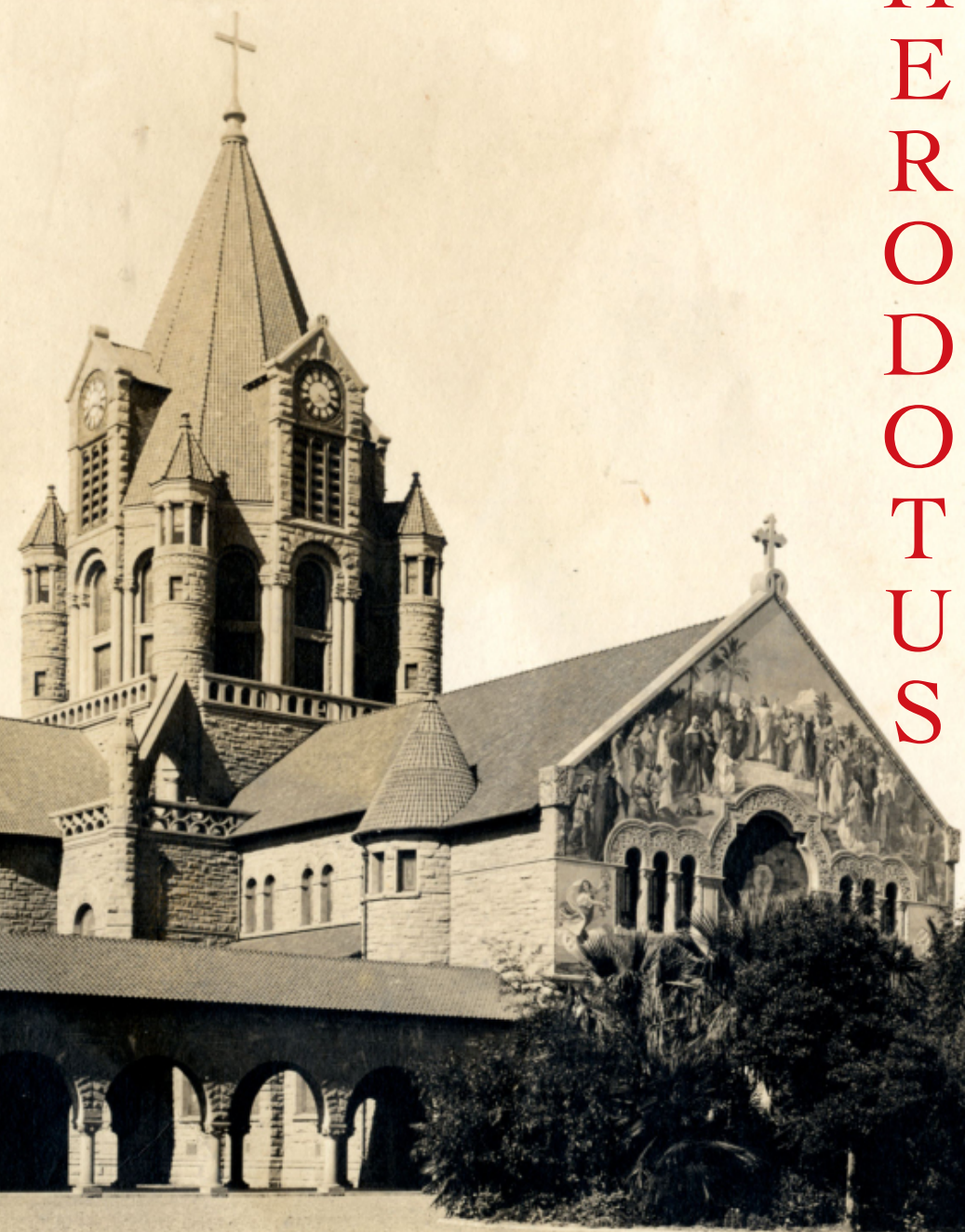


H
E
R
O
D
O
T
U
S



Volume XXXIII • Spring 2023

Stanford University Department of History

HERODOTUS

Volume XXXIII

Department of History
Stanford University

Volume XXXIII, Spring 2023

...

Herodotus is a student-run publication founded in 1986 by the Stanford University Department of History and the History Undergraduate Student Association (HUGSA). It bears the name of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, the 5th century BCE historian of the Greco-Persian Wars. His Histories, which preserve the memory of the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, were written so that “human achievements may not become forgotten in time, and great and marvelous deeds... may not be without their glory.” Likewise, this journal is dedicated to preserving and showcasing the best undergraduate work of Stanford University’s Department of History. Our published pieces are selected through a process of peer review. As a final note, *Herodotus*’ volume numbering system erroneously begins at 1990 rather than at 1986. We have, however, chosen to retain the existing numbering system for the sake of continuity.

Editorial Board**Editor-in-Chief**

Lauren Selden

Managing Editor

Baird Johnson

Section Editors

Jessica Femenias

Grace Sperber

Layout Editor

Krista Arenaodu

Editors

Ryan Beyer

Mike Carragee

Nilou Davis

Novia Liu

Paloma Ronis von Helms

Angela Zhang

...

Authors retain all rights to the work that appears in this volume.

Editor's Note

This year our campus returned to “normal” after more than two academic years were fundamentally altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Classes are in person, even during the first few weeks of every quarter; masks, testing, and vaccines are optional; large gatherings are allowed, and even encouraged. Some students worry, however, that campus culture will never recover from the pandemic. Many upperclassmen decry the loss of events and institutions such as Full Moon on the Quad, ski trips, and theme houses. The popular student movement, “Stanford Hates Fun,” has called on the university administration to return Stanford to “the way things used to be.” These students echo the sentiment as old as time that society is in decline and must return to some former glory.

Disgruntled Stanford students will soon discover, as the Romans and the Puritans and so many others have already found, that it is impossible to return to a golden age (and that those ages may not have been so golden, after all). Looking to the past in order to replicate it is unwise; instead, we hope that the past may help us understand our present and move forward. Whether we learn from the medieval Byzantines, colonial Americans, Martin Luther, or twentieth century South Africans, the past is always worth exploring. We who study history believe that both the past and the present are bright and full of hope.

HERODOTUS

Table of Contents

Ruosong Gao , Liberty and Authority in Early Colonial Massachusetts	7
Luke Lamberti , “Male and female He created them”: Martin Luther and the Eunuch, 1519-1537	23
Ingrid Chen , A Wolf in (Homespun) Sheep’s Clothing: Costuming the Performance of American Equality	38
Samiya Rana , Sophiatown: City of Night and Starlight	47
Abigail Schweizer , The Absence and Presence of Divine Light in Byzantine Images of the Virgin	60

Liberty and Authority in Early Colonial Massachusetts

Ruosong Gao

In 1630, a group of English colonists carrying the King's charter listened to John Winthrop preach as they crossed the Atlantic to found Massachusetts Bay. "We shall be," he proclaimed, "as a city upon a hill."¹ Winthrop and his followers were Puritans, a group of English Protestants that sought to reform the Anglican Church. They viewed political and legal issues through a religious lens and regarded government focus on moral advancement as essential for their service to God. In early colonial Massachusetts, the Puritan vision of a perfect society drew from scripture and their unique experience as a religious minority.

When setting up Massachusetts Bay, leading Puritans aimed to promote Christian liberty among its inhabitants, who would in turn submit to their authority.² As the colony expanded, however, intellectual conflicts within the Puritan community emerged, and social tensions developed. The colonists became divided over matters of judicial discretion and political representation, leading to a systematic codification of the law and gradual political reform that guaranteed certain basic individual liberties.

The freedom exercised by these early colonists had significant limitations in scope. Their laws did not fully protect freedoms of speech and religion, and they gave insufficient protection to servants and women. Some historians have also questioned the extent to which these reforms were genuine changes

1 John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," in *A Library of American Literature: Early Colonial Literature, 1607-1675*, ed. Edmund Clarence Stedman and Ellen Mackay Hutchinson (New York: 1892), 304-307.

2 John Winthrop, "Little Speech on Liberty" (1645), in *Old South Leaflets*, vol 3, no. 66.

as opposed to mere acknowledgements of existing practices.³ These efforts, which culminated in the 1641 “Body of Liberties” and the 1648 “Laws and Liberties,” were nonetheless landmark developments in colonial Massachusetts. Despite their shortcomings, they protected the colonists’ rights through law and represented a shift away from the traditional approach of measuring good liberty against authority to the new concept of measuring good authority against liberty.

Establishing Authority in Early Massachusetts

In 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Company received permission from King Charles I to establish and govern a new colony.⁴ The royal charter stipulated that, at least once a month, a governor, deputy governor, and several assistants would form a Court of Assistants for the “handling, ordering, and dispatching of all such Buysinnes and Occurrents as shall from tyme to tyme happen.”⁵ Crucially, it also guaranteed the political participation of “freemen,” a large group of company stockholders. Assembled every quarter in the General Court, these individuals would “make Lawes and Ordinnces for the Good and Welfare of the saide Company, and for the Government and ordering of the saide Landes and Plantacon.”⁶ The freemen also had the authority to elect the company’s officers each year. Finally, the charter recognized the colony’s autonomy provided that its governance was not “repugnant to the Lawes and Statutes” of England.⁷

Aside from these provisions, the document imposed few restrictions on the colony’s broader development, partly because it was impractical to diligently enforce regulations from across the Atlantic. Thus, the new colony’s government reflected the political

3 Angela Fernandez, “Record Keeping and Other Troublemaking: Thomas Lechford and Law Reform in Early Massachusetts,” *Law and History Review* 23, no. 2 (2005): 276-77, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30042869>.

4 George Lee Haskins, *Law and Authority in Early Massachusetts: A Study in Tradition and Design* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1960), 1-20.

5 “The Charter of Massachusetts: 1629,” The Avalon Project, Yale University, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/17th_century/mass03.asp.

6 “The Charter of Massachusetts.”

7 Ibid.

convictions of its inhabitants, which were influenced by their Puritan affiliations. For many of them, the decision to emigrate to Massachusetts was more religious than economic.⁸ Among those drawn to the enterprise were a group of wealthy, educated Puritans – including John Winthrop – who were well versed in both theology and English law, who became highly influential in the colony’s development.⁹

To understand the society that the early colonists established, one must survey the theology and history of Puritanism. After the Church of England split from Rome, individuals who sought to reform the English church became a religious minority known as the Puritans.¹⁰ By the 1620s, this religious movement was already a rich theological and intellectual tradition. Though Puritanism accepted the Calvinist doctrine of predestination (that God, in His omnipotence and omniscience, had already determined at the beginning of time which souls would be saved or condemned), its adherents nonetheless stressed the need to live a moral life to avoid God’s wrath and prepare for His infusion of grace.¹¹ According to the tenants of predestination, while good behavior was insufficient to guarantee a place in heaven, widespread immoral behavior was a certain way to attract God’s retaliation. As Winthrop warned in his “city upon a hill” address, “if our hearts shall turn away, ... and worship other Gods, our pleasure and profits, and serve them... we shall surely perish out of [this] good land.”¹² It was not enough for individuals to regulate themselves; they needed to watch over one another to ensure that the community stayed on the right path.¹³ Therefore, individual liberties ended where public morality was

8 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 20.

9 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 19-20.

10 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 9.

11 R.H.C., “The Rule of Law in Colonial Massachusetts,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 108, no. 7 (1960): 1001–36, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3310210>.

12 John Winthrop, “Christian Charity,” 304-307.

13 An example of this principle being put into practice is the office of the Holy Watch. This body consisted of chosen members of the neighborhood who were tasked with watching over the behaviors of their fellow men. For details, see Edgar McManus, *Law and Liberty in Early New England: Criminal Justice and Due Process, 1620-1692* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 70-71.

concerned. For example, “vanity,” excessive care regarding outward appearance and worldly possessions, was punished by law in early Massachusetts.¹⁴

With morality situated as the objective, good laws and well-exercised authority became the method. Puritans believed that humans had been so tainted by original sin – Adam and Eve’s defiant act against God – that government was necessary to restrain their evil nature.¹⁵ The function of law was to supplement lapses in human judgment, and in turn living in such a society required willing submission to these moral regulations.¹⁶ Puritan thinkers subscribed to the Augustinian stance against unrestrained liberty.¹⁷ They advocated for the freedom from evil that members of a good community would enjoy. Following this principle, leading colonists like Winthrop and John Cotton asserted that attaining good, “Christian” liberty required submitting to lawful authority, as the latter’s power ultimately came from God.¹⁸ Having thus established the necessity and preeminence of government, Puritan thinkers entrusted power to “regenerate men” who had been saved by the gift of divine grace.¹⁹ They alone could represent God’s will in the appropriate manner.

These theological considerations encouraged a form of benign dictatorship, where power was concentrated among a few righteous men. The early colony’s conditions were further conducive to such concentration of power. While the Massachusetts charter established a general politic of “freemen” to counteract the power of the governor, deputy governor, and assistants, there was evidence that the vast majority of these company stockholders did not make the voyage across the Atlantic.²⁰ As a result, only a few people

14 MacManus, *Law and Liberty*, 42.

15 MacManus, *Law and Liberty*, 20.

16 MacManus, *Law and Liberty*, 3-4.

17 “Rule of law,” 1020.

18 Winthrop, “Little Speech on Liberty,” and John Cotton, “An Abstract of the Laws and Government of Massachusetts” (1655), Early English Books, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A34659.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>. “[Laws] duely attended unto,” Cotton wrote, “would undoubtedly preserve inviolable, the liberty of the Subject, against all tyrannicall and usurping powers.”

19 R.H.C, “Rule of Law,” 20-30.

20 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 24-26.

attended the first meeting of the General Court in 1630, and those who did participate were overwhelmingly magistrates — office-holders. The meeting transferred the power to legislate and elect the governor to the Court of Assistants, which was also given the right to choose lesser officials. Finally, each member of the Court of Assistants was given an area of jurisdiction in which he could set sentences on a case-by-case basis, independent of precedent or guidelines— so-called “judicial discretion.”²¹

There are some clues from this period of concentrated authority that magistrates governed quite harshly. In the first few years, as many as twenty colonists among no more than a few thousand were banished for being unfit or disruptive.²² Almost immediately, however, authority began to decentralize. In 1631, an “explanation” of the 1630 decree ordered the General Court to be held at least once per year. Its participants were also given the power to “remove any one or more of the assistants” for misbehavior.²³ While this change still failed to meet the charter’s requirement of a quarterly meeting, it provided a meaningful check against the magistrates’ power. In 1632, an attempt to raise a tax sparked one of the earliest instances of protest against taxation without representation in colonial America. The government subsequently conceded by giving each town the right to elect two advisors to the governor and assistants.²⁴ Also in 1632, the General Court was reinstated as the colony’s legislature and organ to elect the governor, though the Court of Assistants maintained its judicial privileges.²⁵ In addition, the growth of Massachusetts Bay forced officials to grant more colonists freemen status. Originally consisting solely of company stockholders, the freemen population grew as more inhabitants gained the title. In turn, these colonists demanded their share of rights in the General Court as guaranteed by the charter.

These developments reflected a sense of political consciousness among the Massachusetts population. Their

21 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 24-26, 32.

22 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 28.

23 Massachusetts Court of Assistants, “Explanation of the Order of October 19, 1630, May 18, 1631,” in *Foundations of Colonial America*, ed., W. Keith Kavenagh (New York: Chelsea House Publishers), 1973.

24 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 29-30.

25 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 29-30.

importance, however, should not be overstated. For all its provisions in favor of the General Court, the 1632 decree also stipulated that the governor had to be elected from the small pool of assistants.²⁶ Unsurprisingly, the political leadership of Massachusetts remained fairly stable in the subsequent years. Winthrop, for example, was elected governor twelve times between 1631 and 1648, and his efforts swayed the results of several other elections.²⁷ Perhaps more importantly, the percentage of freemen among the general population remained low, for the title required church membership, and in early Massachusetts, this status was reserved for recognized regenerate individuals.²⁸ Consequently, most colonists had no guarantee of legal or political rights, and authority remained ascendant over liberty. For the few inhabitants that became freemen, they had to swear an oath to “truely indeavr to mainetaine & preserue all the libertyes & previlidges thereof, submitting [themselves] to the wholesome lawes & orders made & established by the [government].”²⁹ Ultimately, the pursuit of liberty depended on a promise of compliance.

Perhaps nothing illustrated this relationship better than the accessibility – or lack thereof – of Massachusetts law. During this period, important legal documents were reserved for the eyes of the few. The charter’s contents were only known to the magistrates until 1634, when the freemen finally learned about them and demanded the rights guaranteed therein.³⁰ In most cases, the General Court’s laws were not made public, not in the least because there was no printing press in Massachusetts until 1638.³¹ Consequently, most colonists were not aware of the law’s precise boundaries. Their liberty, as far as their experience went, was defined by the exercise

26 Massachusetts Court of Assistants, “Further Modifications of the Order of Election of October 19, 1630, May 9, 1632,” in *Foundations of Colonial America*, ed., W. Keith Kavenagh (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973).

27 Stanley Gray, “The Political Thought of John Winthrop,” *The New England Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (1930): 681-690, <https://doi.org/10.2307/359652>.

28 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 32.

29 “The Oath of a Freeman,” Teaching American History, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/the-oath-of-a-freeman>.

30 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 29-30.

31 Clyde Duniway, *Development of the Freedom of the Press in Massachusetts* (New York: Longmans, 1906), 22, <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000961310>.

of authority.

Thus, by 1636, the government of Massachusetts had matured into a partially representative system with few written guarantees of civil and political liberty. Its laws, while made in the General Court, were scarcely circulated. However, even at this stage, the government was limited by various unwritten rules, and the rest of the 1630s and 1640s would see these limits explicitly acknowledged through the codification movement.

Codification and Limitation of Government Authority

According to the Puritan leaders of Massachusetts, the colonists' covenant would secure their harmony by subjecting them to divine and civil authority. These theorists, however, failed to satisfactorily answer the following questions: if humans were naturally corrupt, how could the magistrates be trusted? And if good behavior and faith could not guarantee a spot in heaven, how could the colonists be sure that their magistrates were truly "regenerate?"³²

Even before these issues became relevant to Massachusetts's development, however, Puritans already had historical and ideological reasons to limit their government in several important ways. In England, the church had the power to judge certain types of civil cases, such as divorces, and its censorship carried civil consequences.³³ As religious dissenters, however, Puritans were wary of granting the church such expansive authority. Accordingly, when setting up Massachusetts Bay, the early leaders made sure that their civil government subsumed the English Church's judicial powers. In one such departure from English precedent, if their church chose to excommunicate an individual, that person could still participate in politics.³⁴ With civil power thus concentrated in the government's hands as opposed to being divided with the church, any exercise of authority became subject to a uniform set of norms. Another limitation placed upon the government was its relative exclusion from family affairs. Lawmakers regarded the family as an extension of government in its ability to provide moral regulation,

32 R.H.C., "The Rule of Law."

33 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 63.

34 McManus, *Law and Liberty*, 10-42.

and they were unwilling to extend legal authority into its realm.³⁵

Most importantly, Massachusetts's colonists brought with them the English tradition of fundamental law. These are individual rights and customs, considered immutable by virtue of their longevity, that underscored their vision for government.³⁶ Very quickly, colonists began to worry that their officials held arbitrary powers that placed fundamental law at risk, so they called for a clearer set of codes and political guarantees more akin to the English common law system.³⁷

The colonists' demands ran up against an aspect of Puritan thinking that deviated from the English Church. Both groups accepted the Bible as the basis of good and just laws. Members of the Church of England, however, limited their source base to the Ten Commandments and Jesus's words while Puritans insisted on also incorporating Mosaic law, which they adapted to suit contemporary needs.³⁸ Massachusetts's magistrates subscribed to these Puritans beliefs. Furthermore they cited the lack of fixed punishments in the Bible to support the system of judicial discretion, as opposed to a more English approach of precedents and customs.³⁹ As the colony grew, the gap between the magistrates' approach and popular demand widened. The Puritans' alleged distrust of lawyers only exacerbated the division in addition to stunting the development of the legal profession.⁴⁰ With no access to a legal code, no precedents to rely on, and limited access to legal counsel save from the magistrates themselves, discontent grew among the population.

The colonists' familiarity with the fundamental law combined with their distrust of their magistrates to form the 1630s and 1640s "codification movement."⁴¹ In it, the inhabitants of Massachusetts Bay criticized their magistrates for biased or arbitrary exercises of power. Additionally, they asked for the

35 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 38-42.

36 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 56.

37 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 56.

38 R.H.C., "Rule of Law," 1001-10.

39 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 36-37.

40 Daniel R. Coquillette, "Radical Lawmakers in Colonial Massachusetts: The 'Countenance of Authority' and the Lawes and Liberties," *The New England Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (1994): 176-77, <https://doi.org/10.2307/366078>.

41 Fernandez, "Record-Keeping and Other Troublemaking."

freedoms guaranteed by fundamental and common law be formally recognized. In response to these demands, the magistrates appointed John Cotton, a leading Puritan and central figure in the church, to compose a set of laws in 1636. The document he drafted, “Moses His Judicials,” reflected his commissioners’ principles.

“Moses His Judicials” was principally inspired by the Old Testament. Most laws came with one or multiple citations of scripture – for example, Cotton cited Deuteronomy, Moses’s final message to the Israelites, 39 times.⁴² By his own account, Cotton sought to provide a small set of laws that “[reached] to all persons, nations, and times, and [were] a perfect Standard to admeasure all Judicial actions and causes.”⁴³ In other words, he considered it more important to set forth general, correct guidelines than to detail their implementation. His document then described the powers of the governor, deputy governor, assistants, and the General Court, proposing a system where the magistrates and the General Court held one another accountable. In Chapter 2, Section 5, Cotton’s proposal guaranteed that “all the housholders in every Town shall be accounted as the free inhabitants of the Country, and shall accordingly enjoy freedom of common,” likely as an answer to the people’s demand that common-law freedoms be formally recognized.⁴⁴ The final parts of the document detailed a set of offenses punishable by death or banishment, including witchcraft, the cursing of the magistrates, treason, and heresy.⁴⁵

Cotton, in all likelihood, made an honest attempt to craft a fair set of laws under which liberty would be regulated for moral good. In his eyes, by voluntarily joining in a community and ratifying these laws, individuals exercised their liberties and thereafter subjected themselves to authority until the society collectively decided to amend the rules.⁴⁶ By proposing this document to the people, Cotton hoped to restore harmony and reaffirm Puritan legal and political values. His draft, however,

42 Cotton, “An Abstract.”

43 Cotton, “An Abstract.”

44 Cotton, “An Abstract.”

45 Cotton, “An Abstract.”

46 Shira Wolosky, “Biblical Republicanism: John Cotton’s Moses his Judicials,” *Hebrew Political Studies* 4, (2009): 104.

never received sufficient support to become law. Although it was published in England under the mistaken title of *An Abstract of the Laws and Government of Massachusetts* in 1655, “Moses his Judicials” in the end became neither the laws of Massachusetts, nor an abstract. It failed to address two of the codification movement’s major demands: first, an enumeration of the colonists’ rights and liberties, and second, abolishment of judicial discretion in light criminal and civil cases.

Despite its popularity, the codification movement saw few results for over a decade, not least because the type of legal code its proponents wanted— a detailed set of offenses and punishments, together with legal guarantees of liberties, and provisions of government— posed an arduous task. By 1641, however, the General Court had drafted a *Body of Liberties*, which addressed some of the movement’s concerns.

The *Body of Liberties* marked a shift in how the Massachusetts colonists evaluated the relationship between liberty and authority. “The free fruition of such liberties Immunities and priveledges,” its authors asserted, “hath ever bene and ever will be the tranquillitie and Stabilitie of Churches and Commonwealths. And the deniall or deprivall thereof, the disturbance if not the ruine of both.”⁴⁷ By suggesting that there were universal liberties that had to be respected for authority to properly function, the document affirmed liberty’s precedence over authority and implied that the latter should be evaluated against the former.

Technically, this doctrine did not repudiate that of earlier Puritan leaders. Submission to God’s earthly representatives does not necessarily rule out liberty, provided that it was God’s will for those liberties to be maintained. Nonetheless, the *Body of Liberties* undoubtedly placed its namesake above authority. Even if this document did little more than put existing practices into writing, its contribution in this respect should not be ignored.

In terms of the freedoms it codified, the *Body of Liberties* guaranteed all citizens the rights of life, property, and an unsullied

47 Massachusetts General Court, “Massachusetts Body of Liberties” (1641), Liberty Fund, <https://oll.libertyfund.org/page/1641-massachusetts-body-of-liberties>.

reputation. They could not lose these liberties without a fair trial.⁴⁸ The document also protected defendants against torture and repeated prosecution for the same crime (“double jeopardy”). Furthermore, it reasserted the political rights of freemen, shielded women and servants from cruelty, and imposed a minimum requirement of two witnesses to convict a citizen of a capital crime.⁴⁹ The *Body of Liberties* demonstrated the magistrates’ willingness to concede, but codification still moved slowly. It took another five years for the General Court to commission a complete draft of the code, though an incident in 1646 sped up the process.⁵⁰ That year, Robert Child, an entrepreneur with strong ties to both Massachusetts and England, sent a petition to the General Court denouncing what he identified as “arbitrary government.”⁵¹ Child’s “Remonstrance and Petitions” claimed that both the magistrates and freemen were disconnected from the average citizen. Comparing the former to the sailors on deck and the latter to the passengers below, Child suggested that common colonists were distressed, that they “[perceived] those Leaks which [would] inevitably sink this weak and ill compacted Vessel.”⁵² Child and his fellow signatories asked for the following reforms: first, the publication of a comprehensive legal code based on English common law that fixed criminal punishments; second, the admission of more citizens into political life; third, the expansion of church membership to more Christian denominations.⁵³ The second and third suggestions were interconnected, since freemen status required church membership.

Child’s “Remonstrance” went beyond the bounds of codification, asking also for a more democratic government. Its

48 Massachusetts General Court, “Massachusetts Body of Liberties.”

49 Massachusetts General Court, “Massachusetts Body of Liberties.”

50 John R. Sutton, “Stubborn Children: Law and the Socialization of Deviance in the Puritan Colonies,” *Family Law Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1981): 40, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25739276>.

51 Margaret E. Newell, “Robert Child and the Entrepreneurial Vision: Economy and Ideology in Early New England,” *The New England Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1995): 232–40, <https://doi.org/10.2307/366257>; “Remonstrance and Petition of Robert Child, et al. to Massachusetts General Court,” (1646) House of Russell, <https://www.houseofrussell.com/legalhistory/alh/docs/childremonstrance.html>.

52 Child, “Remonstrance and Petition.”

53 Child, “Remonstrance and Petition.”

language was earnest and stern, interpolated with warnings of God's anger. Its true danger, however, lay in its appeal to parliamentary authority.⁵⁴ According to the Massachusetts charter's "repugnancy" clause, the colony's autonomy was contingent on its laws remaining consistent with those of England. If Parliament became convinced that the colonial government had deviated from English custom, Massachusetts risked losing its independence. The General Court reacted swiftly, dismissing the charges brought against it and arguing that religious toleration and expanded political participation would not bring prosperity, contrary to Child's claims.⁵⁵ The signatories of the "Remonstrance" were jailed and fined. Child, however, was already planning to submit another petition with broader support and appeal his case to the English.⁵⁶ When he tried to sail there to seek help, the Court placed him under arrest and convicted him of sedition.⁵⁷ Though it had successfully neutralized Child, the General Court still felt compelled to grant some of his demands to ease internal tensions and avert potential English involvement.⁵⁸ Following the episode, it ordered the drafting of a complete code of laws. This document took a year to complete and another to publish. At last, in 1648, the "Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts" became the colony's premier legal code. It, and its subsequent revisions, endured until the era of the Dominion government in the late seventeenth century.

The "Laws and Liberties" incorporated almost the entire 1641 "Body of Liberties" in its opening chapter. Echoing the doctrine of the codification movement, its authors declared that it was insufficient "to have principles or fundamentalls, but these [were] to be drawn out into so many of their deductions as the time

54 Sutton, "Stubborn Children," 44.

55 Newell, "Robert Child," 260.

56 John Winthrop, "John Winthrop's Account of the Disposition of the Remonstrance of 1646 by the Massachusetts General Court," in *Foundations of Colonial America*, ed., W. Keith Kavenagh (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973).

57 Winthrop, "John Winthrop's Account."

58 Winthrop, "John Winthrop's Account."

and condition of that people [might] have use of.”⁵⁹ Unlike Cotton’s 1636 “Moses His Judicials,” which only enumerated the crimes punishable by death, the “Laws and Liberties” fixed punishments for various minor crimes as well. Finally, it laid out a detailed description of legal procedure, noting how witnesses were to be summoned and how many pence or shillings they were to be paid for their troubles, for instance.⁶⁰

Some scholars question how much of a legal shift the “Laws and Liberties” really represented. Citing how the prescribed punishment for each offense varied based on number of considerations, they argue that the code essentially recreated judicial discretion.⁶¹ Yet even if the “Laws and Liberties” scarcely altered existing practices, it still offered legal certainty for a set of civil liberties and ensured an at least nominally fair trial to the colony’s inhabitants.⁶² It confirmed the supremacy of liberty over authority and the supremacy of written law over the magistrates’ arbitration. Ultimately, the “Laws and Liberties” represented a fusion of English common law and Puritan ideals that sought to improve upon the former to appease both sides of the debate.

It should be recognized, though, that the passage of the “Laws and Liberties” did not lead to a general increase in colonial rights relative to those of their English brethren. For example, some English officials in 1677 pointed out that the “rebellious son” law, by which a parent’s denunciation could result in a child’s death, was an overly harsh attempt to adapt an outdated Mosaic law.⁶³

59 Massachusetts General Court, “Book of the General Laws and Liberties Governing the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts, 1647,” in *Foundations of Colonial America*, ed., W. Keith Kavenagh (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 307–50.

60 “Massachusetts General Court, “Book of the General Laws.”

61 Fernandez, “Record-Keeping,” 252.

62 There were some notable exceptions to this guarantee, including the now notorious witchcraft trials. In these cases, the rules concerning admissible evidence and witnesses were bent, resulting in a much higher chance of mistrial. For details, see Haskins, *Law and Authority*, chapter 8.

63 Edward Rawson, “Condemnation of the Massachusetts Bay Laws by the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, August 1677,” in *Foundations of Colonial America*, ed., W. Keith Kavenagh (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1973), 144–45. It should be noted that by 1677, the “Laws and Liberties” had gone through two revisions, but this particular clause has stayed constant.

Massachusetts's first legal code did not guarantee a modern or progressive framework of laws and liberties. But by putting liberty first and foremost, it offered a framework that *could* be modernized.

After the passage of the "Laws and Liberties," widespread unrest over the colony's legal and political systems gradually subsided. By 1648, Massachusetts had reinforced its representative government, granted all residents varying shares of civil and political liberties, and reinvented the relationship between liberty and authority.

The Boundaries of Liberty

With the passage of the "Laws and Liberties," Massachusetts had instituted colonial America's first bill of rights and comprehensive legal code. However, there remained clear limitations on colonists' liberties compared to what modern Americans generally enjoy. Notably, the code lacked protections for freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and equality.

While the "Body of Liberties" granted the right of citizens to petition, any attempt to criticize or defame the government or individual magistrates often invited retaliation.⁶⁴ As early as in 1637 Massachusetts adopted a law that criminalized anybody who "openly and willingly [defamed] any court of justice."⁶⁵ Similar offenses applied to defaming the standing court of assistants and the magistrates.⁶⁶ If, like the "Remonstrance and Petitions," the criticism had the potential to invoke an unfavorable response from Parliament, it would be swiftly censored.⁶⁷

Freedom of the press, a subset of freedom of speech, was also severely limited. Setting up a publication required the governor's consent. His approval was so rarely granted that the first licensed newspaper, the *Boston News-Letter*, did not appear until

64 Larry D Eldridge, "Before Zenger: Truth and Seditious Speech in Colonial America, 1607-1700," *The American Journal of Legal History* 39, no. 3 (1995): 337-58, <https://doi.org/10.2307/845791>.

65 Eldridge, "Before Zenger," 346.

66 See, for example, Duniway, *Development*, 29.

67 Haskins, *Law and Authority*, 64.

1704, and an earlier attempt to establish one was shut down.⁶⁸ Even long after 1704, news publications run by the political opposition continued to be censored.⁶⁹ Moreover, the 1648 legal code criminalized various religious creeds contrary to the established doctrine. Spreading Anabaptist doctrines— whose proponents argued against baptizing infants, was punishable by banishment, while atheism and the worship of deities other than the Christian God was punishable by death.⁷⁰ While the state did not compel conversion to Puritanism, speaking out against its central tenets was considered heresy and could result in banishment.⁷¹

Precisely because Puritan theology was so deeply intertwined with the colony's political and legal system, a challenge to it could easily become a challenge to the government's authority. This relationship partially accounts for the severity of the punishments mentioned above. In 1636, Anne Hutchinson, a Massachusetts colonist, was confronted for preaching Antinomianism, or opposition to the adoption of Mosaic Law.⁷² The leaders of the church worried that if this doctrine was allowed to spread, it would bring about “the inevitable danger of separation” (i.e. schism) of the church.⁷³ Mr. Vane, then governor of Massachusetts, agreed: “he saw that those brethren were so divided from the rest of the country in their judgement and practice... [so he concluded that] they must be sent away.”⁷⁴ Mrs. Hutchinson was banished and excommunicated in 1637. From the magistrates' perspective, had she been allowed to freely preach, political upheaval would have ensued.

Finally, Massachusetts Bay remained an unequal society. Even after the passage of the “Laws and Liberties,” the distinction

68 This was a 1690 incident regarding an unlicensed publication named *Public Occurrences*. For the governor's response, see Bradstreet, Simon, “By the Governour & Council. Whereas some have lately presumed to Print and Disperse a Pamphlet, Entituled, Publick Occurrences” (September 29, 1690), in *The News Media and the Making of America, 1730-1865*, <https://americanantiquarian.org/earlyamericannewsmedia/items/show/31>; and Duniway, *Development*, 78.

69 Duniway, *Development*, 79-81.

70 Massachusetts General Court, “Book of the General Laws,” 307-350.

71 Ibid.

72 Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson, eds., *The Puritans* (American Book Company, 1938), 120-130.

73 Miller and Johnson, *The Puritans*, 130.

74 Miller and Johnson, *The Puritans*, 135.

between freemen and common citizens remained. Massachusetts law also did not rule out slavery or servitude. “There shall never be any bond-slavery, villenage or captivitie amongst us,” the laws stipulated, but they made exceptions for “lawfull captives, taken in just warrs, and such strangers as willingly [sold] themselves, or are [were] solde to us.”⁷⁵ Per this clause, the transatlantic slave trade and captive-taking in wars with the natives remained completely legal.

Conclusion

The relationship between liberty and authority in early Massachusetts underwent a major change between the colony’s founding in 1630 and the first published legal code in 1648. Through the codification movement, the colony’s prevailing doctrine shifted from liberty deriving from authority to authority deriving from liberty.

The theological and historical factors behind this shift were complex. In the first years of the colony, Puritanism’s emphasis on moral regulation intersected with the personal beliefs of leading men like John Winthrop as well as the early colony’s political realities. This resulted in a concentration of power and a relatively arbitrary government under which liberties were seemingly left to magisterial discretion. But the political demands of freemen led to a more representative government, and colonists’ insistence on a written set of laws more in accordance with English common law led to an official recognition of their civil and political liberties. Ultimately, these developments culminated in the supremacy of fundamental liberties over authority.

While much of this debate was conducted in the language of theology and English customs, its results pushed liberty to the fore. By putting forth a bill of rights and a comprehensive legal code, Massachusetts colonists settled on a compromise agreeable to both magistrates and commoners. Although the documents they produced had notable deficiencies in the degree and scope of protections offered, they nonetheless constituted a major step towards a free and representative government.

75 Massachusetts General Court, “Book of the General Laws.”

"Male and female He created them": Martin Luther and Eunuch, 1519-1537

Luke Lamberti

In 1532, Martin Luther was having dinner with a man referred to in sources only as Master Forstemius when the topic of eunuchs arose—in particular, the fact that eunuchs could experience sexual desire even after castration. Luther responded by quipping that he would “rather have two pairs [of testicles] added than one cut off.”¹ While at first this may seem merely a humorous aside, it raises myriad questions about the nature of gender and sex in Luther’s setting. What power did Luther believe testicles held? What did it mean to be castrated in Lutheran theology? What role did the eunuch play in Luther’s worldview?

Unfortunately, the answers to these questions cannot be found in existing secondary literature. While extensive literature has documented Luther’s reflections on gender—particularly on the questions of womanhood, masculinity, marriage, and sexuality—the eunuch and castration are topics largely neglected in studies of Luther. The references to eunuchs that do exist are almost entirely metaphorical and instead deal with the well-studied issue of clerical celibacy in Lutheran theology.²

Despite this absence, the eunuch, as both a symbol and a real, contemporary concern, appeared throughout the writings of Martin Luther. Thus, this paper takes up the question of Martin

1 Martin Luther, “A Eunuch Regrets his Castration” (1532), in *Luther’s Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut T. Lehmann, and Christopher Boyd Brown, 54:176. *Luther’s Works* will hereafter be abbreviated as LW.

2 Gary Taylor, *Castration: an Abbreviated History of Western Manhood* (London: Routledge, 2000), 78-79; Jane Strohl, “Luther on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Family” in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, ed. Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and L’ubomír Batka (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 372.

Luther's views on the eunuch and castration. First, I trace the role of eunuchs and castration in Europe from late antiquity to the early modern era. Then, I consider Luther's thoughts on gender, particularly what distinguishes men from women. Next, through an analysis of Luther's writings from 1519 to 1537, I examine the eunuch as a symbolic figure – both as an allegory for a lack of wisdom and as a representation of chastity. Finally, I conclude with an examination of castrated people within Luther's writings to determine that, although Luther stated that he views eunuchs as a subset of men, he allowed for substantial gender variance within this group.

Eunuchs in Luther's World

Some early modern Europeans, Luther among them, characterized the eunuch as an Eastern phenomenon particularly tied to the context of the Ottoman Empire.³ Because of this association, eunuchs were often racialized as part of a hypersexual-Eastern harem culture. In *Castration*, Gary Taylor writes that “in the rhetoric of northwestern European Protestantism, the Italian Church became an Asiatic tyrant, and the Mediterranean was a sea of overlapping tropes of tyranny and sensuality.”⁴ Luther used the existence of eunuchs elsewhere as a means of distancing the phenomenon from himself; in a 1537 sermon on Matthew 19:12, he emphasized the fact that the word eunuch did not exist in German and situated eunuchs firmly in the realm of “kings of the Orient.”⁵ He was particularly dismayed by the existence of eunuchs within the Ottoman Empire, writing “The Turk, the devil, has brought it [eunuchs] into the world now, so that it is quite common again.”⁶ However, we should not take Luther at his word that eunuchs only existed as some geographically and conceptually distant threat. For one, eunuchs sometimes spread into Western Europe by way

3 Abdulhamit Arvas, “Early Modern Eunuchs and the Transing of Gender and Race,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 19, no. 4 (Fall 2019): 118.

4 Taylor, *Castration*, 79.

5 Martin Luther, “Matthew 18-24, Expounded in Sermons” (1537), in LW 68:17.

6 Luther, “Matthew 18-24,” 17.

of the East, an instance being when Frederick II in 1215 presented Muslim eunuchs as a wedding gift to his bride in Germany.⁷ More importantly, castration was already a practically felt and known phenomenon in early modern Europe.

Eunuchs were present in cultural documents and settings foundational to Luther's intellectual heritage. Eunuchs appeared throughout the Bible, from condemnations of them in the Book of Deuteronomy to the respected Ethiopian eunuch who converted to Christianity in the Book of Acts. Castrated men known as "spados" and their role within the family were repeatedly addressed in Roman law; distinctions in marriage and adoption rights existed based on whether one was born without testicles, lost their testicles in an accident, or was castrated forcibly later in life.⁸ Luther was surely familiar with these Roman eunuchs: one of his favorite plays was Terence's *Eunuchus*.⁹

Luther also studied early Christian thinkers who wrote about and even experienced castration. The early Christian Origen allegedly castrated himself in order to become more holy despite it being outlawed by the Council of Nicea in 325.¹⁰ Luther both disagreed with Origen's theology and believed his self-castration made him a "fool."¹¹ Like Luther, many early Christians were disgusted by castration, particularly when conducted in a pagan context. In his 426 book *City of God*, Saint Augustine of Hippo wrote about the Galli, the Roman eunuch priests of the goddess Cybele, arguing that they "violate every canon of decency in men and women."¹²

Scholars such as Mathew Kuefler have noted that medieval Christian theologians wrote about castration significantly less than late antique Christians, suggesting the diminishing prevalence of

7 Mathew S. Kuefler, "Castration and Eunuchism in the Middle Ages," in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Burlough and James A. Brundage (New York: Routledge, 2010), 280.

8 Katherine Crawford, *Eunuchs and Castrati: Disability and Normativity in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2019), 43.

9 Martin Luther, "Genesis" (1541), in LW 4:375.

10 Kuefler, "Castration and Eunuchism," 284, 299.

11 Martin Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount" (1532), in LW 21:91.

12 Saint Augustine, *City of God* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 2003).

the practice; nevertheless, castration still occurred.¹³ The practice survived as a legal punishment for bigamy, homosexuality, and rape in certain parts of medieval Western Europe.¹⁴ Extralegally, eleventh century thinker Peter Abelard was famously forcibly castrated as punishment for lying about his marriage to Heloise.¹⁵ Eunuchs also appeared in literature, including in Germany, where Heinrich Kaufringer wrote about a wife who tricked her husband into castrating himself.¹⁶ In a theological context, the question of whether castrated people could marry was a centuries-long debate within the Roman church.¹⁷ This culminated in the 1587 papal brief *Cum frequenter*, in which Sixtus V forbade castrated people from marrying.¹⁸ Thus Luther's near contemporaries were discussing practical ways of dealing with eunuchs in the realm of the family.

Beyond merely remarking on the existence of eunuchs, early modern European scholars theorized about what it meant to be castrated. Drawing from ancient thinkers, the early sixteenth-century scientific consensus was that castration fundamentally altered the nature of a man. Aristotle—whom Luther referenced by name in his writings on gender—believed that “in the case of eunuchs, the mutilation of just one part of them results in such a great alteration of their old semblance, and in close approximation to the appearance of the female.”¹⁹ Such a sentiment was reflected by physician Bartolomeo della Rocca, who wrote in the early sixteenth century that those who had “loste bothe theyr testyckes, be very much changed from the nature of menne into the nature of women.”²⁰ Physician Jean Fernel wrote that castrated people became “unmanly.”²¹ Luther himself agreed with these sentiments, calling

13 Kuefler, “Castration and Eunuchism,” 283.

14 Kuefler, “Castration and Eunuchism,” 288.

15 Taylor, *Castration*, 40.

16 Kuefler, “Castration and Eunuchism,” 290.

17 Crawford, *Eunuchs and Castrati*, 81–82.

18 Crawford, *Eunuchs and Castrati*, 70.

19 Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 26; Crawford, *Eunuchs and Castrati*, 21.

20 Crawford, *Eunuchs and Castrati*, 24.

21 Crawford, *Eunuchs and Castrati*, 25.

eunuchs “womanish.”²²

Such characterizations raise questions about what it meant to be a eunuch. These were not merely castrated men who had undergone a medical procedure, forcibly or consensually, but rather people who had potentially occupied a new, ambiguous gender position. Secondary literature has explored this distinction extensively, especially in the context of eunuchs in the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Most notably, in *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium*, Kathryn Ringrose argued that “Byzantine society classed eunuchs as what modern analysis defines as a separate gender category, one that was neither male nor female...,” sparking a scholarly debate on the gender status of Byzantine eunuchs.²³ Understanding whether eunuchs could be classified as a third gender specifically within the theology of Martin Luther requires a better understanding of what constituted the other two genders within his Christian framework.

Luther and Gender

Luther’s thoughts on gender adhered to centuries-long traditions of male supremacy. As Susan Karant-Nunn described it, in Luther’s hierarchy, “Men are higher and women lower; men are made to be fathers and women to be mothers.”²⁴ In 1527, Luther even wrote that “Women are not created for any other purpose than to serve man and to be his assistant in producing children.”²⁵ This perspective did not change over time; in 1535, Luther explicitly wrote in a lecture that the female “is inferior to the male sex.”²⁶

22 Martin Luther, “Deuteronomy” (1525), in LW 9:230.

23 Kathryn Ringrose, *The Perfect Servant: Eunuchs and the Social Construction of Gender in Byzantium* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3; Shaun Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Domitilla Campanile, Filippo Carlà-Uhink, Margherita Facella, *TransAntiquity: Cross-Dressing and Transgender Dynamics in the Ancient World* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

24 Susan C. Karant-Nunn, “The Masculinity of Martin Luther: Theory, Practicality, and Humor” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ed. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2008), 170.

25 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 18.

26 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 26.

Luther's beliefs about women were not unique in any of these cases, although his voice was a particularly influential one.²⁷

Additionally, Luther's conception of gender was thoroughly binary, as evidenced by his statement, "Male and female He created them. Even though this statement is made principally about human beings, nevertheless it is to be assigned to all creatures in the world, to those that fly through the sky, to the fishes of the sea, to the animals of the land."²⁸ Luther engaged in a sort of biological determinism surrounding his conception of the gender binary, going so far as to say that "Men have broad chests and narrow hips; therefore they have wisdom. Women have narrow chests and broad hips. Women ought to be domestic..."²⁹ In "Luther and Women," Merry Wiesner-Hanks highlighted Luther's repeated usage of the word *natural* in describing his idealized gender roles: what was natural was what was right.³⁰

Changing genders willingly was thereby practically and morally impossible to Luther. In a 1522 treatise he wrote that "I cannot make myself a woman, nor can you make yourself a man; we do not have that power."³¹ Again, in 1527, he remarked that "A man has to stay as he is and cannot be a woman, and the other way around... It does not stand within their power to alter such things."³² Why Luther felt the need to repeatedly stress to his audience that they were not allowed to change their genders is unclear; perhaps he was more aware of gender variance within early modern Europe than is previously believed. Curiously, in 1527, Luther also wrote that "God has the power to do just as he pleases. He could make a man a woman and the reverse."³³ It is likely that Luther was merely using the unthinkable to prove the supreme power of God, but he may have also implied that shifting gender was possible if adhering to the will of God.

27 Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Luther and Women: The death of the two Marys," in *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics, and Patriarchy*, ed. James Obelkevich and Lyndal Roper (New York: Routledge, 1987), 305.

28 Karant-Nunn, "The Masculinity of Martin Luther," 170.

29 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 28.

30 Wiesner-Hanks, "Luther and Women," 297.

31 Martin Luther, "The Estate of Marriage" (1522), in LW 45:17.

32 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 96.

33 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 18.

Though much of Luther's thoughts conformed to the sixteenth-century norm, it is useful to discuss what was subversive in Luther's writings on gender, sexuality, and marriage. In *Luther on Women*, Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks argued that Luther unusually believed sexual desire to be equally potent in both men and women.³⁴ Additionally, Karant-Nunn highlighted that Luther did not recommend that men beat their wives and generally suggested gentle treatment, although Luther attributed his own gentleness to the fact that women are "the weakest vessel."³⁵ According to Wiesner-Hanks, Luther was certainly not a feminist on a theological level; breaking with a medieval period that elevated some of the more feminine aspects of God, Luther depicted God as "male and transcendent, not androgynous and immanent," implying that God was male and men were more holy.³⁶

Most significantly, Luther famously broke with Roman church tradition on the question of marriage, rejecting clerical celibacy. Luther stated in 1527 that the command to "be fruitful and multiply" is "a clap of thunder against the pope's law and liberates all priests, monks, and nuns to get married."³⁷ Jane Strohl argued that Luther's ideas on marriage evolved over time, with his early writings holding that marriage was merely the best way to avoid sin and his later writings establishing marriage as something more, a divine vocation.³⁸ Of course, Luther's conception of marriage was still based on the inferiority of women. He advised pastors in 1529 that "Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also are wives subject to their husband in all things."³⁹ Consistently, however, marriage was characterized as the best option for both men and women.⁴⁰ This was primarily because marriage produces offspring: Luther wrote that the "greatest good in married life, that which makes all suffering and labor worthwhile, is that God grants offspring, and

34 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 137.

35 Karant-Nunn, "The Masculinity of Martin Luther," 174; Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 95.

36 Wiesner-Hanks, "Luther and Women," 304.

37 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 96.

38 Strohl, "Luther on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Family," 371.

39 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 117.

40 Wiesner-Hanks, "Luther and Women," 298.

commands that they be brought up to worship and serve him.”⁴¹
 For Luther, literal reproduction was important, but so was the reproduction of faith within one’s children.

The eunuch thus violated many of Luther’s core beliefs about gender, sexuality, and marriage. Eunuchs, who even Luther characterized as “womanish,” existed in contrast to a biological determinist gender binary. Eunuchs sometimes did not experience the sexual desire Luther deemed fundamental to manhood. Eunuchs, through the act of castration, crossed gender boundaries during their lifetimes. Eunuchs could not participate in reproduction, Luther’s “greatest good.” Despite this transgressive nature, Luther frequently invoked eunuchs in both a symbolic and literal sense to communicate messages of theological import.

The Symbolic Eunuch and Luther

When Luther used the word eunuch, he was not always referring to a castrated person who occupied an ambiguous gender role. Rather, he used the word eunuch symbolically, to mean anything from someone who is impotent from birth to a celibate man to anyone without a strong command of Scripture. This is taking after Matthew 19:12, which states:

“There are eunuchs who have been made so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.”

Two of the three types of eunuch mentioned in the verse are not actually eunuchs; they are merely born impotent or granted the gift of chastity by God. As such, Luther interpreted the eunuch as an allegory.

For instance, in a 1519 allegorical interpretation of Deuteronomy 23:1, which stated that “He whose testicles are crushed or whose male member is cut off shall not enter the assembly of the Lord,” Luther argued that “the two testicles are certainly the two testaments.” He did not offer much justification

41 Martin Luther, “The Estate of Marriage” (1522), in LW 45:46.

and interpreted the verse as requiring that those without a command of the New and Old Testaments not “enter the assembly of the Lord.” Later, in 1525, Luther interpreted the eunuch in this verse as one “who has no knowledge of the Sacred Scripture” with the testes symbolizing “the Law and the Prophets.”⁴² In both cases, Luther referenced the testes as loci of wisdom. This was within the norm for Luther’s time period; from antiquity onward, semen was viewed as a central source of what made masculinity superior – including the ability to think well.⁴³ In this context, mapping a lack of wisdom onto the image of the eunuch reinforced Luther’s notions of male supremacy.

The 1519 interpretation of Deuteronomy 23:1 was written in the greater context of Luther’s other discussion of biblical verse Galatians 5:12, which said, “I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves.” Luther took after St. Jerome in interpreting mutilation as referring to self castration in this verse.⁴⁴ Specifically, reading this verse in its context of a discussion on circumcision within the Epistle to the Galatians, Luther argued that Paul was calling for those who wanted to be circumcised to “also mutilate themselves and be eunuchs” such that they “are unable to beget spiritual children” as “the members of the ungodly...should be cut off because they plant a foreign seed and an adulterous word.”⁴⁵ While Luther was not actually calling for people who supported circumcision to be castrated, he was suggesting that those who disagreed with him on this issue should not have been allowed to reproduce spiritually– to spread their ideas to others. This metaphor adhered to Luther’s ideas about literal reproduction’s primary purpose being to raise children to be good Christians. Additionally, Luther characterized semen, even if only metaphorically, as a powerful transmitter of ideas, once again reflecting a sense of male supremacy.

In 1532, Luther referenced eunuchs in his analysis of

42 Martin Luther, “Deuteronomy” (1525), in LW 9:235.

43 Joyce E. Salisbury, “Gendered Sexuality,” in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Routledge, 2010), 82.

44 Martin Luther, “Galatians” (1519), in LW 27:344.

45 Martin Luther, “Galatians,” 346.

Matthew 5:30, which said, "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell." In his commentary, Luther focused on sin in sexual and romantic contexts. Luther used this verse to encourage marriage as a manner of avoiding lustful gazing, a form of adultery in his eyes, and discouraged actually cutting off one's hand or plucking out one's eye.⁴⁶ Luther compared the metaphorical removal of body parts in this verse to discussion of castration in Matthew 19:12. Namely, Luther suggested that "spiritual eunuchs" existed: those who had metaphorically "castrated themselves for the kingdom of heaven."⁴⁷ Interestingly, Luther partially told his audience to follow the lead of the spiritual eunuchs, advising that "Here, too, we should tear out our eyes, hands, and heart spiritually, and let it all go so that it does not offend us. Yet we should live in this secular sphere, where we cannot get along without any of these things."⁴⁸ This division of the sacred and the secular was common in Luther's writings, most famously in his two kingdoms doctrine. This was a particularly fascinating framing in the context of the eunuch, however, and suggested that Luther maintained at least some secular value in the testicles and reproduction. These did not exist purely for the sacred in Luther's theology, as it was in the secular sphere that men could not "get along" without their testicles.

Luther went on to discuss spiritual eunuchs in more depth, arguing that "A heart that has resolved to live chastely without marriage, if it has the grace it needs, has made itself a eunuch for the sake of the kingdom of heaven; it does not have to do any harm to the organs of its body."⁴⁹ In accordance with Matthew 19:12, Luther presented this as a valid way of life, although he typically condemned vows of chastity as unholy and unrealistic.⁵⁰ Spiritual eunuchs were the rare exception Luther acknowledged in his typical condemnations of those who avoid marriage, but he acknowledged the exception all the same. How one knew whether they had been

46 Martin Luther, "The Sermon on the Mount" (1532), in LW 21:90.

47 Luther, "Sermon on the Mount," 90.

48 Luther, "Sermon on the Mount," 90.

49 Luther, "Sermon on the Mount," 91.

50 Strohl, "Luther on Marriage, Sexuality, and the Family," 370.

graced with the gift of chastity or were making an invalid vow was not specified by Luther.

In 1537, Luther once again wrote on Matthew 19:12, this time in great depth. Luther again stated that he was in favor of those “who castrate themselves spiritually.”⁵¹ He clarified that “If you castrate yourself in faith, however, to enable you to serve the Christian church, the Gospel, and your preaching office all the better, that would be allowed.”⁵² In his discussion of castration, it was clear that he saw this metaphorical castration as a lesser evil than actual castration. Regarding actual castration, Luther explicitly condemned castrated eunuchs, asserting that “No one should corrupt the male body and take away what they have been given naturally by birth, leaving them unfit for marriage.”⁵³ This “corruption,” and Luther’s thoughts on it, merit further discussion.

The Literal Eunuch and Luther

Luther did not enjoy preaching on castration in a literal sense. He described a sermon that dealt heavily with the topic as “not a very pleasant sermon,” for instance, characterizing castration as a “wickedness.”⁵⁴ But he was forced to grapple with eunuchs and castration anyway, likely because they are mentioned repeatedly in the Bible, most prominently in Matthew 19:12. One piece which deals heavily with Matthew 19:12 is Luther’s 1522 treatise entitled “The Estate of Marriage.” It was here that some of his most explicit delineations of gender arise, particularly in the first section, in which he considered “which persons may enter into marriage with one another.”⁵⁵ Recall that Luther argued that “we may be assured that God divided mankind into two classes, namely male and female” and that “each one of us must have the kind of body God has created for us. . . I cannot make myself a woman, nor can you make yourself a man; we do not have that power.”⁵⁶ Fundamental, then,

51 Martin Luther, “Matthew 18-24, Expounded in Sermons” (1537), in LW 68:17.

52 Luther, “Matthew 18-24,” 19.

53 Luther, “Matthew 18-24,” 17.

54 Luther, “Matthew 18-24,” 17.

55 Martin Luther, “The Estate of Marriage” (1522), in LW 45:17.

56 Luther, “The Estate of Marriage,” 17.

to Luther's conception of gender was the body; one's body signified their gender. He continued with a discussion of what it meant to be fruitful and multiply: that every man was obligated to engage in a sexual partnership with a woman through the estate of marriage. He wrote that "whatever is a man must have a woman and whatever is a woman must have a man."⁵⁷

Yet, very soon Luther was forced to confront an exception: the eunuch. Luther clarified that these three categories of eunuchs described in Matthew 19:12 are respectively made up of the impotent, those who have been castrated, and those called by God to remain celibate. Both "symbolic" and "literal" eunuchs were included within this umbrella term. Referencing this verse, Luther stated that "Apart from these three groups, let no man presume to be without a spouse." Here and elsewhere, Luther referenced the eunuch as a subcategory of man, but according to his earlier definition of man, this must have been incorrect, particularly for the subcategory of eunuch that was castrated. The two primary criteria Luther established for gender only a few paragraphs before were requirements of the body and the normative necessity of marriage: "whatever is a man must have a woman." Castrated eunuchs met neither of these criteria, having differing genitalia and not being required to marry, according to Luther. And, as was seen in the earlier treatment of Luther's thoughts on gender, eunuchs violated more than just these two requirements.

Within this 1522 treatise, Luther was forced to evade these contradictions. Ironically, he wrote that "For as you cannot solemnly promise that you will not be a man or a woman, so you cannot promise that you will not produce seed or multiply, unless you belong to one of the three categories mentioned above."⁵⁸ While it was clear that Luther was explicitly exempting the three categories of eunuch only from "multiplying" and not from binary gender, placing these two commands in such close proximity only highlighted how intimately tied reproduction and gender were for Luther in a way that underscored the failure of the gender binary to encapsulate the eunuch.

Elsewhere, Luther did try to fit the eunuch within his

57 Luther, "The Estate of Marriage," 18.

58 Luther, "The Estate of Marriage," 19.

conception of binary gender. In his 1525 interpretation of Deuteronomy 23:1, Luther argued that eunuchs were allowed to exist within the church but not hold office.⁵⁹ Notably, Luther's justification for this claim was that "such men are rather effeminate and womanish, but an office requires a man upright in administration."⁶⁰ Here, Luther categorized the eunuch as a subcategory of man, though a particularly "womanish" one. In this interpretation of Deuteronomy 23:1, Luther appeared to be responding to real people whom he deemed unfit for church office in the present tense. He was concerned with real eunuchs holding real offices – with the literal eunuch.

Luther thus had to elaborate on his understanding of what being a literal eunuch entailed. Luther was fixated on eunuchs' relationships with women as a defining trait. In "The Estate of Marriage," he wrote that "...they are nevertheless not free from evil desire. They seek the company of women more than before and are quite effeminate."⁶¹ In his 1532 analysis of Matthew 5:30, Luther included the detail that "such eunuchs or castrates are more ardent and loving toward women than anyone else, which is why great kings have liked to have such people as chamberlains."⁶² In his sermon on Matthew 19:12, he reiterated this point, stating that "These are unworthy of women, but they really like women" and that "they have an extraordinary love for women."⁶³ Luther was concerned, above all, with eunuchs' non-sexual interactions with women. It is the one trait that united each of his descriptions of eunuchs. While friendships between men and women were considered valid in Christian cultures dating back to late antiquity (and Luther himself maintained friendships with women), extensive relationships with women clearly distinguished eunuchs in Luther's view from men as he typically conceived of them.⁶⁴

Why was Luther so invested in eunuchs' friendships with

59 Luther, "Deuteronomy," 230.

60 Luther, "Deuteronomy," 230.

61 Luther, "The Estate of Marriage," 21.

62 Luther, "Sermon on the Mount," 92.

63 Luther, "Matthew 18-24," 17.

64 Rebecca Joyce Frey, "Freundlichkeit Gottes: Friendship in the Biblical Translation and Theology of Martin Luther," (PhD diss., Yale University, 1999), 25; Frey, "Freundlichkeit Gottes," 9.

women? In a 1524 sermon, Luther wrote that “A woman does not have a better friend than her husband.”⁶⁵ This was further bolstered by his other writings on the subject; in a 1519 sermon he argued that “a wife is created to be a companionate helper in all things,” and later added that “the love of husband and wife is, or should be, the greatest and purest love of all loves.”⁶⁶ Perhaps Luther was so interested in eunuchs’ friendships with women because he believed that they usurped the most holy relationship in a woman’s life: her marriage. While Luther viewed eunuchs as sexually non-threatening because of their castration, he was confused throughout his writings by their gender variance and their exemption from the gendered institution of marriage. Eunuchs’ relationships with women were particularly perturbing to him.

Conclusion

In his sermon on Matthew 19:12, Luther related a curious anecdote. He said that he “knew someone who wanted to help himself with a vow. He thought he would be fine by means of castration, but later confessed that he had never felt burning desire so great as when he had done that.”⁶⁷ The veracity of this anecdote was unclear. Perhaps it was merely a way for Luther to bolster his long-standing position that vows of chastity were not advisable for most people. But even the suggestion that Luther personally knew someone who castrated himself, and that Luther was willing to admit to this relationship, exemplified Luther’s interest in eunuchs, castrated people, and the practical ramifications of their existence.

Luther was thinking about gender variance in the form of eunuchs and castration, both as a metaphor through which to consider theological problems and as a literal phenomenon. Through an examination of eunuchs in early modern Europe, Luther’s beliefs about binary gender, and the eunuch and castration in Luther’s writings, this paper has demonstrated that the eunuch presented a contradiction in Luther’s own time and nuanced his beliefs on gender, womanhood, marriage, friendship, and celibacy.

65 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks, *Luther on Women*, 94.

66 Ibid, 90.

67 “Matthew 18-24, Expounded in Sermons” (1537), in LW 68:18.

Gender variance existed in early modern Europe, even in the unexpected location of Martin Luther's theology.

A Wolf in (Homespun) Sheep's Clothing: Costuming the Performance of American Equality

Ingrid Chen

First let the loom each lib'ral thought engage,
Its labours growing with the growing age;
Then true utility with taste allied,
Shall make our homespun garbs our nation's pride.
– “On the Industry of the United States America,”
David Humphrey

In many stores today an abundance of products are proudly emblazoned with “Made in America” stickers. Many Americans take pride in purchasing and using domestically produced goods. In the Revolutionary era, however, the conscious decision to purchase American-made goods – particularly textiles – was not just a sign of support for the American economy but a politically symbolic choice that was an explicit rejection of Britishness in the colonies. In the spirit of a revolution that had been spurred by taxation on colonial consumption, American sartorial and material culture became prominent staging grounds for the war and its ideologies. Revolutionary men, women, and children across social classes came together to manufacture and wear “homespun” clothing and shamed their neighbors for failures to do the same.

On the surface, the homespun movement – like the Revolution at large – was a democratic, equalizing campaign, motivated by the principles of independence and liberty. It stood for American unity just as much as it stood for freedom from British tyranny. Just as with the Revolution, however, it remains a question for debate whether this movement was truly transformative

or merely a repackaging of colonial America's systemic power dynamics. The egalitarian, inclusive, liberal language of the homespun movement belied its role in preserving the cultural, economic, and social superiority of America's elites. Where wealthy colonists had previously displayed status through British goods, they adopted a more homegrown air that was still, nonetheless, a performance. Though its advocates claimed otherwise, the homespun movement did not overturn the English social and commercial order.

Even before the homespun movement, Americans' sartorial choices had implications far beyond the purely aesthetic. In colonial America, the wealthy used their dress as a class marker; they also sought to emulate British fashion in both clothing and in lifestyle. A key emulable fashion was the cultivation of gentility, a "conspicuous and self-conscious style that emphasized personal displays of harmony, grace, delicacy, and refinement."¹ In practice, this formula encouraged the consumption and display of luxury British goods. The American gentry scrambled to get their hands on British clothing, furniture, and teapots. American colonists, including James Madison, read newspapers like *The Spectator*, a British periodical that provided guidance on how to properly behave oneself in polite company, among other etiquette manuals.² The cultivation of gentility was, in many ways, the cultivation of Britishness – in appearance, behavior, and values.

The study of cultural history indicates that consumption choices both affected and were affected by political dynamics in addition to social ones. What, then, was the political ideology underlying the Anglicization of American consumer culture? Cultural historian Michal Rozbicki ties consumption practices to societal structures: emulating the characteristics of the English

1 Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 312. Epigraph quotation is David Humphreys, "A Poem on the Industry of the United States of America," in *The Miscellaneous Works of David Humphreys* (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1804), 102.

2 "The Spectator," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, November 7, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Spectator-British-periodical-1711-1712>; Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 39-48.

gentry was an attempt to reproduce the hierarchy of the Old World in a relatively non-hierarchical colonial society.³ Luxury goods became a status symbol that the colonial elite guarded jealously; they constantly policed their use among both fellow elites and the commoners who might try to enter their ranks by adopting elite consumption habits. Dr. Alexander Hamilton, a genteel Maryland doctor, believed that “if Luxury was to be confined to the Rich alone, it might prove a great national good.”⁴ A 1711 article in *The Spectator* described a man “of that Species who are generally distinguished by the Title of Projectors” whose pretension of gentility was revealed by “the Shabbiness of his Dress, the Extravagance if his Conceptions, and the Hurry of his Speech.”⁵ The ideology of the consumer revolution was one that reinforced class divisions by clearly delineating the haves and have-nots according to the rightful possession of fine goods.

Using material goods rather than title to confer privilege had the dangerous consequence of making the class division ambiguous, that is, of opening the door for common people to assume a genteel identity and encroach on the exclusive leisure of the elite. In his *Itinerarium*, Dr. Hamilton documented encountering a “wild and rustic” family in upstate New York who had filled their plain log cottage with fine items such as “a looking-glass with a painted frame” and “a set of stone tea dishes and a teapot” – items that he and his companions declared were “too splendid for such a cottage” and “ought to be sold to buy wool to make yarn.”⁶ Conversely, Americans of far more common origins than those who considered the right to sartorial supremacy theirs alone saw in the burgeoning consumer revolution a chance to express their aspirations. Higher prices for American produce, along with stable prices for British manufactures and increased access to credit, had increased colonists’

3 Michal Rozbicki, *Culture and Liberty in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 56.

4 Alexander Hamilton, quoted in Taylor, 313.

5 Joseph Addison, “No. 31 – Thursday, April 5, 1711” in *The Spectator: A New Edition*, ed. Henry Morley (Glasgow, Manchester, and New York: George Routledge and Sons, 1891).

6 Alexander Hamilton, *Itinerarium*, ed. Albert Bushnell Har (St. Louis: W.K. Bixby, 1907), http://nc-chap.org/resources/archives/1744_alexander_hamilton.pdf, 78.

purchasing power. The expanding opportunities for common people to possess goods like those of their social betters created controversy, not equality; those at the top of the social ladder saw it as an “inappropriate grasping, a sign of disorder, the corruption of bodies and politics.”⁷

Thus, changes in consumption preferences, combined with increased purchasing power, fueled a full-blown consumer revolution. Colonial imports per capita increased by fifty percent between 1720 and 1770; their aggregate value more than tripled between 1700 and 1750.⁸ Textiles made up half of these imports.⁹ By the outbreak of the Revolution, the American textile market had become critical to economies on both sides of the Atlantic, and American consumption of British goods sustained the profits and growth of British manufacturing.

As discontentment with British governance grew, so did the realization that imported goods provided powerful political leverage for what the British saw as an otherwise politically impotent backwater. As Benjamin Rush, president of the United Company of Philadelphia for Promoting American Manufactures, argued, “A people who are entirely dependent upon foreigners for food or clothes must always be subject to them.”¹⁰ In response to the Townshend Acts of 1767 and 1768, Americans across the social spectrum took up the cause of making their own clothes, “breaking flax and shearing sheep, and then transforming the raw fibers into cloth through a chain of tasks mobilizing the entire

7 David Waldstreicher, “Why Thomas Jefferson and African Americans Wore Their Politics on Their Sleeves: Dress and Mobilization between American Revolutions” in *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic*, ed. Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, David Waldstreicher (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 80.

8 Taylor, *American Colonies*, 311.

9 Michael Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies: From Homespun to Ready-Made,” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (2001): 1557, <https://academic.oup.com/ahr/article/106/5/1553/190112>.

10 Benjamin Rush, “Action Taken by Citizens of Philadelphia to Establish Manufactories of Woolen, Cotton, and Linen,” in *Principles and Acts of the Revolution in America, Or, An Attempt to Collect and Preserve Some of the Speeches, Orations, & Proceedings*, ed. Hezekiah Niles (United States: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1776).

family.”¹¹ In 1766, Benjamin Franklin stood before the House of Commons and testified as to whether Parliament ought to repeal the Stamp Act, which had caused so much pushback from the colonists. Asked whether he thought cloth from England was still “absolutely necessary” to them, he replied, “No, by no means absolutely necessary... I am of opinion, that before their old cloths are worn out, they will have new ones of their own making.”¹² Societies formed to promote American manufacturing; states passed non-importation legislation. What resulted was not just an upending of the pre-war economic order but a dramatic shift in the social attitudes that colonists sought to reflect in their everyday comportment. Gone was the opulent commercialism of the Anglo-centric consumer revolution; in its place was simple, homespun linen and wool.

Similar to Jefferson’s veneration of the yeoman farmer a few decades later, the elevation of homespun textiles to a cultural symbol reflected a preoccupation with self-sufficiency and independence, the antithesis of Britain’s unfettered commercialism and corruption. A non-importation agreement from Providence declared that “Luxury and Extravagance, in the Use of British and foreign Manufactures and Superfluities...if persisted in, must alone inevitably reduce the greatest part of its Inhabitants to irretrievable Distress and Ruin.”¹³ A homespun economy made up of independent householders was the remedy for imperial opulence. Putatively, this was an alternative commercial logic founded not on shameless capitalism but rather on self-sufficiency and republican virtue.¹⁴ “The skin of a son of liberty will not feel the coarseness of a homespun shirt! The resolution of a Pennsylvanian ‘should be made of sterner stuff’ than to be frighted at the bug bear—fashion!” wrote someone in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* under the pseudonym “A Freeborn American.”¹⁵ True patriots took pride in the roughness of their homespun linen and

11 Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies,” 1553.

12 “The Examination of Doctor Benjamin Franklin, before an August Assembly, relating to the Repeal of the Stamp-Act, &c.” (pamphlet, Boston: Edes and Gill, 1766), https://www.masshist.org/database/viewer.php?item_id=251&mode=large&img_step=1&&pid=2, 9.

13 “Luxury and Extravagance,” (Pamphlet, Providence: December 2, 1767).

14 Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies,” 1564.

15 *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), July 19, 1770, quoted in Zakim, 1555.

wool garments – fine silks had come to represent the immorality associated with tyranny and greed.

Implicit in this novel outpouring of sartorial republicanism was a newfound egalitarianism. In publicly rebuking England's opulence, elite Americans seemed to renounce the exclusive liberties they had once enjoyed. Every patriot – whether he was a genteel planter or an “average Joe” – donned the same rough clothes – united and equalized under the banner of freedom. In 1768, at the “House of a Gentleman of the first Rank and Figure in the Town,” a number of Bostonian women celebrated the New Year dressed entirely in homespun manufactures. In the same year, the graduating classes of Harvard and Yale wore homespun at their commencement.¹⁶ In short, it became fashionable to be unfashionable, forsaking British broadcloth for homely linen and considering private interests “as [in]distinct from those of the public.”¹⁷ The “ideologically seductive political language” they had chosen to justify revolution – the credo of self-evident equality – demanded it.¹⁸ If American colonists ought to be entitled to the same rights as British citizens in the old country – if they ought to be equal – then the realities of waging a full-scale revolution demanded that this include the common man, too.

The first fractures in homespun's revolutionary costume appeared out of dual conceptions. As material culture historian Michael Zakim has argued, “domestic” simultaneously connoted the household and the nation: the Revolutionary fathers saw household order and virtue as the fundamental basis of the republic. Nonetheless, there remained an obvious difference between the coarse fabrics that were truly homemade and factory-made textiles, a difference that revealed the stubborn persistence of the pre-war order.

In January of 1789, a “Philadelphia Mechanic” wrote to the editor of the *Federal Gazette* to propose that “the gentlemen who are, or shall be, elected to serve in [Congress]...as also the president and vice-president, should all be clothed in complete

16 *Boston Gazette* (Boston), January 18, 1768, quoted in Zakim, 1555; Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies,” 1555.

17 *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia), May 12, 1768, quoted in Zakim, 1556.

18 Rozbicki, *Culture and Liberty*, 81.

suits of American manufactured cloth” for their inauguration ceremonies.¹⁹ It seems Washington himself took this to heart, for later that month he wrote to Henry Knox,

Having learnt from an Advertisement in the New York Daily Advertiser, that there were superfine American Broad Cloths to be sold at No. 44 in Water Street; I have ventured to trouble you with the Commission of purchasing enough to make me a suit of Cloaths... If the *choice* of these cloths should have been disposed off in New York—quere could they be had from Hartford in Connecticut where I perceive a Manufactory of them is established.

Three months later, he indeed appeared in a suit of the Hartford Company’s best cloth, along with American-made silk stockings and plain silver shoe buckles.²⁰

The fine manufactures of the Hartford Company were assigned the same political meaning as home-produced linen, yet the fine appearance clearly communicated something else. Those who had once embraced British commerce again sought out equivalent goods that could only be described with the broadest meaning of “homespun.” But if the Revolution called for conspicuous rejection of opulence, then the conscious choice of choosing textiles that were visibly superior rendered the homespun movement meaningless. The Revolutionary ideology that had professed inclusive liberty was a “fighting ideology, not an objective description of social reality.”²¹ By conspicuously distinguishing themselves from the masses with their clothing, the American ruling class again attempted to create a uniquely American aristocracy. This aristocracy would speak the language of equality, pandering to common people and the ideology that had won them the war while simultaneously signaling their perpetual superiority through the display of fine “homespun” goods.

19 A Philadelphia Mechanic, “To the Editor of the Federal Gazette,” *Federal Gazette* (Philadelphia, PA), January 7, 1789, <https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/readex/doc?p=EANX&docref=image/v2%3A102260FB21316FC0%40EANX-102DEB7F28A8587B%402374486-102DEB7F9964BCAD%402-102DEB80513314AD%40to%2Bthe%2BEditor%2Bof%2Bthe%2BFederal%2BGazette>.

20 Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies,” 1568.

21 Rozbicki, *Culture and Liberty*, 79.

The British commercial order was also recreated through a push towards what Democratic Republicans would later decry as the European business model – the antithesis of the yeoman homesteader. The self-starters of America came to realize that “virtuous self-sacrifice did not rest on the effacement of private desires... but on their successful integration with public needs.”²² Thus, homespun became a business venture. One newspaper advertised that Daniel Mause, a Philadelphia hosier, had “lately erected a Number of Looms, for the manufacture of thread and cotton stockings and other kinds of Hosiery of any size or quality, hoping the good people of this and the neighboring Provinces will encourage this, his undertaking, at a time when AMERICA calls for the endeavors of Her Sons.”²³ The elites of this newly formed nation pushed away British sartorial and economic hegemony with one hand while trying to create their own power structure with the other.

When ascribed to tangible items so charged with status, the different interpretations of homespun could not help but give rise to social difference – perhaps most interestingly in regard to how slave owners permitted their slaves to take part. Even at the height of the movement, slaves continued to wear imported goods as slave owners wore homespun. Like the social inferiors of the consumer revolution, slaves’ appropriation of used clothing from whites was seen as “unsuccessful attempts by an inferior group to imitate white ways,” a pitiful attempt to reclaim a sartorial identity that did not rightfully belong to them.²⁴ These claims ignored the fact that the homespun goods prized by whites were manufactured by slaves. One planter who came to the capitol in a suit made entirely by one of his slaves became the “envy of Williamsburg,” rejecting even a silk suit offered in exchange for his homespun. White women across the colonies took up the ideology and performance of the homespun movement, but the burden fell on enslaved women – and the reordering of their lives to include more clothing production –

22 Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies,” 1563.

23 Zakim, “Sartorial Ideologies,” 1564.

24 Waldstreicher, “Politics on Their Sleeves,” 88.

to compensate for the trade deficit in textiles left behind by Britain.²⁵ Thus, the patriotically egalitarian ideology of the homespun movement was predicated on the continued exploitation of Black slaves and their conscious exclusion from the cultural space of the United States.

As with much of the American Revolution, the common people who had supported the homespun movement so fervently came to find that it, too, was a performance that clothed the old social order in disguise. As much as American elites publicly professed their worship of homespun textiles, they still chased the fine fabric – and the status that it connoted – of the prewar era. But because it was no longer fashionable to wear silk, they sought out superior versions of the clothes that they had insisted signaled equality within their new republic. Their new republican values were molded to compliment a world where they remained at the forefront of America’s cultural, economic, and social spaces. Though it had not come to complete fruition, the ethos of the homespun movement is one that momentarily united many Americans across many lines, and at least in part caused Americans to win the Revolutionary War.

25 Linda Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America: The Colonial Williamsburg Collection* (Yale University Press, 2002), 96; Waldstreicher, “Politics on Their Sleeves,” 88, 90.

Sophiatown: City of Night and Starlight

Samiya Rana

Introduction

Just ten minutes outside of white Johannesburg there was a bustling city, its streets stained with the blood of desperation, its air perfumed with the sweetness of jazz. In Sophiatown, Africans, Indians, Chinese, and Coloured people lived together in harmony, united in their struggle for survival. It was in the run-down streets of Sophiatown that jazz musicians like Dolly Rathebe, The Pebble Shakers, and Miriam Makeba entered the limelight and gave voice to the lives of Black South Africans. From the ‘slum’ of Sophiatown came writers like William Modisane, Don Mattera, and Trevor Huddleson, some of whom wrote for the iconic *Drum* magazine – a celebration of Black culture in the white supremacist context of apartheid.

Sophiatown was more than just a place. The very existence of Sophiatown was a challenge to the logic of apartheid. Its vibrant streets were rich with racial mixing and its cultural scene evinced Black excellence and resilience against a backdrop of extreme violence and poverty. It is perhaps partly because of what Sophiatown represented that the South African government ordered its destruction in February of 1955. The Native Resettlement Board sent two thousand policemen armed with stun guns and rifles to remove Sophiatown’s inhabitants and resettle them in the suburb of Meadowlands. Sophiatown was renamed Triomf, meaning the successful termination of a struggle – or a fitting title given the demolition of Black South Africa’s cultural hub by the apartheid regime.

Today Sophiatown is mostly evoked to recall the tragedy of its demolition, but before its destruction it held a special place in South African history. This paper will illustrate the life

of Sophiatown before its demolition in all its bloody, melodic hues. It will recover Sophiatown as a site of both the horrors of apartheid and the persistence of Black artistry and interracial bonds. Sophiatown tore to shreds the rulebook of the apartheid regime.

The Birth of A City

Sophiatown sprung up unexpectedly, as a flowering weed in the crack of a concrete sidewalk. In 1897 Mr. Tobiansky bought a large plot of land on the six-thousand-foot plateau of Johannesburg. He lovingly named it Sophia, after his wife. To the streets, he bestowed the names of his many children, Edith, Gerty, Bertha, Toby, and Sol.¹ As houses were erected and an empty playfield was set aside for children, the town showed the promise of a popular new suburb. That all changed when the Town Council decided that a growing Johannesburg needed sewage-disposal facilities. Sophiatown was regarded as the perfect place to build them.²

It was after this sewage-disposal system was added that the government deemed Sophiatown an appropriate place to house Black South African laborers. As these workers flocked to Johannesburg to fill the growing labor demand of the First World War, the Western Native Township was erected in Sophiatown. The Township was built to accommodate 3,000 families and was surrounded by a tall iron fence. It was then that Mr. Tobiansky found himself in an area with a non-European majority and began to sell land to Black, Coloured, and Asian people. As Johannesburg stretched and expanded, so too did its shadow – the dark, vibrant streets of Sophiatown growing ever more crowded. To Afrikaners, Sophiatown was little more than a filthy slum, home to the most vicious of criminals. To others, it was far more. As archbishop and Sophiatown resident Trevor Huddleston described it, “There is very little of the slum about Sophiatown. It is a human-dwelling place. It is as if old Sophia Tobiansky herself were gathering her great family

1 “An Introduction to Sophiatown,” *South African History Online*, n.d., <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/introduction-sophiatown>.

2 Trevor Huddleston, *Naught for Your Comfort* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1977), 90.

about her, watching over them before they slept.”³

It is in that human dwelling place that this story is born. The history of Sophiatown retains the reverberations of repression, devastation, and resistance. The following biographies will give insight into three elements of life in Sophiatown: its violence and poverty, multicultural community, and incredible artwork.

Sketches of A Town

Bloke Modisane



Fig. 1 Bloke Modisane.⁴

Bloke Modisane was a writer, reporter, and theater and music critic for *Drum* magazine, a publication on Black urban culture that became important for African nationalist movements.⁵ He also worked as an actor and filmmaker. He appeared in many English shows and lectured on African culture to American audiences.⁶

3 Huddleston, *Naught for Your Comfort*, 92.

4 Sipiwo Mahala, “‘Something in Me Died, a Piece of Me Died, with the Dying of Sophiatown . . .,’” *The Sunday Times*, January 23, 2023, <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/opinion-and-analysis/insight/2023-01-22-something-in-me-died-a-piece-of-me-died-with-the-dying-of-sophiatown/>.

5 “Drum Magazine,” *South African History Online*, March 22, 2011, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/drum-magazine>.

6 Bloke Modisane, “Blame Me on History,” *The Atlantic*, November 1963, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1963/11/blame-me-on-history/658940/>.

Bloke Modisane was a resident of Sophiatown and was deeply disturbed by its destruction. To Modisane, Sophiatown “was a complex paradox with attracted opposites: the ring of joy, the sound of laughter, was interposed with the growl and the smell of insult.”⁷ He recalls the impression of these dual forces on his youth: “we sang sad-happy songs, were carried away by erotic dances, we whistled and shouted, got drunk and killed each other.”⁸ While he considered it his home, full of happy memories, it was not without its ugliness and trauma. Modisane recalls the afternoon of his father’s death when he was told by the school’s principal to return home immediately. Upon his arrival, he was faced with a corpse, a battered body beyond recognition, smashed to pieces, that the neighbors claimed was his father. He learned that there had been a quarrel with another man who had unexpectedly pounded his father with a brick again and again until he was a mass of bloody parts.⁹

Remarkably, despite the pain of his experience, Modisane was able to read the violence of Sophiatown in the broader context of apartheid South Africa. In his autobiography, *Blame Me on History*, he describes how Africans directed their aggression towards one another, and reserved a special derision towards those who attained success. In the public eye, white South Africa was the “standard of civilization,” while Blackness was a “badge of ignorance and savagery.”¹⁰ A native South African seeking acceptance from society would adopt the fashions of “white civilization,” resulting in their identification as “white.”¹¹ It was this identification with whiteness, with the oppressor, that inspired fellow Africans to dispense violence upon him. Modisane’s analysis of the violence of Sophiatown gives greater insight into how it was both generated and sustained. Some Black South Africans turned on those successful among them given that they lived in a society where they were thoroughly dehumanized and the rich were emblems of whiteness.

But how did the succession of murders in Sophiatown

7 Modisane, “Blame Me on History.”

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

continue? Why was there no justice or order? In Modisane's words, in Sophiatown "The law [was] white and justice [was] casual... it could not protect us against the knives of Sophiatown, so we tolerated the murders while the law encouraged them with its indifference."¹² Night after night Modisane would lie trembling in his bed, sweating the minutes away, the screams of death overtaking him. The gangster rule of Sophiatown kept him chained to his room, unable to help those in danger. For all the residents of Sophiatown, the silence was the same. They only emerged to examine the body of a victim, after the crime had been committed, to either fall and cry upon it or sigh in relief that *this* time their loved ones have been spared.¹³

Police commissioners, meanwhile, complained that the Natives didn't cooperate with the police and failed to uphold their duties as citizens. Modisane finds this accusation laughable. He points to the hypocrisy of the authorities: Natives were not ruled by popular consent and yet were expected to fulfill their "public duty." They were promised law and order and yet "the police [were] instruments of Black oppression."¹⁴ Despite all the violence he faced at the hands of Sophiatown's gangs, Modisane asserts he would much rather be ruled by the tsotsis than the police.¹⁵

Bloke Modisane himself was beaten within an inch of his life on the streets of Sophiatown. He recounts how he saved a woman from an attempted rape only to find the would-be-rapist was one of his old friends. He gently persuaded him away from the violation, and together they reminisced on their days as schoolchildren. The victim of the assault, however, brought reinforcements to confront Modisane and his former classmate. He was surrounded by men and struck suddenly on the head with a stick. Then he was struck from all sides, shielding his body with bloodied palms. As he resigned himself to death, he envisioned Sophiatown as a sort of guillotine. He saw himself as not pummeled by fellow citizens but instead pummeled by Sophiatown itself, as though Sophiatown was "striking out against the overcrowding, the congestion of hate, the

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

prejudice, the starvation, the frustrating life in a ghetto.”¹⁶ Modisane views this violence, too, as an expression of frustration against the chokehold of apartheid oppression. A striking element of this story is Modisane’s closeness to the man attempting rape. In the violence and turmoil of Sophiatown, it was not uncommon for previous friends to commit crimes and become the perpetrators of their classmates’ greatest nightmares.

Despite these brutal experiences, Modisane retained love for Sophiatown. He understood how the very psyche of Black South Africans had been warped by apartheid, and in a place with few white residents, the horrors suffered had become horrors dispensed. To Modisane, it seems that the interracial community of Sophiatown was its most remarkable feature. The city was not without its racial tensions, but Africans, Indians, and Chinese, and Coloured people lived “a raceless existence” despite the varying degrees of privilege they had according to their proximity to whiteness. Modisane described this community¹⁷ as “far richer and more satisfying, materially and spiritually, than any model housing could substitute.”¹⁸

The racial mixing in Sophiatown directly threatened the apartheid regime’s foundational contention: that the races were naturally meant to be separated and could not co-exist. However, there were not many white residents in Sophiatown and it is perhaps for that reason that it existed without government intervention for over fifty years. The image of white and Black people living together in harmony would likely have been far more destabilizing given that apartheid was meant to “preserve” Afrikaner identity. The contention between white and Black people remained, at least to a degree, in Sophiatown. Modisane recalls how he was often involved in racial skirmishes with white boys from the working-class white area. At first, they would fight for access to the mud pool, but as time went on, they fought simply because they desired to fight one another. While the degree of racial unity in Sophiatown was incredible by South African standards, it was still a source of

16 Ibid.

17 This description was a heartfelt reflection following the destruction of Sophiatown, the “model housing” mentioned refers to Meadowlands.

18 Modisane, “Blame Me on History.”

tension and violence.¹⁹

The residents of Sophiatown reacted to these dynamics with an outpouring of artwork. Bloke Modisane himself was a part of Sophiatown's pantheon, producing articles, short stories, and poems that often addressed Blackness under apartheid. Some of his most famous works were his memoir *Blame Me on History*, a satire piece *The Dignity of Begging*, and several poems which were featured in an anthology by Langston Hughes entitled *Poems from Black Africa*.²⁰ One of the poems in the selection, "black blues," is particularly striking:

the blues is the black o' the face,
I said: black is the blues' face;
it's black in the mornin'
beige in the sun,
and blue black all night long.

Oh, the blues is a black devil face,
I said: devil black is the blues' face;
it's black in the mornin'
beige in the sun,
and blue black all night long.

my baby, said to me, daddy;
sit down and listen, candy:
the blues is in your blood,
black down deep in your skin
and the devil rides on your back.
The mean black blues got my daddy,
those black mean blues got you, daddy;
you're black in the mornin'
beige in the sun,
candy black all night long.²¹

19 Modisane, "Blame Me on History."

20 "Bloke Modisane | South African Author | Britannica," *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bloke-Modisane>.

21 Langston Hughes, *Poems from Black Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 109-110.

Modisane writes of the deep sorrow he feels: sorrow born of being Black in South Africa. He tells his daughter of the blues beneath her skin and how he shares them even in the glow of the morning and the darkness of night.

Modisane's experiences in Sophiatown depict a complicated reality: a city shining with life and love and creativity and a city gorged by the knife of apartheid, its twisted hilt generating continual violence and constant death. The injustices of apartheid accumulated on its streets, smothering, salient. Nevertheless, Sophiatown remained a place of hope where numerous races lived together in unity, and artists gave meaning to the world and their suffering.

Departure...

By Don Mattera

I grow tired
and want to leave this city
seething in unrest and injustice
I am leaving
No I have left
Look for me on the banks of the Nile
or under some spreading palm
I shall be sleeping
the sleep of freedom
Do not wake me
leave me to dream
my dream of departure
from a city of seething unrest
void of pity
for I have grown weary
of eating the brine
and long for jungle fruit...²²

22 Don Mattera, "Six Poems," *Index on Censorship* 3, no. 4 (1974): 19–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03064227408532368>.

Trevor Huddleston

Fig. 2 Trevor Huddleston²³

Trevor Huddleston was an Anglican bishop and anti-apartheid activist who worked as a priest in Sophiatown for thirteen years. He established the African Children’s Feeding Scheme and raised funds for the Orlando Swimming Pools, the only pools that Black children were permitted to use in Johannesburg until the end of apartheid. Huddleston influenced the lives of many famous South Africans, including Hugh Masekela, Desmond Tutu, and OR Tambo. He became a much-loved priest and activist and received the name Makhali (‘‘dauntless one’’) for his advocacy work.²⁴

In his book, *Naught for Your Comfort*, Huddleston describes how Sophiatown had unique value because it was not a ‘‘location’’ or a prescribed area for Native People. He views ‘‘locations’’ as places designated for Natives so long as their presence is necessary and desirable for Europeans. They have at least a five hundred-yard buffer strip to mark the departure from ‘‘civilization’’ to ‘‘barbarism’’

²³ ‘‘Centenary of Archbishop Trevor Huddleston to Be Celebrated in London,’’ *The South African*, June 20, 2013, <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/centenary-of-archbishop-trevor-huddleston-to-be-celebrated-in-london/>.

²⁴ ‘‘Trevor Huddleston, Bishop Born,’’ *African American Registry*, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://aaregistry.org/story/trevor-huddleston-bishop-born/>.

and colorless houses that dehumanize residents. In a “location,” a home cannot belong to anyone except the European officials who control it.²⁵ Sophiatown, however, was no location. It was teeming with life, utterly without monotony, and home to a vibrant multicultural community. Huddleston describes the interracial setting of Sophiatown with fondness and almost wonder: “An ‘American’ barber’s shop stands next door to an African herbalist’s store... You can go into a store to buy a pack of cigarettes and be served by a Chinaman, an Indian, or a Pakistani.”²⁶ He goes on to assert that these various groups – Xosa, Mosotho, Shangaan, Mostwa, Indian, Chinese, and white – all contributed something valuable to the community.²⁷ Huddleston appreciated the spirit and freedom of Sophiatown as compared to “locations.” In Sophiatown, people could choose their own doctors and clinics, none of which were under municipal leadership. Residents even had their own choice of church, of which there were numerous varieties, including the “Donkey Church.”²⁸

Huddleston’s deep love for Sophiatown arises from its “unknown heroes and heroines” who, against all odds, practiced the most admirable virtue. In his role as a priest he was often expected to give moral advice to residents, yet he found he often gave guidance that he himself could not have followed given the conditions in Sophiatown. He illustrates the immeasurable challenge of practicing Christianity in the context of Sophiatown with the following lines:

“To keep your self-respect when you are expected to have less than your white baas; to keep your home neat and tidy... all this against the background of overcrowding, of the need to be up and away to work... It needs the kind of virtue which most European Christians in South Africa have never come within a mile of.”²⁹

25 Huddlestone, *Naught for Your Comfort*, 95.

26 *Ibid.*, 96.

27 *Ibid.*, 101-102.

28 *Ibid.*, 96.

29 *Ibid.*, 97.

Part of Huddleston's appreciation of Sophiatown is born of his awareness of the poverty and violence it bred. He understands the appeal of street-corner gangs and gambling in the "endless gray vista" of poverty.³⁰ It was that very context of adversity that made the morality and kindness of Sophiatown's residents all the more striking. When hearing confessions Huddleston would learn of sins of fornication, stealing, and fighting and would often ask himself *whose fault* these actions were in the sight of God and what advice he was capable of giving.³¹ In a sense, the religious dedication of Sophiatown's residents was a form of resistance against the apartheid regime. Notwithstanding the city's conditions, they chose to hold themselves to the highest standard and, in so doing, asserted their humanity in the face of extreme dehumanization.

Although Huddleston himself was not an artist, he inspired many rising jazz musicians in Sophiatown. The most famous was Hugh Masekela, who grew into a world-renowned flugelhornist, trumpeter, composer, singer, and bandleader. Huddleston provided Masekela with his very first trumpet at the age of 14, and soon after, the Huddleston Jazz Band was born. Masekela began to develop his signature Afro-Jazz style in the late 1950s and in the 1960s received training from Dizzy Gillespie and Louis Armstrong.³² One of his most famous songs is entitled "Stimela (Coal Train)" which speaks to the exploitation of Native South Africans in the mines. A segment of the lyrics read as follows:

They think about the loved ones they may never see again
 Because they might have already been forcibly removed
 From where they last left them
 Or wantonly murdered in the dead of night
 By roving, marauding gangs of no particular origin³³

The references to forced removal and gang violence may partly

30 Huddleston, *Naught for Your Comfort*, 97.

31 *Ibid.*, 97.

32 "Biography | HUGH MASEKELA," *The Official Site of Hugh Masekela*, 2010, <https://hughmasekela.co.za/biography/>.

33 "Hugh Masekela – Stimela (the Coal Train)," *Genius*, <https://genius.com/Hugh-masekela-stimela-the-coal-train-lyrics>.

come from Masekela's experiences in Sophiatown. The fear of losing loved ones who may be "wantonly murdered in the dead of night" echoes the terror of Blake Mosidane's experiences in the city. Similarly, the concept of unexpected, forced removal might allude to Sophiatown's destruction and relocation in February 1955.

Trevor Huddleston's account of Sophiatown reveals how its residents fought to preserve their dignity and freedom against all odds. In the uproar of gang violence and destitution, where survival was never a guarantee, many worked to uphold Christian morality. They resisted apartheid by forming bonds of community that traversed color lines and by asserting their humanity through artwork. What the National Party had deemed the garbage bin of Johannesburg became a glimmering testament to Black excellence and resiliency.

Sophiatown lyrics

By Thandi Klaasen

See the people standing in the doorway
See the bright lights on a summer night
I can hear the music from Fattie's Bar
I can see my past passing by.

I had no chance to say goodbye to romance
I had no time to leave it all behind
It was the place I knew where my dreams came true
Until they broke it down Sophiatown.

I can see shebeens up in Good street
I can hear the wind before the storm
I can see police on a winter night
Breaking down the place where I was born.

I had no chance to say goodbye to romance
I had no time to leave it all behind
It was the place I knew where my dreams came true
Until they broke it down Sophiatown.

It was the place I knew
 Where my dreams came true
 Until they broke it down ...

I had no chance to say goodbye to romance
 I had no time to leave it all behind
 It was the place I knew where my dreams came true
 Until they broke it down Sophiatown.

Until they broke it down, until they broke it down
 Until they broke it down Sophiatown.³⁴

Conclusion

Sophiatown may no longer exist, but it will forever hold a place in the pages of South African history. From streets where blood ran red on dirtied asphalt and cries of victims sang a nightly chorus came community, artwork, and resistance.³⁵ Sophiatown's very existence was a protest against the apartheid regime. It was a testament to interracial love and to the ingenuity of Black artistry. Even its ugliness and shame held a mirror to the brutality of apartheid, reflecting back its indifference to Black death and its ability to breed violence.

When we remember Sophiatown we should think not only of its destruction but of its life and legacy. This paper has attempted to illustrate what that life was like and what meaning the city held in the context of apartheid. In sharing this history, it has sought to unflinchingly represent the duality at the core of Sophiatown in all its heartbreak and allure. After all, it was the horrors of Sophiatown that made its achievements all the more remarkable, just as the terrors of apartheid made Black resilience all the more extraordinary.

34 "Thandi Klaasen - Sophiatown Lyrics," *Lyrics Translate*, accessed March 16, 2023, <https://lyricstranslate.com/en/thandi-klaasen-sophiatown-lyrics.html>.

35 In 2006, Triomf was renamed Sophiatown, but the Sophiatown referred to here is the original city as it existed before 1955.

The Absence and Presence of Divine Light in Byzantine Images of the Virgin

Abigail Schweizer

Foreword and Historical Context

In 431AD, a council of Christian bishops met near present-day Selçuk, Turkey, and declared the Virgin Mary to be the *Theotokos*, calling her the Mother of God, not only the Mother of the earthly Christ. Starting at the Council of Ephesus in the fifth century, the Virgin rose slowly but steadily to prominence within the Byzantine empire, and by the thirteenth century, her importance had surpassed Byzantium's spiritual traditions, and she had transformed into the imperial force of the Orthodox Christians. She was recognized as a vessel able to secure military victory and protection; her intercession was sought in battle, and she was praised when victory came. After Michael VIII Palaeologus and his Byzantine army successfully retook control of Constantinople from the empire of the Latin Crusaders in August of 1261, he was crowned the emperor of the Byzantine empire and led into Constantinople with a procession headed by the holy icon of the Virgin *Hodegetria*.¹ Her growing cult spread across Christendom and encouraged the increased production of her visual image. By the thirteenth century, icons, mosaics, and other images of the Virgin used a range of visual strategies to depict her glory, from crowning her with a halo, surrounding her with angels, clothing her in bejeweled garments, and—as I explore in this essay—ornamenting her figure with gold striations, a technique formally classified as chrysography. In what follows, I explore Marian images with and without gold striations

1 Jaroslav Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting : the Virgin and Child Hodegetria and the Art of Chrysography*, (New York, NY : Cambridge University Press, 2015) xix-xxi.

to understand what the presence (and absence) of gold detailing communicated about the Mother of God and her theological position to the devotee.

Chrysography in Images of the Virgin Mary

Byzantine icons were methexic: surpassing their two dimensionality, icons imprinted the real presence of the saint onto their surface and into the church space, encouraging the worshiper to take on a posture of devotion toward the holy figure.² To generate mimesis, icon makers often added chrysography, a term first used in the ninth century to describe writing in gold. The term soon expanded to refer to the golden highlighting in images of the saints.³ These golden elements could be found on the holy figures in illuminated manuscripts as careful gold detailing, on enamel images as gold rivulets joining the colored segments, on panel icons as mordant gilding, and on mosaics as glass tesserae covered in gold leaf.⁴ Under the unstable natural light of the original church spaces and the flickering candles set out by congregants, the gold surfaces of these images trembled as if moved by the real presence of the saints. This performance between the icon and the illuminating light dichotomized light and shadow, allowing the holy figure's face to disappear against the gold adornments.⁵

A distinctive form of chrysography was found in the thirteenth century icon of St. Michael the Archangel at the Monastery of St. Catherine (Fig. 1). The angel's robes and wings were detailed with linear gold elements extending diagonally upwards, revealing a concealed light source emanating onto his body from beyond the frame's upper right corner. Orthodox devotees would have recognized the unseen light source in the icon

2 Bissera Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*, (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010) 631-632.

3 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, xxi.

4 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, 258-266.

5 Bissera Pentcheva, "Cross, Tunic, Body: Liturgy, Materiality, and the Phenomenology of Salvation," *La stauroteca di Bessarione fra Costantinopoli e Venezia*, ed. Holger A. Klein, Valeria Poletto, and Peter Schreiner, (Venezia, 2017) 279.

of St. Michael the Archangel as God. The striations did more than animate the presence of the figure; they also revealed two important theological realities. The brilliant gold symbolized God's blessing over the saint and showed the holy figure's physical and spiritual nearness to the divine. The latter idea found its roots in Exodus 34, when the Lord met Moses on Mount Sinai and Moses received the Lord's light and left God's presence with a glowing face from the divine light of His presence. Orthodox theology determined this story to be an earthly reflection of the paradisaical phenomenon where Byzantine saints inhabiting the heavenly kingdom reflected the divine light of God.⁶



Figure 1: Byzantine icon of St. Michael the Archangel, about 1200, Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine. From Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, Plate 7.

Thus, the Lord's divine grace continuously resided over the saints. The greatest of these was the Virgin Mary—as the one who bore the divine Christ from her womb, the immaculate Virgin held

⁶ Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, 2. See also Exodus 34:29-35.

the Light of the World within her and forever reflected the Lord's brilliance. Surprisingly, up until the thirteenth century, Byzantine artisans often chose not to decorate the robes of the Virgin with linear chrysography, especially when they depicted her with her Child.⁷ For example, the sixth-century icon of the Virgin *Theotokos* and Child at the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai included very little gold detailing on the Virgin (Fig. 2). She was adorned with three gold cross-stars—one on her forehead and one on each shoulder—and gold bands on the edges of her *maphorion* (head covering) and the sleeves of her *chiton* (gown). This kind of gold decoration was certainly an act of devotion by the icon makers, but it was not considered a reflection of holy light—Byzantine artisans chose to uniquely represent God's light reflecting onto the holy person with gold striations on the person's robes.

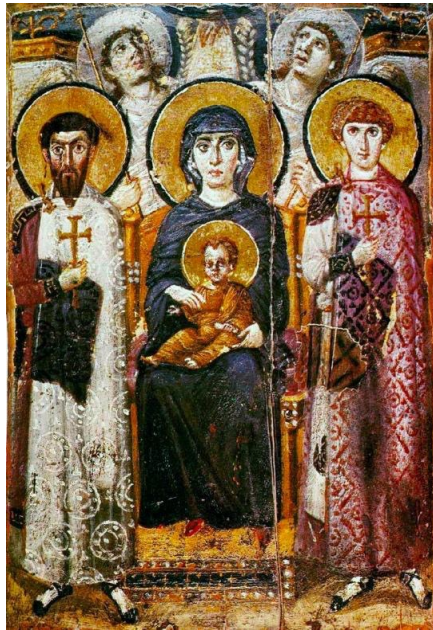


Figure 2: Byzantine icon of the Virgin *Theotokos* and Child enthroned with flanking soldier saints, 6th century, Sinai, Monastery of St. Catherine, <https://smarthistory.org/virgin-theotokos-and-child-between-saints-theodore-and-george/>.

7 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, 100-102.

In *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, Jaroslav Folda explored the curious lack of golden striations on the Virgin's robes in pre-thirteenth century images of the Virgin and Child. He argued that pre-thirteenth-century Byzantine icon painters did not apply chrysography to the Virgin's robes for the theological reason of seeing her as "the *Theotokos*, the human Mother of God."⁸ The thirteenth-century introduction of chrysography onto the robes of the Virgin in *Hodegetria* icons emerged as an artistic intervention by the Crusaders—as the Virgin's cult in the West was growing in the thirteenth century, the Crusaders implemented chrysography on her robes because "[t]hey saw the Virgin ... as the queen of heaven who, having been assumed bodily into heaven, was now glorified with Jesus and appeared with him enthroned in heaven."⁹ Folda demonstrated that the theological transformation of the Virgin's status in *Hodegetria* icons from the human Mother of God to the glorified "Queen of Heaven" was expressed visually by the addition of gold striations on the Virgin's robe.¹⁰ Therefore, the absence of gold striations on the Virgin's robe in Byzantine *Hodegetria* icons could be attributed to a weaker Byzantine cult of the Virgin pre-thirteenth century, or to Byzantium not yet acknowledging her full glory as Heavenly Mother of God.

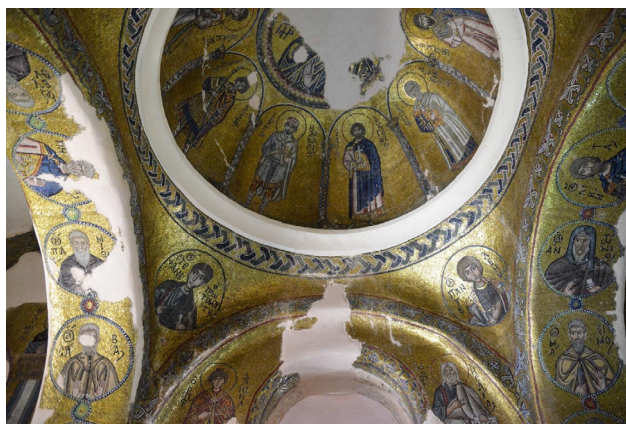


Figure 3: Mosaic in the dome of the inner narthex of Nea Moni, Chios, 1042-55, <https://ric-chios.myportfolio.com/nea-moni>.

8 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, 100.

9 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, 100.

10 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, xix-xx.



Figure 4: Mosaic of the Virgin in the apse of Hagia Sophia, Kiev, 1043, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Oranta-Kyiv.jpg>.

Folda's research was extensive but not comprehensive. One of the main areas that he left to be explored was the image types beyond the *Hodegetria*, such as images of the Virgin without the Child. While *Hodegetria* Virgins lacked chrysography until the thirteenth century, numerous pre-thirteenth-century images showing her without the Child depicted her with gold striations. Her robes in the domical vault of the inner narthex of Nea Moni, Chios, and in the apse of Hagia Sophia, Kiev were covered in gold tesserae. The cubes formed vertical striations, which appeared to be the mosaic equivalent of icon chrysography (Fig. 3 and Fig. 4).

He also failed to acknowledge that the Byzantine Marian cult had been developing steadily since at least the fifth century. The *Akathistos* hymn, dated to the late fifth and early sixth century, indicated the fifth century emergence of the cult.¹¹ The *Akathistos* was "the oldest performed hymn dedicated to the Virgin Mary sung in the Eastern Orthodox Church," celebrated the life of the

¹¹ Bissera Pentcheva, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006) 16.

Virgin, and praised her role in the Incarnation, the Redemption, and humankind's salvation.¹² Devoting unprecedented power to the Virgin, the hymn recognized her as a powerful civic and spiritual intercessor able to secure imperial and spiritual victory, power, and protection.¹³ The *Akathistos* illuminated the presence of the Marian Cult in early Byzantium and proved that the Orthodox acknowledgement of Mary's earthly *and* heavenly roles could be traced back to the fifth or sixth century.

The *Akathistos* and other ecclesiastical poetry honoring the Virgin, such as Romanos the Melodist's sixth century *kontakia*, described the Virgin as mystically lit, calling her a "a torch full of light" and a "beam of spiritual sun."¹⁴ Romanos' "On the Mother of God" went so far as to establish her as the second burning bush: "As once there was fire in the bush shining brightly and not burning the thorn, / so now the Lord is in the Virgin."¹⁵ The lyrics compared the mysteries of Mary's virginity to the Lord revealing himself to Moses through a fiery bush which did not burn—just as the bush remained unconsumed by fire, Mary's virginity remained intact through childbirth.¹⁶ Romanos' *kontakion* did more than illustrate biblical typology—he also established the Virgin's all-consuming, yet unconsuming, radiance. Romanos' and the *Akathistos*' hymnal descriptions of the Virgin were sung throughout the Orthodox ecclesiastical calendar, often in front of icons. The poetic images, being voiced continuously in the resounding space of the church, soon became visual realities in the symbolic details of the Marian icons.¹⁷

12 Alice Sullivan, "Visions of Byzantium: 'The Siege of Constantinople' in Sixteenth-Century Moldavia," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 99, No. 4, Dec. 2017, 31-68, 43. Available: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44973216>.

13 Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 14.

14 Leena Mari Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 17. See *Akathistos Hymn*, strophe 21, verses 1 and 6.

15 Romanos Melodos, *On the Life of Christ*, trans. Ephrem Lash (New York: Harper Collins, 1994), 19. See "On The Mother of God," strophe 5, verse 1.

16 Exodus 3:2-4 (NIV).

17 Fr. Maximos Constas, "Poetry and Painting in the Middle Byzantine Period: A Bilateral Icon from Kastoria and the Stavrotheotokia of Joseph the Hymnographer" in *Viewing Greece: Cultural and Political Agency in the Medieval and Early Modern Mediterranean*, ed. Sharon Gerstel (Turnhout: Brepols: 2016), 24.

If there was literary precedent for the heavenly power of the mystically lit Virgin, why did this poetic imagery fail to extend into the images of the Virgin and Child through chrysography? The *Akathistos* hymn's and Romanos' *kontakia*'s exaltation of the Virgin indicated that it was not a lack of theological development that prevented the Virgin from being illuminated by divine light in Byzantine *Hodegetria* icons. Since the sixth century, Mary had already been established as a figure with power equal to the thirteenth-century Crusader Queen of Heaven. Thus, Byzantine iconographers must have purposefully excluded chrysographical striations on the Virgin's robes in order to guide the devotee's attention toward specific aspects of the Virgin's character. In what follows, I will reflect on the theological implications of the presence and absence of divine light in Byzantine images of the Virgin created before the thirteenth century. I will examine the icon of the Virgin *Arakiotissa* in Cyprus, revealing that the absence of divine light on the Virgin portrayed her mortality, paralleled the darkening of the world, symbolized her lament, and reminded her audience of her sacrifice in offering Christ over to his executors. Next, I will analyze the mosaic of the Virgin in the inner narthex of Nea Moni, Chios, and discover through the presence of divine light her absolute power as the assumed, impenetrable, and interceding Mother of God. Often overlooked is the duality in the presence and absence of gold on her figure; by examining these two examples successively, I gather the completed image of the Virgin and her theological roles.

Absence: Icon of the Virgin Arakiotissa in Cyprus

The late-twelfth-century icon of the Virgin *Arakiotissa* from Cyprus was a standard *Hodegetria* type that emphasized the necessity of Christ's Crucifixion and his Mother's desire to protect him from suffering (Fig. 5). Her right hand embraced his body to keep him from the world, while her left loosened to offer him up to his accusers and gestured toward him as the way to salvation. Remembering the Passion, she furrowed her brow and frowned, but the subtlety of her expression allowed her to keep her composure as

the holy Mother of God.¹⁸ In her arms, Christ's bare feet extended from his robe as if hanging from the cross, and in his left hand he held the eschatological scroll from Revelation. With a child's body but the features of a man, Christ prophesied from infancy his own Crucifixion and Ascension.¹⁹ In response to his Mother's gesture, Christ looked toward the Virgin and lifted his hand to bless his people.



Figure 5: Icon of the Virgin Arakiotissa, late 12th century, Nicosia, Cyprus, Byzantine Museum, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/28433765@N07/4635437551/in/photostream/>.

The *Arakiotissa* and the general lineage of Byzantine *Hodegetria* icons consistently emphasized the Virgin's mortality

¹⁸ Maria Vasilakē, *Mother of God: representations of the Virgin in Byzantine art*, (Milano: Skira, 2000) 406-407.

¹⁹ Revelations 5:6-8a (NIV). "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits[a] of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb."

in comparison to Christ's divinity.²⁰ Like the Virgin *Hodegetria* at Sinai, the gold detailing on her figure was limited to three gold cross-stars and linear decorations on the hems of her purple *maphorion*. The absence of divine radiance on Mary visually emphasized her humanity in relation to Christ's status as the God-man. Her gesturing hand coupled with Christ's golden robes emphasized him as "the light of the world" who illuminated the path to salvation for those who loved him.²¹ Holy light shone from Christ's robes, and the linear striations followed the curves of his robe to emphasize the materiality of the fabric. Splendid in gold, he appeared stoic, all knowing, and divine.



Figure 6: The Virgin *Blachernitissa*, detail from a larger icon, 12th century, Sinai. From Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 77, Figure 42.

20 Folda, *Byzantine Art and Italian Panel Painting*, 4.

21 John 8:12 (NIV)

Like the *Arakiotissa*, the *Hodegetria* icons typically presented the Virgin as co-sufferer to varying degrees. For example, in the icon of the *Theotokos* and child from the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai, she suffered quietly. Both hands embraced her Child in a protective embrace, but her face showed no indication of emotional distress. Her suffering intensified in the twelfth century Virgin *Blachernitissa* from Sinai: she embraced Christ fully, and he returned her embrace and touched his cheek to hers as her loving Son and Comforter (Fig. 6).²² Like in the *Arakiotissa*, gold striations were absent from the Virgin's robe in the *Blachernitissa* and *Theotokos* and Child icons.

While the Virgin's lament was visually memorialized in the *Arakiotissa* through her facial expressions, her grief was poetically memorialized in Romanos the Melodist "On the Lament of the Mother of God." The *kontakion*, recited yearly in the office for Good Friday, unraveled the Virgin's sorrow and described the painful meeting of the Virgin and her Son on his way to the Cross. In the second stanza, the Virgin questioned Christ's unjust death: "I wish to know, alas, how my light is being quenched; / how is he being nailed to a Cross, / my Son and my God?"²³ The Virgin's lamentation provided a precedent in Byzantine tradition for the connection between Mary's co-suffering and her light dimming, which was echoed by the absence of divine light on the Virgin *Arakiotissa*. Having already established that the lack of chrysography references her mortality, Romanos' lyrics exhibit the absence of divine light as a reference to her role as co-sufferer in Christ's Crucifixion.

Though Christ had yet to be crucified in the *Arakiotissa*, the Virgin suffered because every image of Christ was proleptic of his death. In the same way that Christ's feet extended from his body and reminded us of his death, the Gospels confirmed that his body had always been, and would always be, a testimony of his coming Crucifixion. When Simeon blessed the Child at his temple presentation, he prophesied Christ's suffering and said to his Mother: "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many

²² Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 76-77.

²³ Melodos, *On the Life of Christ*, 142-144. See "On the Lament of the Mother of God," strophe 2, verse 8-9.

will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.”²⁴ Christ’s body continued to proclaim his death hours before his Crucifixion, at the Last Supper, when his hands broke the bread and he said to his disciples, “Take and eat; this is my body.”²⁵ Lifting the cup to drink the wine, he declared, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”²⁶ Post-resurrection, his body bore the scars of his suffering, and when he showed his hands to his disciple Thomas, he said, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”²⁷ Because Christ’s body eternally testified his Crucifixion, Mary co-suffered in the Passion from the moment of his conception.

Mary’s absent light could also be encapsulated as *kenosis*, or “self-emptying,” a term Orthodox theologians took from Philippians to describe the doctrine of Christ’s incarnation. Paul described the Lord descending into manhood: “Christ Jesus, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for his own advantage, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”²⁸ Christ’s *kenotic* act—the emptying of his divinity to take on mortality—was voluntary: he “emptied himself.” While Christ’s *kenotic* act was his incarnation, the Virgin’s *kenotic* act was her response to the Annunciation: “I am the Lord’s servant . . . May your word to me be fulfilled.”²⁹ Her response to the Lord’s blessing was her voluntary, yet divinely ordained, surrender to God’s will, and pouring herself out to God, she emptied her womb

24 Luke 2:34-35 (NIV).

25 Matthew 26:26 (NIV).

26 Matthew 26:28 (NIV).

27 John 20:27 (NIV).

28 Fr. Maximus Constas, *The Art of Seeing: Paradox and Perception in Orthodox Iconography*, (California: Sebastian Press, 2014), 101. Here he quotes Philippians 2:6-8.

29 Luke 1:38 (NIV).

for the Savior.³⁰ Likewise, when she offered her Child to Simeon, she oriented herself toward the future, much greater, sacrifice of offering her Son over to death. Both acts were tied up in a complex matrix of loving obedience and painful loss.³¹

In the *Arakiotissa* icon from Cyprus, she loosened her embrace of Christ and pointed to him as the Redeemer, inviting us into her final kenotic act, where she offered him up to his accusers for our sake. Just as Christ consented to the Father's will on the Mount of Olives before his Crucifixion, he consented to the Virgin's gesturing hand by extending his own toward us in blessing. The *Arakiotissa* was thus a participatory moment between the viewer, the Virgin, and the Child, initialized by the Virgin's kenosis. Thus, she emptied her maternal desire to protect her Child for the sake of God's ultimate glory and embraced grief. This grief, poeticized in Romanos' *kontakia* as her light being quenched, expressed itself in the dimness of her figure.³² Having previously established that every image of Christ is Christ crucified, and recognizing that Christ's death caused the world to darken, I conclude that the Virgin *Arakiotissa* also reflected the darkening of the world. Thus, the implications of the absence of divine light on the Virgin's figure were fourfold: it reflected her mortality, paralleled the darkening of the world, symbolized her lament, and reminded us of her kenosis.

Presence: The Mosaic of the Virgin at Nea Moni, Chios

If the absence of divine light reflected the Virgin's kenosis, what might the presence of divine light as gold striations on her robe have indicated? To explore this question, I will examine the Virgin in the center of the dome of the inner narthex of Nea Moni, Chios, dated 1042-55. In this mosaic, she was flanked by eight holy figures, including warrior saints Sergios, Theodore Stratelates, and Bacchos. By pairing her with the warrior saints, the muralist presented the Virgin as the *Blachernitissa*, an epithet evoking the Virgin's power

30 Fr. Maximos Constas, "The Kenosis of Christ and the Mother of God in Byzantine Iconography," (Boston College, 2015) 2. The academic paper accompanies a lecture delivered in Boston College's Higgins Hall, 21 April 2015.

31 Constas, "The Kenosis of Christ and the Mother of God ...", 5.

32 Melodos, *On the Life of Christ*, 144.

to intercede as Byzantium's spiritual and imperial protector.³³ Most of her upper body was gone, but a close look at the icon revealed her right hand lifted in blessing. Her missing left hand left the intercessory *orans* gesture incomplete, and her left shoulder—where Christ usually rested—showed no evidence of the Child's presence, indicating that she stood alone. Gold striations decorated her robe, allowing her to glitter with the light of the divine.

Though the bust of the Virgin in Nea Moni did not have a compositional equal before the twelfth century, the mosaic in the apse of Hagia Sophia, Kiev, from 1043, suggested what the Virgin may have originally looked like.³⁴ The Child was absent from the mosaic of the Virgin in Hagia Sophia, and instead of embracing Christ as she did in *Hodegetria* icons, she held her hands, palms up, in a gesture of intercession. Like the Hagia Sophia Virgin, the face of the Nea Moni Virgin was likely unexpressive, and her robes were likely covered up to the hood in chrysography. As a *Blachernai* icon—closely related to the *Blachernitissa* type—the image alluded to the Virgin's civic and spiritual intercession.³⁵

In the dome of Nea Moni, tesserae formed five distinctly colored concentric circles around the Virgin. This rainbow motif was rarely included in images of the Mother of God; it was most often found instead in images of the Christ Pantokrator, where Christ was shown in his eschatological glory, post-ascension, as the universal judge.³⁶ Slobodan Ćurčić has argued that the rainbow motif has “been noted as the paradigmatic image of the heavenly glory.”³⁷ The rainbow encircling her body alluded to the divine light of heavenly glory, whose source was Christ, and suggested that she was being presented in heaven, post-assumption, as the Virgin Assumpta.

Francesca dell'Acqua's examination of the images of the assumed Virgin in *Iconophilia* brought forth three pertinent points.

33 Pentcheva, *Icons and power*, 92.

34 Doula Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios I*, (Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1985) 65, 139-140, 139.

35 Pentcheva, *Icons and Power*, 76-79.

36 Mouriki, *The Mosaics of Nea Moni on Chios I*, 194.

37 Slobodan Ćurčić, “Divine Light: Constructing the Immaterial in Byzantine Art and Architecture” in *Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium*, edited by Bonna D. Wescoat and Robert G. Ousterhout, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2012), 31.

First, she noted that “there is no standardized image of Mary *Adsumpta*,” but that illustrations of Mary’s assumption—whether it was the actual migration of her soul or her subsequent establishment as the heavenly Mother of God—used a variety of visual cues to separate her from her earthly state.³⁸ This may have looked like surrounding the heavenly Virgin with an ensemble of angels, a tactic found in the apse mosaic of S. Maria in Domnica, or as is the case with Nea Moni, striating her robe with gold chrysography and encircling her with a cosmological rainbow (Fig. 7). Second, dell’Acqua stressed that Byzantine Christian visual and textual theology maintained that Mary’s intercessory powers were only activated post-assumption. The Nea Moni Virgin foregrounded her intercessory agency, and thus presented her in her assumed form.

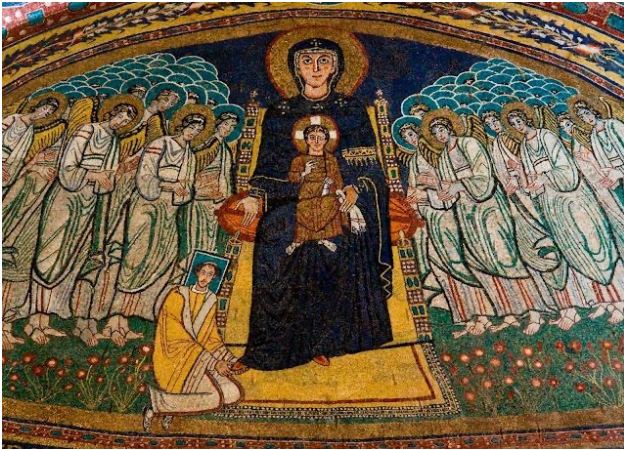


Figure 7: Apse mosaic of the Virgin surrounded by angels at S. Maria in Domnica in Rome, S. 818-819, <https://www.liturgicalartsjournal.com/2022/07/minor-roman-basilicas-santa-maria-in.html>.

Third, pointing to sacred images of Christendom, she showed that Mary’s assumption and her intercessory agency were tied together visually in texts and works of art. Unmistakable evidence for the Virgin’s assumption being tied with the presence of divine light came from the *Akathistos*. The hymn established the Virgin’s role in the Incarnation, Redemption, and humankind’s salvation,

³⁸ Francesca dell’Acqua, *Iconophilia: Politics, Religion, Preaching, and the Use of Images in Rome, C. 680-880*, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020) 242.

and gave thanks to her for interceding on behalf of the Church. The last stanza cried for her personal and present intercession, for her to continue to “deliver from evil and from the punishment to come / all those who cry to you: ‘Alleluia.’”³⁹ Because the Virgin’s intercessory agency activated post-assumption, the *Akathistos* was addressed to the holy Mother in Heaven. In addition, her majesty and intercessory agency were metaphorically connected to images of the Virgin as divine light. She was called the “star causing the sun to shine,” “you who illuminate the minds of the faithful,” “bright dawn of the mystical day,” “you who shine forth the prefiguration of resurrection,” “torch full of light,” “beam of the spiritual sun,” and “soul-illuminating lightning.”⁴⁰ The same connection between the Virgin’s assumption, intercession, and brilliance also mapped onto the Nea Moni Virgin. Surrounded by a heavenly rainbow, she stood with her hands forward in an intercessory *orans* gesture. The gold striations on her robes shimmered, calling the worshiper to remember that she was the “bright dawn of the mystical day,” lit by the Lord’s divine light.

The inclusion of two forms of divine light—the celestial rainbow and the gold striations on her cloak—directed attention to the Virgin as being worthy of the title Queen of Heaven. Her aerial position in the dome additionally recalled her heavenly post as the mediator between humanity and the divine Christ. As worshippers stood under the dome in Nea Moni, their gaze and their quiet prayers lifted toward the Virgin in its center, mirroring the trajectory of her body and soul during her Dormition. Bissera Pentcheva conjured a brilliant image of the golden Virgin in the darkness of the original church setting: “this icon would have become iridescent when the surrounding candles started to flicker, stirred by human breaths or drafts of air In its glittering performance, this ... icon brought to life the concept of Mary as light and fire.”⁴¹ Mary, whose virginity was preserved in childbirth, became the bush unconsumed by fire.

39 Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, 17. See *Akathistos Hymn*, strophe 23, verse 4-6.

40 Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, 17. See *Akathistos Hymn*.

41 Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon*, 118. She refers directly to a gold and cloisonne enamel icon of the Theotokos, but her concept can be applied to the mosaic of the Virgin at Nea Moni.

Thus, these gold striations transformed the Nea Moni Virgin into an utter glorification of the assumed, impenetrable, and interceding Mother of God.

Conclusion

Separated by the vast Mediterranean Sea, the Virgin in the dome of Nea Moni and the Virgin and Child *Arakiotissa* were never meant to be viewed together, but digital technology has allowed me to analyze the images side-by-side in order to visually illuminate Byzantium's Mariology. The *Arakiotissa* Virgin emptied her womb and gave up her Child so that the Lord's salvific plan could come to fruition, and her kenosis and momentary grief were visually echoed by the lack of chrysography on her figure. Post-assumption, she entered into God's physical presence, became the mediator between the divine Christ and his children, and gained the title Queen of Heaven. Nea Moni presented her in her heavenly post, shining with the divine light of God. By initially denying her own will and sinful nature, the *Theotokos* gained surpassing blessings in Heaven as the illuminated and impenetrable Mother of the Most High, eternally worthy of the praise voiced in the *Akathistos*:

We see the holy Virgin as a torch full of light,
shining upon those in darkness.
For by kindling the immaterial light
she guides all to divine knowledge,
illuminating the mind with brilliance, honoured by this cry:
"Hail, beam of the spiritual sun;
Hail, lampstand of the light that never wanes;
Hail, soul illuminating lightning;
Hail you who like thunder strike down the enemies;
Hail, since you kindle the many beamed lantern;
Hail, since you make the many streamed river gush forth,
Hail, you who prefigure the baptismal font;
Hail, you who take away the filth of sin;
Hail, basin that washes clean the conscience;
Hail, bowl wherein is mixed the wine of mighty joy,

Hail, scent of Christ's fragrance,
Hail, life of mystical feasting;
Hail, bride unwedded.⁴²

42 Peltomaa, *The Image of the Virgin Mary in the Akathistos Hymn*, 17. See Akathistos Hymn, stanza 21.

