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**The Ideal of the Fish: St. Anthony of Padua, Pope Innocent III, and
The Role of Preaching in the Catholic Church Around the Time of
the Fourth Lateran Council**

Casey Booth

**Black Soldiers and the Battle of Milk Creek: Double Consciousness
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1890**

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The 'Executioner': *Medicina* and Ancient Rome

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The *William Jewell Historical Review* publishes outstanding historical writing authored by students at William Jewell College. This issue contains two remarkable senior capstone essays written by history majors at the institution during the 2023-2024 academic year. The issue also contains a historical essay from a student written in the fall of 2020. These essays demonstrate some of William Jewell's best students' research and writing skills and capacity for original, independent historical scholarship.



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The Ideal of the Fish: St. Anthony of Padua, Pope Innocent III, and The Role of Preaching in the Catholic Church Around the Time of the Fourth Lateran Council

Casey Booth

Introduction

In the history of Christianity, the period of greatest change is widely considered to be the aptly named 16th century Reformation. It radically altered the course of Christianity and the world at large. For Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and others, this break from the pope served to restore the faith from its “Babylonian Captivity” in Rome. But it was certainly not the first reform movement within the Catholic Church, nor was it the last.

St. Benedict of Nursia and his *Rule of Saint Benedict* in the 6th century, by bringing Monasticism to western Christianity, has been described as bringing the “reality we call ‘Europe’” into being.¹ The Gregorian Reforms of the late 11th century sought to end simony and reassert moral integrity within the clergy and introduced a precursor to the electoral process for the Papacy. In the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic response to the Reformation, there were significant changes to the organization and structure of the Church, many addressing Protestant critiques. Even today, many in the Catholic Church call for renewal with well-known American Bishop Robert Barron writing that “something new must come forth, something specifically fitted to our time and designed to respond to the particular corruption that currently besets us.”²

¹ Benedict XVI, “Saint Benedict of Norcia,” General Audience, 9 April 2008.

² Bishop Robert Barron, *Letter to a Suffering Church: A Bishop Speaks on the Sexual Abuse Crisis* (Park Ridge, IL: Word on Fire Press, 2019), 105.

The Church has, throughout its history, been reformed by many different people from all walks of life.

The Catholic Church of the late 12th and early 13th centuries was, like many other periods of Church history, facing growing calls for reform. The rise of heretical and unorthodox beliefs across Catholic Christendom set the stage for major changes to the way the Church ministered to her flock. Pope Innocent III (r. 1198-1216) was a catalyst for much of this change as the Church struggled to grapple with the shifting religious climate of the time. While Innocent advocated an increase in preaching and ministering to the laity and giving his go-ahead to the somewhat unorthodox Mendicant orders, he also initiated the Albigensian Crusade against Cathar heretics in France, an unprecedented use of Crusading privileges.

Against this backdrop of religious upheaval, the Portuguese Franciscan Anthony of Padua rose to become one of the most prominent preachers of the newly founded Order of Friars Minor in Italy. Anthony and the Franciscans broke the mold of classic Benedictine Monasticism with their radical focus on serving the laity and the poor. However, though the Franciscans responded to many of the same problems within the Church as other movements which were deemed heretical, they remained in good standing with Innocent and the orthodoxy.

Historiography & Thesis

Beverly Mayne Kienzle's *The Sermon* (2000) and Carolyn Muessig's *Preacher, Sermon and Audience in the Middle Ages* (2002) are widely considered the most important modern studies of Medieval preaching. However, these essay collections are overviews of the topic and do not focus on specific events and preachers. Stansbury's more recent *A Companion to Pastoral*

Care in the Late Middle Ages (1200-1500) (2010) is about pastoral care in general and its changing nature in the late Middle Ages, but again lacks special focus on Italy or Anthony of Padua. Three major works focus on Franciscan preaching specifically: Johnson's *Franciscans and Preaching* (2012), Şenocak's *The Poor and The Perfect* (2012), and Roest's *Franciscan Learning, Preaching and Mission* (2015), none of which have a special focus on Anthony of Padua.

R. I. Moore's *The War on Heresy* (2012) is a significant overview of the rise of heresy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but focuses on the increasingly violent response of the Church and the political motives for it rather than the reform toward increasing pastoral care. Many studies which do focus on the reform of the Church at the time of Innocent III and Lateran IV are primarily concerned with their impact on the crusading movement and the treatment of Europe's Jews. Notable exceptions are John C. Moore's biography of the pope, *To Root Up and To Plant* (2003), which closely follows Innocent's role in Church reform generally and at the council in particular, and *Between God and Man* (2004), a collection of Innocent's sermons on the role of the clergy with notes and context. Another is several chapters in Evans's *A History of Pastoral Care* (2000) which discuss the relationship between the Mendicants and Lateran IV. Andrew Jones's article "The Preacher of the Fourth Lateran Council" (2015) analyzes Innocent's sermon at the opening of Lateran IV for his ideal preacher in the Church. Jones identifies Innocent's ideal preacher not as a "revolutionary or romantic" like the heretical and Mendicant movements of the time, but as a simple parish priest who was well educated "in Sacred Scripture and theology."³

³ Andrew W. Jones, "The Preacher of the Fourth Lateran Council," *Logos* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 140.

In this essay, I will explore the relationship between Innocent's ideal preacher, as described by Andrew Jones, and Anthony of Padua, archetypal and foremost of the Franciscan preacher who emerged in Italy around the time of Lateran IV. Francis himself is almost always the focus of studies on Franciscan preaching, but he is more well-known for his preaching to non-Christians, including his famous unsuccessful attempt to convert the sultan of Egypt during the Fifth Crusade. Anthony, on the other hand, spent his preaching career entirely within Christendom and was considered the greatest preacher of the period. Towards the end of his life, Pope Gregory IX commissioned a collection of his sermons and called the future saint *Doctor Arca Testamenti* ("Ark of the Testament") in reference to his preaching abilities.⁴ Unlike Jones, I conclude that Anthony and the Franciscans were *not* far from Innocent's ideal. Anthony himself was a formally trained preacher and initiated the Franciscan focus on learning and preaching which would develop over the following centuries. The difference between the Franciscans and other similar groups who were denounced as heretics was that the Franciscans were deeply devoted to remaining theologically orthodox and submitting to the authority of the Church's hierarchy.

I will explore the role of St. Anthony of Padua by using preaching as a response to the rise of heresy, particularly in northern Italy in the early 13th century in the context of the changing roles of the clergy and preaching. The dual movement to strong Papal authority, embodied especially by Innocent III, and the rise of heretical movements which seemed to threaten the Church created a need for response from the Ecclesial authorities. The solution, as

⁴ Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, trans. Noel Muscat (TAU Franciscan Communications: Malta, 2010), 162.

embodied by St. Anthony and the Franciscans, was to try and convince the heretics to repent from their faulty beliefs through preaching. The ideal of both, represented by the story of St. Anthony preaching to the fish, was very similar, differing mostly in method, not in goal.

Rise of Heresy and the Catholic Church in the Twelfth Century

The late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were a moment of great change within the Catholic Church. A major catalyst of this change was a perceived rise in dangerous heresies and the increasingly violent response of authorities. For about 600 years before the 11th century, there is no record of heretics being executed in western Europe and it was not until the mid to late 12th century that death became the standard punishment for heresy.⁵ This, of course, has created an impression of the Medieval period as one of extreme violence in its treatment of unorthodox beliefs which, while true for the later period, was not always the case.

The reaction to heresy was part of a wider reform movement taking place within the Church. The Gregorian Reforms of the 11th century and subsequent Investiture Controversy had successfully led to an increase in Papal power over secular authorities in regard to naming bishops. Prior to the reforms, the pope and other Church leaders were often manipulated or outright controlled by secular authorities. But the breaking free of secular influence and subsequent rise in clerical power was marked by a rise in feeling that the clergy was taking advantage of its position and becoming rich and immoral, a feeling which was spread by traveling hermit preachers. One of these would-be reformers was Peter of Bruys who rejected key Catholic doctrines such as the Eucharist and infant baptism in direct opposition to growing

⁵ R. I. Moore, *The War on Heresy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 2.

clerical authority.⁶ While condemned by Church authorities, he preached for about fifteen years before an angry mob—not any formal authority—finally killed him in 1131. The Second Lateran Council of 1139 specifically called for those who believed in his heresies to be “cast out of the Church as heretics, and ordain that they be restrained by the civil power.”⁷ For the most part, the response of the Church was to let secular authorities handle the problems raised by heretical teaching, but as reports of heresy increased, so too did the violence in response by the Church.

While many like Peter were condemned as heretics, many hermit preachers were successful in reform. In fact, they inspired many in Church leadership to a newfound responsibility for pastoral care, which included preaching.⁸ Prior to this period, preaching to the laity was rare and was primarily the role of the bishop in a world where few local priests, much less their congregations, had the proper training in biblical exegesis.⁹ Bishops had to give explicit permission to priests to preach to the Christians they served. The primary role of the medieval cleric was the provision of the sacraments, even today still the primary role of a Catholic priest.

In a world where formal education was largely nonexistent for most of the population, Christian truths were often expressed primarily through interaction with the senses to bring people to God. The colossal scale and beauty of medieval churches and art (sight), the burning of incense (smell), the use of rituals (touch) and chant (hearing), and the literal and physical transformation of unleavened bread into the Body of Christ (taste) were all methods by which the

⁶ Moore, *The War of Heresy*, 125.

⁷ The Canons of the Second Lateran Council, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Canon 23.

⁸ Moore, *The War of Heresy*, 126.

⁹ Carlo Delcorno, “Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200-1500),” *The Sermon* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 450.

Church expressed the faith to the illiterate masses in ways they could understand. The idea of Luther's *sola Scriptura* [Scripture alone] as the basis for the Christian faith and preaching as the cleric's primary responsibility was a long way away. In the second half of the thirteenth century, when the famous Dominican theologian St. Thomas Aquinas began his proofs for the existence of God and the truth of the Catholic faith, he did not appeal to scripture or divine authority but to things which are "evident to our senses."¹⁰ To the medieval Church, that the senses could bring a person to the knowledge of and belief in God and the Church was a given.

With the rise of heretical groups which were quickly becoming more organized and widespread, there was an increasing need for an effective—and especially orthodox—response by the Church. The Cathars, who were primarily active in southern France, were accused of heretical beliefs, including a belief in two deities, a good New Testament God and an evil Old Testament God.¹¹ The Waldensians, named after their founder Peter Waldo, were prolific in northern Italy and declared heretical for refusing to seek the permission of the local bishops before preaching, an established standard in the Church.¹² The reformer hermit movement was primarily concerned with returning to a Christian lifestyle modeled on the apostles, by living in poverty, traveling and preaching. This by itself was not heretical, it was when they rejected key beliefs or the authority of the bishops and pope, the latter of which is of significant importance due to the Catholic doctrine that the Church leaders are the rightful successors of St. Peter and the apostles, that the Church cracked down and declared them anathema.

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, q. 2, a. 3.

¹¹ Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 198.

¹² Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 224.

Innocent III and Preaching

It was in this strained religious climate that Innocent III became Pope in 1198. Well-known as the most powerful pope of the Middle Ages, and certainly the most controversial, Innocent set out to launch new Crusades to the Holy Land and root out heresy in Christendom. To accomplish this second goal, he issued the letter *Vergentis in senium* in 1199 which ruled that heresy was a crime of treason against God which ought to be punished by confiscating land, which was a reinstatement of a 700 year old Roman law which did the same.¹³ This was significant because it was a continuation of Papal policy which crossed over spiritual and temporal law.

It is also clear, however, that Innocent was committed to renewing and reforming the Church, not just punishing heretics. In his sermon upon being elected pope, Innocent quotes Jeremiah 1:10 as part of God's mission for his Papacy: "I have constituted you over nations and kingdoms, that you may root up and destroy, lay waste and scatter, and that you may build and plant."¹⁴ In addition to rooting up and destroying, Innocent's goal was also to build and plant. To this end, preaching was foremost. As Innocent himself stated in a letter to an abbot: "among the many ministries that belong to the pastoral office, the virtue of holy preaching is the most excellent" because it "uproots the hurtful, plants the helpful, and nourishes virtue."¹⁵ It was the

¹³ John C. Moore, *Pope Innocent III: To Root Up and to Plant* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 241.

¹⁴ Innocent III, *Between God and Man*, translated by Frank C. Gardiner (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 23.

¹⁵ Innocent III, *Between God and Man*, 4.

role of the clergy first and foremost to convince the heretics and their preachers to follow the right teachings of the Church.

The Fourth Lateran Council

The major preaching reform undertaken during Innocent III's pontificate was that at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. Lateran IV was the most important and largest ecumenical council of the Middle Ages, and the number of bishops attending was not matched at another until Vatican II (1962-65).¹⁶ It was called at the height of Innocent's papal power and besides reform, was meant to muster support for the Fifth Crusade (1217-21) under Papal leadership, a sharp divergence from previous crusades which relied on secular leadership. It was, in a sense, the culmination of Innocent's plans for the expansion of ecclesiastical authority and duty. Just as he took up the responsibility for retaking Jerusalem, he took responsibility for reforming the pastoral work of the Church.

Canon 10 of the Council forever altered the structure and mission of the clergy by requiring bishops to find "suitable men...to exercise with fruitful result the office of preaching," describing the preaching of the Word of God as a "spiritual food" for the souls of Christians.¹⁷ This idea of pastoral care for souls is continued in Canon 11 which proscribes each diocese to have a theologian to "instruct the priests and others in the Sacred Scriptures and in those things especially that pertain to the *cura animarum* [care for souls]."¹⁸ Lateran IV also instructed, for

¹⁶ Moore, *The War on Heresy*, 264.

¹⁷ The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Canon 10.

¹⁸ The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Canon 11.

the first time, regular lay engagement with sacraments by requiring the reception of the Eucharist and Confession at least once a year.¹⁹ The dual theme in the canons of Lateran IV is not just about the turning of the listener, but correction and instruction for the preacher to better the listener. Canons 14-16 deal with the moral life not of the laity, but of the clergy, urging them to guard “against every vice of desire,” “abstain from drunkenness,” and “not...engage in secular...pursuits.”²⁰ Canon 25 invalidated episcopal elections subject to simony.²¹ To the reformers of the time, the heretic would hardly change his ways if the clergy were not being good moral representations of the Church. While there is certainly some doubt about the attainment of such lofty goals (many of these problems have always been present in the clergy!), there is no doubt that Innocent had a particular strategy in mind. To root out heresy and protect Her flock, the Church needed to provide suitable shepherds.

The most important themes of Innocent’s plan at Lateran IV are laid out in his opening sermon to the gathered bishops. Reflecting on Chrst’s *pasch*, his passover from death to new life, Innocent called the then-current moment in the Church an opportunity:

there is a triple *pasch* or phase I desire to celebrate with you, physical, spiritual, eternal: physical, so there may be a passing over to a place—to liberate pitiable Jerusalem; spiritual, so there may be a passing over from one condition to another

¹⁹ The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Canon 21.

²⁰ The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Canons 14-16.

²¹ The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, *Internet Medieval Sourcebook*, Canons 25.

—to reform the universal church; eternal, so there may be a passing over from [earthly] life to [eternal] life—so as to obtain celestial glory.²²

Using this breakdown, Innocent’s reform plan can be summarized in three parts: his mission to reclaim Jerusalem through crusading, to reform the clergy to better serve the laity, both of which ought to lead Christian souls to salvation and root out the heresy disrupting the Church.

In the same sermon, Innocent places the root of heresy squarely at the feet of the clergy. He states outright that “all corruption in the people comes first from the clergy” and that “it is certain that when the laity, see [the clergy] sinning shamelessly and outrageously, they also will fall into sins and ungodliness because of the [clergy’s] example.”²³ It is therefore necessary that a reform of the clergy, a spiritual *pasch*, must come from within the boundaries of Church orthodoxy. A similar analysis of Innocent’s speech is what leads historian Andrew Jones to conclude in “The Preacher of the Fourth Lateran Council” that Innocent’s ideal of reform from within is at odds with the less orthodox missions of the Mendicant orders which were founded around the same time.²⁴ It is a conclusion that, upon comparison to the goals of Anthony of Padua and the Franciscans, cannot be sustained.

Francis and the Franciscans

Orders like the Franciscans, which were spiritual descendants of the hermit preacher movement of the 12th century, lived as beggars, were not tied down to monasteries, and,

²² Innocent III, “Convening the Fourth General Council of the Lateran,” *Between God and Man*, 57.

²³ Innocent III, “Convening the Fourth General Council of the Lateran,” *Between God and Man*, 62.

²⁴ Jones, “The Preacher of the Fourth Lateran Council,” 139.

especially in early years, were not concerned with educating preachers like Innocent was. St. Francis, who was especially committed to poverty as a part of his mission was known to be at the very least hesitant toward formal education for his friars.²⁵ This would seem to make them, at least at the outset, poor carriers of the preaching mission outlined by Innocent III around the same time. Nonetheless, the Franciscans were quickly accepted by the Pope and became a significant resource for the Church.

The use of the Franciscans and other Mendicant orders as personal preachers for Innocent III and his successor's calls for crusade is well-known. Because they had mobility by not being subject to certain monasteries and, for the same reason, were not under the jurisdiction of any one bishop, the friars were essentially directly subject to Papal authority. This gave the popes a cheap, easy, and doctrinally orthodox way of drumming up support for crusades. One of the problems with relying on preachers not directly appointed by Rome was their unfortunately efficient ability to stir up antisemitism towards the Jewish minority in Europe resulting in mass murders, which served no real purpose in reclaiming the Holy Land.²⁶

It is important to remember that most of the specific information about Francis of Assisi and his earliest followers comes from hagiographical sources. Hagiographies tend to idealize their subjects and prioritize anecdotes of their good deeds compared to accounts of their specific movements and actions. However, they are useful for understanding the way the figures were viewed by their close contemporaries and, at least in the case of St. Francis and St. Anthony, are

²⁵ Neslihan Şenocak, *The Poor and the Perfect: The Rise of Learning in the Franciscan Order, 1209–1310* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 29-30.

²⁶ Cristoph T. Maier, "Papal crusade propaganda and attacks against Jews in France in the 1230s: a breakdown of communication?," in *Journal of Medieval History* 49, no. 3 (July 2023), 339.

the best contemporary sources for their lives. Francis and Anthony's portrayals, while maybe not up to modern historical standards, do reveal a lot about what the men might have thought and been like.

From the beginning, it is obvious that Francis of Assisi was deeply concerned with remaining completely loyal to the Church. Shortly after recruiting his first few followers, in 1209 Francis decided to travel to Rome to seek the approval of Innocent III for his new order, drawing on quotes from scripture about the mission of spreading the good news.²⁷ While it is impossible to know exactly what the pope and the rest of the Church hierarchy thought of Francis and his small band, they probably viewed them as just another group of pious laymen who were "playing at the monastic life."²⁸ Thus, Innocent's blessing of Francis's group was only informal and not at all out of the ordinary. In fact, their ascetic lifestyle and focus on preaching was not noticeably different from other groups who had been deemed heretics, like the Cathars and Waldensians.²⁹ The major difference for the Franciscans was their being tonsured, the head shaving which was a physical sign that assured whoever heard their preaching that they spoke for the orthodox faith. Still, it would be years before Francis's group attained official recognition. The most impressive part of the account of Francis receiving the pope's blessing is that he was able to get there at all. The episode reveals Francis's unwavering tenacity and how, even from this early stage, the Franciscans were committed to remaining an orthodox order within the Church, even though their methods might have been out of the ordinary.

²⁷ Thomas of Celano, "The Life of Saint Francis," in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 2001), 210.

²⁸ Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi: The Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 30.

²⁹ Moore, *Pope Innocent III*, 147.

Anthony of Padua

It was probably to Innocent's surprise as well as that of his successor Honorius III that the Franciscan movement increased at all. It is important to note that while Francis probably had no formal training in preaching, he was regarded as a powerful figure who "went around cities and villages proclaiming the kingdom of God and preaching peace and penance for the remission of sins."³⁰ The Franciscans quickly grew in number and began to attract adherents from across Christendom.

One of these was Anthony of Padua, originally from Portugal. Born into a wealthy family, he joined a traditional monastic community of Augustinians as a young man and was trained as a priest in theology and Latin. Anthony was attracted to the Franciscan way of life and in 1221 went to Italy to join them. While originally remaining inconspicuous, Anthony burst his way onto the scene in a famous story which takes place in 1222. A group of Franciscans and Dominicans had gathered for an ordination in the town of Forli but found that no one had prepared a homily. Anthony was called upon to preach and his incredible ability stunned his audience, not realizing that he had been formally trained.³¹ While the story may or may not be true, it seems that it was around this time that Anthony became widely recognized and became a famous preacher.

From then on Anthony was called upon to teach his brother Franciscans and preach. A shift since the founding of the Franciscans was also occurring, with properly trained preachers

³⁰ Thomas of Celano, "The Life of Saint Francis," 214-5.

³¹ Ernest Gilliat-Smith, *Saint Anthony of Padua According to His Contemporaries* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1926), 55-6.

taking a more central role in the order, Anthony being the most prominent. In 1223, Pope Honorius III officially granted the Franciscans apostolic blessing and approved their Rule. The Rule of 1223 called for the examination of potential members in their beliefs “concerning the Catholic faith and the sacraments of the Church” in Chapter II as well as a vetting process before being allowed to preach as outlined in Chapter IX.³² Anthony did not go unnoticed by the order’s founder either. Around 1224, Francis wrote a letter to Anthony giving him express permission to “teach sacred theology to the brothers.”³³ It seems, however, that Francis did do only begrudgingly as his letter includes a caveat. Quoting the 1223 Rule, he gives his assent only so long as education does not “extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotion.”³⁴

Whatever his initial feelings on formal learning, Francis came to accept that theology and clericalism were a necessary part of his order’s survival, but never wanted them to become the central feature. While he may have wished to typify the untrained apostles, the reality of the thirteenth century required preachers who were much closer to Innocent III’s mold. The Franciscans needed to remain orthodox and prove they were valuable to the Church in the fight against heresy, of which Anthony became a substantial figure.

Anthony Preaching

Between his discovery as a trained preacher in 1222 and his death in 1231, Anthony of Padua became the most famous preacher in all of Italy. He spent his time between teaching in

³² Second Rule of the Friars Minor, *Capuchin Franciscan Friars Australia*, <https://www.capdox.capuchin.org.au/legislation/second-rule-of-the-friars-minor>.

³³ Francis of Assisi, “A Letter to Brother Anthony of Padua,” in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, vol. 1 (New York: New City Press, 2001), 107.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

universities and travel preaching, but the specifics are mostly anecdotal from the hagiographies. Most important to his preaching period is that sometime in his last few years Anthony compiled a collection of his sermons. When, or if, they were preached is not known, but it is likely that the collection was commissioned at the behest of Pope Gregory IX or his representative.³⁵ As described already, Gregory is quoted as praising Anthony as the “Ark of the Testament” for his preaching ability and Anthony, as a senior Franciscan by his later life, certainly could have met the pope.³⁶ The collection of Anthony’s sermons is the only extant account of his exact words in preaching and was probably intended for use in teaching other Franciscans. It covers three major sections: sermons for specific Sundays of the liturgical year, sermons on Mary, and sermons for specific Church festivals.

In the general prologue to his sermons, Anthony lays out the reasons and importance for preaching and understanding scripture. He points out the distinction between knowledge and understanding and how without real “understanding of the deeper meaning of Scripture” one cannot “grasp even the literal sense properly.”³⁷ He further describes scripture’s relationship to the life of the Christian with Christ acting as a “gardener” of the soul, who through scripture grows and purifies the soul “from every defilement of heretical perversity.”³⁸ It is the role of the preacher to provide understanding and be the tool by which Christ cares for and guards the soul from error. Even here in the general prologue, Anthony identifies the rooting out of heresy as a

³⁵ Gilliat-Smith, *Saint Anthony of Padua According to His Contemporaries*, 74-5.

³⁶ See *Saint Anthony of Padua According to His Contemporaries*, Chapters VI-IX.

³⁷ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, trans. Paul Spilsbury, https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1195-1231._Antonius_Patavinus._Sermones._EN.pdf, 8.

³⁸ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 8-9.

primary goal of preaching and teaching about scripture. He goes on to illustrate the Church as being like the Ark of the Covenant and the understanding of scripture like the golden Cherubim whose wings are outstretched to guard it as commanded by God in Exodus 25:18-20.³⁹

Anthony's prologue sets up two recurring themes in his sermons: the importance of understanding scripture and scripture's role in combatting heresy. While not the only two themes, how Anthony deals with them is important for comparing his preaching to that of Innocent III.

On the Sunday known as Quinquagesima Sunday, early in the year prior to Lent, the Church historically (prior to the Vatican II reforms) used Luke 18:31-43 as the Gospel reading. Split into two parts, the first half (v. 31-34) deals with Jesus' foretelling of his own death and resurrection, which is not understood by his disciples.⁴⁰ The second half (v. 35-43) describes Jesus granting a blind man sight because of his faith.⁴¹ In his commentary on the passage, Anthony addresses the themes of heresy and moral life. Anthony laments the injustice and cruel death of the innocent Christ, especially regarding the betrayal of Judas:

³⁹ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 9-10. Exodus 25:18-20: "and two cherubs of pure beaten gold for the two ends of this throne, one to stand on either side of it; with their wings outspread to cover the throne, guardians of the shrine. They are to face one another across the throne. And this throne is to be the covering of the ark."

⁴⁰ "Then he took the twelve apostles aside, and warned them, Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and all that has been written by the prophets about the Son of Man is to be accomplished. He will be given up to the Gentiles, and mocked, and beaten, and spat upon; they will scourge him, and then they will kill him; but on the third day he will rise again. They could make nothing of all this; his meaning was hidden from them, so that they could not understand what he said."

⁴¹ "When he came near Jericho, there was a blind man sitting there by the way-side begging. And he, hearing a multitude passing by, asked what it meant; so they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth was going past. Whereupon he cried out, Jesus, son of David, have pity on me. Those who were in front rebuked him, and told him to be silent, but he cried out all the more, Son of David, have pity on me. Then Jesus stopped, and gave orders that the man should be brought to him; and when he came close, he asked him, What wouldst thou have me do for thee? Lord, he said, give me back my sight. Jesus said to him, Receive thy sight; thy faith has brought thee recovery. And at once the man recovered his sight, and followed him, glorifying God; all the people, too, gave praise to God at seeing it."

Yet how many Judas Iscariots there are today, ‘hirelings’ according to the meaning of his name, who sell the Truth for the reward of some small temporal advantage, who sell their neighbour with the kiss of flattery, and in the end hang themselves in the pit of eternal damnation.⁴²

The Judas’s of Anthony’s own time were both the heretics who claimed to be Christian and those, particularly in the Church, who take advantage of their position for personal gain.

Yet Anthony does not stop at criticizing Judas. He goes on to name Herod, Pilate, and the Jews as all complicit in the death of Christ. Herod is the “image of the hypocrite,” Pilate is “a weak man pretending to be strong, but full of empty words,” and the Jews are “perverse subordinates” who spit in the face of Christ.⁴³ Anthony explicitly states the goal of comparing those who mistreat Christ with contemporary equivalents: Christ represents “the leaders of the Church, who make God known to us and who represent him.”⁴⁴ This is the climax of his sermon. To Anthony, Christ’s body, the Church, is being undermined, beaten, and even killed in the present day by those who are supposed to be subordinate to it (heretics) as well as authorities who are supposed to lead it (simoniacs, hypocrites, and other corrupt clergy). This mirrors the problems in the Church seen by the hermit preachers before and admitted by Innocent himself, that of heretics and immoral clergy.

⁴² Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 54.

⁴³ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 55-6.

⁴⁴ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 56.

How then does Anthony think the problems of the Church can be solved? For this he turns to the second half of the Gospel. He argues that the goal of the preacher, like Christ in the passage, must be to open “the eye of reason, so that it becomes capable of seeing the light of the true sin.”⁴⁵ He connects the blindness of the man to pride in humanity, that is, to be fully cured of blindness and thus “enlightened” requires becoming “truly humble.”⁴⁶ The preacher’s responsibility is not simply to teach what the right thing to do is, but must be met by humility in the receiver. However, he also believes that “nothing so humbles the proud sinner as the humility of Jesus Christ’s humanity.”⁴⁷ Therefore, good preaching and explication of the Gospels can turn even the proudest heart humble. It is the goal of the preacher to bring about that change, even amongst the most stalwart of heretics and unbelievers. To the Catholic Church, humility and submission to Church authority and teaching are one and the same. It is pride that leads the heretic to reject the teachings of the apostle’s successors in favor of their own beliefs. Although the modern reader may see a bit of naivete in Anthony’s belief in the power of the Gospel to change hearts and minds, there is no doubt that he and his brother Franciscans were serious about their mission. Anthony himself had once dreamt of going to Africa to convert Muslims but was prevented by illness. The famous story of St. Francis traveling to Egypt with the Fifth Crusade in a failed attempt to convert the Sultan is another example of Franciscan devotion and belief in the efficacy of preaching.

⁴⁵ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 44.

⁴⁶ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 46.

⁴⁷ Anthony of Padua, *The Sermons of Saint Antony of Padua*, 47.

The Ideal of the Fish

Anthony of Padua was canonized about a year after his death in 1231, but like many saints his death was only the beginning of his legend. Understanding how he was remembered in the years after his death is important for continuing to understand the changes the Catholic Church was undergoing in the later Middle Ages. About 150 years after Anthony's death, a Franciscan named Arnald of Sarrant wrote his *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor* which includes anecdotes and stories about the most important Franciscans since the founding of the order, including Anthony. It particularly remembers his feats of preaching to heretics and sinners, sometimes to a supernatural ability.

One of the most famous stories given about Anthony is his preaching to the fish. Anthony, unable to convince a group of heretics to turn away from their erroneous beliefs, grew frustrated and instead began to preach to fish. Unlike the heretics, the fish, of all colors and sizes, gathered before the saint in "complete orderliness" and, upon hearing him preach the Word of God, "made sounds...made a sign of bowing their heads...as if they wanted to praise the Most High."⁴⁸ The sight of the fish caused the heretics to listen to Anthony preach which was able to convince them of the error of their false beliefs.

While a strange story, Anthony's preaching to the fish is emblematic of his own goals and that of Innocent III and Lateran IV. The response of the fish is the ideal envisioned by the two preachers. Both sought an orderly Church of all humanity who gathered each Sunday to give praise to God. The evidence from their sermons makes clear that they both believe a trained

⁴⁸ Arnald of Sarrant, *Chronicle of the Twenty-Four Generals of the Order of Friars Minor*, 164-5.

preacher and moral saint, by expounding the truths of the faith, would cause all to be moved to praise and right living. The heretics and schismatics could not resist being converted by the miracle of such movement. The reforms in preaching in the early thirteenth century, as well as the rise of the mendicant orders, created the new ideal of the fish as the model for the whole Church.

Conclusions

In many ways, Anthony and Innocent III were united in their desire for better preaching. Innocent, as well as the Lateran IV reforms, refocused preaching to be the most important aspect of priestly duty, and it is obvious Anthony saw it as equally important. They both truly believed that heresy could be rooted out of the Church through good, orthodox preaching combined with good moral example from the clergy. There were dangerous elements within the Church and without, certainly, but the solution was not to tear the whole thing down like the heretics wanted, but to call those at fault to repent and to teach the truth. However, while the moral example of the clergy was the primary concern of Innocent, Anthony believed the key was more on the side of preaching. The difference in primary focus, while notable, probably has more to do with their specific positions within the Church, Innocent III as pope and Anthony of Padua as mendicant preacher, rather than a fundamental disagreement over the most serious problem.

What is perhaps most interesting about the dichotomy of Innocent III and Anthony of Padua in their respective roles as pope and popular preacher is that it reveals

that the goals of the Church hierarchy were not that different from the new mendicants. The Franciscans were in many ways dissidents. They began as a group of mostly uneducated laymen and St. Francis himself questioned the need for proper education and priestly training and, like other similar movements, was concerned with corruption and scandal in the Church. However, it is clear Innocent was deeply concerned with the same. Both also came to hold the same views on the role of education. It is incredible how much things changed within Francis's own lifetime, with a traditionally educated priest becoming the most famous preacher of his order and indeed in all of Italy, despite his hesitancy in accepting the process that formed him. Eventually, it became clear that good preaching and the refutation of heretics necessitated formal training, which can partially be attributed to Anthony's success, thus aligning the goals of all parties.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the Franciscans were able to dodge the claims of heresy leveled against many other similar groups.⁴⁹ If nothing else, they were fiercely loyal to orthodoxy (whether or not that was different from the individuals in the hierarchy) and lived radical lifestyles built on taking literally the call of the Gospels. They could be affirmed as a legitimate reform movement precisely because people like Francis of Assisi petitioned to the pope from the very beginning. Because of this, they became recognized as an asset of the Church rather than a threat. They were undoubtedly also helped by the pastoral canons of Lateran IV, which emphasized much of the same reform priorities.

⁴⁹ Moore, *The War of Heresy*, 270-1.

My conclusion would, therefore, be somewhat at odds with that of Andrew Jones in his article “The Preacher of the Fourth Lateran Council.” While it is true that Innocent III and Lateran IV were traditional in that their ideal was for formal education and leadership by a morally upright parish priest who celebrated the sacraments and preached well, this is not completely antithetical to the Franciscan mission.⁵⁰ The ideal is exactly that, an ideal. Although the mendicants were more radical in the way they lived, traveled, and preached, the story of the fish shows that they had the same ideal in mind. The realities of the Church were different, not the ideal itself. It is sometimes easy to forget that the major protagonists of the period were all reacting to the same reform movement occurring within the Church in their own unique ways. The difference lies primarily in method, not the ideal itself.

Lessons for Modern Catholics

It is perhaps worth noting that many Catholics have drawn comparisons between the figures of St. Francis of Assisi and Martin Luther. Both are notable for their desire to reform the Church but are separated by an important distinction: one was loyal to orthodox belief, while the other was not. The distinction only matters if one believes the Catholic faith is worth fighting for. The disagreements and calls for reform in the Catholic Church have never been new or unique. The problems plaguing it in the thirteenth century are more or less the same as those in the twenty-first. What matters to the Church is how to respond. Do you give up on the project and move on to something

⁵⁰ Andrew W. Jones, “The Preacher of the Fourth Lateran Council,” 140.

else or do you believe in the ideal of the fish and the truth of the Catholic faith? St.

Anthony of Padua, Pope Innocent III, and the whole Church gathered at Lateran IV knew their answer. The question as always for Catholics is if they know theirs.

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Soldier, American, and Black: Double Consciousness and the Experience of Black Soldiers on the American Frontier between 1870 and 1900

Hallie Lindsey

After the Civil War, Americans shifted their focus West and Manifest Destiny became one of the defining ideologies of the period. Americans from all natures of life went West in an attempt to make their fortunes and find a place within the national narrative. African Americans were no different and were integral in shaping the West, though their contributions are often forgotten. There were many Black pioneers, like the Exodusters who sought to make a home on the Kansas frontier and the one in four Black cowboys who ranged the plains along with their white counterparts.¹ Just as important were the Black soldiers, often called the Buffalo soldiers, who made up the Army's 9th and 10th Cavalries and the 24th and 25th Infantries. These soldiers played a unique role in the West as they were often in conflict with Indigenous people and played a substantial role in their genocide. Additionally, the Black troops consistently faced racism within the Army and were often looked down on by both white members of the military and the general public. For many Black soldiers, this further complicated their relationship with race and identity. In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois described this tension as "double consciousness" which he argued affected all African Americans. It was even worse for the Black soldiers during this period as they were placed in conflict with not only white Americans but also Native Americans. However, the racial hierarchy during the second half of the 19th century was more flexible and

¹ Smithsonian Magazine and Katie Nodjimbadem, "The Lesser-Known History of African-American Cowboys," Smithsonian Magazine, accessed September 13, 2023, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/lesser-known-history-african-american-cowboys-180962144/>.

complex than typically assumed. Identity and perception were malleable and were constantly evolving, especially for Black soldiers.

W. E. B Du Bois pioneered the theory of “Double Consciousness” in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*. He worked to understand what it meant to be Black in United States at the turn of the twentieth century.² Du Bois pulled from multiple areas of philosophy and religion to explain and explore the Black experience. The theory of “Double Consciousness” is one of the ways he frames this and states:

It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, - an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled striving; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder... He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.³

In this quote, Du Bois argues that American society has made it nearly impossible for African Americans to embrace all aspects of their identity. Simply, Blackness and Americanness are viewed as disanalogous. A slight subversion of the line stating an African American “simple wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American,” to the relationship between being Black and a soldier is one of the core themes of this paper.⁴

After the Civil War, Black soldiers sought to use military service as a way to unite these different aspects of their identity, but their experiences in the West amplified it. Black soldiers

² W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk - Essays and Sketches* (Duke Classics, 1903), 6.

³ Du Bois, 10–11.

⁴ Du Bois, 10–11.

were expected to defend the discriminatory status quo and assist the American government in accomplishing their goals. More specifically, Black soldiers were frequently placed in the middle of the literal and ideological conflicts between the white population and Indigenous people. However, these soldiers were not the only ones who would attempt to use the Service to unite their identity. Over the next century, many more African American soldiers would enlist with similar hopes, but still battled with complex issues of identify.

The scholarship on Black soldiers and their experience of double consciousness primarily focuses on later wars, but many of their insights can be retrospectively applied to the Black troops and their experience on the frontier. In her dissertation on the Black military experience, Le'Trice Donaldson argues that Black soldiers who fought in the Indian wars, the Spanish-American War, and World War I fought as “a means of exercising their citizenship” and “a means of demonstrating that they were real men.”⁵ In essence, Black soldiers wanted to affirm their identity as Americans but struggled to do so because of the racism embedded in society.

Another scholar, Helen K. Black interviewed William H. Thompson about being a “Buffalo soldier” during World War II and he described the experience as “a war within a war.”⁶ For Thompson and other Black soldiers, they were expected to be defenders of the United States and liberators of foreign nations, “but solely within the small container American culture allowed

⁵ Le'Trice Donaldson, “A Legacy All Their Own: African American Soldiers Fight for Citizenship, Race, and Manhood, 1870-1920” (Ph. D. dissertation, Memphis, Tennessee, The University of Memphis, 2015), v, <https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2275&context=etd>.

⁶ Thompson describes himself as a Buffalo Soldier, but by World War II, Black soldiers had reclaimed the name. The all Black 92nd division of the Army chose the buffalo as their insignia in 1917 as an ode to the original buffalo soldier nickname. Helen K. Black and William H. Thompson, “A War within a War: A World War II Buffalo Soldier’s Story,” *The Journal of Men’s Studies* 20, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 33, <https://doi.org/10.3149/jms.2001.32>.

[them].”⁷ Their experience was bifurcated by their identity because society deemed Blackness as incompatible with Americanness. This divide was worsened by their job as soldiers because “The armed services worldview was a concentrated microcosm of subjugation for African Americans.”⁸ The goal for many Black soldiers in essentially every conflict was to unify the two aspects of their identity, or double consciousness, through service, but societal racism and circumstances often helped deepen the divide.

African Americans were first allowed to join the Army and Navy in 1863, mid-way through the Civil War. They were initially excluded from Lincoln’s Call to Arms in 1861, despite the large number of free Black people who advocated for their inclusion.⁹ Their exclusion arguably made the situation in the Union worse as Black people were blamed for the war and violently took this out on the Black population in the North.¹⁰ However, Lincoln’s administration finally changed their policy following the Emancipation Proclamation. By the end of 1863, approximately 37,000 African Americans joined the United States Colored Troops (USCT), which consisted of 58 segregated units.¹¹ Throughout the remainder of the war, one in five Black soldiers were killed.¹² It is also important to note that African Americans were involved in the

⁷ Black and Thompson, 33.

⁸ Black and Thompson, 33–34, 37.

⁹ Deborah Willis, *The Black Civil War Soldier: A Visual History of Conflict and Citizenship*, 43, accessed December 11, 2023, <https://mobius.overdrive.com/mobius-williamjewell/content/media/5402624#>.

¹⁰ Willis, 129.

¹¹ Willis, 129.

¹² Willis, 129–30.

war before 1863, but their roles were generally unofficial. They often worked as laborers for both the Union and the Confederacy and were critical to the War effort and eventual Union victory.¹³

After the Civil War, the United States government set its eyes on a new prize, the West. While westward expansion had already begun, it expanded rapidly in the second half of the century. A central part of this was conflict with Indigenous people as even more were pushed off their homelands by the Army following the War.¹⁴ These conflicts officially referred as the Indian Wars Campaigns, were genocide. The US government “won” 62.5 percent of these conflicts with an additional 26.56 percent ending in a peace agreement. However, of the remaining conflicts, the indigenous people are only considered to have won 1.56 percent of the conflicts and most other outcomes still benefited the government.¹⁵ Numerous tribes were pushed off their lands by the government, including the Ute people of Utah and Nevada. In the early 1860s they “ceded” most of their land to the government in exchange for a small reservation near the Great Salt Lake.¹⁶ However, not all Ute bands relocated to the reservation, and they continued to conflict with the Army and government for the next 40 years.¹⁷ Black soldiers fought numerous different tribes including the Ute and were a part of banishing them onto reservations. Despite their active role in the “winning” of the West, Black soldiers have only recently become a topic for exploration.

¹³ Willis, 44,48.

¹⁴ Ray Allen Billington and Martin Ridge, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (UNM Press, 2001), 299.

¹⁵ Brian R Urlacher, “Introducing Native American Conflict History (NACH) Data,” *Journal of Peace Research* 58, no. 5 (September 1, 2021): 6, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343320987274>.

¹⁶ Billington and Ridge, *Westward Expansion*, 299–300.

¹⁷ Sondra Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute: The Story of an American Indian People* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2019), 167.

Scholarship on the history of Black soldier in the West was nonexistent until the 1960s when William Leckie published his book *The Buffalo Soldiers*. This book in many ways argued that studying the Black soldiers was valuable and that they were instrumental in settling the West. Notably, Leckie attempts to unpack the racism and discrimination the soldiers faced, but the work is still a product of its time and contributed to some common misperceptions of the soldiers. Forty years later, William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips reinvigorated the field with their book *The Black Regulars* and sought to remedy and fill in some of the gaps left by Leckie. Dobak and Phillips make the argument that the Black regiments were not intended to promote racial equality, rather they were a necessity for conquering the West. They make this argument by focusing the day-to-day life of the soldiers rather than the rare moments of conflict. They also make the compelling argument that these soldiers should not be called Buffalo soldiers because it was a derogatory term. Both of these works were seminal for the study of Black soldiers during the Indian Wars and laid the groundwork for most modern historical analysis. However, neither work applies Du Bois theory of Double Consciousness and how perception shaped the Black experience during this period.

This paper will explore how the Army and the white public influenced how Black soldiers perceived themselves and the complex evolution of race in the American West. Soldiering and life on the frontier were critical in shaping the concept of race in America between 1870 and 1890. By applying W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of Double Consciousness, the paper attempts to understand how the identity of Black soldiers was shaped by predominantly white institutions, such as the Army, and by interactions with Native Americans, specifically the Ute people. The strict barriers of race became more flexible on the frontier, but this resulted in

Black soldiers having to navigate a racial society which constantly contradicted itself. Based on letters written by people who interacted with the Black soldiers, military documents and newspapers, this paper argues that the identities of Black soldiers near the end of the nineteenth century were made more complex by how the white population perceived them. Furthermore, this critically affected the development of race on the frontier which was very complex and flexible.

The Eyes of Others

The American West was divided into a racial hierarchy with whites at the top and Native Americans at the bottom. African Americans, especially Black soldiers, had to navigate a middle ground within this hierarchy. They were expected not to challenge the superiority of the white population and to dutifully conduct the white vision of Manifest Destiny. At the same time, Black soldiers were ordered to enforce this hierarchy upon indigenous people and participate in their genocide. In many ways, they lacked agency and were forced to exist with a double consciousness in order to survive. Each sector of society perceived Black soldiers differently, and it was “the eyes of others,” as Du Bois put it, that made a cognitive divide necessary.¹⁸ Whites especially had dramatically varied opinions about Black soldiers, but nearly all of them were extremely vocal. The loudly and frequently told Black soldiers, and all African Americans, who they were and what they could be which forced many Black soldiers to have complex relationships to their identity.

The first part of society that helped create Black soldiers’ double consciousness was the Army. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the United

¹⁸ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 10.

States Army was a white-dominated institution. More specifically, of the troops that fought in the West, 80 percent of cavalry members were white, 92 percent of infantry soldiers, and 88.6 percent of the total fighting force.¹⁹ As such, the Black soldiers existed within a white-dominated society even on the frontier. They were the minority and lacked social capital which in turn left them on the whims of the current officer in charge of their fort or base. The vast majority of officers were white, however there was no legal prohibition on African Americans becoming officers. Throughout this period there were only four Black officers in total, but enlisted men could and did move up the ranks.²⁰ Despite being removed from mainstream society, many of the same prejudices persisted like limited representation and discrimination. However, the unique nature of the frontier allows for the complexities of race to be examined with greater clarity.

The first example of this is letters written by Frances Roe, the wife of Lieutenant Fayette Washington Roe of the 3rd Infantry, which demonstrate how Black soldiers were perceived and what many viewed their role within the Army to be. While it is unknown who she was originally writing to, Roe later published the letters she wrote while living in the West in her book *Army Letters from an Officer's Wife*. The letters cover all aspects of her life in the West and as Roe states in the preface, the letters are a “concise narration of events as they actually occurred.”²¹ Included within her narration are various mentions of the Black troops that served with her

¹⁹ Frank N. Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier: Records, Reports, and Recollections of Military Life and Service in the West* (UNM Press, 2009), 1.

²⁰ Isaac Hampton II, *The Black Officer Corps: A History of Black Military Advancement from Integration through Vietnam* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 23, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203081891>.

²¹ Frances Marie Antoinette Mack Roe, *Army Letters from an Officer's Wife, 1871-1888* (Project Gutenberg, 2009), 3, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/6823/6823-h/6823-h.htm>.

husband in the Army, one of which is the earliest known use of the term Buffalo soldier.²² While Roe's letters provide a limited perspective of life in the West, they provide valuable insight into how the Black soldiers were perceived.

Between 1872 and 1873, Roe lived at Camp Supply, Indian Territory along with members of the 10th Cavalry and expressed her opinions on the Black troops frequently.²³ She takes a very dismissive and racist attitude towards the troops as soon as she arrives at the camp. Roe's first letter discussing the Black troops is from May of 1872 and she says that "there is one advantage in being with colored troops – one can always have good servants."²⁴ She goes on to compliment another wife's servants, stating "Mrs. Vincent has an excellent colored soldier cook, and her butler was thoroughly trained as such before he enlisted."²⁵ Both of these passages demonstrate how people viewed the Black soldiers as inferior and predisposed to subservience. Servant-type positions were common in Black regiments with cooks and waiters making up the fourth-largest occupational group among the enlisted.²⁶ The Army viewed Black troops as a goldmine for servants and often employed them as support staff for white officers and their families.

Roe also discusses the Black troops' competency as soldiers and their integration into the Army. In her eyes, they were Black first and soldiers second. This perception of the soldiers' identities is apparent when she notes, "It did look so funny, however, to see such a Black man in

²² Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier*, 47.

²³ Schubert, 47.

²⁴ Roe, *Army Letters from an Officer's Wife, 1871-1888*, 50.

²⁵ Roe, 50.

²⁶ William A. Dobak and Thomas D. Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), 136.

a blue Uniform.”²⁷ It was strange and almost comical in her opinion for Black troops to wear the same colors as the white troops. Later on in 1872, Roe recounts the officers’ opinions on the Black troops stating, “The officers say that the negroes make good soldiers and fight like fiends.”²⁸ While the second half of this statement and the use of fiends is problematic, the officers were complimenting the Black soldiers. They viewed them as good soldiers even if Roe did not. She followed the officers’ compliment with her opinion that “they certainly manage to stick on their horses like monkeys.”²⁹ Her word choice here is very telling, especially the use of fiends and monkeys. Both of these words imply the Black soldiers were seen as animalistic and almost feral which reflects how Roe viewed them. However, these lines also show that not every person believed that Black soldiers were incapable of being good soldiers and even some officers recognized their skill. Roe’s opinion was not ubiquitous among whites on the frontier, although it was arguable the loudest.

Black soldiers were also viewed as immoral or criminal and rarely received the benefit of the doubt. Even within the Army, “mention of crime brought out white observers’ worst fears about Black people.”³⁰ This is encapsulated by an episode that happened at Camp Supply in October of 1872. Roe spoke of the events stating, “Faye says that the colored troops were real soldiers that night, alert and plucky. I can readily believe that some of them can be alert, and possibly good soldiers, and that they can be good thieves too. For last Saturday night they stole

²⁷ Roe, *Army Letters from an Officer’s Wife, 1871-1888*, 50.

²⁸ Roe, 57.

²⁹ Roe, 57.

³⁰ Dobak and Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898*, 195.

from us the commissary stores.”³¹ However, Roe’s assumption that it was the Black troops that stole from them lacks evidence. Especially since the base had been under attack by Native Americans when the goods were stolen.³² Additionally, while Roe does state that the Black soldiers may be good fighters, it is sarcastic and is setting up her punch line stating that they are good thieves. Despite having no proof, they are the thieves and an abundance demonstrating the Black soldiers’ valor, she chose to believe they were criminals. Even though Camp Supply was under attack, in her opinion the Black soldiers were the most likely suspects because they were Black.

Relations between white and Black soldiers could also be very tense at times because many of the white soldiers viewed themselves as inherently better than the Black troops. As such, serving with them or even having a Black soldier as the commanding officer was an affront to some white soldiers. Roe provides one example of this from February of 1873 after Camp Supply came under new command of John Gregory Bourke, a captain who at the time served as an assistant adjutant general.³³ She says,

Many changes have been made during the few weeks General Bourke has been here. The most important having been the separating of the white troops from the colored when on guard duty. The officers and men of the colored cavalry have not like this, naturally, but it was outrageous to put white and black in the same little guard room, and colored sergeants over white corporals and privates. It was a good cause for desertion.... Best of

³¹ Faye refers to Lieutenant Fayette Washington Roe, the author's husband. Roe, *Army Letters from an Officer's Wife, 1871-1888*, 68.

³² Roe, 66.

³³ F. W. Hodge, “John Gregory Bourke,” *American Anthropologist* A9, no. 7 (1896): 245, <https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1896.9.7.02a00030>.

all, the colored troops have been ordered to another department, and the two troops of white cavalry that are to relieve them are here now.³⁴

Within this quote, Roe makes clear that she and other white members of the base, including officers do not in any way view the Black soldiers as their equals. They were, in her opinion, not even fit to share a room with white troops, and having a Black commanding officer was a valid cause for desertion. The celebration of racism and the racist treatment towards the Black troops is evident in Roe's description, especially with her stating that these are "important" changes, it was "outrageous" to have them serve together, and it was "best of all" that the 10th Cavalry was being reassigned. In her eyes, the Black troops were not fit for service alongside white troops because they were inferior and did not deserve equal treatment.

These sentiments were present among white soldiers of all ranks, and some did even desert because of perceived conflicts with Black soldiers. In his memoir, Richard H. Pratt, who in 1868 was a lieutenant of the 10th Cavalry, recalls an episode when he held a competition to select his commanding officer's new orderly. This was a highly desired position and both Black and white soldiers competed for it, but some white soldiers "could not bear the humiliation of losing an interracial contest."³⁵ Pratt's competition came down to two men, a white infantryman and a Black trooper who were very evenly matched, but the Black soldier ended up being selected as orderly because he "had on perfectly clean socks and clean drawers."³⁶ Despite winning fairly, Pratt's decision to award the black soldier was quickly overruled by the Fort's

³⁴ Roe, *Army Letters from an Officer's Wife, 1871-1888*, 91.

³⁵ Dobak and Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898*, 86.

³⁶ Richard Henry Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom: Four Decades with the American Indian, 1867-1904* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), 28.

commanding officer. The other officer chose the white soldier even though it was against the rules.³⁷ However, this change was never carried out because the white soldier was deeply aggrieved by being beaten by a Black soldier and decided to desert his post. Pratt said of the event that “the white soldier ‘could not face the ridicule of his comrades at being beaten by a Negro.’”³⁸ When the standard perception of Black soldiers being inferior was questioned, white soldiers, nor white officers, could not handle it. Their worldview required African Americans to be inferior to them, so they imposed systemic forms of oppression and even broke rules to maintain white superiority.

Systemic racism in the Army took place on multiple levels. For example, throughout their history, the 9th and 10th Cavalries and the 24th and 25th Infantries had a total of four Black officers: Henry O. Flipper, Henry V. Plummer, John Hanks Alexander, and Charles Young. During their time in the Army, all of them faced extreme racism from white officers and soldiers which resulted in both Flipper and Plummer being dismissed. Alexander and Young faced similar treatment, especially when they attended West Point, but both died while they were in the service. Notably, Alexander died young of a heart attack, while Young was a career soldier and died during World War I due to an infection.³⁹ Flipper and Plummer, however, provide clear examples of how the military viewed and treated Black officers. They were fodder for an extremely racist system because of how white officers perceived them.

³⁷ Pratt, 29–30.

³⁸Dobak and Phillips, *The Black Regulars, 1866-1898*, 86; Pratt, *Battlefield and Classroom*, 29.

³⁹Charles L. Kenner, *Buffalo Soldiers and Officers of the Ninth Cavalry, 1867–1898: Black and White Together* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 296, 298, 301, 306.

Henry O. Flipper was the first Black man to graduate from West Point in 1877 and served with the 10th Cavalry. However, by 1881 he had been court-martialed, and by 1882 dismissed. He was charged with embezzlement and “conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.”⁴⁰ Apparently, during his tenure as commissary some of his accounts came up short. This was not an uncommon occurrence, but being court-martialed for it was. In the end, he was acquitted of the main charge of embezzlement but was convicted of conduct violation. Charles Kenner, a notable author regarding Black officers, argues Flipper’s trial was abnormal and that he received harsher treatment because he was Black.⁴¹ Specifically at Fort Davis, where Flipper last served, white officer corps did not want or believe there should be Black officers, which made the Fort a hostile environment. Flipper was perceived as a threat and after his removal, the corps was all white again.⁴²

Henry V. Plummer was commissioned as a chaplain, a rank equivalent to captain, to the 9th Cavalry in 1884. During the initial years of his tenure, Plummer had great success because as a chaplain, he “did not exercise command and therefore did not pose the same threat to white supremacy as did black line officers.”⁴³ Over the next ten years, he was very successful and regularly drew some of the largest crowds to his sermons. However, as Kenner puts it, because Plummer was successful, he became a threat and was “in the minds of his superiors, metamorphosing into a radical race agitator.”⁴⁴ In 1894, Plummer was court-martialed on

⁴⁰ Kenner, 284.

⁴¹ Kenner, 284.

⁴² Kenner, 284.

⁴³ Kenner, 284.

⁴⁴ Kenner, 285.



*Second Lieutenant Henry Flipper in William Loren Katz, *The Black West : A Documentary and Pictorial History of the African American Role in the Westward Expansion of the United States.**

trumped-up charges due to a grudge held by another Black soldier. Throughout his trial and after his conviction, many leaders of the African American community spoke out on his behalf and petitioned President Grover Cleveland. The President ignored them and approved Plummer's conviction and dismissal in order to "[fulfill] the expectations of his Southern Supporters."⁴⁵ The

⁴⁵ Kenner, 292.

Army and the government viewed African American soldiers as inferior and as such allowed for their unequal and unjust treatment. They perceived the Black soldiers as criminals, so the soldiers did not receive the benefit of the doubt and often received harsher punishments than the white soldiers. In essence, the white members of the Army made their assumptions true by creating oppressive systems for the Black soldiers.



Henry V Plummer circa 1860, Wiki Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry_V_Plummer_\(page_63_crop\).jpg#filehistory](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry_V_Plummer_(page_63_crop).jpg#filehistory).

In general, Black soldiers were victims of a system designed to keep them out because the white majority perceived them as inferior. This resulted in much higher rates of desertion and

dishonorable discharges. In 1887, Black soldiers were court-martialed more than twice as often as white soldiers, and at smaller posts, they were more than three times more likely to be court-martialed.⁴⁶ Within the 9th Cavalry, 91 men deserted and 59 received dishonorable discharges between 1885 and 1887.⁴⁷ The climate was hostile for Black soldiers in the Army and the racism they faced was often amplified by where they were stationed, with smaller forts typically being more toxic. Additionally, the systems in place, such as the majority white officer corps, limited their recourse leading to unwarranted court-martialing, unjust trials, and unforgiving convictions and dismissal. Furthermore, some white officers despised that they had been put in charge of a Black regiment and took it out on the soldiers. The inhumane treatment by the white officers was rarely corrected or punished.⁴⁸ As such, it is not surprising that there were such high numbers of desertion when many soldiers had very limited options. The belief that Black soldiers were more likely to be criminals became a self-fulfilling prophecy as whites established systems that discriminated against the Black soldiers.

On the other hand, the perception of Black soldiers as inferior is also evident in how they were rewarded for their service. As previously stated, Black soldiers made up 11.4 percent of all troops in the West, but they received Medals of Honor far less frequently.⁴⁹ In fact, only four percent of all Medal of Honor winners were Black between 1817 and 1898, the period the Department of Defense labels as the “Indian Wars/Campaigns.” To put this in context, only

⁴⁶ Kenner, *Buffalo Soldiers and Officers of the Ninth Cavalry, 1867–1898*, 26–27.

⁴⁷ Kenner, Table 1-2, 26.

⁴⁸ Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier*, 55.

⁴⁹ Schubert, *Voices of the Buffalo Soldier*, 1.

eighteen Black soldiers won the award out of 427 total.⁵⁰ Of these eighteen, there were no officers and Moses Williams, a First Sergeant, was the highest ranked. Additionally, no members of the 25th Infantry won a Medal of Honor during this period.⁵¹ Black soldiers, thus, received far fewer awards for their service compared to white soldiers during the same conflict. This can be explained by the fact that they had to be nominated by their typically white commanding officer and it had to be approved by many white officers who often viewed the Black soldiers as inferior. Many white people perceived the Black soldiers as incapable of great acts of heroism and when they did accomplish them, they were likely to not be recognized or have their success diminished.⁵²

A hub for racism, the US Army caused Black soldiers to experience double consciousness. They were soldiers and they were African Americans. These two categories had to be separated because the conditions they lived under made being both extremely difficult. As seen in Roe's letters some of those associated with the Army had, in general, negative preconceived notions of what a Black person was. Additionally, being Black was their defining characteristic rather than their skill as a soldier or personality. They were expected to behave in a certain way and, in general, were not supposed to compete with white soldiers. As individuals, they were not supposed to challenge the racial hierarchy and if they did, like the Black officers, whites within the Army would take it upon themselves to enforce it. These rules of army society

⁵⁰ "Army - Medal of Honor Recipients - U.S. Military Awards for Valor - Top 3," accessed September 15, 2023, <https://valor.defense.gov/Recipients/Army-Medal-of-Honor-Recipients/>.

⁵¹ Frank N. Schubert, *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier: Biographies of African Americans in the U.S. Army, 1866-1917* (Scholarly Resources, 1995), 515.

⁵² See appendix 1 for more information about Medal of Honor winners.

are reflected in the statistics regarding Black soldiers with high rates of desertion, dishonorable discharge and fewer honors. All of these factors demonstrate how complex race and racial identity were on the frontier. Black soldiers could be officers and did receive honors, but they were also court-martialed more frequently and faced blatant discrimination. White institutions were often oppressive, but Black soldiers found ways to navigate within them. For these soldiers, the development of identity was extremely personal and individualized because there was such a wide variety in how Black soldiers were treated and viewed due to the unpredictable and still developing concept of race on the frontier.

Milk Creek: A Case Study

After the Civil War, Native Americans were the primary target for Black soldiers and the broader Army. The US Army came into conflict with various troops including the Ute, Comanche, and Apache peoples and their goal, prior to the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887, was to force Indigenous people onto reservations.⁵³ Relationships between the Black soldiers and the Indigenous people varied and evolved but were generally negative. This was encouraged by whites who sought to position African and Native Americans as enemies. Additionally, the concept of race became more flexible in the West and was tied more closely to culture. The role of Black soldiers was very complex as they faced discrimination within the army, but in the view of Native Americans, they were the same as white soldiers. In other words, unlike Roe discussed earlier, who viewed the Black soldiers as Black first and soldier second, many Native Americans viewed them as soldiers first. The wars against Native Americans helped shape Black soldiers'

⁵³ After the Dawes act passed in 1887, the official policy toward Indigenous people changed. They were treated as individuals rather than tribes which help the government to break up reservations and tribal lands. "Dawes Act (1887)" (2021), <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/dawes-act>.

identity as they were put in the middle of two groups, white and Native Americans, who looked on them with contempt. One of the best examples of this is the Battle of Milk Creek.⁵⁴

On the first of October 1879, Company D of the 9th Cavalry was en route to the White River Agency, in what is today northwestern Colorado, when they came across a messenger who reported that the troops at the agency were under siege. Two days earlier on the 29th of September, Major Thomas Thornburgh of the 4th infantry had crossed Milk Creek knowingly advancing from agency territory to Ute land.⁵⁵ He was supposed to be there for a conference with Ute chiefs and had explicitly been told that crossing the creek would be perceived as an attack. Nathan C. Meeker, the Agent at White River wrote to him stating, “The Indians seem to consider the advance of troops as a declaration of real war.”⁵⁶ However, Thornburgh thought it best to be “within striking distance,” and continued on.⁵⁷ The situation quickly devolved as the army realized that a group of Utes were on the other side of the river. However, the number of Utes, and if there were even lying in wait, is highly contested. The Army claims there were between 300 and 400 Utes waiting to ambush them. However, Nicaagat, a leader of the Utes, said there were only fifty warriors and that the fight broke out spontaneously.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Throughout the paper, this conflict will be referred to as Milk Creek, but it is also often called the Battle of Milk River.

⁵⁵ Russel D Santala, “The Ute Campaign of 1879: A Study in the Use of the Military Instrument” (Master’s Thesis, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1993), 78–79, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA273079.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Meeker to Thornburgh, September 27, 1879, RSI (1879) Sondra Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute: The Story of an American Indian People* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2019), 144.

⁵⁷ Santala, “The Ute Campaign of 1897,” 79.

⁵⁸ Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 144; Santala, “The Ute Campaign of 1897,” 80.

Then, Thornburgh's scouting party tried to wave the Utes down to speak and Nicaagat waved his hat back in agreement. However, the Utes began firing because Nicaagat's "warriors misinterpreted his 'hat waving' as encouragement."⁵⁹ The army troops quickly came under heavy fire and began to retreat back across the river to their wagons. It was at this time Thornburgh was shot and killed and command was passed to Captain Payne of the 5th cavalry. Once back at the wagons, the remaining troops began to dig in hoping to wait out the battle, but steady fire from Ute sharp shooters plagued them well into the night. Eventually, all of the horses and mules were killed. Desperate, Payne sent four volunteers for help around midnight on the 29th, the first of which reached the 9th Cavalry on the 1st of October.

Company D of the 9th was already on its way to White River as they had received orders from Brigadier General John Pope on the 15th of September to "settle matters" there.⁶⁰ They were a small company, between thirty seven and thirty nine men, but their captain, Francis Dodge, quickly made a plan.⁶¹ The company pretended to start setting up camp for the night to "deceive any Indians near [them]" and distributed ammunition amongst themselves.⁶² After night fell the company headed towards Milk Creek and marched seventy miles over night to arrive on the morning of the 2nd of October.⁶³ The scene was desperate when they arrived with troops sheltered behind the rotting corpses of their animals and pinned down without access to water. However,

⁵⁹ Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 144.

⁶⁰ Santala, "The Ute Campaign of 1897," 77.

⁶¹ Sources different on the number of soldiers with company D. Some state there were 35 men and two officers while others say 39 total. Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 145; Peter R. Decker, "*The Utes Must Go!*": *American Expansion and the Removal of a People* (Fulcrum Pub., 2004), 143; Frank N. Schubert, *Black Valor: Buffalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870-1898* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 63.

⁶² Schubert, *Black Valor*, 63.

⁶³ Decker, *The Utes Must Go!*, 141.

the arrival of the 9th proved that word had gotten out and hopefully more reinforcements would come.

The arrival of the 9th prolonged the battle another four days until the full 5th Cavalry regiment got to Milk Creek on the 5th of October to end the battle. Throughout the battle, 11 white soldiers, 11 white civilians and 37 Utes were killed, with many more injured.⁶⁴ However, no members of the 9th were killed, nor are there any reports of injuries.⁶⁵ Additionally, ten men committed actions at Milk Creek that would get them the Medal of Honor for Valor. Henry Johnson was one of them. A private with the 9th cavalry, Johnson was the only Black soldier to receive the award for this conflict. His citation states that he “Voluntarily left fortified shelter and under heavy fire at close range made the rounds of the pits to instruct the guards, fought his way to the creek and back to bring water to the wounded.”⁶⁶ Johnson, however, did not receive his medal until 1890, unlike the majority of the white soldiers who were issued theirs in 1880. It is likely his race played a significant factor in the War department’s hesitant to issue him the Medal of Honor and why it took a decade of fight for him to be honored like his white counter parts had been.

Many people, including soldiers from the battle, argued that Johnson did not deserve a medal because his actions were not sufficiently heroic. They state that he and the other Black soldiers were not in danger because the Utes did not shoot at them when they went to get water.

⁶⁴ Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico* (University Press of Colorado, 2001), 216.

⁶⁵ Theophilus Francis Rodenbough and William Lawrence Haskin, *The Army of the United States: Historical Sketches of Staff and Line with Portraits of Generals-in-Chief* (Maynard, Merrill, 1896), 286.

⁶⁶ “Indian War Campaigns Medal of Honor Recipients,” Index, Medal of Honor - United States Army, March 30, 2023, <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/>.



Sgt. Henry Johnson, Library of Congress, <https://lccn.loc.gov/2002723363>

Robert Emmitt, one of Thornburg's soldiers, wrote that the Utes were not impressed or threatened by the Black soldiers, rather they felt contempt for them. In Emmitt's opinion, the Utes believed that "The Buffalo Soldiers had not come to fight; they had come to work for the white soldiers," which made the warriors "very disappointed."⁶⁷ If Emmitt is to be believed, the Utes saw the Black soldiers as subservient and not worth killing; they were pathetic because they were not

⁶⁷ Schubert, *Black Valor*, 69.

fighters, but rather only there to do manual labor. This perception speaks more to how Emmitt viewed the Black soldiers rather than the Native Americans. As a white soldier, he believed this about the Black soldiers and speculated that the Utes must feel the same way. Black soldiers were told that they were lesser by their white counterparts who used instances like this to say that even the native Americans agree with us.

Caleb Benson, a Black soldier from the 9th Cavalry, also wrote about the event leading up to Johnson's Medal of Honor, but his interpretation was very different. When interviewed about Milk Creek and the White River campaign over fifty years later, he claimed that Black soldiers warned white soldiers to "black [their] hands and face" because "the Indians never shot a colored man unless it was necessary."⁶⁸ His justification for this was that two white soldiers had been killed when trying to retrieve water, but Black soldiers had not been. Notably, Benson's recollection of events was inaccurate as the two white soldiers were not killed in this manner. Regardless, he believed this and used it to support his perception that Native American "always wanted to win the friendship of the Negro race and obtain their aid in campaigns against the white man."⁶⁹ Benson's interpretation of the events is drastically different than that of Emmitt's and demonstrates one's race was instrumental in shaping how they viewed other's actions. The Black soldier believed that the Native Americans wanted to work with and form an alliance with them against white oppressors. The Black soldiers were valuable, and the Utes wanted their help, rather than pitying or resenting them.

⁶⁸ Schubert, 69.

⁶⁹ Schubert, 69.

Reports of the battle were soon found in newspapers around America, but their coverage of the events varied. One of the key points of differentiation was in regard to the Black soldiers and their role in the battle. The first example is the *Helena Weekly Herald*, which was a Republican leaning paper, characterized by a Democratic rival as a “a copperhead snotrag”⁷⁰ The Milk Creek report in the Herald printed: “9th cavalry [has] come to our rescue... Cheer upon cheer rent the air from our trenches when it was ascertained who were coming.”⁷¹ Beyond being a positive report of the events, the author notably writes that they were greeted by cheer and that the white units were elated to have them there. The Black soldiers were the heroes of the day and were written about as such.

While a positive response to the Black soldiers in a staunchly Republican paper seems more likely due to the Republican stance on slavery and the rights of African Americans, they also received positive press in Democrat-owned papers.⁷² One of these was the *Stark County Democrat* out of Ohio. The article they ran stated they were a brave company and that “Payne had been most gallantly succored by a colored company... of the Ninth Cavalry.”⁷³ Both papers wrote that the Black soldiers were good at their job and used wording that positively characterized the 9th. By using descriptors like gallant and brave the paper implied that they were

⁷⁰ Montana Historical Society, “Helena Weekly Herald (Helena, Mont.) 1867-1900,” Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn84036143/>.

⁷¹ National Endowment for the Humanities, “Helena Weekly Herald. [Volume] (Helena, Mont.) 1867-1900, October 16, 1879, Image 5,” October 16, 1879.

⁷² Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, “Republican Party Platform of 1880 | The American Presidency Project,” accessed December 12, 2023, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/republican-party-platform-1880>.

⁷³ National Endowment for the Humanities, “The Stark County Democrat. [Volume] (Canton, Ohio) 1833-1912, October 16, 1879, Image 3,” October 16, 1879; National Endowment for the Humanities, “The Stark County Democrat. [Volume],” accessed November 6, 2023, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84028490/>.

heroes of good character. Both of these news reports gave the perception that Black soldiers were saviors of the white troops and presented them as not only good soldiers but also good people.

Other newspapers did not look favorable on the Black soldier's role in the Battle of Milk Creek. One of these was the *Lake County Star* in Baldwin, Michigan. Founded in 1873, the paper published its first issue on the 1st of May of that year and within that article the paper declared that it was Republican. It stated, "In politics, *The Star* will be *Republican* – no independent or neutral humbug for us... However, this will not prevent us from doing full justice to those of a different political opinion from ourselves."⁷⁴ Later on, the paper presented itself as a community resource and printed opinions representative of people from across all political affiliations.

On the 6th of November 1879, the *Star* published a piece about the Battle of Milk Creek on the second page. Within this recapitulation, the 9th Cavalry is not mentioned at all. However, the second round of support troops led by Colonel Wesley Merritt were highlighted. Additionally, this article covers the abduction of Agent Meeker's family after he was killed, but not the main battle.⁷⁵ However, on the next page, the paper explicitly talks about the Black soldiers in a derogatory manner. It states,

The Indians call the colored troops buffalo soldiers, on account of their kinky hair. They never scalp them, and dislike fighting them, because when they kill them, the braves have nothing to show for their prowess. Until their enlistment as soldiers, negroes could pass in safety through an Indian country where to a white man it would be certain death.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Lake County Star. [Volume] (Chase, Mich.) 1873-Current, May 01, 1873, Image 2," May 1, 1873, 2, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85026421/1873-05-01/ed-1/seq-2/>.

⁷⁵ "The Lake County Star (Chase, Mich.), November 6, 1879," *Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA*, 2, accessed September 13, 2023, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn85026421/1879-11-06/ed-1/?dl=page&q=%22buffalo+soldiers%22&sp=1>.

⁷⁶ "The Lake County Star (Chase, Mich.), November 6, 1879."

The purposefully omission of the Black soldiers in the coverage of the battle and the manner in which they are portrayed later on are indicative of how this “Republican” paper viewed African Americans and Black soldiers.

First, while this section is removed from the main coverage, it is placed with the *Topics* section of the paper and presented as a piece of news. Other topics within this section include coverage of international events like a recent discovery at Pompeii and domestic reports such as news about women being admitted to the bar in eight states.⁷⁷ As such, the section on the Black soldiers is presented as fact rather than opinion and speculation. Secondly, the first two sentences of the section belay how whites interpreted the relationship between Native Americans and Black soldiers. The writer projects their own biases that Black people are lesser and due to their physical appearance are not worth scalping. Their scalp and hair are not considered a prize. Lastly, in the final sentence of the article, the author argues that before Black soldiers enlisted, they had the privilege of safe travel on the frontier that whites did not. In his opinion, native groups did not view them as a threat, nor was there a benefit to killing them unlike the white settlers. In three sentences, the author exemplifies how white Americans attempted to drive a wedge between Black and Native Americans. By presenting the Indigenous people as antagonistic to Black people, white Americans presented themselves as almost allies to the Black population. The “us” versus “them” narrative attempted to create a common enemy that allowed whites to use African Americans to achieve their goals regarding Indigenous people while maintaining their own racial superiority. However, it is a bit disingenuous to say this was simply a calculated move as there is evidence that there may have been resentment or hatred on the part

⁷⁷ “The Lake County Star (Chase, Mich.), November 6, 1879,” 3.

of Native Americans, or at least many white people truly believed that the Utes and other tribes hated the Black soldiers.

A month after the events at Milk River on the 2nd of November, Maria Smart, the wife of Albert Smart wrote a letter to her parents discussing the Utes in the area. She and her family lived in Hot Sulphur Springs and her husband was a miner. She reflects on her experience with Black soldiers and the Utes earlier that year. The Utes camped near her house for a few days in July and according to her, “they said they didn’t care how many white men came but they wouldn’t stand Negroes (that was too great an insult).”⁷⁸ This was in response to a report that stated 500 Black soldiers were stationed in Middle Park. While the reliability of Smart is questionable, as it is unlikely that a woman, let alone Smart who was admittedly bed ridden at the time due to a miscarriage, would speak with the soldiers. However, others also reported Utes feeling similarity about the Black soldiers.

One of the similar reports came from Frank Hall who was at the time the Adjutant General of Colorado. Reflecting on the summer of 1879, years later he wrote, “if there is anything on the face of the earth that an Indian hates above another it is a negro, and especially a N----- soldier. Therefore, this movement, instead of quieting their hostility, merely inflamed it.”⁷⁹ Both of these white authors believed that Utes hated the Black soldiers and, in their opinion, this racism on the part of the Native Americans was why events boiled over later that year. Even though Blacks were not originally at the battle, the white members of the community blamed the

⁷⁸ Al Look, *Utes’ Last Stand ;: At White River and Mill Creek, Western Colorado in 1879* (Golden Bell Press, 1972), 88–89, <http://archive.org/details/uteslaststandatw0000allo>.

⁷⁹ Santala, “The Ute Campaign of 1897,” 68.

Black soldiers for the battle. Whites truly believed that the Utes hated the Black soldier and thought their presence was insulting.

In the aftermath of the events of 1879, widespread outrage was aimed at the Colorado Utes, even though it was only a small group that engaged with the troops. Vocal cries, especially out of Denver, called for their removal or extermination. The Journalist William Vickers wrote that it would “be impossible for the Indians and whites to live in peace hereafter.”⁸⁰ However, these events also caused the American public to reflect on the policies towards Native Americans that led to the conflict. One Montana paper argued, “If the Indians . . . were protected as they are entitled to be against the aggressions of marauding miners and the dishonesty of government officials, the outbreak would have no doubt been averted.”⁸¹ *The Washington Post* even wrote, “Nearly all our Indian wars—including the present trouble—have resulted from aggressions on the part of the Caucasian on the rights of the red man.”⁸² Both of these quotes are indicative of the shift in how the American public perceived the battle of Milk Creek. It became a moment to critique government policies, but in the end, the Utes still suffered. By March, it had been decided that the White River bands would be removed, their land ceded to the United States and reparations would be given to the white families killed at the White River Agency.⁸³

Black soldiers were instrumental in the Battle of Milk Creek, but their contributions and valor were often diminished by the white institutions and population. They existed in “a world

⁸⁰ National Endowment for the Humanities, “The New York Herald. [Volume] (New York [N.Y.]) 1840-1920, October 03, 1879, Image 3,” October 3, 1879; Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 146.

⁸¹ Humanities, “Helena Weekly Herald. [Volume] (Helena, Mont.) 1867-1900, October 16, 1879, Image 5,” and quoting *New York Herald Tribune*; Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 146.

⁸² *Washington Post* quoted in Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute*, 146.

⁸³ Jones, 148.

that looks on in amused contempt and pity,” Du Bois argues, and Milk Creek encapsulates this well.⁸⁴ After the battle, their actions were scrutinized far more than their white counterparts and they were villainized as often as they received a hero’s treatment. They could not control how they would be perceived and were constantly told who they were by others. The Black soldiers were also told they were hated by the Utes because, just like whites, the indigenous people thought them inferior and their presence an insult. However, the truth of this is debatable and this perception was likely the result of the predominant white narrative, which at times attempted to pit Black soldiers against Indigenous people. At Milk Creek in particular, Henry Johnson won the Medal of Honor because he helped save the white troops from the Utes. The race of who he helped and fought against was critical and a reason why he was even able to fight for his Medal. The Black soldiers were placed within a narrative they did not control and were expected to conform. They were part of the Army and as such, the Utes and other Native Americans were the enemy. Milk Creek and its legacy represent how Black soldiers were treated and seen by the white public.

Black soldiers were an essential element of the Army during this period, even if they were often pushed aside or had their work diminished. However, they were also part of the genocide of Native Americans and were often praised, or in Johnson’s case rewarded for their actions. They were told by whites that the indigenous people hated them, felt contempt for them, and even feared them because they were Black. Beyond the typical racialization of American society, Black soldiers on the frontier were part of an organization, the army, that told them who they were and what they could be. The identity of Black soldiers was critically shaped by how

⁸⁴ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 10–11.

whites perceived them and by how whites perceived the relationship between the soldiers and the native people. Du Bois's Double Consciousness theory is key in understanding the soldiers and how they existed in this society. The split in identity between being Black and being American was amplified for the soldiers because they were an actual extension of the government that was actively discrimination against them. The reality of the Black soldiers provides another window for looking into how Black identity across America was shaped during this period because many of the same issues that were covert in mainstream society, like how whites would manipulate interracial relations, are very apparent when examining this subsect of people. These Black soldiers are emblematic of America during the latter part of the twentieth century and their experiences demonstrate the reality of Manifest Destiny and post-civil war race relationships.

Appendix 1

Last Name	First Name	MI	Rank	Conflict	unit	campaign or action	year
Stance	Emanuel	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	Texas raid	1870
Paine	Adam	NMI	Private	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	24th inf	comanche campaign	1874
Factor	Pompey	NMI	Private	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	24th inf	staked plains expedition	1875
Ward	John	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	24th inf	staked plains expedition	1875
Payne	Isaac	NMI	Trumpeter	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	10th cav	staked plains expedition	1875
Greaves	Clinton	NMI	Corporal	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	apache campaign	1877
Johnson	Henry	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	Ute campaign	1879
Boyne	Thomas	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	victorio campaign	1879
Denny	John	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	victorio campaign	1879
Jordan	George	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	victorio campaign	1879
Williams	Moses	NMI	First Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	apache campaign	1881
Walley	Augustus	NMI	Private	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	apache campaign	1881
Shaw	Thomas	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	apache campaign	1881
Woods	Brent	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	apache campaign	1881
Mays	Isiah	NMI	Corporal	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	24th inf	paymaster escort	1889
Brown	Benjamin	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	24 inf	paymaster escort	1889
McBryar	William	NMI	Sergeant	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	10th cav	apache campaign	1890
Wilson	William	O.	Corporal	Indian Wars/Campaigns,1817-1898	9th cav	pine ridge campaign	1890

Source: Army - Medal of Honor Recipients - U.S. Military Awards for Valor - Top 3"; Schubert, *On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier*, 515.

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The 'Executioner': *Medicina* and Ancient Rome

Logan McKinney

The establishment of rational medicine in Rome and its sphere of influence (*imperium*) was a long and gradual process beginning in the early third century BCE and extending to the mid-first century CE, by which point *medicina* finally gained a secure foothold. Garnering the support of Roman citizens for any new form of medical practice (in this case, Greek ones) was essential to the success of the process. The development of rational medicine in the Roman *imperium* was hindered by the nature of traditional Roman healthcare, with its rural and household-centered basis influenced by religious and folk traditions. In Roman thinking, persons were responsible for keeping themselves healthy, but anyone within the *familia* who became ill or was injured could choose to receive treatment provided by the *paterfamilias* (head of the household), who typically possessed some limited knowledge of herbal and magical remedies that was jealously guarded and handed down through the generations. Beyond the *familia* and its *paterfamilias*, additional types of medical practice and practitioners were available, including root cutters and herbal healers who relied on magic and superstition to treat ailments, and religious healers who utilized temple medicine. Although all these practitioners considered their methodology and themselves the authority on “all things medicine,” individual patients (if adult and non-slave) were free to choose the healing approach they believed would yield the best outcome for themselves. Thus, it was the patient who had ultimate power in the medical “marketplace,” and no particular approach or methodology could be mandated by the *civitas*. Even though successful cures might build reputations and client lists, the Romans persisted in

clinging to their personal right to choose among possible treatments and methodologies. This, in addition to the Romans' traditionalist attitudes, complicated and slowed the introduction of rational medicine into the Roman world.

Societal trends outside of individual Romans' control, however, did help to actuate their ultimate acceptance of rational *medicina*. The expansion of the *imperium* exposed Roman merchants, soldiers, and other ordinary Romans to diverse cultures and healing methodologies. As the populations of older cities grew, and new ones were established (both with a mix of locals and transplanted Romans/Italians), so too did issues with sanitation, with unfamiliar illnesses, and with the growing number of needy patients. These issues led to the immigration of foreign healers, many of them proponents of the rational medicine taught in Greek medical schools. But, even when these Greek-educated healers were necessary, and effective, their techniques often seemed so novel and "barbaric" to the Romans that both the healers and their *medicina* were initially rejected. Not until true physicians such as Asclepiades and Galen learned to temper their treatment methodologies and to present them in ways that complemented traditional, autonomous Roman attitudes toward their healthcare, and not until these same physicians attained the sponsorship of leading Romans such as the Caesars, were Romans' attitudes reshaped to permit the establishment of rational *medicina* in their *imperium*.

Prior to the influence of Greek rational medicine on Roman culture, medicine practiced within the *imperium* had a rural basis influenced by religious and folk traditions although likely impacted by Etruscan traditions, which may themselves have been developed from contact with Greek colonists in southern Italy. Regardless, much of early Roman medicine within the *familia*

was conducted by the *paterfamilias*, who utilized ingredients such as wool, honey, wine, or cabbage (among others) to produce herbal and magical treatments for his household.⁸⁵ ⁸⁶ Rural practices like these were typically contained within a family, resulting in a large amount of variation in the treatments used for a single illness (e.g., common colds could be treated with either garlic or feverfew). Because Romans believed that healthcare belonged on a familial level, the *paterfamilias* was responsible for the treatment of family, slaves, and animals alike. Other types of medical practitioners, including root cutters and herbal healers, provided more exotic treatments based in magic and superstition, such as singing a snake to sleep and utilizing its venom to treat illness.⁸⁷ These less popular practices differed considerably from those employed by the *paterfamilias* in that they tended to be more focused on ritualistic healing. Additionally, Romans often believed that disease had been inflicted on a person by a divinity as a sign of displeasure.⁸⁸ Thus, the religious nature of early Roman medicine was focused on appeasing the god who sent the illness, through prayers, offerings, and amulets. In sum, early Roman medicine lacked the scientific basis (necessary to render many practices effective) that would accompany much of the Greek rational medicine yet to be known to the Roman people.

The religious aspects of Roman medicine first appear to have intersected with Greek medical practices in 293 BCE, at which time the Roman people were afflicted by a particularly

⁸⁵Louise Cilliers and Francois Retief, “The Transforming Influence of the Greeks on Roman Medical Practice,” *Acta Academica*, 39, no. 3 (2007): 155

⁸⁶ Andrew Langley, *Ancient Medicine* (Chicago, IL: Capstone, 2013), 512.

⁸⁷ Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 159.

⁸⁸ Encolpius, the protagonist of Petronius’ satirical novel, *The Satyricon*, suffered from erectile dysfunction because he had offended the god Priapus.

devastating plague that had been decimating the population for nearly three years.⁸⁹ With contemporary methods of healthcare failing, the Senate decided to consult the Sibylline books and then to summon the divine Greek physician Asclepius from Epidaurus. The Romans dedicated a temple to this healing god in 291 BCE on Tiber island. The epidemic subsided shortly thereafter, surely softening the anti-Greek sentiment shared by many Romans. Asclepius became very popular among Roman slaves; according to Suetonius, sick slaves were abandoned on Tiber island so that they could be looked after by Asclepius, and those who recovered were considered free.⁹⁰ Thus, it became known that the healings offered at the temples of Asclepius were administered regardless of social class, economic status, or gender. Healing within a temple, however, did not take on an entirely foreign identity. In Asclepieia, healers would rely on information found in dreams to develop treatments (it was believed that gods might reveal treatments through the dreams of the afflicted). The introduction of such a cult into Roman medicine was widely successful, and this event represents the first direct contact of Romans with Greek medicine. Since Greek and Roman religious healing overlapped in several ways, it was much easier for the Roman people to be sympathetic to such an approach. For instance, several treatments used in Asclepieia to treat the ill had bases similar to those used in Roman family medicine. One such doctrine was the emphasis on diet to bring about a cure. For example, Asclepius prescribed the consumption of an onion every morning, to cure Theon of a (presumably gastrointestinal) ailment (Israelowich). Onion was also utilized by Pliny the Elder in his own cures, and he maintained that onions aided in the treatment of gastrointestinal issues and

⁸⁹William V. Harris, *Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Explorations* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2016), 88.

⁹⁰ Suetonius Tranquillus, *Divus Claudius*, 25.

promoted overall good health. It was an added bonus that the religious healing offered by Asclepius was more effective in aiding the Roman people during times of illness than their own domestic forms of medicine had been. Thus, this served to moderate resistance to Greek medicine (especially among the lower social classes), as well as to provide a foundation on which later influential physicians could base their treatments.

It is important to note that, for Greek medicine to be incorporated into Roman culture, the support of Roman citizens was required. Thus, Greek medicine was not the major form of healthcare until well into the second and third centuries CE. Until then, there was a wide range of medical practices, each with its merits. Even though the practitioners of each methodology claimed to be the ultimate authority in healing its customer, the patient held the power in the medical marketplace. Healers of all varieties understood that patients had the freedom to choose their preferred form of medicine. Because of this, many practitioners avoided advertising the usage of a single (or discounting another) form of medicine to intrigue the Roman patient, who may favor a particular approach.⁹¹ The patient-centered medical marketplace meant that the success of any form of medicine depended largely on its reputation with the Roman people. Oftentimes, people would seek out multiple forms of treatment for a single illness (religious healing, scientific medicine, folk medicine, etc.), “hedging their bets.”

From the time of Asclepius’ introduction, Roman medicine would be changed as a result of the influence of Greek culture on a growing population, stimulated largely by successful

⁹¹ Ido Israelowich, *Patients and Healers in the High Roman Empire* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 47.

military conquests. As cities and towns grew, so too did poor living conditions, characterized by malnutrition, poor sanitation, and overcrowding.⁹² Thus, the Romans were greatly in need of skilled, professional physicians who could tend to those falling ill. Additionally, crowded cities did not accommodate the planting of herbs and other vegetables used in traditional remedies, nor the proliferation of that knowledge, as the number of those skilled in making and prescribing them declined.⁹³ Therefore, a shortage of healers and physicians began to occur in growing cities. As a result, many physicians (legitimate and illegitimate) looked to seize this opportunity and migrated to large Roman cities. No formal regulations were in place that restricted a person from claiming to be a physician—no educational requirements or licensing existed at the time. Thus, the success of a doctor (and perhaps of the medical profession) depended on a practitioner's reputation in the community, highlighted by the demonstration of knowledge and successful treatments.⁹⁴ For this reason, it was commonplace for doctors to refuse treatment to terminally ill patients, as these morbid cases would likely tarnish the very reputation they were trying to build.

The earliest immigrant doctors to Rome aimed to improve their social status by advertising the latest medical achievements contained in the Hippocratic corpus, the most common of which were advancements in the knowledge of anatomy and physiology. To this end, doctors often performed systematic dissections of animals and even vivisections on the bodies of

⁹² Audrey Cruse, *Roman Medicine* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, U.K.: Tempus, 2006), 59.

⁹³ Israelowich, 18.

⁹⁴ Cruse, 194.

criminals sentenced to death.⁹⁵ Other doctors demonstrated the fixation of dislocated joints, during which they utilized boards and leather straps in an effort to extend the joint for realignment. These methods, although effective, were graphic in nature and shocking to those not accustomed to such sights (i.e., Romans), representing a harsh introduction to such a novel field disapproved by so many. Roman higher education at the time was focused on rhetoric, philosophy, and the practice of law. Therefore, scientific advancements in anatomy and physiology, especially those demonstrated by dissection, seemed barbaric and unsuited for Roman life. Physical interventions like surgery and cautery were also not common in Roman medicine, making these a foreign idea, especially if they caused significant pain for the patient.

Although some Greek doctors and other healers likely came before him, Archagathus of Sparta was the first doctor to be appointed to office by the state in 219 BCE.⁹⁶ His shop was established at public expense in the Crossroads of the Acilii, where he was initially well received. The Roman historian Lucius Cassius Hemina spoke of the Spartan as a *vulneraris medicus* in his *Annales*, for Archagathus was skilled in dealing with accidents and war wounds. Naturally, such injuries required an empirical approach, through which Archagathus could make an immediate difference (e.g., closure of a wound, cautery of a blood vessel, realignment of a dislocation). However, the treatment of internal conditions proved to be much more difficult, as their pathology only had theoretical support. In light of this, the wound doctor elected to treat even these more ambiguous ailments with surgery and cautery. As a result, his cruel and

⁹⁵Ann Hanson, "Roman Medicine," In *A Companion to the Roman Empire*, ed. David S. Potter (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 495.

⁹⁶ Hanson, 493.

ineffective surgical approach soon earned him the nickname *carnifex*, or “executioner.”⁹⁷ He was forced to leave the city and return to Laconia, leaving behind only a loathing for Greek physicians and medicine alike.

The successful implantation of *medicina* in Rome was further hindered by local opponents of Greek culture and medicine, such as Cato the Elder, who strongly advocated for the traditional Roman lifestyle including its healthcare, and passionately criticized Greek customs.⁹⁸ In the early second century BCE (c. 180-173), Cato wrote a work in which he alerted his son to a damaging influence of the Greeks, namely their doctors.⁹⁹ He claimed that these had taken oaths to kill foreigners with medicine, and even cryptically demanded payment for such deeds. Cato believed very strongly in family medicine (performed by the *paterfamilias*) and practiced it in his own household, utilizing herbs and cabbage as universal remedies. He argued that medicine should remain a familial responsibility, instead of a specialized profession, to prevent profiteering in Rome. The influence of powerful men such as Cato certainly made the immigration of Greek doctors more difficult, and the poor medical practices by some of the earliest immigrant physicians further advanced the position of Greek opponents. Some aspects of Greek medicine, however, found their way into Roman life despite strong opposition. For instance, Cato himself used Greek-based medical terms in his work *On Agriculture*, even though

⁹⁷ Nutton, 161.

⁹⁸ Cilliers and Retief, 157.

⁹⁹ Nutton, 162.

he openly despised anything Greek.¹⁰⁰ This text represents the earliest surviving work to contain Latin medical information. Further, Latin medical jokes can be found in plays written by Plautus in the third century BCE (e.g., *Miles Gloriosus*, *Asinaria*). Therefore, despite setbacks, rational medicine had already found a place in Roman culture.

Finally, the linguistic divide between Greek- and Latin-speaking people slowed the convergence of the two forms of medicine. Because the Greek doctor and the Roman patient often came from different educational and cultural backgrounds, interactions proved to be difficult, further accentuated by verbal and textual barriers to communication (since medical theories were developed in Greek). Even though Greek medical terminology found its way into Latin writings (as evidenced by Cato's *On Agriculture*), there was still a need for the translation of Greek writings into Latin. Caesar's contemporary Pompey, for instance, brought Greek medical literature back to Rome, to be translated into Latin by his freedman Lenaeus,¹⁰¹ indicating the acceptance by some that Greek medical theories were more advanced than Roman practices. Regardless, the largest determinant for the success of rational *medicina* in Rome would be the modification of medical practices by Greek physicians to accommodate Roman preferences and attitudes.

The opposition of Romans to Greek medicine was largely based on hostility to Greek culture and the money-seeking aspects of its practices, rather than on any medical or scientific

¹⁰⁰Brigitte Maire, 'Greek' and 'Roman' in Latin Medical Texts: Studies in Cultural Change and Exchange in Ancient Medicine (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014), 331, 413.

¹⁰¹William Scott, "The Practice of Medicine in Ancient Rome," *Canadian Anaesthetists' Society Journal* 2, no. 3 (1955): 284.

reasons. Thus, the practical-minded Romans eventually recognized the superiority of scientific medicine over traditional medicine. Greek physicians continued to arrive in Rome during the late second and early first centuries BCE, many of these penetrating the upper-class circle of Roman citizens. One of these physicians was Asclepiades of Bithynia, who employed a gentler approach to treatment than his predecessors.¹⁰² He had trained in Alexandria, Egypt, at the end of the second century BCE, one of the most well recognized medical centers of the time. Thus, his immigration to Rome was accompanied by the reputation, knowledge, and expertise of Alexandria. Furthermore, his background in rhetoric (a common field of study for the Roman nobleman) endeared him to his patients. Asclepiades took a molecular approach to medicine: he believed that the body was made of invisible particles and that these particles must move freely through pores to be healthy.¹⁰³ If an imbalance, flood or blockage occurred, disease would follow. His therapies, however, were what gave him such a positive reputation. He openly discouraged Hippocratic thought regarding surgical and pharmacological interventions as the first line of treatment,¹⁰⁴ and was the first physician in the Western world to develop his own medical theories in opposition to Hippocratic theories.¹⁰⁵ Instead, he encouraged non-invasive, gentle treatments for illness. He advertised the motto *cito, tuto, et iucunde* (softly, safely, sweetly), attracting the curious Roman *nobiles*. Asclepiades relied on the usage of five main

¹⁰² Israelowich, 19.

¹⁰³ Nutton, 168.

¹⁰⁴ Luigi Santacroce, Lucrezia Bottalico and Ioannis A. Charitos, "Greek Medicine Practice at Ancient Rome: the Physician Molecularist Asclepiades," *Medicines* 4, no. 92 (2017): 1, 3.

¹⁰⁵ Plinio Pioreschi, *A History of Medicine: Roman Medicine* (Omaha, NE: Horatius Press, 1996), 89.

therapies: regulating intake of food and wine, gentle exercise, rocking appliances, bathing, and massage.¹⁰⁶ Bathing was a particularly popular prescription, earning him the nickname the “water giver.” None of these treatments was particularly new on its own, but their combination was remarkably effective. In particular, Asclepiades believed that these treatments were the most effective means of restoring balance to the atoms in one’s body. He reserved the usage of drugs and surgery for extreme cases, but was not totally opposed to them. In fact, he was the first practitioner to perform an elective tracheostomy, successfully, on a patient who had some sort of obstruction in his airway. However, his predominantly gentle treatments helped Asclepiades gain favor with patients who were used to the harsh treatments of earlier Greek physicians. In fact, Asclepiades’ reputation was enhanced by his friendship and treatment of upper-class clientele, including Cicero and Lucius Crassus, both of whom would go on to advocate medicine as a profession worthy even of patricians. Asclepiades’ effective practice, endorsements and, above all, his eloquence helped to propel medicine into the forefront of Roman society. Moreover, his success with the Roman elite caused the spread of Greek medicine throughout the entirety of the Roman social structure. Pliny the Elder later criticized Asclepiades’ habit of charging money for treatment (as earlier Romans had warned), although he did recognize the superiority of the water giver’s approach to those of the physicians before him. Indeed, both contemporary and later physicians held Asclepiades in *summa fama*. Perhaps what made Asclepiades so successful was his opposition to traditional Greek medicine. Many Romans were likely hesitant ever to acknowledge a form of medicine that favored surgical treatment and the usage of novel drugs. They had come to consider this style of medicine as too invasive and too foreign. Wine, bathing,

¹⁰⁶Nutton, 168-169.

and relaxation, however, were activities familiar to the Roman people, which encouraged their acceptance of such practices. Even better, these practices were endorsed by powerful citizens and had been proven effective. Therefore, the Roman people would be much more sympathetic to an approach that discredited the Greek medicine they had come to know; they instead favored a gentler methodology.

The widespread success and fame of Asclepiades is the major turning point of medicine in the Roman world, since he transformed the physician into a highly valued professional. From this point on, it was not uncommon for members of the Roman elite to have personal Greek physicians, known as Asclepiadeans, many of whom were pupils of the Bithynian trailblazer. Before turning to medicine, Asclepiades had tried his hand at rhetoric. That career did not last long, however, either because of a lack of skill¹⁰⁷ or because he found it unprofitable.¹⁰⁸

Regardless, his background prepared him well for spreading and teaching his theories to those anxious to learn medicine. One powerful Roman who enjoyed the company of his personal physician was Julius Caesar. In fact, when Caesar was kidnapped for ransom by pirates, he sent all his staff (minus his physician and two valets) to collect the ransom money.¹⁰⁹ Then, between 49 and 46 BCE, he issued an edict granting Roman citizenship to all physicians and teachers, along with certain tax exemptions. In his biography of Julius Caesar, Suetonius wrote: “... *omnisque medicinam Romae professos et liberalium artium doctores, quo libentius et ipsi urbem incolerent et ceteri adpeterent, civitate donavit.*” (“... he conferred citizenship on all who

¹⁰⁷ Nutton, 167.

¹⁰⁸ Scott, 283.

¹⁰⁹ Israelowich, 21.

practiced medicine in Rome, and on all teachers of the liberal arts, to make living in the city more desirable to them and others”).¹¹⁰ Historians hypothesize three reasons that may have led to Caesar’s issuing of such an order: first, it served to reconstruct the city and restore serenity in the city in the aftermath of the civil wars; second, it was an attempt to restore order to encourage physicians to immigrate to Rome and serve the lower class of Roman citizens; third, it may have been aimed at attracting physicians to come to Rome before serving in the Roman military.¹¹¹

This decree was the first attempt of the Roman state to address the entire medical profession in Rome. It marks the beginning of the establishment of a public health service. Moreover, it encouraged a more drastic shift away from traditional forms of Roman medicine, as the state was advocating for the new Graeco-Roman approach instituted by Asclepiades. Soon after, more Greek physicians would arrive in Rome to establish their own practice, as well as Roman citizens who aimed to acquire training in the new form of medicine, thereby encouraging the establishment of Graeco-Roman medicine among the plebeians.

Caesar’s development of medicine was continued by his successor Augustus who, in 10 CE, granted physicians additional immunities from taxes and other public duties. This action was not unmotivated, however. Augustus himself had a personal physician, Antonius Musa, who was a former slave and freedman of Mark Antony. In 23 BCE, Musa is said to have saved Augustus from a fateful illness caused by an abscess on his liver. Musa, an Asclepiadean himself, utilized cold baths and potions to cure Augustus of his ailment, during a delicate time in Roman history. Antonius Musa continued his successful treatment of the Roman elite, serving the likes of

¹¹⁰ Israelowich, 22.

¹¹¹ Israelowich, 22.

Maecenas, Marcus Agrippa, Virgil, and Horace.¹¹² Later, Augustus introduced an organized system of military medicine which included *milites medici* and *capsarii*. These specialists were assigned to various divisions of the Roman military and *valetudinaria* throughout Roman dominions. Naturally, this medical military personnel helped with additional spread of Graeco-Roman practice to less civilized parts of Europe through military conquests.

Rational medicine was far from established as the predominant form of healthcare in the Roman world, however. Many of the ill-trained physicians claimed to be specialists in a particular area of medicine in an attempt to avoid being exposed for their limited ability to treat certain diseases. As a result, Rome was littered with both trained and disreputable physicians, many of whom turned to professional criticism of their contemporaries to win favor with the Roman people. Now, medicine was based on who could successfully advertise the best, most novel cure. As a result, scientific effort was left behind and medicine was focused on profiteering instead, confirming the prediction of Cato from decades earlier. The Roman people again found it difficult to trust the practices of physicians, for the charlatans began to outweigh the reputable physicians. Medicine was now in need of a strict integration with Roman society, which occurred in two main ways. First, trained immigrant physicians began to recognize the need to appeal to those who still favored traditional family medicine. Recognizing the hierarchical structure within the Roman family, physicians focused their efforts on educating the *paterfamilias* about their medicine and treatments. Additionally, physicians would advise the heads of households on how they should outsource certain forms of healthcare, for instance, childbirth. Physicians like

¹¹² Prioreschi, 127.

Soranus would advise the *paterfamilias* on how to choose the best midwife and physicians to aid in the delivery and care of the children under his authority.¹¹³ This strategy helped to infiltrate the part of Roman society that still favored traditional forms of Roman medicine. Secondly, to control the number of charlatan physicians in Roman cities, Antonius Pius (c. 131-168) ordained that the immunities enjoyed by physicians should apply only to a certain number of physicians. Thus, he ordered that smaller towns be allowed five, middle-sized towns seven, and larger cities ten.¹¹⁴ But, the cities themselves appointed these physicians. In this way, a sort of public healthcare system was introduced that recognized a limited number of practitioners in a given municipality. Further, this system also functioned as a licensure system, since the most popular physicians (because of their successful treatments) were the ones who maintained such exemptions from public duty. In this time period the Roman and Greek forms of medicine converged, each having to adapt to suit the preferences and needs of the Roman people.

Although many continued to doubt the efficacy and principles of *medicina*, the endorsements from members of the Roman elite and mandates of the *civitas* aided the acceptance of the next influential era of physicians, including Claudius Galen, the prince of medicine. Galen received his medical training in Smyrna and Alexandria before setting his sights on practicing in Rome. He quickly realized that to be a successful practitioner, he would have to adapt his Greek medical education to cater to his Roman patients. His adaptability is the main reason Galen was so successful in Rome, as he would effectively treat his Greek and Roman patients differently, largely based on the differences in the lifestyles between the two cultures. Galen did not model

¹¹³ Hanson, 495.

¹¹⁴ Israelowich, 29.

his practices after either his Greek or Latin predecessors, but rather utilized a combination of approaches, similar to that of Asclepiades. He recognized the merits of each approach and accredited theories to his predecessors.¹¹⁵ Thus, he recognized that, although he might favor a certain approach, he must accommodate the desires of his patients if he was to have success in Rome. By the time Galen arrived in Rome, medicine had evolved to encompass much more than the passive treatments favored by the Asclepiadeans. Romans acknowledged the superiority (in some instances) of scientific medicine, understanding that some cases called for more invasive measures like surgery. For this reason, Galen's success was enhanced through his previous experience with wounds. He began as a physician for gladiators in Pergamum, and his success at reducing the fatalities of injured fighters served as a major advantage for his practice in Rome.³² He had become a skilled surgeon and possessed the ability to treat diseases internally as well, each of which enhanced his image to Roman patients. Thus, his success as Rome's most famous physician was as much mediated by his skill as it was by his adaptability, made apparent to Galen through the mistakes of his predecessors.

Made difficult by Roman traditionalism and xenophobia, the establishment of rational medicine in the Roman world spanned multiple centuries. However, the ultimate acceptance of *medicina* resulted from assimilation of novel medical practices already established in Roman culture, improving those practices to enhance their effectiveness, and (often) endorsements of the new practices by members of the Roman elite; all these led to the reshaping of Roman attitudes toward healthcare without the total rejection of traditional valued practices. Indeed, other

¹¹⁵Dmitry A. Balalykin, "Ancient Medicine After Herophilus. Part 1," *History of Medicine* 3, no. 1 (2016): 4.

forms¹¹⁶ of medicine in ancient Rome were never totally abandoned, and many still preferred traditional approaches to healing.

From the *paterfamilias*, herbalists, and religious healers of early Rome through the first Greek-trained physicians, their "specialist" competitors, and their too often novel and "barbaric" treatments, to the ultimately more successful blending of Greek and Roman healing practices by men like Galen, Romans maintained their traditionalism and their practicality by measuring new healing practices against those already common in the *imperium*. Thus, the Romans assessed new practices on the basis of their efficacy and their integrity. Ultimately, it was those practices that were most familiar to Romans (i.e., those utilized by Asclepiades) which served to mediate their acceptance into normal Roman life. Only then could physicians build upon those practices to incorporate a more scientific approach to treatment. It was those physicians who recognized the power of the Roman patient and adapted their practice to engage traditional values that were most successful in establishing a firm connection between *medicina* and Roman life, one that not even an 'executioner' could sever.

¹¹⁶Joseph B. Fullerton and Mark E. Silverman, "Claudius Galen of Pergamum: Authority of Medieval Medicine," *Clinical Cardiology* 32, no. 11 (2009): 82.

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