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The current issue is the third of the sixth volume of the *Athens Journal of History (AJHIS)*, published by the [History Unit](#) of ATINER.

Gregory T. Papanikos
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US-Syrian Relations, 1920-1967: The Bitter Harvest of a Flawed Policy

*By Jacob Abadi**

This essay explores the course of US-Syrian relations from the end of World War I until the Six Day War of 1967. It argues that despite the early understanding between the two countries the US government never managed to develop a robust foreign policy toward this country and always regarded it as part of greater strategic and ideological concerns, which occupied the minds of the policy makers in Washington at that time such as the competition with the Soviet Union over the Middle East, which loomed large in US defense policy during the Cold War and the struggle against pan-Arabism. In addition, the author attributes this failure to the deference which the US government had toward French interests in the region and to its tendency to regard Syria as a mere participant in the Arab-Israeli conflict and above all, to intervene in Syrian affairs with a deliberate intent to overthrow the regime and install pro-US leaders in Syria. The attempts to interfere in Syria began soon after the country's independence and had a negative effect of the future of the bilateral relations. In addition, the author argues that Syria's leaders tended to rely on Soviet aid and thereby put little efforts in the attempt to convince Washington to adopt a more balanced policy in the Israeli-Syrian conflict. The author shows how the flawed foundations of the bilateral relations culminated in the hostility which brought Syria to sever its relations in the aftermath of the Six Day War of 1967.

Introduction

US relations with Syria underwent numerous twists and turns over the years. Proclaimed in January 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points called for self-determination for the territories controlled by the former colonial powers and thereby instilled hopes among the Syrian nationalists that an alliance with the US would have a salutary impact on their country. The subsequent imposition of the French mandate on Syria in 1920 and the violent encounter that ensued, intensified their desire for such alliance. In September 1944, the US recognized Syria's independence and diplomatic relations were established the following month. The bilateral relations remained cordial until the late 1940s, when the US intervened in an effort to install the Syrian military leader Hosni al-Za'im who seemed more willing to collaborate with the West than the Nationalist Party that ruled the country. The bilateral relations deteriorated following the rise of Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser in 1954, but it was not until the formation of the UAR (United Arab Republic) between Egypt and Syria in 1958 that Washington severed its relations with

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Damascus. The diplomatic relations were restored after the dissolution of the UAR in 1961 however, they remained cold, there was little commercial or cultural exchange, and Washington did little to promote the ties. Distrust in Syria's aim was common among US officials who were accustomed to regard it as a Soviet satellite. Moreover, the border incidents along the Israeli border led US officials to suspect that Syria was the one that violated the Armistice agreed upon in 1949.

By the mid-1960s the incidents along the border with Israel increased and the Syrians regarded the US as an instigator supporting Israel and its expansionist tendencies. However, the bilateral relations did not reach their nadir until the Six Day War of 1967, when the IDF (Israel Defense Force) managed to defeat Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The war resulted in Israel's conquest of the Golan Heights which Damascus later tried to regain with US pressure but failed. Although the US initiated the peace talks it refrained from pressuring Israel to withdraw and thereby left the Syrian leaders disgruntled. Disgruntled by Washington's attitude the Syrian government severed the diplomatic relations on 6 June, 1967.

This essay concentrates on US-Syrian relations from the end of World War I until the Six Day War and it argues that (a) Despite Syria's initial encouragement the US government had failed to prolong the bilateral relations; (b) The tendency of US officials to regard Syria as a sphere of French influence discouraged them from paying serious attention to it and thereby caused the bilateral relations to deteriorate; (c) Washington's excessive preoccupation with fighting the Cold War and combatting pan-Arabism during the mid-1950s made it practically impossible for its policy makers to differentiate between Egypt and Syria. By regarding both countries as mere Soviet satellites Washington lost the opportunity to explore Syria's unique history and culture and to examine the benefits which close ties with Damascus could bring, and; (d) The linkage which the US government made between its ties with Syria and the Israeli-Syrian conflict made it practically impossible for the bilateral relations to improve.

The essay begins with the initial contacts between the US and Syria starting with President Woodrow Wilson and his vision of friendship with this country. It portrays the views of Syrian nationalists who regarded the US favorably as a result of their bitter experience with the French Mandate imposed on their country in the aftermath of World War I. In addition, it demonstrates how deference toward French interests in that country prevented the US policy makers from fashioning a robust foreign policy toward that country. The second section deals with emergence of the Cold War and it assesses the impact of the race between the two superpowers on US-Syrian relations. It demonstrates the efforts made by Washington to use all the means necessary to reduce Soviet influence in that country, including the covert attempts to overthrow the pro-Soviet leaders in Syria and their dismal failure.

The last section assesses the negative impact of Washington's attempts to overthrow the Syrian regime on the bilateral relations against the background of the Cold War contest and the clash with pan-Arabism. The sources used in this essay are primary as well as secondary. They include US government and CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) publications, memoirs by leaders and officials who were involved in the contacts with their Syrian counterparts, and articles by commentators and observers.

The Genesis of US-Syria Contacts

Serious interaction between the US and the Syrian nationalists who aspired to independence did not begin until World War II, which brought the French forces of the pro-Nazi, Vichy regime to that country. Syria was part of the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I when France was entrusted by the League of Nations to rule the country as a Mandatory power. Nevertheless, the contacts between Syrians and Americans can be traced to the 19th century during which numerous visitors arrived in the country. They included missionaries, merchants and tourists who were generally regarded favorably by the Syrians. For example, an Arab dragoman named Yusef who escorted the Kentucky writer and artist J. Ross Browne in 1853 was recorded to have said, "I have taken a thousand American gentlemen through Syria... Yes Sir...I like the Americans-fun, fight, or frolic."¹

The first time Syria's future as an independent state was discussed in Washington was in January 1918, when Wilson proclaimed his Fourteen Points. This document had considerable impact of the proponents of Greater Syria who arrived at the Paris peace conference on January 18, 1919, and claimed that all territories which constituted the Ottoman province of Syria ought to become independent. Prince Faisal, son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca who led the delegation rejected the French demand to control Syria as a mandate and condemned the Balfour Declaration which Britain gave the Jews of Palestine in 1917. However, neither France nor Britain were willing to yield to the nationalists' demands and both insisted on acting as mandatory powers entrusted to rule these areas until their populations become mature enough for independence. When Wilson's suggestion that a commission consisting of representatives of all victorious powers go to Syria and Lebanon to determine the wishes of the population did not materialize, only two of his envoys, Henry King and Charles R. Crane were sent for that purpose. The overwhelming response of the Syrian population was that the US ought to become their

1. Cited in, Michael B. Oren, *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), 160.

mandatory power and if that did not materialize, they would accept a British mandate, but definitely not French.

Many Syrians saw the US as a better alternative to France and Britain. This was largely because the US had no imperial record and its contacts were limited to a few companies which operated in that region. The two key figures who promoted the idea of rapprochement with the US were the Syrian nationalists Fares al-Khoury and Abdul Rahman Shahbandar. According to the Khoury, Wilson told Faisal, "if the people truly want independence, then I will not allow any country in the world to control Syria!"² But when the issue was discussed again, another nationalist, Shukri al-Quwatli told Crane to inform Wilson that while the Syrians considered the US a friend they will not accept it as a mandatory power. He said explicitly, "we will not move from one disaster to another."³

Despite his sympathy toward the Arabs, Wilson had little regard toward their aspirations and the region was hardly considered important for the US until oil became an important factor in its foreign policy considerations. The Druze rebellion of 1925 was the first event that led the US government to be interested in Syria. This was largely because the French bombing that ensued hit the properties of US companies in Syria. This event led to tension with France and increased Washington's interest in Syria but when the US entered the Great Depression, little attention was given to that country. However, the region's oil resources and the fact that Syria's independence loomed in the horizon brought the two sides to interact once more. Besides, American culture, which manifested itself in the production of numerous movies and popular songs turned the US into a land of opportunity and freedom in the eyes of many young Syrians. Thus, the firm foundations laid by the US in the Wilsonian age provided a fertile ground for renewed interaction between the two sides. Nevertheless, Syria remained marginal on US foreign policy agenda and it was always dealt with in connection with larger issues such as the Cold War and the rise of pan-Arabism which began playing a significant role in Washington's policy toward that region.

Hoping to protect US interests the State Department began drafting a treaty with Syria and Lebanon in 1938. However, when France began delaying the withdrawal process the State Department came to a decision that signing such treaty was immature and abandoned the idea altogether.⁴ By the beginning of World War II the US government started paying more attention to Syria. The fall of France brought Syria to Washington's attention when the

2. Cited in, Sami Moubayed, *Syria and the USA: Washington's Relations with Damascus from Wilson to Eisenhower* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2012), 14.

3. Moubayed's interview with Munir al-Ajlani, April 10, 1999. Cited, *Ibid*, 16.

4. John A. Denovo, *American Interests in the Middle East* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), 336-337.

war between the forces of Free France and Vichy France spread to the region. In addition, Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill's assurance to President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 7, 1941 that "We have no political interests at all in Syria, except to win the war" reassured the US government that it had a *carte blanche* to intervene.⁵ No such assurance came from General Charles de Gaulle who led the forces of Free France. US officials were cognizant that the Levant was a French territory but as leading members of the Allies they regarded themselves entitled to deal with Syria at least as long as the war lasted. Nevertheless, during 1939-1942 the State Department kept a low profile in the discussion regarding the Levant and its main purpose was to define the status of that region as non-belligerent in order to justify US shipments of small arms, which it claimed were destined for local purchase and not for assisting the Allies. However, by late 1942, it became clear that the country was unlikely to fall into Axis hands. Consequently, the State Department reverted to insisting on an open-door policy for the Allies in that region. At the same time, however, the State Department was cautious not to antagonize the Vichy regime and did not yield to pressure by the Syrian nationalists to recognize their demand for independence.⁶ Consul General Cornelius van Engert was among several officials who advocated noninterventionist approach, and when the State Department discussed the possibility of raising the status of the US 'consul general' to 'diplomatic agent and consul general' the consul in Beirut, William Gwynn called the idea 'premature' and ill-inspired. Similarly, Middle East expert William Westermann argued that the US should avoid recognizing the independence of Syria, which included Lebanon at that time; abide by the 1924 Convention which respected French rights in these territories; and avoid promoting its interests at French expense or separate Syria from Lebanon because such step was liable to have negative economic results.⁷ Naturally, those who believed that the US ought to have special rights in these countries tended to interpret the Convention's stipulations in a different way, insisting that US consent was necessary for any change in their status.⁸ Nevertheless, US officials tended to not to interfere in Syrian affairs. Thus, the deference which US officials demonstrated toward France had a considerable impact on their policy toward Syria and it explains their lack of firm

5. Churchill to Roosevelt, Doc. 60, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Their Secret Wartime Correspondence*, Edited by Francis L. Loewenheim, Harold D. Langley and Manfred Jonas (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1975), 145.

6. Philip J. Baram, *The Department of State in the Middle East 1919-1945* (Jersey City, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc, 2009), 129-130.

7. Ibid, 132.

8. Cited in, The Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Murray) to the Ambassador in France (Bullitt), Washington, 13 January, 1938, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1938, Vol. II (United States Government Printing Office, Washington 1955), 1007.

commitments toward that country, except for defeating the Vichy forces. However, this policy changed considerably in November 1942, when the State Department gradually abandoned the Vichy-Washington connection and moved toward recognition of the independence of Syria and Lebanon. This was largely as a result the increasing aggression demonstrated by the Vichy regime. Seeing that US interests were under serious threat the State Department showed more willingness to support the independence of these countries. The fact that Vichy's usefulness as an intelligence source was declining and that the State Department was regarded by the liberal press as an appeaser brought the US decision makers to adjust their approach. Moreover, the feeling that it was urgent to act against France intensified in the eyes of those who did not wish to De Gaulle be the next to take the country, and the fact that Operation Torch which was aimed at expelling the Vichy forces from North Africa succeeded, emboldened the State Department to grant recognition to Syria and Lebanon. In addition, the nomination of two pro-Arab officials in the State Department, George Wadsworth who became consul general for Syria and Lebanon, and Philip Ireland who was nominated head of Middle Eastern research in the Division of Special Research accelerated and eased the adjustment process. By October 1942, the State Department became clearly more pro-Arab and less pro-French and the two countries were increasingly regraded as areas of "direct interest" to the US.⁹

In 1943, Roosevelt sent General Patrick Hurley who met members of the Syrian National Bloc and thereby recognized them as the country's legitimate leaders. At the same time, the US government regraded Quwatli as a strong leader capable of promoting its interests in the region and turned a blind eye to his past pro-Nazi sympathies. Not only did Quwatli cooperate with the US he also pledged support for the Allied war effort against Germany. In addition, Roosevelt planned to invite him to the UN Conference in San Francisco. The bilateral relations reached an unprecedented cordiality and when Roosevelt died the Syrian press was replete with articles praising him as the Arabs' great friend.

In 1943, the State Department debated the future of Syria and Lebanon. One of the ideas proposed as a solution was to establish a regional federation in which Syria and Lebanon become members and it called for promoting commercial relations between the US and the two countries.¹⁰ At the same time, pressure for greater US involvement came from people in the region. Both the Maronite and the Orthodox bishops of Beirut called for US intervention and Quwatli stated openly that he could count on US support in the struggle with France.¹¹ Gradually, more officials became in favor of US intervention. Moreover, US State Secretary Cordell Hull's fear of an Anglo-French deal that

9. Baram, 133.

10. Ibid, 137.

11. Ibid, 138.

would bar the US from entering these countries played an important role in accelerating the rapprochement with these countries. Finally, in August 1943 the State Department decided on a long-term policy toward Syria and Lebanon. The policy makers decided that France must leave and on September 19, 1944 the US finally recognized the independence of these countries. Several reasons led to this decision; the fear that the Soviet Union might penetrate the region; De Gaulle's delaying tactics and reluctance to grant recognition to these countries; the mounting resentment among Syria's politicians who sought to restore their position as founders and leaders of pan-Arabism and; the conviction in the State Department that since the US participated in the war it had the right to exercise influence in the Levant.¹² Gradually, the conviction that France had no right to the Levant became rife in US government circles and when Loy Henderson became the director of the Office of Eastern and African Affairs in the spring of 1945, he insisted that France had no rights in the Levant.¹³ Consequently, the US government had fully supported Syria's position in its negotiations with France. In response to Jamil Mardam Bey's inquest regarding Washington's position, Hull said that the US fully supported Syria's right to conclude treaties with other countries as long as they are voluntarily and mutually reached.¹⁴

President Harry Truman who came to power on April 12, 1945 adhered to Roosevelt's policy and continued to support Syria's aspiration for independence and when Quwatli informed him about the French bombing of the Syrian cities, which came after his refusal to grant France special privileges in his country, he appealed to De Gaulle to treat the country as a sovereign state.¹⁵ However, by the end of 1940s US officials made it clear to Quwatli that he was expected not only to facilitate the transfer of oil through its territory but also to reach an agreement with Israel.

While the upper echelons in the State Department tended to stay away from Syria and Lebanon the middle managers were in favor of intervention. Generally, however, the State Department sympathized with the grievances of the Arabs in these territories. At the same time, the Syrian people held numerous demonstrations calling for US intervention with supplies and even

12. Ibid, 141-142.

13. Prime Minister Winston Churchill had noted on more than one occasion that "we had supported the attainment of freedom from French control by Syria and Lebanon." Prime Ministers' Meeting No. 3 of 1953, Meeting of Commonwealth Prime Minister, Secret, June 5, 1953; Cabinet Papers, 133/135. Cited in Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill, Vol. VIII, Never Despair, 1945-1965* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988), 841.

14. Cited in, Salma Mardam Bey, *Syria's Quest for Independence 1939-1945* (Reading, UK, 1994), 148.

15. Cited in, *Memoirs by Henry S. Truman, Vol. I: Year of Decisions* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1955), 242.

troops. The State Department's answer was generally positive and some officials such as Henderson and his supporters argued that Syria's request for military assistance constituted "excellent opportunity which we should seize at once."¹⁶ The advocates of active policy in the Levant were highly encouraged by the faltering British economy which made it difficult for Attlee's Labor government to deal with this region.¹⁷

Direct US intervention in Syria did not take place until its independence and the beginning of the Cold War. It was at that time that the British government informed Washington of its inability to maintain forces in the region. At the same time, the CIA was entrusted with the task of searching for a Middle Eastern country capable of containing the Soviet Union. It was clear by then that the US was concerned primarily about the danger of losing access to the large Middle East petroleum deposits. Cold War considerations loomed large in Washington's decision to become involved in Syrian politics. According to CIA official Miles Copeland US objectives were to prevent a regional struggle from leading to war with the Soviets; to coax the regional governments into joining the free world and; to create an environment conducive to investments. When the heads of the CIA debated these issues, they looked for a country willing to establish a democratic regime.¹⁸ The consensus in the CIA was that Syria was the best place for such experiment since there were no British interests and no monarchy which could stand in the way. As it turned out, however, the first attempt to introduce free elections in Syria was utter disappointment for the CIA.¹⁹ Quwatli was reluctant to liberalize the political system. He was reluctant to reach a settlement on Palestine, refused to let the Arabian-American Oil Company (Aramco) install a pipeline on Syrian territory, and dismissed Washington's concern about the threat that the Ba'th party and the Communists posed to US interests.²⁰ Consequently, the US government sought other means by which to protect its interests in the region and thereby antagonized the Syrian regime causing the bilateral ties to deteriorate virtually beyond repair.

US Intervention and the Aborted Coup

US support of Syria's independence led to cordial relations with the National Party while left-wing parties such as the SSNP (Syrian Social Nationalist Party),

16. Cited in, Baram, 147.

17. Ibid.

18. Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations: The Amorality of Power Politics* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), 37.

19. Copeland, 38-39.

20. Douglas Little, "Mission Impossible: The CIA, and the Cult of Covert Action in the Middle East," *Diplomatic History*, 28, no. 5 (2004), 670.

the Arab Socialist Party, the Ba'th Party and the SCP (Syrian Communist Party) were regarded with suspicion. The US was particularly suspicious of the Communist leader Khaled Bakdash who capitalized on anti-US propaganda to come to power. Moreover, the fact that the SCP collaborated with Quwatli worried US officials and this was the main reason why the Congress rejected Quwatli's request for arms in 1947. When Quwatli rejected Washington's request to allow the Trans-Arabian Pipeline (Tapline), which passed through Syrian territory the bilateral ties deteriorated significantly and the tension reached its peak when Truman recognized Israel. Convinced that mending fences with Quwatli was no longer an option, US officials began considering the possibility of overthrowing him by encouraging Za'im to stage a coup.

Moreover, the fear that a Soviet-supported coup was a distinct possibility drove Washington to consider this option seriously and the CIA was ordered to contact Za'im. Miles Copeland, Ambassador James Keeley and the Military Attaché Major Steven Meade were the ones who took part in this operation. Meade met Za'im on November 30, 1948 and at least five times thereafter. When Za'im agreed to stage a coup, he requested that the US intervene by causing turmoil that would justify overthrowing Quwatli's government, or provide funds for that purpose. Although the US did not respond to his request Copeland promised that following the coup Washington would immediately recognize the new regime *de facto* and *de jure* a few days later. Finally, on March 30, 1949 Za'im arrested Quwatli, suspended the constitution and proclaimed a military dictatorship. Initially, Za'im demonstrated willingness to fulfill Washington's expectations. He improved his relations with Turkey and Israel, agreed to cooperate with ARAMCO and suppressed the Communists, arresting more than 400 of their activists. Seeing that Za'im kept his promises Washington recognized his regime on April 16, 1949.²¹ The State Department agreed to the plan but asked Meade to incarcerate the corrupt Syrian politicians, reorganize the government, introduce reforms and strive to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.²² However, there was no consensus among US officials regarding the prospect of turning Syria into a democratic state. Copeland and Meade were somehow optimistic, however, not everyone shared their view. While Jim Keeley believed that democracy could take root in Syria after a short interlude of dictatorship, Deane Hinton insisted that intervention would lead nowhere. He said, "I want to go on record as saying that this is the stupidest, most irresponsible action a diplomatic mission like ours could get itself involved in, and that we've started a series of these things that will never end."²³ Indeed, his prediction materialized and Za'im who initially listened became autocratic and ignored the suggestions made by US officials. Although there is no conclusive evidence that the US initiated the coup, it certainly did not

21. Ibid, 671.

22. Copeland, p. 42.

23. Cited in, Copeland, 43.

stop it, especially since Za'im agreed to sign the Tapeline agreement and start a dialogue with Israel as Washington requested. Generally, the US was pleased with the coup and recognized him as president.²⁴ What becomes evident from Washington's attitude is that its main concern was that the Syrian regime was instrumental in supporting its wider objectives in the region such as promoting a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict by absorbing a large number of Palestinian refugees, and providing easier access to the region's oil resources. In other words, Syria was not the main objective but rather what it could do to promote Washington's general desiderata in the region.

On August 14, 1949 another officer, Sami Hinnawi staged a coup but in turn was overthrown by Colonel Adib al-Shishakli who killed Za'im and became Syria's strongman for the next five years. Once again, the US sought to benefit from the political change in Syria hoping that the new leader would serve its interests in the region by remaining loyal to Western interests and containing Soviet penetration. Therefore, Copeland and Meade remained in touch with Shishakli and offered to train his security force. Shishakli impressed US officials who came into contact with him. He was regarded as a figure capable of promoting stability which could lead to economic growth and as a practical leader who was likely to agree to absorb a large number of Palestinian refugees without significant expenses to Washington. In a letter to the State Department the US ambassador to Iraq Burton Y. Berry noted that "Syria offers some promise," that "Shishakli has both personal authority" and that "Syria furthermore has greater opportunity for economic development at less cost and is only Arab country that could absorb large amount of refugees."²⁵ State Secretary John Foster Dulles felt that Shishakli was reliable and that Syria was capable of absorbing Palestinian refugees.²⁶ Likewise, Assistant Secretary Henry A. Byroade was convinced that the solution to the refugee problem "required above all leadership such as the Syrian government was now providing."²⁷ Shishakli capitalized on the trust which US officials had in him and played the role expected of him with consummate skill. Seeking arms from Washington he allayed its concern that they would be used against Israel, promising that he did not wish to push it into the sea, but he implored Dulles to send arms quickly to allow the Syrian army time to be trained in their use.²⁸ So impressed was the

24. Moubayed, 81.

25. The Ambassador in Iraq (Berry) to the Department of State, Baghdad, May 17, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, Vol. IX, Part 1 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1986), No. 31, 89.

26. Memorandum of Discussion at the 147th Meeting of the National Security Council, June 1, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 137, 381.

27. Memorandum, by the Officer in Charge of Lebanon-Syria-Iraq Affairs (Funkhouser), Washington, November 15, 1952. *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 520, 1057.

28. Memorandum of Conversation, Prepared in the Embassy in Syria, Damascus, May 16, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 23, 58, 62.

Second Secretary of the US legation William D. Brewer that he wrote to the State Department, "his private recognition that Israel will be a factor in the area for a long time is gratifyingly realistic." Yet he was astute enough to realize that "Colonel Shishakli is concerned with the establishment of a *modus vivendi* rather than with a permanent settlement."²⁹

For a while it seemed that all was going according to the plan until Shishakli decided to turn to the Soviet Union for help. In December 1951, Truman agreed to declare Syria eligible for US military assistance, and on August 27, 1952 the legations in Syria and Lebanon were elevated to the status of embassies. However, in February 1954 Shishakli himself was overthrown in a coup staged by left wing officers and he was exiled to Lebanon. Meanwhile, Washington was left with the dilemma of responding to Syria's request for arms. In a letter to Secretary of Defense Charles Erwin Wilson, Dulles wrote that in order to ensure that arms provided to the countries in the region were used only for defense purposes there was need to make arrangements for joint military planning between the recipients and the US ,especially with regard to Iraq and Syria.³⁰ When the debates regarding the need to establish a western defense organization in the Middle East officials in Washington saw considerable value in adding Syria to it. Once more, it became clear that Syria was regarded as serving a wider plan which the US had for that region. Consequently, it agreed to a military grant on the proviso that Syria participate in a defense pact that was being discussed at that time in Washington.³¹

As it turned out however, the negotiations regarding including Syria in the proposed pact did not go as well as expected. In a letter to the US embassy in Turkey from November 11, 1954 Dulles noted that "We question [the] practicality [of] endeavoring at this time [to] bring Syria into the defense picture. Also, because [of] limited appropriations we [are] not able [to] plan this time [to] allot any funds to Syria for military assistance."³² This was especially the case since Shishakli sought the same amount of arms that was allocated to Turkey.³³ He also expected substantial amount of economic aid for domestic projects, insisting that he must receive enough to justify the political risk of signing an economic agreement with the US because, as he put, he will be criticized for "sellout to the

29. The Minister in Syria (Cannon) to the Department of State, Damascus, September 25, 1952, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 494, 1010-1011.

30. The Secretary of State to the Secretary of Defense (Wilson), Washington, September 8, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 151, 417.

31. Paper Approved by the Chiefs of Mission Conference at Istanbul, Istanbul, May 11-14, 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 212, 512.

32. The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Turkey, Washington, November 11, 1954, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 236, 558. The parentheses are mine.

33. The Ambassador in Syria (Moose) to the Department of State, Damascus, November 6, 1952 *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 510, 1045.

imperialists.”³⁴ For quite some time this concern prevented Syria from asking the US for economic assistance. In a paper by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs from December 17, 1954 the author noted that “Whether in the face of the anti-Western popular mood in Syria, the present Government will have the courage to associate with the American ‘imperialists’ to the extent of accepting our offer of economic aid (made to Syria in September 1953) remains in doubt.”³⁵

The archival evidence shows clearly that Washington welcomed Shishakli’s to power.³⁶ He portrayed an image of a moderate leader willing to cooperate. This became evident when the president’s envoy Eric Johnston was sent to the Middle East to discuss the distribution of the Jordan River’s waters between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Shishakli responded favorably, agreeing to meet his American guest. However, when he turned to the Soviet Union for support the US no longer considered him a worthy ally.

When Bakdash became leader of the SCP and demonstrated hostility toward the US the bilateral relations took a serious turn for the worse and no improvement was in sight until 1961, and even the return of the pro-American Prime Minister Fares al-Khoury did not change that course. Khoury’s resignation in 1955 left no hope for improvement when his successor Sabri al-Asali turned to the Soviet Union as well, leaving Husni al-Barazi as the only pro-American left in the Syrian government. Besieged by his critics and accused by pro-Nasser loyalists for being a CIA agent, he was in no position to improve the bilateral relations. He was sentenced to death *in absentia* and fled to Lebanon.³⁷

Adnan Malki who came to power after Shishakli’s removal in February 1955 began immediately by approaching the Soviet Union and thereby raised concern in Washington. To counter this danger US agents contacted Colonel Mahmoud Shawkat, leader of the SSNP who was in contact with the CIA for quite some time. Meanwhile, however, Malki whose ambition to become a ‘Syrian Nasser’ was assassinated on April 22, 1955 by the Alawite SSNP member Yusuf Abd al-Rahim who hoped for a right-wing coup. There were several speculations regarding the motives. Some argued that Abd al-Rahim was ordered to carry out the assassination by one of his superiors who held a grudge against Malki. Others attributed the assassination to Nasser’s meddling in Syrian affairs but according to the State Department, Abd al-Rahim sought to take revenge on Malki who

34. Department of State Position Paper, Washington, May 5, 1953: U.S. Military and Economic Aid, [Tab 4], *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 607, 1208.

35. Briefing Paper by the Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, Washington, December 17, 1954, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, Vol. XIII, Edited by John P. Glenon et al. (Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1988), No. 287, 514.

36. Moubayed, 88. Parentheses are in the text.

37. *Ibid*, 124.

seduced his teenage daughter and became her child's father.³⁸ US agents learned from pro-Western elements in the Syrian army that Malki planned to remove Shawkat and other officers connected with the SSNP from their positions. Malki's murder was regarded by many of his Ba'thist followers as a conspiracy by the CIA.

Recent classified documents confirm that US officials had been in touch with Shawkat and one should not discount the possibility that they were involved in the assassination, or at least that they were aware of the plan and did nothing to stop it. The upshot was that in the elections of August 18, 1955 Quwatli returned to the presidency. Seeking to portray an image of a moderate leader he asked the US to restrain the Saudis and the Egyptians but the State Department's response was that "it appears certain such remonstrances we might make would not significantly affect their behavior."³⁹ At the same time, he worked closely with the Ba'thists and turned to the Soviet Union for help. The rise of Nasser, Shishakli's downfall and the Israeli raid on Gaza which took place on February 28, 1955 had such impact on US popularity that virtually no one in Syria was willing to speak on its behalf. Even the hope that Quwatli would be in a position to improve the bilateral relations faded when he turned to Moscow for aid.

Quwatli's contacts with the Soviet Union caused much concern in Washington and brought the issue of supplying Syria with arms to the fore once again. Byroade opined that Syria should not receive arms in large amounts "as long as the Israeli situation exists."⁴⁰ This conviction clearly demonstrates that Washington had wider objectives in the region which the ties with Syria were designed to promote. Resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and finding a solution to the Palestinian refugees loomed larger on Washington's foreign policy agenda and its officials sought a definite commitment on the part of the Syrian government to address itself to this issue and refrain from turning to the Soviet Union for aid. Hence the delay in the shipment of arms to Syria. Besides, there was considerable degree of distrust in Syria's intentions. US officials were not convinced that Syria's request for arms were genuine and that it only came as a tactic to pressure the Soviet Union to sell its arms at a bargain price as Herbert Hoover Jr. noted "It seems likely Syrian Government would merely use our offer for bargaining with Soviets."⁴¹ Reluctant to forfeit the possibility of enhancing the bilateral relations the State Department faced a major dilemma; refusing Syria's

38. Christopher Solomon, "Revisiting the Malik Affair," *Syria Comment*, <https://bit.ly/2OxuMdm>, accessed April 23, 2017.

39. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria, Washington, February 6, 1955, *FRUS, 1955- 1957*, Vol. XIII (Washington D.C. Government Printing Office, 1988), No. 290, 517.

40. Memorandum of Conversation, by the Officer in Charge of Palestine-Israel-Jordan Affairs (Waller), Washington, June 9, 1953, *FRUS 1952-1954*, No. 622, 1236.

41. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria, Washington, October 25, 1955, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, No. 313, 557.

request could push its leaders to turn to the Soviet Union while sending arms without a commitment to solve that Arab-Israeli conflict could have adverse effect on one of Washington's major objectives in the region. The attitude of the US embassy in Damascus toward the Syrian request for arms was summarized in a telegram from October 6, 1955 which stated that "We do not wish compete with Soviet bloc in supply of arms but we do not wish impression to arise that US is not interested in helping its friends obtain requirements necessary for their defense."⁴² Like most officials the embassy members opined that in order to prevent Syria from turning to the Soviet Union the US ought to respond favorably to the Syrian request.⁴³

Despite their suspicion of Syria's aims US officials were less reluctant to provide Syria financial aid for domestic reforms. However, Syria continued to refuse US aid fearing the conditions attached to it.⁴⁴ By refusing US aid Syria seemed acting as a recalcitrant country acting contrary to the US Mutual Security Act of 1955, which determined that any country receiving aid ought to agree to contribute to the defensive strength of the free world and capitalism.⁴⁵ Despite US suspicion Syria's behavior was quite docile during that period. Its leaders did not act in an irresponsible manner and did not resort to nationalizing western companies. What stood on the way of better relations with Damascus was the fact that US officials became so entrenched in their own propaganda campaign regarding the sinister Communist penetration and the threat to the regimes in the region that they tended to see any contact with the Soviet Union as a threat that ought to be resisted by all means possible. Recently classified documents of the National Security Council based partially on reports received from the US embassy in Damascus during 1955-1956 shed light on the anti-Communist mood which prevailed in Washington at that time. Some of them are pertinent to quote. One report states, "Syria is at the present time the most wholeheartedly devoted to a neutralist policy with strong anti-Western overtones." Other reports attributes that change to the Palestinian problem, the frequency of the takeovers in Syria and the Communist penetration of the army. Some reports specifically targeted the left-wing parties as responsible for the grim state of affairs in the country. There were also reports with dramatic tone warning that there was a left-wing trend that posed a danger to the regime and that "If the recent trend continues there is strong possibility that a Communist-dominated Syria will

42. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria, Washington, October 6, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, No. 306, 546.

43. Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Allen) to the Under Secretary of State (Hoover), Washington, December 8, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, No. 314, 558.

44. John C. Campbell, *Defense of the Middle East: problems of American Policy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 267-268.

45. William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2004), 85.

result, threatening the peace and stability of the area and endangering the achievement of our objectives in the Near East." Finally, there was a report urging the government to "give priority consideration to developing courses of action in the Near East designed to affect the situation in Syria and to recommending specific steps to combat Communist subversion."⁴⁶ However, despite all these dire warnings there is no evidence anywhere in the documents that any of the leftist, Communists or any other group have done anything intended to harm US or Western interests in Syria or in the region as a whole. In fact, these were highly exaggerated assessments. The Syrians were essentially pragmatic without a tendency to infiltrate, penetrate or control.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, US officials preferred to be misled by their own warnings. For example, the US ambassador to Syria James Moose, Jr., believed that a Communist-dominated Syria was liable to do substantial harm to American interests in Turkey and to NATO countries and stressed that it was essential to act before it was too late. At that time the Middle East entered a period of unusual unrest. Iraq and Britain aimed at plotting against both Syria and Egypt; the British exerted pressure on Washington to join the conspiracy and the CIA which for quite sometimes had been toying with the idea of overthrowing Nasser, agreed to leave him alone and instead was ready to contemplate an action in Syria. Encouraged by its recent victory in Iran where it managed to overthrow Muhammad Mossadeq's regime and restored Shah Muhammad Reza Pahlavi the US government seemed anxious to expand its influence in this petroleum-rich region. At that time Teddy Roosevelt's grandson Archibald aspired to become famous like his cousin Kermit who planned and executed the operation to overthrow the Shah and hoped that he could do something similar in Syria.

On January 8, 1956 a telegram from the embassy in Damascus stated that according to local press reports Shishakli had been in Syria and was plotting a coup with the SSNP and other Syrian officers.⁴⁸ When Syria showed interest in moving in Nasser's direction the CIA was once again on alert and informed the government of the potential danger. Consequently, Dulles planned to overthrow the Syrian regime and make it look like a coup by "indigenous anticommunist elements within Syria".⁴⁹ Seeking all the help and advice that they could get he and Eisenhower decided to discuss the matter with the British. However, the meetings took place at the precise moment when the British joined the French and the Israelis in the attack on Egypt following Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal in July 1956. During the negotiations it was decided to carry out Operation Wakeful (known to the British as Straggle) in order to prevent the rise of the

46. All quotes regarding the perceived Communist threat are cited in Blum, 85.

47. Ibid.

48. Telegram from the Embassy in Syria to the Department of State, Washington, January 8, 1955, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, No. 318, 563.

49. Little, 675.

socialist Ba'ath party in Syria. According to some reports there was fragmentary evidence that the plan was to encourage the Druze to rebel and to ignite a border conflict with Turkey simultaneously. Referring to the coup attempt as Operation Wappen the CIA coordinated it with the intelligence services of Britain, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. The decision to proceed with the operation was made in April 1957.

Participating in the planning was Wilbur Crane Eveland and several other US officials. At a meeting with Michail Bey Ilyan, one of Quwatli's associate, which took place in Damascus on July 1, 1956 Archibald Roosevelt asked how it would be possible to help the conservatives in Syria prevail over the Communists and their leftist supporters. Ilyan provided names of those who could help and recommended that the US take control of the radio stations and the newspapers in Damascus. However, Ilyan's warning that the coup should not take place simultaneously with the announcement of the nationalization of the Suez Canal, which raised Nasser's prestige, led to its postponement to October 25, 1956. According to plan the Syrian army had to take control of Syria's big cities, including the borders with Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon; to place army units throughout Damascus, and to keep the members of the new government in the dark until the coup was over.⁵⁰ Ilyan asked for a half million Syrian pounds which he promptly received. As it turned out, however, the operation had to be postponed again due to the Israeli invasion of the Sinai, which began on October 29, 1956. Eisenhower was disappointed by the delay. His concern about the oil supplies of the Middle East intensified his resolve to start the operation soon afterwards. When saboteurs blew up the British oil pipeline which passed through Syrian territory on November 3, 1956 he was enraged. He noted in his memoirs that he would have to consider implementing "a crash plan, drawn up months earlier, for shipping more oil to Europe."⁵¹ According to the plan Shishakli was to take over after the coup even though he was not regarded as the ideal candidate in the eyes of many officials. It was for that reason that Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs George V. Allen wrote to Dulles on June 27, 1957 that "we should bide our time and await developments before taking any positive position relative to his possible return to power."⁵²

According to the plan Shishakli was to be assisted by his former chief of security Colonel Ibrahim Hussein. The plan was to send Hussein secretly to Lebanon and then smuggle him through the Syrian border to meet Syrian CIA

50. Blum, 86-87.

51. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace 1956-1961: The White House Years* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1965), 95-96.

52. Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Allen) to the Secretary of State, Subject: Adib Shishakli and the Possibility of a Coup in Syria, Washington, June 27, 1956, *FRUS, 1955-1957*, No. 329, 581.

agents and provide assurance that Shishakli would take over after the coup. The persons involved in the attempted coup were the Second Secretary for Political Affairs Howard Stone, the military attaché Lieutenant Colonel Robert Molly, the Vice Consul at the US embassy Frank Jeton and another official named Arthur Close. Their plan was to convince the commander of the Syrian armor school to deploy his tanks throughout Damascus and collaborate with the plotters to topple the regime. At a meeting in Stone's house it was decided to pay the commander \$3 million for his cooperation. A contact was made with Shishakli and some embassy secretaries at his house to give the impression that the event was no more than an ordinary *soirée*, but when Stone and his agents arrived at the desk of intelligent chief Abdul Hamid Sarraj they were caught trying to hand in the money to the commander and expelled from the country.⁵³ Stone, Molly and Jeton were all declared *personae non gratae* and expelled from the country. But Molloy was determined to retaliate; upon arriving at the Lebanese border he pushed his Syrian motorcycle escort off the road and shouted, "Tell Colonel Sarraj and his commie friends" that Molloy would "beat the shit out of them with one hand tied behind his back if they ever crossed his path again."⁵⁴ The response from Washington was a total denial that a coup attempt was ever made. An article in Time magazine from August 26, 1957 dismissed Soviet reports regarding the coup attempt as mere propaganda.⁵⁵ The State Department denied the accusation and recalled its ambassador from Damascus. In an article published in the *New York Times* shortly afterwards the writer speculated about the reason for the Syrian accusation but it did not occur to him that the accusation might have been true and even Eisenhower said nothing other than that the Communists had taken control of Syria and the Soviets supplied it with arms.⁵⁶ In a telegram from August 21, 1957 to King Saud the president argued that the accusation was "part of a slanderous campaign to distract attention from the actual Communist intervention that was going on."⁵⁷ And when he wrote his memoirs he insisted that the accusation was a "propaganda attack on the U.S."⁵⁸

The Aftermath of the Aborted Coup

In August 1957, the relations between the two counties reached another one of its nadirs. The Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs William M. Rountree send a memorandum to the Acting Secretary of

53. John Prados, *Safe for Democracy: The Secret Wars of the CIA* (Chicago: Ivan R, Dee, 2006), 163-164.

54. Cited in Blum, 88.

55. Ibid.

56. Blum, 89.

57. Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia, Washington, August 21, 1957 *FRUS*, 1955-1957, No. 364, 646.

58. Waging Peace, 197.

State in which he noted that the Syrian Government was unfriendly to the US and that it was getting closer to the Soviet Union. He argued that this attitude manifested itself in blaming the US for an attempt to overthrow the regime and expelling its diplomats from the country.⁵⁹ Whether or not the US government's reaction to the events in Syria was out of proportion to the real danger will continued to be debated. However, the British who took part in the aborted operation remained convinced that such was the case. Commenting on US reaction to the Soviet infiltration of Syria, Britain's Prime Minister Harold Macmillan referred in his memoirs to the events in Syria saying, "Here we had the full, almost embarrassing, support of our American friends." He added that "our function proved, not to stimulate but restrain the impetuosity of the State Department, which was interpreting the 'Eisenhower Doctrine' with all the enthusiasm of recent converts," and that "In this evangelical mood, Dulles seemed ready and even anxious to consider measures which a few months before he would have denounced as shocking and immoral."⁶⁰ Commenting of the events in Syria in August 1957, Macmillan noted in his diaries that "The Americans are taking it very seriously and talking about the most dramatic measures--Suez in reverse." Describing what he felt about the American attitude he said, "If it were not serious (and really satisfactory) it would be rather comic."⁶¹ Macmillan was highly critical of the coup attempt advising that the West should not confront Syria directly but act through Turkey and the rest of the countries sympathetic to it.⁶²

The realization that Syria was regarded by the US as little more than a pawn in its Cold War contest with the Soviet Union for world domination was a disappointing blow to the leaders in Damascus. By the same token, officials in Washington were frustrated by Syria's apathy and lack understanding for US global strategic needs in the region.⁶³ Thus the relations between the two countries continued to deteriorate. Washington continued to refer to Syria as a 'satellite' or 'quasi satellite' state and false reports were disseminated that Syria was receiving massive amounts of arms from the Soviet Union. Among those who questioned the government's propensity to exaggerate was the journalist Kenneth Love whose report stated that he travelled throughout Syria and found no evidence of such shipments and that no Communist coup had taken place.

59. Memorandum from the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs (Rountree) to the Acting Secretary of State, *FRUS*, 1955-1957, No. 355, 632-633.

60. Harold Macmillan, *Riding the Storm 1956-1959* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 277-278.

61. Harold Macmillan, *The Macmillan Diaries: Prime Minister and After, 1957-66* (London: Macmillan, 2011), 55. Parentheses are in the text.

62. *Riding the Storm*, 279.

63. J.K. Gani, *The Role of Ideology in Syrian-US Relations: Conflict and Cooperation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 65.

And when Eisenhower's emissary Loy Henderson was sent to the Middle East in August 1957, he did not have anything extraordinary to report. In fact, a Department of Defense memorandum written in June 1957, two months before Henderson's departure to the Middle East stated that "The USSR has shown no intention of direct intervention in any of the previous Mid-Eastern crises, and we believe it is unlikely that they would intervene, directly to assure the success of a leftist coup in Syria."⁶⁴

In early September 1957 the US sent arms to the moderate countries that it sought to protect (Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Turkey and Saudi Arabia). The Soviets reacted by sending arms to Syria, Egypt and Yemen. The Syrian government accused the US of sending warships and reconnaissance planes to Latakia where Soviet ships had recently arrived. Moreover, it blamed the US for encouraging Turkey to concentrate troops along its border. Eisenhower responded that he assured the leaders of Turkey, Iraq and Jordan of US aid in case of aggression by Syria. It is highly likely, as Blum argued, that the US was not as passive as Eisenhower described. One of the president advisers, Emmet John Hughes had mentioned how the Under Secretary of State Christian Herter, "reviews in rueful detail...some recent clandestine American attempts to spur Turkish forces to do some vague kind of battle with Syria."⁶⁵ It seems that the US was seeking an opportunity to somehow invoke the Eisenhower Doctrine as it appears from a study done later for the Pentagon, which stated that "in the 1957 Syrian crisis...Washington seem to seek the initial use of force by target."⁶⁶ Furthermore, US officials tried to bring Jordan, Iraq and Saudi Arabia to claim that they were threatened by Syria but they all denied that such threat existed. Consequently, Washington's noise about Syria's drift to the left lost much of its credibility and the *New York Times* reported that its reaction was exaggerated and out of proportion to what really took place.⁶⁷

The US regarded Syria in the same way that it considered Lebanon; as country that deserved attention primarily for the role that it played in the Cold War contest with the Soviet Union.⁶⁸ The events that followed did not help allay the mutual suspicion. When Syria and Egypt began talking about creating a

64. Cited in Blum, 91.

65. Cited in Blum, 91-92.

66. Cited in Blum, 92.

67. Blum, 92.

68. This becomes evident when one explores the real reason why the CIA was ordered to interfere with the Lebanese legislative assembly elections in 1957. We learn from Wilbur Crane Eveland that the CIA director Allen Dulles paid \$25,000 to ensure that a pro-U.S. candidate comes to power. According to Eveland, Ambassador Donald Heath insisted on holding new elections in order to defeat hostile politicians and demanded that the pro-U.S. foreign minister Charles Malik participate in the campaign. Jonathan C. Randal, *Going All the Way: Christian Warlords, Israeli Adventurers, and the War in Lebanon* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), 161.

merger the US government became concerned and there was even talk about a plan to assassinate Nasser. Reports appeared between July 1957 and October 1958 in the Egyptian and Syrian press that there were at least eight attempts by the US, Saudi Arabia and Iraq to assassinate Nasser. It is impossible to determine exactly what role the US played in these alleged conspiracies. The fear of an American coup attempt was undoubtedly one of the reasons for Syria's quest for a merger with Egypt. According to Deputy Director of the CIA, Charles P. Cabell, the Syrians were concerned about the growing Soviet influence and therefore called for a union with Egypt.⁶⁹

The News about the merger talks between Syria and Egypt caused alarm in Washington and led the decision makers to consider the possibility of convincing Syria not to join. Apparently, US intelligence officers approached King Saud asking to pay Sarraj \$5 million if he agreed to call off the merger. According to the testimony of one CIA official Sarraj gave the bribe to Nasser. According to another report, Sarraj had been informed that the US knew about the plan and approved the merger. Not much is known about US machinations in this event however, Douglas Little's account of what transpired gives the impression that the CIA was involved in the effort to dissolve the UAR in September 1961.⁷⁰ Ironically, one of Nasser's condition for the merger was that Syria disband its communist party, an objective that the CIA failed to achieve.⁷¹ Complicating the bilateral relations was Lebanon's President Camille Chamoun's charge that Syria and Egypt were supporting a revolt of anti-government rebels in his country. Eisenhower had no doubt regarding the veracity of these claims.

The tension in the bilateral relations reached another crescendo in 1960, when Nasser reiterated that Israel will not be allowed passage through the Suez Canal. In protest, the American longshoremen decided to retaliate by boycotting ships of the UAR. The Seafarers' International Union and the International Longshoremen's Association refused to unload the cargo of cotton from the Egyptian ship *Cleopatra* which arrived at New York harbor on April 13, 1960. Consequently, the UAR retaliated with an embargo of its own. American ships which arrived at UAR ports were not served. The boycott extended to all UAR ports and labor unions in many ports such as Latakia, Beirut, Tripoli, Aqaba, Kuwait, Rabat and Port Sudan joined it.⁷² As a UAR member Syria took part in the boycott and thereby brought the US government to consider the means of dissolving the union.

Direct action by the US government did not lead to the dissolution of the UAR and it was only by using its Saudi and Jordanian allies that it managed to do

69. Eisenhower, 262.

70. Little, 682-683.

71. Blum, 93-94.

72. Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, *Sānāwāt al-Ghālyān: Ḥarb al-Thālāthīn Sanah*, Vol. I (Al-Qāhirah: Markaz al-Ahrām lil-tarjamah wal nashr, 1988), 445-446.

so. The UAR was dissolved by help from what the Egyptian *Al-Ahram's* editor and Nasser's confidante Muhammad Hassanien Heikal described as "the syndicate of kings" which included Saudi Arabia's King Saud and Jordan's King Hussein. King Saud later admitted to Nasser that he paid £12 million in the efforts to dissolve the UAR. The government of President Nazim al-Qudsi of the People's Party that the Saudi money helped install in power collapsed in early 1962, and some of its leaders were put to trial in what became known as the Dandeshi case. Dandeshi was a Syrian politician who was tried for treason. Documents surfaced during his trial that he and other politicians were in contact with CIA agents who were engaged in planning to overthrow the regime in collaboration with the Special Security Committee of the Baghdad Pact.⁷³

On the eve of the Six Day War of 1967 the leaders of the Ba'th party which came to power four years earlier were panicking. They were convinced that other officers within their ranks were plotting against them and that the reactionary monarchs of Saudi Arabia and Jordan were planning to overthrow them with CIA support. Their fear intensified when the Ba'thi officer Salim Hatum conspired against them from his base in Jordan where he installed a clandestine radio, which called upon the Syrian people to rebel against their leaders. His colleague, Colonel Abu Talal 'Asali later told the Egyptian press that the US conspired with Saudi Arabia and Jordan and they supported Hatum in the attempt to overthrow the Syrian regime. On April 25, 1967 the army magazine *Jaysh el-Sha'b* published an anti-religious article portraying God as "an embalmed toy in the museum of history." The article triggered a furious response and a large demonstration led by Shaikh Hasan Habannaka forced the regime to react by force. When the demonstration was disbanded by the police Habannaka was arrested, two Saudi diplomats were accused of provoking the protest and the CIA was blamed for writing and disseminating the article.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, the tension along Syria's border with Israel mounted. On the eve of the Six Day War the Soviet press reported that Israel concentrated forces on the Golan Heights. However, US President Lyndon Johnson dismissed the reports as inaccurate. Commenting on the events that preceded the Six Day War he said, "The spring of 1967 was an ominous season.... Tensions were rising in the Middle East as a result of increased Syrian harassment of Israel."⁷⁵ Meanwhile, the conditions in Syria continued to deteriorate and the frequent coups persisted until 1970, when Hafiz Assad came to power and remained Syria's president for thirty years. But even after his coup the bilateral relations remained tense and complicated.

73. Mohamed Hassanien Heikal, *The Cairo Documents: The Inside Story of Nasser and His Relationship with World Leaders, Rebels and Statesmen* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1973), 204-205.

74. Patrick Seale, *Asad: The Struggle for the Middle East* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 115.

75. Lyndon Baines Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971), 480.

Conclusion

This essay analyzed the course of US-Syrian relations from the Wilson era until the Six Day War. It demonstrated how the US failed to capitalize on the robust beginning, which could have led to better relations. Excessive deference to French interest in Syria prevented the policy makers in Washington from establishing firm foundations that could lead to meaningful relationship. Syria never occupied a high place on Washington's foreign policy agenda. All contacts with Syria were made with different and wider objectives in mind. Wilson's early statements about cooperation with Syria remained mere slogans with little substance. US involvement in Syria during World War II was essentially to win the war and no one in Washington seemed interested in its unique culture or the value of establishing cordial relations with it. The impression that emerges from the documents of that period shows that Syria's importance to the US has been marginal. When Nasser came to power in Egypt and spread his pan-Arab message US policy was aimed at curbing his ambitions and Syria received little attention. During the Cold War Syria began to loom larger in US foreign policy but only due to its strategic location in the Middle East and it was primarily the fear of Soviet expansion which led to US interest in that country. The excessive preoccupation of US government officials with the Soviet danger prevented them from developing a robust and clear policy toward Syria. Moreover, the fact that US policy-makers were preoccupied with Cold War considerations led them to ignore the differences between Syria and Egypt. An analysis of US foreign policy in the Middle East clearly shows that Syria was always discussed in tandem with Egypt and Saudi Arabia and rarely did the US diplomats discussed it as an independent country deserving special nurturing. Furthermore, the linkage which US foreign policy makers made between Syria and the Arab-Israeli conflict stood on the way of better relations. Not only was Syria expected to reach an agreement with Israel but also to absorb a large number of Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, substantial pressure was applied on Syria to join an alliance with the US, avoid connection with the Soviet Union and promote capitalism. It seems that by using Syria as an instrument to protect wider US interests in the region such as containing the Soviet Union, securing access to oil, resolving the Palestinian refugee problem and combating pan Arabism, Washington had lost the opportunity to establish firm foundations for robust relations with that country.

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Zodiacal Dating Prehistoric Artworks

By Martin B. Sweatman*

Recent work has shown that animal symbols in European Palaeolithic cave art and at two ancient sites in southern Turkey, namely Gobekli Tepe and Catalhoyuk, can be interpreted as star constellations, practically the same constellations we continue to use in Europe today. It appears they were often used to represent dates using precession of the equinoxes, where each animal symbol represents a constellation corresponding to one of the solstices or equinoxes. Here, I trace the evolution of this method for writing dates after Catalhoyuk was abandoned in the 6th millennium BCE through to its last known use in Pictish symbol stones during the 1st millennium AD.

Introduction

The recent discovery of Gobekli Tepe has sparked a revolution in our understanding of prehistory, the Palaeolithic – Neolithic transition and the origin of civilisation in west Eurasia^{1,2,3}. Prior to its discovery, it was often presumed that the development of agriculture enabled the rise of civilisation. However, according to the earliest radiocarbon dates for the site, Gobekli Tepe was constructed before agriculture was established. And given that Gobekli Tepe can be taken as a signal for the arrival of civilisation, considering its massive and extensive megalithic construction with advanced artistry and symbolism, it appears that civilisation preceded agriculture in this region by quite some margin.

Gobekli Tepe, therefore, poses many questions. The key to answering many of these questions must be an understanding of the symbolism carved into its numerous stone pillars. Recent work has interpreted the animal symbols on the broad faces of its stone pillars in terms of star constellations, finding they encode information such as the date of important events and astronomical observations⁴. Very interestingly, the constellations used appear to be the same, or at least very similar, to many of our modern ones.

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1. M. B. Sweatman, *Prehistory Decoded* (Matador, 2019).

2. O. Dietrich et al., "The Role of Cult and Feasting in the Emergence of Neolithic Communities. New Evidence from Gobekli Tepe, South-Eastern Turkey," *Antiquity* 86, no. 333 (2012).

3. Giulio Magli, "Astronomy and Architecture at the Roots of Civilization," in *Archaeoastronomy* (Springer, 2016).

4. M.B Sweatman and D. Tsikritsis, "Decoding Gobekli Tepe with Archaeoastronomy: What Does the Fox Say?," *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 17, no. 1 (2017).

Pillar 43 at Gobekli Tepe is especially important. It is like a prehistoric 'Rosetta Stone', as it allows the decoding of these animal symbols with confidence. The message it bears is very likely the date of the Younger Dryas impact event, a catastrophic cosmic collision, possibly with the Taurid meteor stream, that likely triggered the onset of the Younger Dryas mini ice-age around 10,835 BCE⁵⁶. Quite possibly, it was this event that motivated the construction of Gobekli Tepe, and therefore perhaps the origin of civilisation in western Eurasia^{7,8}. In other words, civilisation might have begun nearly thirteen thousand years ago with a cataclysmic cosmic collision, and Pillar 43 is a memorial to this event.

Many of the above statements are controversial. The Younger Dryas impact hypothesis has received sustained criticism from some quarters, despite being supported by overwhelming scientific evidence⁹. Similarly, the archaeologists working at Gobekli Tepe questioned our decoding of the site, but did not challenge the statistical case that supports it¹⁰.

Conventionally, it is thought our Western zodiacal symbols and constellations were defined by the Babylonians, or the earlier Sumerians¹¹, in the 2nd or 3rd millennium BCE. However, this is just an assumption. All we really know is that these people were aware of this knowledge, which they recorded in their star catalogues. There is no clear evidence they invented these constellations. Likewise, the discovery of precession of the equinoxes is generally attributed to Hipparchus of Ancient Greece in the 2nd century BCE. But again, all we can really say is that this is the latest time by which this effect was known. So, there is no problem in principle with knowledge of the zodiac and precession in much earlier times, along with other astronomical phenomena¹². It is simply that, until now, there was no convincing evidence for this earlier knowledge. But with the discovery of Gobekli Tepe, that has changed.

5. J. P. Kennett et al., "Bayesian Chronological Analyses Consistent with Synchronous Age of 12,835-12,735 Cal Bp for Younger Dryas Boundary on Four Continents," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 112, no. 32 (2015).

6. R. B. Firestone et al., "Evidence for an Extraterrestrial Impact 12,900 Years Ago That Contributed to the Megafaunal Extinctions and the Younger Dryas Cooling," *Ibid.* 104, no. 41 (2007).

7. M.B. Sweatman, "Catastrophism through the Ages, and a Cosmic Catastrophe at the Origin of Civilisation," *Archaeology and Anthropology Open Access* 1, no. 2 (2017).

8. Sweatman, *Prehistory Decoded*.

9. V. T. Holliday et al., "The Younger Dryas Impact Hypothesis: A Cosmic Catastrophe," *Journal of Quaternary Science* 29, no. 6 (2014).

10. J. Notroff et al., "More Than a Vulture: A Response to Sweatman and Tsikritsis," *Mediterranean Archaeology and Archaeometry* 17, no. 2 (2017).

11. JH Rogers, "Origins of the Ancient Constellations: 1. The Ancient Mesopotamian Traditions," *Journal of the British Astronomical Society* 108, no. 1 (1998).

12. B. Hayden and S. Villeneuve, "Astronomy in the Upper Palaeolithic," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 21 (2011).

Following our decoding of Gobekli Tepe, the same methods were applied to interpret zoomorphic symbolism at Catalhoyuk and in Palaeolithic cave art¹³. It was found that the ancient zodiac and astronomical knowledge uncovered at Gobekli Tepe had probably been in use for tens of thousands of years already, and probably continued to be used in Neolithic Anatolia. Importantly, a statistical case underpinning this discovery was developed. We found the probability of the null hypothesis, i.e. that the correlations we had discovered could have occurred by pure chance, to be in the region of 1 in 140 million for Pillar 43 at Gobekli Tepe and 1 in 380 million for Palaeolithic cave art, although the value obtained for Pillar 43 is subject to a degree of uncertainty. However, even allowing for this uncertainty, the combined probability is completely negligible, and therefore the zodiacal hypothesis is supported with an extreme level of confidence.

Moreover, we found the Lascaux Shaft Scene, probably the most famous Palaeolithic cave art of all, could be dated using this method to the range 15,300 to 15,000 BCE, as these are the only dates consistent with the four animals in the scene (bull, duck, rhino and horse) and the approximate conventional age of the cave. This date range was interpreted as another cosmic collision the with the Taurid meteor stream, and was found to correspond to a significant climate fluctuation evident from the GISP2 ice core record¹⁴. Moreover, it is now clear that this date range also corresponds to a major population bottleneck in this region (southern France) during the Late Middle Magdalenian period. This is revealed by analysis of radiocarbon dates from many archaeological sites across this region¹⁵.

Regarding Catalhoyuk, its zodiacal date is based on the four types of animal shrine that appear in its main occupation phase; the bear, bull, ram and leopard¹⁶. The only date range consistent with these animal symbols is 7200 to 6600 BCE, which agrees very well with the known date range of the lower levels of Catalhoyuk in which these shrines are found¹⁷; 7100 to 6500 BCE.

Following this earlier work, I show here how zodiacal dating can be applied to more of the world's best-known prehistoric artworks, often obtaining dates with greater precision than established methods. We will consider some of the

13. M. B. Sweatman and A. Coombs, "Decoding European Palaeolithic Art: Extremely Ancient Knowledge of Precession of the Equinoxes," *Athens Journal of History* 5, no. 1 (2019).

14. Ibid.

15. C. Barshay-Szmidt et al., "New Extensive Focused Ams 14 C Dating of the Middle and Upper Magdalenian of the Western Aquitaine/Pyrenean Region of France (Ca. 19–14 ka cal bp): Proposing a New Model for Its Chronological Phases and for the Timing of Occupation," *Quaternary International* 414 (2016).

16. I. Hodder, *Catalhoyuk: The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey's Ancient 'Town'* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 2011).

17. Sweatman and Coombs, "Decoding European Palaeolithic Art: Extremely Ancient Knowledge of Precession of the Equinoxes."

world's most famous ancient artworks, including the Pashupati Seal and the Gundestrup Cauldron. The list here is not exhaustive, but representative. I recommend the reader reviews the statistical case supporting this zodiacal dating method, described in detail in earlier work¹⁸, before proceeding.

Zodiacal Dating of Ancient Artworks

In the following, it is assumed that the zodiacal theory is correct. Therefore, whenever animal symbols consistent with this ancient zodiac appear in prominent settings with apparent cultic or religious significance, they can be used to provide a date using precession of the equinoxes. The ancient zodiac deduced from Gobekli Tepe, Catalhoyuk and the Lascaux Shaft Scene is given in Figure 1.

Typically, we find that four animal symbols are used to encode a date range, representing the four constellations corresponding to the solstices and equinoxes of a specific year. As this pattern repeats every one-quarter of a great year, or 6443 years, the zodiacal dating method must be used in conjunction with another dating method, like radiocarbon dating, to set the appropriate epoch. Given the extremely wide timescales and locations considered, we should not expect this ancient zodiac to be fixed absolutely; minor local variations are expected.

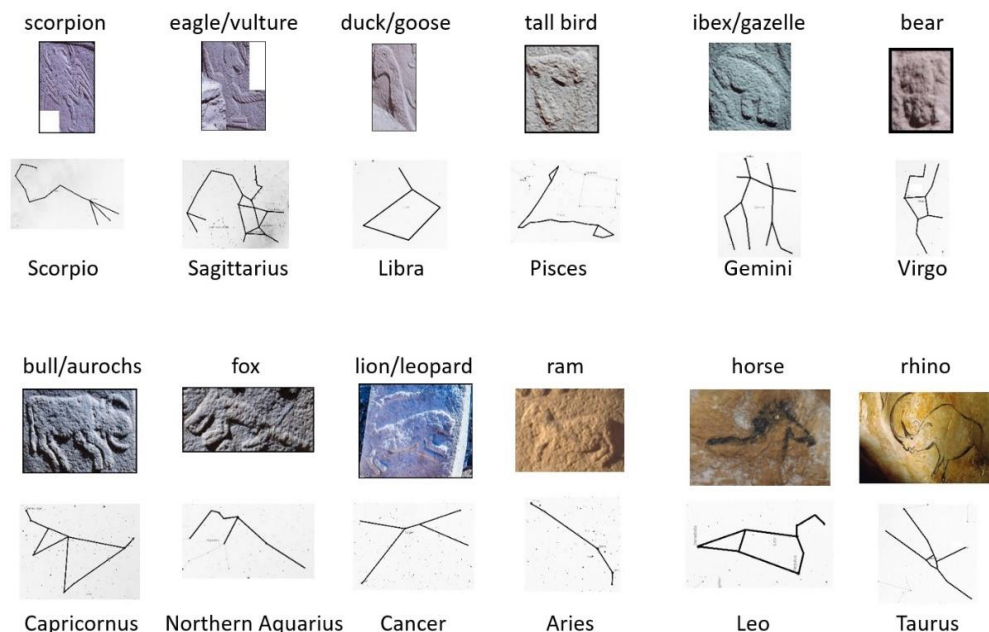


Figure 1. *The ancient zodiac deduced from Gobekli Tepe, Catalhoyuk and the Lascaux Shaft Scene*

18. Ibid.

The Nahal Mishmar Treasure Hoard

Around 1,500 years after Catalhoyuk was abandoned, a community of expert copper smiths stashed their treasure hoard in a cave bordering the Dead Sea of Galilee, near Nahal Mishmar. Their treasure, a collection of copper religious items apparently rescued from the nearby Ein Gedi temple, was wrapped in a reed mat and hidden in a hole in the wall of the cave¹⁹. Using modern experimental methods, the reed mat has received several radiocarbon dates between 5375 ± 55 and 6020 ± 55 BP²⁰, which translates to around 5,200 to 4,050 BCE (95% confidence using the IntCal13 calibration²¹), although, presumably, the copper items it encloses, which show signs of significant wear and use, are somewhat older.

The largest and most ornate pieces are an extraordinary crown, the earliest known, and sceptre (see Figure 2). Importantly, they display two kinds of prominent animal symbol; ibex on the sceptre and ibex and birds, thought to be vultures with hooked beaks, on the crown. Both animals are included in our ancient zodiac, suggesting, if correctly identified, a zodiacal date range can be estimated. Note that the ibex was a common motif during this period in the Levant, sculpted on ossuaries and painted on pottery, and is suggested to represent a fertility symbol²².

Interestingly, the vulture and ibex both appear on Pillar 43 at Gobekli Tepe, where they are thought to represent the summer and winter solstice constellations respectively. But this copper treasure is around 7,000 years, corresponding to about one quarter of a Great Year, younger. This means that here the ibex and vulture likely represent the spring and autumn equinox constellations instead. Using Stellarium²³, the date range consistent with these constellations, Gemini and Sagittarius respectively, is 6,300 to 4,200 BCE. This overlaps nicely with the radiocarbon age of the mat. Moreover, this reinforces the identification of the ibex with fertility at this time, as it represents the spring equinox constellation. But with only these two animals identified, we cannot provide a more precise date than this for this treasure.

19. D. Ussishkin, "The Chalcolithic Temple in Ein Gedi: Fifty Years after Its Discovery," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 77 (2014).

20. G. E. Aardsma, "New Radiocarbon Dates for the Reed Mat from the Cave of the Treasure, Israel," *Radiocarbon* 43 (2001).

21. P.J. Reimer et al., "Intcal13 and Marine13 Radiocarbon Age Calibration Curves 0–50,000 Years Cal Bp," *Ibid.* 55 (2013).

22 L. Milevski, "A New Fertility Figurine and New Animal Motifs from the Chalcolithic in the Southern Levant : Finds from Cave K-1 at Quleh, Israel," *Paleorient* 28 (2002).

23 "Stellarium 0.18.0," <http://stellarium.org/>.



Figure 2. Sceptre and crown from the Nahal Mishmar treasure hoard, images from Wikipedia (Oren Rozen (left) and Hanay (right) [CC BY-SA 3.0])

Origin of the Ancient Egyptian Gods

One thousand years later we reach the dawn of the great Bronze-Age civilisations of Sumer and Egypt. Proper writing would soon be invented, but it appears the zodiacal system for representing dates continued to be used for several thousand more years.

For example, consider a limestone vase found amongst a cache of important relics at Hierakonpolis by Quibell and Green in 1898 (see Figure 3), including the famous Narmer Palette and Mace, that have been linked with a mythical Scorpion King of predynastic Egypt^{24,25}. The animal symbols above the horizontal line on this vase resemble hieroglyphics and can be read as the name “Scorpion King” because the hawk symbol at the top of the vase in later dynastic times refers to the deity Horus, and normally precedes the name of a Pharaoh using the so-called ‘Horus name’ convention. But the duck/goose symbol at the bottom of the vase is ignored in this interpretation. Dating these artefacts is problematic because the context of their discovery is not well documented. Nevertheless, a date near the end of the 4th Millennium BCE is usually suggested. A desert rock graffiti scene in which a falcon appears above a scorpion, using the same logic, has also been

24 I. Shaw, *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

25 S. Hendrickx and R. Friedman, “Gebel Tjauti Rock Inscriptions I and the Relationship between Abydos and Hierakonpolis During the Naqada Iii Period,” *Gottinger Miszellen* 196 (2003).

linked to a 'scorpion king'^{26,27}. Re-interpretation of this rock graffiti in terms of a date using the zodiacal system will be presented elsewhere.



Figure 3. Limestone vase associated with a mythical 'Scorpion King', recovered from Hierakonpolis. Left: reproduction of Pillar 33 from Gobekli Tepe in Sanliurfa museum, courtesy of Alistair Coombs. Right: image from Wikipedia (public domain)

However, we can see that the three symbols on the stone vase are practically identical to those on the main panel of Pillar 33 at Gobekli Tepe, where we see the vertical sequence vulture/eagle, scorpion, duck/goose (see Figure 3). We can, therefore, interpret the symbols on the vase as a date using the zodiacal method. Accordingly, the horizontal line on the vase becomes the horizon, and the vase likely indicates that Libra (represented by the duck/goose) is below the horizon at sunset on the autumn equinox, while the sun is between the constellations of Sagittarius (the hawk) and Scorpius (the scorpion) above the horizon.

This interpretation suggests a new kind of notation, not previously seen, is used on the vase. It appears that when two neighbouring constellations are 'written' together, it indicates that the relevant solstice or equinox is in transition between them. If correct, the vase can be dated using Stellarium quite accurately to around 3,500 BCE (to within 100 years or so), which precedes the estimated date of the cache found in Hierakonpolis by just a few hundred years.

Apart from deducing the date of the vase, this interpretation indicates how hieroglyphic writing developed. That is, it seems to, at least partly, be inspired by

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ J.L Le Quellec and D. Huyge, "Rock Art Research in Egypt, 2000 - 2004," in *Rock Art Studies, News of the World III*, ed. P.G. Bahn, N. Franklin, and M. Strecker (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2008).

astronomical notation. Moreover, it suggests that the most important Ancient Egyptian deities derived, originally, from constellations. This is sensible, because we know that Ancient Egyptian religion is fundamentally based on astronomy. Moreover, it is already accepted that other Egyptian deities are derived from the stars. For example, Osiris is associated with Orion, while Nut is associated with the night sky, or the milky-way specifically. So, for example, Horus (often represented as a falcon-headed deity), Anubis (dog-headed), Hathor (bovine) and Thoth (represented by a tall bird, like a crane) might derive originally from Sagittarius, Lupus, Capricornus, and Pisces respectively (see Figure 1). Note that these astronomical-mythological associations are likely very ancient and precede the proto-dynastic period, as indicated by the stone vase above. The known Egyptian asterisms, or decans, were created later during the dynastic period for more utilitarian purposes, such as keeping track of time during the night²⁸.

This view is reinforced if we consider symbolism associated with one the most revered Ancient Egyptian deities, Amun^{29,30}. Originally a local god of Thebes, he became the prime creator god for all Egypt in the New Kingdom, in the process absorbing some of the most important aspects of other local gods. His sacred animals are said to be the goose and ram. During his earlier incarnations in the Old and Middle Kingdoms (before the 16th Century BCE) he is sometimes known as the 'great cackler', a 'primeval goose' that laid the 'world-egg' and created the first sound, a myth first attributed to the deity Geb. But in later incarnations, especially during the New Kingdom (16th Century BCE and later), he is commonly linked with the ram, symbolising fertility.

It is probably no coincidence that Libra, symbolised by the duck/goose in our ancient zodiac, is the autumn equinox constellation from around 2300 to 1000 BCE. Moreover, Aries, symbolised by the ram, is the spring equinox constellation from around 1800 to 200 BCE. Once again, we see the spring equinox constellation, here Aries the ram, is associated with fertility.

Pashupati Seal

The Pashupati Seal, found in the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro, an ancient Indus Valley city, depicts a seated horned god, perhaps an early version of the deity that came to be known eventually as Shiva, surrounded by animals (see Figure 4). This scene is familiar among various Indo-European cultures from the first few

28 J. Lull and J. A. Belmonte, "The Firmament above Thebes: Uncovering the Constellations of Ancient Egyptians," *Journal for the History of Astronomy* XXXVII (2006).

29 G. Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses* (Routledge, 2005).

30 D. Mackenzie, *Egyptian Myths and Legends* (Gresham Publishing Co., 1907).

millennia BCE³¹. The symbols along the top belong to the, as-yet undeciphered, Indus Valley Script. Notice there are four main animals on this seal, including some from our ancient zodiac. Consequently, we can try to determine a date for this seal using the zodiacal method.

In fact, the four animals here are similar to those in the Lascaux Shaft Scene. We have the bison (or perhaps buffalo on the seal) and rhino, representing Capricornus and Taurus respectively in our ancient zodiac. Immediately, this means the date of this seal must be about one half of a Great Year later than the Lascaux Shaft Scene, i.e. roughly 2000 BC. But instead of the horse, seen at Lascaux, we have the modern feline symbol representing Leo, which means the elephant (or mammoth) on the seal likely represents Libra, like the bird at Lascaux. Using all four constellations, we can read a date range of 2,100 to 1,800 BCE. This is the most precise and accurate dating of this seal, consistent with Mohenjo-Daro's suggested lifespan, 2600 to 1900 BCE³².



Figure 4. *Pressing from the Pashupati seal, image from Wikipedia (Ismoon [CC0])*

31 B. A. Olsen, T. Olander, and K. Kristiansen, eds., *Tracing the Indo-Europeans* (Oxbow Books, 2019).

32. M. J. Kenoyer, "The Indus Valley Tradition of Pakistan and Western India," *Journal of World Prehistory* 5 (1991).

Decoding this seal indicates that the ancient zodiac was not fixed, and exhibited minor variations with time and location, as expected. We see from the Pashupati Seal that the feline symbol is switched from representing Cancer to Leo, consistent with our modern Western constellation set. But the elephant/mammoth is unfamiliar as Libra, and, indeed, has not previously been observed as a zodiacal symbol. Nevertheless, the elephant/mammoth is common in European Palaeolithic cave art. Moreover, if we perform a cross-check with the radiocarbon dates of mammoth paintings in European Palaeolithic cave art, we find they are indeed consistent with the mammoth representing Libra. The only mammoth painting that has been radiocarbon dated and meets our data quality criteria³³, the painting 'Mammoth 493' from Chauvet cave, has a radiocarbon date of $34,200 \pm 1,540$ BCE (95% confidence) and a zodiacal age of 33100 BCE (using Stellarium), taken at the centre of the constellation Libra on the summer solstice. With this additional data point, the null hypothesis for European cave art (see Sweatman and Coombs, 2019) becomes around 1 in 800 million, which provides even greater confidence in the zodiacal hypothesis.

The Gundestrup Cauldron

Moving forward nearly two millennia and westward to Europe, we find another example of the Indo-European seated horned god surrounded by animals. This time the artwork is preserved in solid silver on the Gundestrup Cauldron (see Figure 5), formed of several large panels, discovered in a bog in Denmark in 1,891 AD. Based on specific artistic motifs, it has been dated to the first few centuries BCE, or thereabouts³⁴. Radiocarbon measurement of its age suggests a time-frame between 100 BCE and 200 AD (using the latest IntCal13 calibration curve), although an older age cannot be ruled out³⁵. This radiocarbon measurement is thought to be the most reliable of those carried out on aged beeswax still in place on the surface of the cauldron. An older date, 400 to 200 BCE, is obtained by radiocarbon dating of a section of ironwork with entrained charcoal particles remaining from casting the iron.

The panel displaying the classic horned deity, perhaps a representation of the deity known as Cernunnos in this region of Celtic Europe, also displays two bulls, three lions, a fish or dolphin, a stag, and what is probably a hunting dog. The similarity of this scene with the Pashupati Seal suggests this artefact might also be

33. Sweatman and Coombs, "Decoding European Palaeolithic Art: Extremely Ancient Knowledge of Precession of the Equinoxes."

34. F. Kaul, "The Gundestrup Cauldron: Thracian Art, Celtic Motifs," *Etudes Celtiques* 37 (2011).

35. S. Nielsen et al., "The Gundestrup Cauldron: New Scientific and Technical Investigations," *Acta Archaeologica* 76 (2005).

dated by the zodiacal method. Of course, being several millennia younger, the animals on the cauldron are different to those on the Pashupati Seal. It is interesting to observe there are five different kinds of animal in this scene, rather than four, suggesting that one of the solstices or equinoxes might be in transition between two constellations. Here, we are using the convention first observed on the stone vase, described above, found in Hierakonpolis.

The bull probably represents Capricornus on the winter solstice, and the lions probably represent Cancer (consistent with the ancient zodiac) here rather than Leo as on the Pashupati Seal (consistent with our modern one), on the summer solstice. Note how a pair of lions face each other, just like the leopards at Catalhoyuk³⁶, reinforcing the view that these felines represent Cancer (as at Catalhoyuk) rather than Leo.

The fish or dolphin probably represents Pisces, consistent with our modern zodiac, replacing the tall bending bird in the ancient zodiac. However, fish are also observed in European Palaeolithic cave art, for example the salmon at Abri du Poisson, although none have been radiocarbon dated. Potentially, then, the fish symbol, representing Pisces, is a very ancient alternative to the bending bird in the ancient zodiac.

With these animals translated to constellations we immediately find using Stellarium a date range from 200 BC to 0 BCE, which agrees perfectly with other estimated dates for the cauldron. Before around 200 BCE, the spring equinox constellation is Aries (ram) instead of Pisces, and after 0 BCE the winter solstice constellation is Sagittarius (vulture/eagle), rather than Capricornus. Neither the ram nor the vulture/eagle appear on the panel.



Figure 5. The Gundestrup Cauldron panel featuring a seated horned deity, image from Wikipedia (Malene Thyssen [CC BY-SA 3.0])

36. Hodder, *Catalhoyuk: The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Turkey's Ancient 'Town'*.

The stag and the hunting dog remain to be deciphered. For the date range 200 BC to 0 BCE the remaining symbol should be the bear according to our ancient zodiac (see Figure 1), representing Virgo as the autumn equinox constellation. Note also that over the range 100 BC to 0 BCE the summer solstice constellation is in transition between Cancer and Gemini.



Figure 6. Bottom panel of the Gundestrup Cauldron, image from Wikipedia (Claude Valette [CC BY-SA 3.0])



Figure 7. 'Splayed bear' symbols likely representing Virgo. From left to right; on a stone recovered from Gobekli Tepe now in Sanliurfa museum (image courtesy of Alistair Coombs), top-right on Pillar 43 at Gobekli Tepe (image courtesy of Alistair Coombs), a seal stamp from Catalhoyuk (from www.catalhoyuk.com), and an artist's impression of a bear shrine at Catalhoyuk (courtesy of Alan Mellaart)

Let's consider the dog first. Clearly, this dog has a similar profile to a bear, albeit a rather slim one, suggesting that this symbol might represent Virgo. This view is reinforced when we consider the bottom of the cauldron. Here, a bull is held at bay by the hunting dog (see Figure 6). But note how this dog has a splayed shape, just like the splayed bear at Gobekli Tepe and Catalhoyuk (see Figure 7). It appears, then, that the hunting dog (or slim bear) does indeed represent Virgo, as expected.

This leaves the stag. One possibility is that the stag represents Gemini, which would narrow down the date of the cauldron to 50 BC, to within 50 years. In this case, the feline and stag symbols indicate the summer solstice is in transition between Cancer and Gemini. Of course, it could also be that the stag is not a zodiacal symbol, and its presence here is related somehow to the antlers worn by the deity, considering that until now the ibex has represented Gemini in the ancient zodiac (see Figure 1). However, as we have seen, the ancient zodiac does exhibit some local variations, and it might well be the case that the antlered stag has replaced the horned ibex as Gemini in this region at this time. But until some additional evidence comes to light to corroborate this association, this is quite speculative.

In summary, the zodiacal date for this cauldron is probably either 100 BC, to within 100 years, or 50 BC, to within 50 years, depending on whether the stag represents Gemini or not. In either case, agreement with other estimated dates for the cauldron is excellent.

Pictish Symbols

Pictish symbol stones are probably the most recent example of the use of this zodiacal system. Given the close proximity of the Picts to the Celts, with their Gundestrup Cauldron, across the North Sea, it should not be surprising to see the system in use in 1st millennium AD Pictish Scotland.

Over 100 Pictish symbol stones, decorated with symbols, have been recovered, mainly in north-east Scotland. Although it is clear the stones carry information³⁷, and are not simply random symbols, they have nevertheless perplexed scholars since their discovery (see Figure 8 for some of the most common symbols)^{38,39}. However, with the discovery of the ancient zodiac, these Pictish symbols can now largely be understood as astronomical.

37. R. Lee, P. Jonathan, and P. Ziman, "Pictish Symbols Revealed as a Written Language through Application of Shannon Entropy," *Proceedings of the Royal Society A* 466 (2010).

38. A. Jackson, *The Symbol Stones of Scotland* (Orkney, 1984).

39. W. Cummins, *Decoding the Pictish Symbols* (The History Press, 2009).

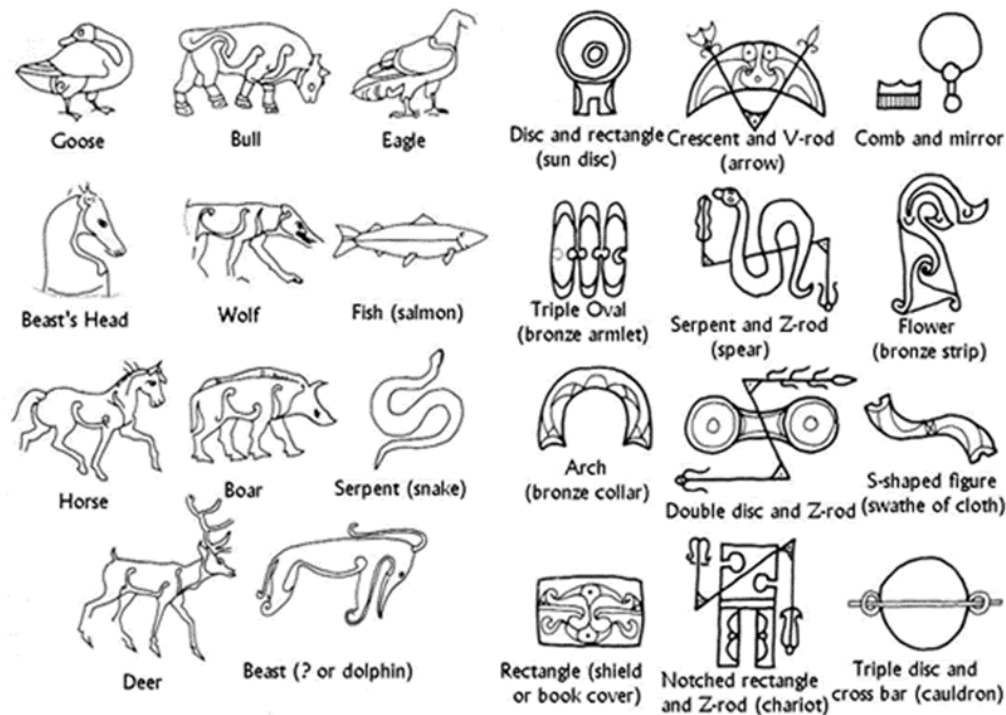


Figure 8. Some of the most common Pictish symbols, courtesy of Aberdeenshire District Council

The earliest stones tend to be relatively simple, usually displaying just two Pictish symbols (Class I), while later ones (Class II and III) can be quite complex, with a variety of Pictish and Christian-influenced patterns. However, if we count how often the various patterns occur on all the stones found, focussing only on the animals, we find the following list.

The most numerous Pictish animal symbol is the 'Pictish beastie' (54 examples according to Mack⁴⁰). Figure 9 compares a drawing of this Pictish symbol directly with the one from Pillar 43 at Gobekli Tepe - the ibex, representing Gemini in our ancient zodiac.

40. A. Mack, *A Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones* (The Pinkfoot Press, 1997).

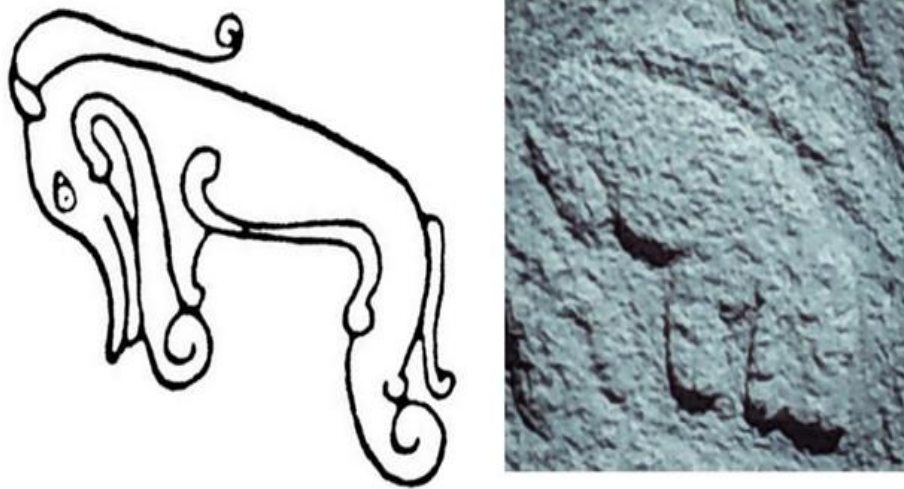


Figure 9. Comparison of the Pictish 'beastie' with the ibex symbol on Pillar 43 at Gobekli Tepe, left image from Wikipedia (Struthious Bandersnatch [CC BY-SA 3.0]), right image courtesy of Alistair Coombs

These symbols appear to be incredibly similar, from the inclination of the head to the 'horns' along the back, although the Pictish symbol seems to have an aquatic character, and indeed is often thought to be a dolphin. Possibly this indicates the Pictish beastie is a mythical 'Aquatic goat' creature. In our modern zodiac, obtained from the Greeks via Mesopotamia, of course the 'Aquatic Goat' symbol represents Capricornus, and not Gemini.

Interestingly, Gemini is the summer solstice constellation from around 100 BCE to the present day. This suggests that the transition of the ibex from Gemini in the ancient zodiac to Capricornus in our modern one might have occurred in two steps. First, the 'aquatising' of the ibex/goat and then its switch from Gemini to Capricornus. For the Picts, only the first step appears to have taken place.

The next most numerous Pictish animal symbol is the snake, often pierced by a 'z-rod' (25 examples in total⁴¹), which also happens to be the most numerous animal symbol at Gobekli Tepe, where it likely symbolises a meteor⁴².

The third most numerous Pictish animal symbol is the fish (18 examples⁴³), which following the interpretation of the Gundestrup Cauldron above, can be taken to represent Pisces, just as it does in our modern zodiac. Note that Pisces is the spring equinox constellation from around 200 BCE until the present day.

41. Ibid.

42. Sweatman, *Prehistory Decoded*.

43. Ibid.

The fourth most numerous Pictish animal symbol is the eagle (15 examples⁴⁴), which according to our ancient zodiac represents Sagittarius. Again, this agrees with the zodiacal hypothesis because Sagittarius is the winter solstice constellation from 0 BCE until the present day.

The fifth most numerous Pictish animal symbol is the bull (10 examples⁴⁵), but these are found in only one location, Burghead, and they are always found alone without any other symbols. We will come back to them.

The sixth most numerous Pictish animal symbol is the deer, or at least its head (6 examples⁴⁶). Now, we saw from the Gundestrup Cauldron the possibility that the deer, or stag, represents Gemini in the Celtic zodiac of western Europe, replacing the ibex of the ancient zodiac. Their relatively high frequency as Pictish symbols would tend to confirm this. Therefore, it appears that both the Pictish beastie and the stag were used to represent Gemini. Perhaps different ethnic groups with slightly different ancestral zodiacs lived in Scotland at this time, but all have been labelled as Picts.

There is a tie for the seventh most numerous animal symbol between the boar and the dog or wolf (also called the 'beast'), with 3 examples each⁴⁷. Now, we saw from the Gundestrup Cauldron that the hunting dog (or slim bear) probably represents Virgo, which is the autumn equinox constellation from around 1000 BCE to the present day (we are just reaching the transition to Leo). Therefore, the dog or wolf Pictish symbol is also consistent with our zodiacal hypothesis. The boar symbol, on the other hand, is curious. It is one of the most common symbols at Gobekli Tepe, but it is rare in Palaeolithic cave art, and so far we have not been able to interpret it with any confidence.

We now return to the issue of the Burghead Bulls. These bull symbols are unique; they only appear alone on a stone and have only ever been found at Burghead, a small town on the Moray Firth thought to have been founded by the Picts. Indeed, an ancient Pictish fort is found at Burghead, suggesting Burghead is one of the oldest Pictish cultural centres^{48,49}. Construction of Burghead Fort is thought to have begun in the 3rd or 4th century AD, but there are clear indications of earlier human settlement in the area. Because they appear alone, while all other Pictish symbol stones carry at least two symbols, Cummins did not consider them Pictish symbols at all⁵⁰. However, their style marks them clearly as belonging to the repertoire of Pictish symbols. In fact, their anomalous appearance can also be explained in terms of the zodiacal hypothesis.

44. Mack, *A Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones*.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

48. K. J. Edwards and I. Ralston, "New Dating and Environmental Evidence from Burghead Fort, Moray," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 109 (1978).

49. G. Noble and N. Evans, eds., *The King in the North* (Birlinn Ltd., 2019).

50. Cummins, *Decoding the Pictish Symbols*.

To see this, it is first necessary to consider another unique feature of life at Burghead, the 'Burning of the Clavie' festival. This festival is still celebrated each winter by residents of Burghead in early-mid January. It involves carrying the 'Clavie', essentially a giant flaming torch, around the town. The festival, usually held on the 11th Jan, is known to derive from a New Year festival before a change to the Calendar system of the UK took place in the mid eighteenth century. Quite possibly, this New Year celebration derives from an even more ancient winter solstice celebration. Very interestingly, Capricornus, represented by the bull in the ancient zodiac, is the winter solstice constellation from around 2000 BC to 0 BCE. Quite possibly, then, the Burghead bulls are the earliest of all the known Pictish symbols, and were used together with the Burning of the Clavie festival at Burghead, one of the earliest Pictish cultural centres, to celebrate the winter solstice in the first millennium BCE. Their early provenance might then explain their anomalous appearance as single symbols on Pictish stones.

Some of the more abstract and geometric Pictish symbols can also be easily related to an astronomical theme, reinforcing the zodiacal hypothesis. For example, the most common symbol of all involves a crescent (the 'crescent and v-rod', 86 examples⁵¹), which clearly symbolises an aspect of the moon, and the third-most common symbol (57 examples⁵²), the 'double-disc and z-rod', can be interpreted as the switch from a rising to a descending sun or *vice-versa*, i.e. a solstice. An astronomical interpretation is not yet clear for the second-most common symbol, the 'comb and mirror', involving several circles joined by a line. Likewise, many, but not all, of the remaining Pictish symbols have obvious astronomical interpretations.

Diffusion of the Ancient Zodiac

The history of archaeological theory can be cast as an intellectual struggle between cultural diffusionists and cultural ecologists^{53,54}. The most extreme variant of diffusionism, known as hyper-diffusionism, has a long history and posits that the main cultural elements of many cultures around the world can be traced to a 'mother' culture from which they originated. The main theoretical problem with this idea is one of timescale: how can any cultural trait remain intact over the very long timescales required for cultural diffusion from one corner of the world to another? The assumption here is that prehistoric people

51. Mack, *A Field Guide to the Pictish Symbol Stones*.

52. Ibid.

53. S. Hakenbeck, "Migration in Archaeology: Are We Nearly There Yet," *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* 23 (2008).

54. E. A. Storey and T. L. Jones, "Diffusionism in Archaeological Theory," in *Polynesians in America: Pre-Columbian Contacts with the New World*, ed. T. L. Storey Jones, E. A., E. A. Matisoo-Smith, and J. M. Ramirez-Aliaga (Altamira Press, 2011).

could only travel slowly by land or along coastal routes, and, moreover, cultural traits diffuse even more slowly than people migrate. Rapid ocean voyages in prehistory are typically ruled out, or at least thought to be relatively insignificant. However, an even greater barrier to this theory has been its historical association with racist ideologies, regardless of whether it is correct or not.

The opposite view of cultural ecology developed from the late 1960s onwards, and in its most extreme form suggests that all cultural traits for all cultures around the world are developed independently in response to local conditions, such as climate and availability of resources. Despite much support within much of the archaeological community in recent decades, presumably as a response to the more extreme versions of diffusionism, it is clearly wrong as it ignores clear evidence in favour of diffusionism.

For example, modern developments into studies of ancient DNA have shown that migration is extremely important, and provides an obvious explanation for many aspects of cultural diffusion. In particular, it is now quite clear that Neolithic European culture was dominated by two massive migration events, namely the migration into Europe of Anatolian 'farmers' around 6000 BCE, and of Indo-Europeans around 3000 BCE^{55,56,57}. It is tempting to link the 3000-year gap here to the 3000-year precessional cycle of the Taurid meteor stream⁵⁸.

Following developments in modern scientific methods, such as ancient DNA, archaeological debate has re-focussed on the balance between these two opposing influences; diffusionism versus cultural ecologism. Once one accepts that cultural diffusion that cannot be side-lined, and that migration is an important contributor, it is rational to seek the oldest and most widespread of these diffused cultural traits. Cave art, linguistic and mythological traits are obvious candidates. Moreover, given the evidence presented here, it is rational to seek within any of these long-lasting diffuse cultural traits evidence for the influence of the Taurid meteor stream and its catastrophic consequences.

Palaeolithic cave art has already been discussed. Radiocarbon dating evidence shows very clearly that this specific artistic cultural trait was spread widely across Europe, and perhaps beyond, for over 30,000 years. The similarity in technique and artistic subject over this timescale is direct evidence of long-lasting, wide-ranging cultural diffusion. Earlier sections of this work show how this art was likely used, in the case of the Lascaux Shaft Scene at least, to record catastrophic encounters with the Taurid meteor stream.

55. M. E. Allentoft et al., "Population Genomics of Bronze Age Eurasia," *Nature* 522, no. 7555 (2015).

56. W. Haak et al., "Massive Migration from the Steppe Was a Source for Indo-European Languages in Europe," *Ibid.*

57. Olsen, Olander, and Kristiansen, eds., *Tracing the Indo-Europeans*.

58. D. J. Asher and S. V. M. Clube, "Towards a Dynamical History of 'Proto-Encke'," *Celestial Mechanics & Dynamical Astronomy* 69, no. 1-2 (1997).

Turning to comparative linguistics next, linguists have developed several major language families, such as Indo-European and Afro-Asiatic, that indicate diffusion of linguistic traits over several thousand years across large, continental-scale areas. Further developments have tried to define super language families that link the major language families further back in time. Although controversial, one of the most well-known of these is the Nostratic super language family, and its minor variants^{59,60,61}. The originating language, Proto-Nostratic, is thought to have existed towards the end of the Palaeolithic with an origin near the Fertile Crescent. In line with this idea, Gobekli Tepe would likely have been an important Proto-Nostratic cultural centre. Attempts to go further back in time to unify any potential super language families are generally thought to be unreliable.

Regarding mythology, elements of a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) mythology have been defined and are largely accepted⁶². The main figures of the PIE pantheon are known as the 'sky father' and 'sky-twins', which are clearly very compatible with astronomical phenomena such as comets and their splitting events. The seated horned gods described earlier are likely examples of the PIE sky-father deity. It is therefore tempting to associate these deities with comets and the Taurid meteor stream. That many of the most significant ancient deities derived from comet-worship was already suggested by Clube and Napier⁶³, pioneers of the theory of coherent catastrophism induced by the Taurid meteor stream^{64,65}.

Mythology, however, appears to be more robust than language, and many comparative mythologists have tried to establish links between very diverse cultures separated by vast timescales and distances. A recent, comprehensive and ambitious study of this kind by Witzel even provides a history of mythology for the whole world from the time modern humans migrated out of Africa around 65000 years ago⁶⁶. Through his analysis, he detects a transition in mythology,

59. A.C. Renfrew, ed. *Nostratic: Examining a Nostratic Macrofamily* (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 1999).

60. A. Dolgopolsky, *Nostratic Dictionary* (McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, 2008).

61. A. Bomhard, *A Comprehensive Introduction to Comparative Nostratic Linguistics*, 2nd ed. (2015).

62. J.P. Mallory and J.Q. Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

63. V. Clube and W. Napier, *The Cosmic Serpent* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1982).

64. D.J. Asher et al., "Coherent Catastrophism," *Vistas in Astronomy* 38, no. 1 (1994).

65. S. V. M. Clube and W. M. Napier, "The Microstructure of Terrestrial Catastrophism," *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* 211, no. 4 (1984).

66. E.J.M. Witzel, *The Origins of the World's Mythologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

apparently around 40000 years ago, that diffused across Eurasia and later found its way to the Americas via Beringia. He calls this ancient mythological system 'Laurasian'. Very interestingly, 40000 years is also the kind of timescale expected for the origin of the Taurid meteor stream.

Witzel's list of the core themes of his ancient Laurasian mythology are repeated below;

1. Father heaven engenders: two generations ('Titans/Olympians').
2. Four (or five) generations/ages: Heaven pushed up, sun released.
3. Current gods defeat/kill predecessors: killing the dragon, use of sacred drink.
4. Humans: somatic descendants of (sun) god; they (or a god) show hubris [and] are punished by a flood.
5. Trickster deities bring culture: humans spread (emergence of 'nobles').
6. Local history begins.
7. Final destruction of the world.
8. New heaven and Earth emerge.

We again see notions of a sky-father and several generations of sky-deity, consistent with observations of a progenitor comet and multiple cometary splitting events, which can obviously be associated with the Taurid meteor stream. Catastrophic events are also highlighted, including a cycle of world 'ages' and clearing of the 'heavens', which again are consistent with the notion of catastrophic interactions with the Taurid meteor stream. Also emphasized are 'trickster' deities and a dragon, or 'cosmic serpent'. Given the likely association of serpents with meteor tracks at Gobekli Tepe, the generalised 'cosmic serpent' theme also likely symbolises a comet. The trickster deity can, likewise be interpreted as a comet, with its unpredictable orbit and even more unpredictable catastrophic encounters.

Given this background in Palaeolithic cave art, and comparative linguistics and mythology, we can begin to understand how an ancient zodiac can have lasted for so long across such a wide area. Essentially, we can link the ancient zodiac to this ancient mythology and cave art. Indeed, astronomy, mythology and large-scale art are common bed-fellows in ancient cultures; the Ancient Egyptians are a prime example. Quite possibly, the extreme duration of an ancient mythology and associated art-forms can be explained in part in terms of the near-constant appearance of the stars and their patterns, the constellations. Moreover, the natural world is tuned to the seasons, so it should be no surprise if ancient human cultures took a great interest in the stars for tracking them.

This does not mean that this work supports hyper-diffusionism. What is proposed here, however, is that some core aspects of culture, including mythology and its associated art and astronomical knowledge, can be extremely diffused, more so even than language, essentially because they are mutually

supportive, and perhaps because the stars are so relatively static and the catastrophic threat posed by the Taurid meteor stream was so long-lasting.

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A Satire, not a Sermon: Four Stages of Cruelty and Murder

By Donald C. Shelton*

This paper analyses seven inter-connected William Hogarth prints in the context of medical history. Hogarth is noted for his eighteenth-century prints featuring perceptive depictions of London life. The most famous series is Four Stages of Cruelty, generally accepted as a Sermon intended to influence public opinion by drawing attention to animal cruelty. That opinion is founded on the cruel and sadistic treatment of a dog in First Stage of Cruelty; and relies on an assumption the dog is male. But, what if that dog is female? In considering that option, this paper presents evidence showing Hogarth did intend the dog as female. In so doing, the paper reaches a radically new perspective. Four Stages of Cruelty is a dark Satire, intended by Hogarth to force the cessation of murders-for-dissection, then being undertaken by man-midwives William Smellie and William Hunter; in conducting Caesarean experiments on pregnant women. In analysing events, the paper reveals Hogarth included within each print, recognisable likenesses of selected contemporaries, with scores of artistic puns. Realisation of the dog as female, and the series as a Satire, allows explanation of the many cryptic puns, and presents Four Stages of Cruelty as a Hogarth masterpiece.

Introduction

For 250 years the conventional view of *Four Stages of Cruelty*, as a William Hogarth *Sermon* moralising on animal cruelty, has been unchallenged. But detailed, methodical, and logical analysis shows the series as misread. Hogarth concealed, within each simple *Sermon* for the uneducated, a cryptic *Satire* for the educated; exaggerating animal cruelty in challenging cruel obstetric experiments and murders-for-dissection by man-midwives and anatomists. Overlooked by scholars has been the “front door” key placed in full view by Hogarth, a key which still works smoothly, even though unturned since 1751. That satiric key is the arrow central to *The First Stage of Cruelty*, incongruous when drawn to one’s attention; if the prime objective was cruelty to animals, more readily available tools of torture were stick, stave, or sword. A pointing arrow and exaggerated animal cruelty were cues for Hogarth’s educated peers, along with those targeted, to read *Four Stages of Cruelty* as a *Satire*. Turning the key reveals the series as alluding to events so shocking, public discussion or exposure could have risked widespread rioting, Figures 1-4.

Discussion includes Jan van Rymsdyk’s anatomical drawings of 1750, as included in iconic atlases of William Smellie¹ and William Hunter². Four

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1. W. Smellie, *A Sett of Anatomical Tables with Explanations* (London: Freeman), 1754.

2. W. Hunter, *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* (Birmingham: Baskerville), 1774.

previously unrecorded self-portraits of Hogarth are identified, along with two portraits of the artist, Jan van Rymdyk. Tobias Smollett's defence of murders by Hunter and Smellie enabled Smollett to be identified as author of the April 1751 satire, *A Dissertation on Mr Hogarth's Six Prints*.³ Classically educated, Smollett was a prolific, polemic, author, usually writing anonymously. He opposed the Caesarean experiments of Smellie and Hunter but, as a fellow Scot, defended them, whilst also attacking their actions in anonymous pamphlets. In *Peregrine Pickle*, Smollett parodied Hogarth as Pallet, and Fielding as Mr Spondy; the latter as part of ongoing battles with Fielding.

It has been said of investigations, "When you get closer to the truth, everything begins to fit". This occurs in reading *Four Stages of Cruelty* as a *Satire*, rather than as a *Sermon*. For over 250 years, and despite eighteenth-century public attendance at executions, dissections and scientific lectures, anatomy and man-midwifery have sat in a historical "no-man's land" between art, literature, law, science, and medicine. This essay criss-crosses that no-man's land to meld those disparate disciplines into a homogeneous whole. The series is shown full of irony, ridicule, humour, and cryptic puns, thereby opening new perspectives on 1745-65.

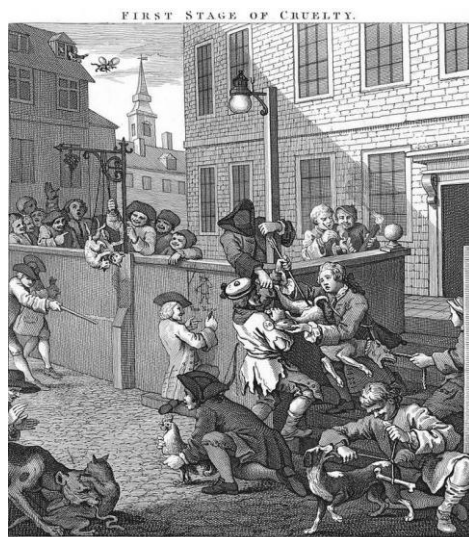


Figure 1. *First Stage of Cruelty* - 1751



Figure 2. *Second Stage of Cruelty* - 1751

3. T. Smollett, *A Dissertation on Mr Hogarth's Six Prints* ... (London: Dickinson), 1751.



Figure 3. *Cruelty in Perfection* - 1751



Figure 4. *Reward of Cruelty* - 1751

Animal Cruelty as Conventional Wisdom

Before exploring Hogarth's satiric intent, it is prudent to examine the animal cruelty claim. Scrutiny reveals multiple weaknesses, and the series has been little regarded by scholars. Charles Lamb wrote; "the *Stages of Cruelty* I omit, as mere worthless caricatures, foreign to his general habits, the offspring of his fancy in some wayward humour"⁴. The art historian Allan Cunningham expressed his negative view: "I wish it had never been painted. There is indeed great skill in the grouping, and profound knowledge of character; but the whole effect is gross, brutal and revolting. A savage boy grows into a savage man, and concludes a career of cruelty and outrage by an atrocious murder, for which he is hanged and dissected."⁵ Recent opinion echoes that, James Steintrager writing,

The story told in the series is almost banal in its clarity: a poor boy, Tom Nero, begins by torturing animals, eventually moves on to killing a human, and ends up an unwilling participant in an anatomy lesson ... It seems improbable that any reader of the series could not make sense of it. ... In actuality, the series projects a semblance of legibility for us to the extent that

4. C. Lamb, "On the Genius and Character of Hogarth ...," *The Reflector*, vol. 2. (London: Hunt, 1811), 74.

5. A. Cunningham, "William Hogarth": *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters and Sculptors* (London: Murray, 1830), 140-41.

the values of sympathy and of non-cruelty to animals are shared (or at least acknowledged as prevalent) in many parts of the world.⁶

That focus on animal cruelty leaves unanswered many important questions. Why did Hogarth himself say of Steintrager's "almost banal" series, "If they have had this effect, and checked the progress of cruelty, I am more proud of having been the author, than I should be of having painted Raphael's Cartoons"?⁷ Surely other series should have made Hogarth more proud than one described by Lamb as "mere worthless caricaturas". In contrast to "worthless caricaturas" Cunningham refers to a "profound knowledge of character". How can those two statements be reconciled? Who then is depicted?

Why is *Four Stages of Cruelty* the only series depicted in both woodcuts and engravings? Why do commentators claim cheaper to make woodcuts were more costly than engraved copper plates? What was the contemporary legacy, if any, of the satire? Is there more to the series than meets a casual eye? Is it a thin veneer covering a hidden message for more discerning viewers? As a decorative mahogany veneer stretched over a strong oak carcass, or as one-seventh of a visible iceberg, with the dangerous six-sevenths hidden underwater? Animal cruelty has not identified those depicted, nor explained Hogarth's puns, his Biblical and Classical references, nor fitted the prints into the social, political and literary framework of the times.

The perception of the series as a *Sermon* became codified in the late eighteenth century. A *Sermon* was directed at uneducated people, and characterised by simple messages with obvious morality and Biblical references. In contrast a *Satire* is directed at the educated and uses humour, irony, exaggeration, ridicule or sarcasm to expose and criticise people's stupidity or vices, particularly in the context of contemporary politics and topical issues. In 1751 Christopher Smart's *Mary Midnight* highlighted the difficulty faced by readers then and now: "One Man prints a Sermon, which may as well be called a Satire ... Our Poetry is all Prose, and our Prose is false English".⁸

Those espousing animal cruelty underestimate Hogarth's artistic genius in pioneering the skill of political cartoonists, conveying a clear likeness with quick lines, and focusing on key physical characteristics. Hogarth chose to exaggerate animal cruelty in order to expose public apathy, and a neglect to censure or punish cruelty to women and infants. Acceptance of *Four Stages of Cruelty* as a satire is seen in the writings of Smollett, and in Henry Fielding's clever double entendre embracing *Beer Street* and *Four Stages of Cruelty*: "The ingenious Hogarth

6. J. A. Steintrager, *Cruel Delight: Enlightenment Culture and the Inhuman* (Bloomington: Indiana, 2004), 38-40, 50.

7. J. B. Nichols, *Anecdotes of William Hogarth* (London: Nichols, 1833), 65.

8. C. Smart, *The Midwife, or, The Old Woman's Magazine*, vol. 2 (London: Carnan), 1751, 116.

hath very finely satyriz'd this, by representing several of the most valuable Productions of these Times on the Way to the Trunk-maker".⁹ Hogarth's exaggeration was noted in 1785: "The thrusting an arrow up the fundament of a dog, is not an idea of *English* growth. No man ever beheld the same act of cruelty practised on any animal in *London*".¹⁰

The Front Door Key

As a formally trained artist, Hogarth recognised the importance of iconographic symbolism in composing works of art, with *Four Stages of Cruelty* including embedded symbolic vignettes. The word vignette derives from little vine, especially with reference to the vine motif frequently used in embellishments to a text. *Four Stages of Cruelty* comprises central images surrounded by multiple vignettes winding vine-like back to the centre, each with a hidden message. Examples of his puns illustrate that Hogarth's satire is far more a carefully structured cryptic crossword, than an assemblage of social commentary, with the arrow important as a triple obstetric pun, or as a quadruple pun after first implying animal cruelty.

Hogarth's second use of the arrow, along with a bow leaning against the wall, was as symbol of Diana, Goddess both of Hunting and of Childbirth. Diana with her bow and arrow is one of the most readily recognisable images in classical art. Here, at first glance that does not help with interpretation of the image, but clarity dawns when linked to the dog. The reference to Diana signifies Hogarth intended the dog, not as male but as female; with the arrow not thrust into its anus, but into its vagina.

Hogarth's third pun emerges in considering who could take such cruel action. The arrow resembles an obstetric instrument used by man-midwives during difficult deliveries if the skull of a fetus needed perforating and extraction (Figures. 5-6).¹¹ Hogarth, left on Figure 5, is seen with the prominent London man-midwives of 1750, William Smellie and William Hunter, whose actions predominate in this essay. Later analysis confirms the uncouth, "smelly", boy as Smellie, and the boy with a "hunter's" tricorne as Hunter. Fierce competitors, they "fight like cats" to insert the arrow.

9. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 169.

10. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 3rd ed. (London: Nichols, 1785), 317.

11. J. Burton, *An Essay Towards a Complete New System of Midwifery* (Hodges, 1751).



Figure 5. *Arrow, and a Bow Against the Wall*

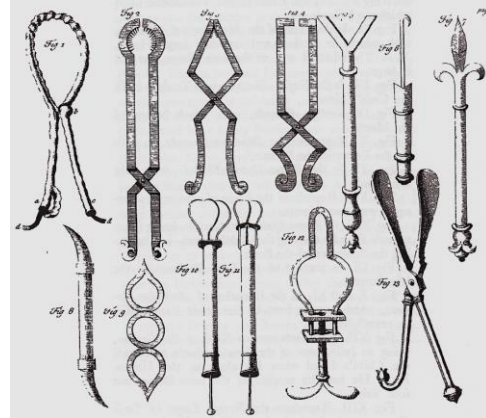


Figure 6. *Obstetric Instruments c.1753*

The third boy is William Hunter's younger brother, John Hunter, offering a tart, not as a cake, but as a prostitute; where "all" in the verse "take all my tart" offers a pregnant prostitute as substitute for the dog. This is an early use of "tart" as prostitute, as most dictionaries record a nineteenth century origin. But extensive innuendoes refer to a "cream tart" (a "tart" filled with "cream") in *The Works of Moliere*.¹² In 1735 it was noted of the Greek philosopher, Bion (c.325-c.250 BC): "Bion said that unless one was a *tart*, or *Thasian wine*, it was impossible to please several persons ... Perhaps Bion, says he, pretended to speak of a tart that was hot and cold at the same time".¹³ In 1752 Henry Fielding penned his own innuendo on tarts and 'bastards': "But what Concern must the Author himself feel on such an Occasion; when he beholds those Writings, which were calculated to support the glorious Cause of Disaffection or Infidelity, humbled to the ignoble Purpose of supporting a Tart or a Custard!"¹⁴

Hogarth's fourth use of the arrow as a pun alludes to Smellie and the "Hunter" brothers; the arrow symbolising their use of obstetric instruments in "hunting" fetuses. Abortions were illegal, but those willing to secretly pay man-midwives, or certain midwives, could procure one. Intervention in difficult deliveries was accepted as necessary, so neither that, nor illegal abortions was serious enough to prompt Hogarth into publishing *Four Stages of Cruelty*. But a "quintuple" pun, the "angle" of flight of the arrow, reveals his intended target. If *The First Stage of Cruelty* is laid four-square on top of *Cruelty in Perfection*, the arrow's "angle" points directly at the pregnant womb of the murdered woman.

12. J-B. Poquelin, *The Works of Moliere, French and English*, vol. 3 (London: Watts, 1739), 307.

13. J. Bernard, *A General Dictionary*, vol. III (London: Strahan, 1735), 356.

14. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 169.

Her pregnancy and the pun on her name, “Ann Gill”, confirm her as the “point” of Hogarth’s “angle” in the satire.

One vignette in *The First Stage of Cruelty*, two boys with roosters and another “cocking” (readying) a stick, alludes to strict and detailed *Rules and Orders for Cocking* (cock-fighting) recorded in 1752. They included Rule I, “That every man having Cocks to fight, shew them and put them into the Pit with a fair Hackle, not too near shorn or cut, or any other Fraud, under pain of forfeiting ... Three Shillings and Four Pence”, and Rule XVII, “That none shall strike or draw Weapon to strike any Man upon pain for every time so offending to forfeit Forty Shillings”, with Rule XIX stating that half of all such forfeits be distributed to the poor of the parish.¹⁵

Hogarth draws attention to those strict rules of behaviour and fairness protecting fighting cocks as a “striking” contrast to man-midwives unregulated use of cruel obstetric “weapons” on parturient women; where any deliberate and/or negligent, patient injury and/or death was not subject to investigation, and went unpunished. They reveal Hogarth focussing on the mistreatment and murder of pregnant women by man-midwives in conducting obstetric experiments. Animal cruelty is but thin camouflage for his prime message; a threat to Smellie and Hunter of public exposure, potentially with trial and execution, unless they cease.

The Need for a Rigorous “CSI” Style Methodology

For many observers *Four Stages of Cruelty* has resembled a locked puzzle box; lacking an obvious key, decorated top and bottom with woodcuts, and on the four sides with engravings. Accorded a cursory glance, pigeon-holed, and passed over in favour of discussion of more titillating Hogarth series; particularly those focused on human foibles, frailties, and failings. That has resulted in *Four Stages of Cruelty* being read as a *Sermon* for 250 years, instead of a *Satire*; even though Hogarth placed a “front door” key in full view. This essay does not claim entry to the satire by using the “front door” key, instead the research entered with a “back door” key; a sudden and serendipitous realisation William Hunter’s profile featured in *The Reward of Cruelty*. Followed by countless iterations, and references to social history.

Other Hogarth series have been treated to the proverbial “fine toothed-comb” seeking meanings hidden within the prints. An example is Fiona Haslam’s discussion of *The Company of Undertakers* where she discusses heraldic allusions in detail.¹⁶ In contrast *Four Stages of Cruelty* appears bare of a quest for satire,

15. R. Heber, *An Historical List of Horse-Matches Run and of Plates and Prizes* (London: Heber, 1752), 149-54.

16. F. Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson* (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 1996).

although several scholars have indicated a belief something remained hidden. As when Roy Porter hinted: "So upon what is the President—or Hogarth—sitting in judgement: the felon or the business of anatomy? And what precisely is there to choose, this moral twist invites us to ponder, between murderous malefactors and dissecting doctors?"¹⁷ And Ronald Paulson's comment: "Whatever ultimately disruptive elements may lurk in these prints".¹⁸ This essay seeks answers by unravelling puns, identifying those depicted, and weaving the prints tightly into issues of the day.

Full and logical analysis requires a methodical crime-scene-like investigation, to address all unanswered questions implicit in the theory of animal cruelty. The investigation needs to determine Hogarth's "motive", his "means", and his "opportunity". Conclusions must be supported by a framework explaining changes from his preliminary drawings, with any and all puns explained. The essay details the social factors and environment prompting Hogarth's "motive". It discusses the unethical medical practices creating an "opportunity" to address his concern. Analysis of his "method" shows the series as a pun-illustrated satire; threatening man-midwives with exposure unless they cease obstetric experiments. In ensuring the conclusions are robust, the essay stress-tests the framework in three ways. Firstly, against Hogarth's preliminary drawings. Secondly, against the April 1751, *A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth's Six Prints*.¹⁹ Thirdly, by integrating the satire into the 1751-52 Paper War.

Unwanted Infants—Life or Death?—the Foundling Hospital or Hunter's Anatomy School?

Hogarth drew attention to social issues with engravings paralleling the literary satire of Jonathan Swift. In 1732 Hogarth demonstrated concern for the fate of prostitutes in *The Harlot's Progress*; that followed Swift's *A Modest Proposal* of 1729, which offered a solution to unwanted children: "I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled".²⁰ Another concerned was Daniel Defoe, his 1729 *Augusta Triumphans* promoted establishment of a foundling hospital, in a belief mothers were acquitted of infanticide by paying for expert witnesses.

17. R. Porter, *Bodies Politic: Disease, Death, and Doctors in Britain, 1650-1900* (London: Reaktion, 2001), 50.

18. R. Paulson, *Hogarth, His Life, Art, and Times*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale, 1971), 109.

19. T. Smollett, *A Dissertation on Mr Hogarth's Six Prints ...* (London: Dickinson, 1751).

20. J. Swift, *A Modest Proposal* (Dublin: Bickerton, 1729), 10.

Hogarth shared these concerns as a Foundling Hospital governor from its 1739 establishment by Captain Thomas Coram, who was horrified at abandoned children in the streets. The casual culling of unwanted pregnancies and infants, so distressing to Swift, Defoe, Coram, and Hogarth, was accepted by society with few prosecutions. Typical was Hannah Perfect, a servant tried on 25 February 1747 for killing her new-born baby in a house where no-one knew she was pregnant. Hannah was prosecuted under a law of 1624, being an *Act to Prevent the Destroying and Murdering of Bastard Children*. She was acquitted, but pregnant servants were common. When Coram opened the Hospital it was overwhelmed by the response from mothers and started a ballot system. Mothers picked a ball from a bag to decide the fate of their child, while wealthy women looked on as if it were a spectator activity. On 30 March 1754, only 20 children out of 100 were admitted by lot into the hospital. Hence the Hospital was only a partial solution to unwanted pregnancies; abandonment and infanticide continued. In this intensely antisocial climate William Hunter opened his anatomy school on 13 October 1746 and, from its opening, abandoned infants arrived there dead, and sometimes alive, as subjects for dissection. Hunter recommended his students procure multiple bodies of children for dissection and study:

The dead body cannot be too fresh for dissection; every hour that it is kept, it is losing something of its fitness for anatomical demonstrations; the blood is transuding, and bringing all the parts nearer to one colour, which takes off the natural and distinct appearance; and putrefaction is advancing, which makes all the fleshy parts tender and indistinct. ... every student [must] make and collect as many anatomical preparations as he can. ... He should have a preparation of all the blood vessels in their natural situation, and two preparations of the trunk of a child, the one presenting a fore view, the other a back view, of the whole viscera, and as many preparations of the organs of sense and generation, and of the particular viscera as he can easily procure.²¹

The opening of Hunter's school exacerbated the demand for subjects of all ages for dissection, and prompted a letter in the *Westminster Journal* on 19 November 1746, drawing attention to the urgent need for more fresh bodies for dissection, hinting at murders-for-dissection, and proposing a law change. The letter has since been attributed to writer Tobias Smollett, on behalf of his friend William Hunter:

I am informed that it is absolutely necessary for every lecturer to be furnished with at least one fresh body once a week; and that it would be much more for the advantage of the pupils who attend, to have two or three

21. W. Hunter, *Two Introductory Lectures, Delivered by Dr. William Hunter* (London: Johnson, 1784), 87, 110.

bodies at the same time under dissection. We are sure that they have not all these bodies from Tyburn, and we do not know that they are allowed any from the hospitals ... The way for relief lies in the favourable interposition of Parliament by adding a clause to some Bill in the Present session, that from henceforth every felon that shall be hanged at Tyburn shall be carried from thence to Surgeons' Hall, and there by proper persons, be distributed among those gentlemen who are reading Anatomical lectures.²²

Predictably, the authorities took no action and anatomists continued with body-snatching and murder. As targets for murder were generally prostitutes, vagrants, and abandoned children, a blind eye was turned to body-snatching and murder-for-dissection, due to a need to train military surgeons. The letter was echoed a year later on 24 October 1747 in a polemic satire, likely also penned by Smollett:

I never think on the relation of the young lady, of *Hatton Garden*, whose body was taken away by the sexton, the very night of its interment, and sold to a surgeon, without heartily wishing the vile thief might be rewarded with the gallows and afterwards anatomised. I am informed that it is a common practice with these fellows, and their comrades, to steal dead bodies and sell them, which I fear is too true, since, otherwise, the surgeons would never have such plenty of dissections. If there is no law in being for punishing offenders of this kind with death, it is high time that there should be ... Secondly, That all *physicians, men and women midwives* (for I would not exclude any *old woman* of the faculty) *surgeons, apothecaries, quacks, tooth-drawers*, their *pupils, journey-men, apprentices* and *labourers*, shall, as soon as they are dead, be carried to the [Surgeons'] hall and there dissected.²³

In his lectures, Hunter admitted illegal procurement of bodies by murder and/or grave-robbing, but stressed a need for the tightest secrecy about his dissections and, especially, experiments involving the pregnant gravid uterus:

In a country where liberty disposes the people to licentiousness and outrage, and where Anatomists are not legally supplied with dead bodies, particular care should be taken, to avoid given offence to the populace, or to the prejudices of our neighbours. Therefore it is to be hoped, that you will be upon your guard; and, out of doors, speak with caution of what may be passing here, especially with respect to dead bodies. These considerations render it necessary to shut our doors against strangers, or such people, as might chuse to visit us, from an idle, or even malevolent curiosity. But, if a

22. G. Peachey, *A Memoir of William & John Hunter* (Plymouth: Peachey, 1924), 95.

23. Anon (Smollett?). *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 17 (London: Cave, 1747), 487.

student should wish to introduce a friend to any particular lecture, it will give us pleasure to oblige him; provided he will only take the trouble of presenting his friend, just before the lecture begins. The lectures, however upon organs of generation; and gravid uterus, are to be excepted. No visitor can be introduced when we are upon these subjects.²⁴

In 1758 Samuel Johnson conveyed his own extreme contempt for anatomists:

Among the inferior professors of medical knowledge, is a race of wretches, whose lives are only varied by varieties of cruelty; whose favourite amusement is to nail dogs to tables and open them alive; to try how long life may be continued in various degrees of mutilation ... the anatomical novice tears out the living bowels of an animal and stiles himself Physician, prepares himself by familiar cruelty for that profession which he is to exercise upon the tender and the helpless, upon feeble bodies and broken minds, and by which he has opportunities to extend his arts of torture, and continue those experiments upon infancy and age, which he has hitherto tried upon cats and dogs.²⁵

Subjects for anatomists included kidnapped children, as reported on 14 August 1754: "Last Sunday two children were stolen from Windmill Street, and two out of Red-lion Square; and yesterday they were found at a house in Tyburn Road in custody of four women, who had stripped them almost naked".²⁶ Windmill Street was only a half mile from Hunter's anatomy school in Covent Garden and he later lived and maintained his school in Windmill Street. The incident implies kidnapped or unwanted infants were assembled prior to his lectures, to be fresh subjects for dissection; as suggested by a 1762 report from near Tyburn Road: "Yesterday morning about four o'clock a man going to take up a load of dung from a dunghill in St George's Fields; near the New-Inn, to his great surprize found the bodies of a woman and eight children cut and mangled in a shocking manner; the upper part of the woman's body to her navel was cut off; and likewise her legs, and what remained much mangled, as were the bodies of the children. The bodies could not have been long there, as they were no way tainted".²⁷

The foundling situation was not improved in 1756, when Parliament resolved all children offered to the Foundling Hospital should be received. A basket was hung outside the hospital, the maximum age for admission was raised from two

24. W. Hunter, *Two Introductory Lectures, Delivered by Dr. William Hunter* (London: Johnson, 1784), 113.

25. S. Johnson, *The Idler* in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 28 (London: Cave, 1758), 365.

26. Anon, *The Universal Magazine*, vol. 15, (London: Hinton, 1754), 92.

27. Anon, *The London Chronicle*, vol. 12 (London: J. Wilkie, 1762), 54.

to twelve months, and a flood of children arrived. In less than four years nearly 15,000 children were presented to the hospital, and a trade grew up with "Coram Men", promising to carry children from the country to the hospital, but secretly supplying Hunter's anatomy school. In 1760 midwife and author Elizabeth Nihell lamented the fate of poor-house children sold by parish officials to anatomists. Her reference to "fourteen" years prior to 1760 implicitly accused Hunter of dissections at his anatomy school from its 1746 opening, with "twenty" years alluding to Smellie's actions from 1740;

[One] needs but to examine [parish records] to discover the red-letter catalogues of the armies of innocents ... put to death under the management of the charity destined to preserve their life. There will be found not one but many, even of the most populous parishes, where for fourteen, twenty, or more years, not one poor babe of the thousands taken in have escaped the general destruction, and sacrifice to that inhuman fiend of Hell ... Will any one here say, that this total mortality was purely accidental? ... What could be so intolerable in the sum to be added, to that actually paid for their being worse than murdered out of hand, to save their little lives, and bring them up.²⁸

Obstetric Experiments by Smellie and Hunter

Originally a navy surgeon inured to injury and death, Smellie became a country practitioner in Scotland, then in 1738 went to Paris to attend lectures on midwifery, before returning to London to teach midwifery. As one of his initiatives, he facilitated his teaching by setting up a lying-in fund for indigent patients, many being pregnant prostitutes, on the condition they allow his students to observe them during late pregnancy and birth, in 1742 advertising: "He has houses where poor women with child are delivered, at which deliveries those who are his pupils may, on reasonable terms, be present".²⁹ Lying-in houses represented a ready supply of vulnerable pregnant women. Difficult deliveries rarely needed forceps, but Smellie conducted trials with varying styles of forceps on many indigent women whose condition did not necessitate forceps deliveries. It being easy to tell a patient in painful labour forceps were necessary, even when not, and with little fear of detection. Some patients died and others suffered internal damage.

In 1748 Smellie was accused: "I have been told of no less than *Eight Women* who have died within these last few Months under the hand of a *Wooden*

28. E. Nihell, *A Treatise on the Art of Midwifery* (London: Morley, 1760), 196-98.

29. S. Seligman, "The Royal Maternity Charity: The First Hundred Years," *Med Hist.* 24, no. 4(1980): 403-18.

Operator. Now, Sir, it is very plain that the Allusion is to the General Practice of *that Operator*, and not confined to the *Forceps* only".³⁰ And in 1753 John Burton charged Smellie with dangerous practices, "Smellie uses the Forceps in Cases that don't require it, and thereby increases the Dangers to both Mother and Child".³¹ Burton was critical of Smellie's excessive use of a crotchet to terminate pregnancies by killing and extracting the fetus. In contrast to Smellie, when Frank Nicholls accused the Lying-in Hospital of malpractice, the hospital quoted from their records; 545 women delivered 550 babies between November 1749 and January 1752, but only two required the use of instruments.³²

William Hunter also came to London from Scotland, initially as apprentice to Smellie, before studying in Paris, then competing as a man-midwife. After establishing his own anatomy school in 1746, Hunter was a founder of the [British] Lying-in Hospital in Brownlow Street in November 1749, as one of two man-midwives on call. When established it was the only hospital in England solely employed for lying-in women, but only for those married; the hospital rules included:

The Committee decreed that women should be received in the last month of their pregnancy on a letter of recommendation from a subscriber and on producing an affidavit of their marriage ... In 1751 a patient, Ann Poole was summarily dismissed from hospital because she was unmarried and had falsely sworn on affidavit she had been married in the Fleet [prison] and had been subsequently deserted. Her defence that 'necessity obliged her to crave the aid of charity' was of no avail.³³

The hospital rules show the bleak situation for unmarried pregnant women, who turned in desperation to the free service offered by Smellie. One can speculate a reason for lying-in hospitals to refuse unwed women was to ensure Smellie, Hunter, and other man-midwives retained a steady stream of indigent parturient women, thereby forced to become teaching subjects. Smellie and his assistants, Colin Mackenzie, also a Scottish ex-navy surgeon and John Harvie, competed with the Hunters for students, in seeking obstetric discoveries at a time gravid uterus knowledge was subject to vigorous debate; as unclaimed, undelivered subjects for dissection were impossibly rare. Wide variance of opinion still prevailed when Exton wrote in 1751, "Anatomists have varied very much in their opinions concerning the substance of the womb during

30. W. Douglas, (likely Smollett) *A Letter to Dr Smelle*, ... (London: Roberts, 1748), 10.

31. J. Burton, *A Letter to William Smellie MD*, ... (London: Owen, 1753), vi.

32. J. Cook and B. Cook, *Man-midwife, Male Feminist....* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004), 118.

33. C. Vartan, "The Lying-in Hospital 1747", *Proc R Soc Med*. 65, no 5(1972): 467.

pregnancy".³⁴ Lack of consensus is seen in fetal images by John Burton³⁵ and Donald Monro³⁶; with a lack of direct observation evident compared to van Rymdsdyk (Figures 7-10).^{37,38}



Figure 7. John Burton York 1751

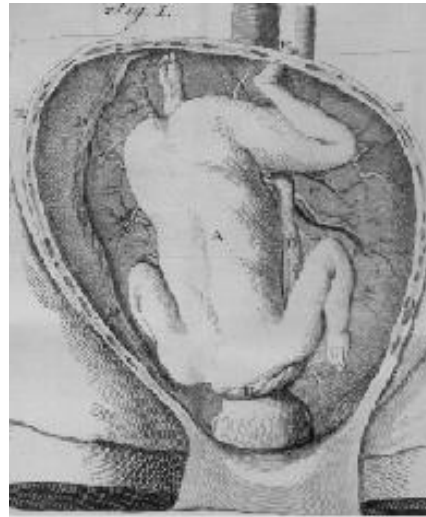


Figure 8. D. Munro Edinburgh 1753

Even before 1750 Smellie and Hunter had realised the catalyst for obstetric, as well as anatomical research, was access to fresh, healthy, subjects procured *in articulo mortis*, at the point of death, rather than decaying corpses dead of disease or old age. Smellie demonstrated on female cadavers, as well as machines, during his midwifery lectures. He and Hunter abandoned any pretence at ethics when comments by Jean Louis Petit, Director of the French Royal Academy, were published in London in 1750: "An anatomist who has only dissected men, is not in a condition to operate equally safely on women, when they labour under disorders of the parts which distinguish their sex. In order to be sure of our procedure, we must have dissected women who have died both before and after delivery".³⁹

34. B. Exton, *A New and General System of Midwifery* (London: Owen, 1751), 123.

35. J. Burton, *An Essay Towards a Complete New System of Midwifery* (Hodges, 1751), 196.

36. D. Monro, "The Dissection of a Woman with Child", *Essays and Observations*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Hamilton, 1754).

37. W. Smellie, *A Sett of Anatomical Tables with Explanations ...* (London: Freeman, 1754).

38. W. Hunter, *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* (Birmingham: Baskerville, 1774).

39. J. Petit, "Remarks on various faulty conformations of the Anus in new born Children", ed. M de la Peyronie, *Memoires of the Royal Academy of Surgery*. vol. 1 (London: Cave, 1750), 247.



Figure 9. Van Rymsdyk - Smellie 1750

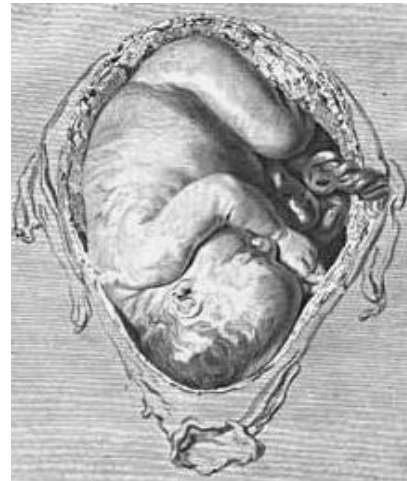


Figure 10. Van Rymsdyk - Hunter 1750

This was a spur to Smellie and Hunter, but to seek pregnant subjects resurrected from graves was pointless as they were so rare. Annual undelivered deaths in London were in low single figures, and even then deceased mothers were badly damaged during attempts to save the baby. Smellie resorted to murder-for-dissection of indigent patients, particularly country girls who had come to London and become pregnant. This was not as risky as it seems, if a friend enquired they were simply told the mother had died in childbirth. With the corpse immediately dissected this could not be disproved. The method of murder is relevant to *Four Stages of Cruelty*. In 1737 the anatomist Alexander Monro extolled a need for freshness, at a time human subjects were described as creatures or animals. Monro implied fresh human subjects, bled to death, were preferred for successful injection of wax into veins and arteries:

The younger the creature to be injected is, the injection will *ceteris paribus*, go farthest, and *vice versa*. The more the creature's fluids have been dissolved and exhausted in life [bled to death], the success of the operation will be greater. The less solid the part designed to be injected is, the more vessels will be filled. The more membranous and transparent parts are, the injection shows better. Whereas in the solid very hard parts of a rigid old creature, that has died with its vessels full of thick strong blood, it is scarce possible to inject great numbers of small vessels.⁴⁰

Murder of subjects by bleeding to death still prevailed in nineteenth-century New York: "I recollect one of the stories then prevalent, and universally believed, that missing children had been found in the haunts of the burkers in our city,

40. A. Monro, *Medical Essays*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Monro, 1737), 105.

fastened in a sitting position in a chair, with their feet immersed in warm water, an important artery cut, and slowly bleeding to death.”⁴¹

To provide a lasting record, and sell copies for profit, in 1750 Smellie hired the talented Dutch artist Jan van Rymsdyk to make forensic quality drawings of his obstetric research for a proposed anatomical atlas. The drawings were exact drawings from “life”, i.e. “death”, being subjects murdered during labour, including a series to progressively show how the head of a fetus turned in passing through the birth canal. Smellie next decided to seek a successful procedure for Caesarean births; to substitute for termination of fetuses via a craniotomy. Smellie believed whoever first documented how to perform a Caesarean would make his fame and fortune. To do so he needed to experiment where best to make an incision, but a Caesarean obviously necessitated the pregnant mother be alive when the experiment commenced. Smellie had “persuaded” indigent women in painful labour forceps were “necessary”, but this was impractical for Caesareans. He decided to perform secret Caesarean experiments on indigent patients, with the mothers murdered during the operation to prevent them informing of the experiments. Smellie’s experiments became known to Hunter after van Rymsdyk realised encouraging Hunter to compete would generate more artwork.



Figure 11. *Hunter's Atlas - Table IV*

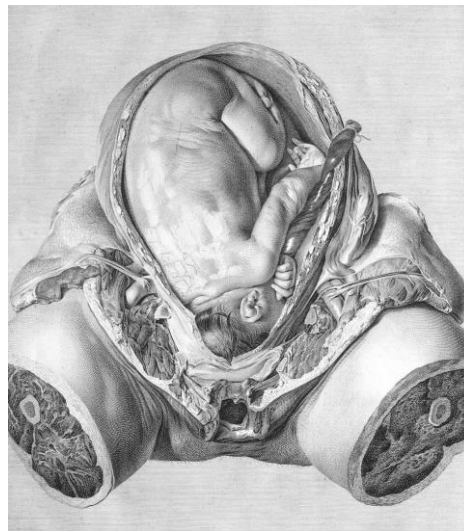


Figure 12. *Hunter's Atlas - Table VI*

Hogarth learned of the obstetric experiments during a visit to Hunter’s anatomy school. Events suggest his visit was in December 1750, with Hunter writing: “You cannot conceive anything lying snuggler than the foetus in utero. This puts me in mind of Hogarth. He came to me when I had a gravid uterus to open and was amazingly pleased. Good God, cries he, how snug and compleat

41. J. Mines, *A Tour Around New York* (New York: Harpers, 1892), 143.

the child lies. I defy all our painters in St. Martin's Lane to put a Child in such a situation. He had a good eye, took it off and in drawing afterwards very well expressed it".⁴²

Hogarth's own drawing has not survived, likely destroyed after learning Hunter was murdering parturient patients; lest he, Hogarth, be deemed a collaborator. The dissection of a pregnant victim viewed by Hogarth was almost certainly the torso depicted in Figures. 11-12; with the head and limbs removed, and transferred to Hunter's school for separate student dissection. Hunter may have invited Hogarth to view the gravid uterus, to ask if the Foundling Hospital would accept babies surviving from any of his Caesarean experiments. Such babies would be living proof of Hunter's success, help advertise his lectures, and be anatomical wonders of the age. As a Foundling Hospital governor, Hogarth was stunned to learn the pregnant subject had been murdered; it roused him to urgently make woodcuts, to reinforce his demand that Hunter cease experiments.

The callous eighteenth century attitude of anatomists to pregnant prostitutes is revealed in a remarkable letter of 18 April 1768 from John Cook, with its timing and intent closely connected to the Hunters. Two sons of Cook, George likely a student under Hunter in c.1755 and Lemuel in c.1764, were positioned to be aware of Hunter's obstetric research. Cook's letter, discussing compulsory extraction of live children from prostitutes by Caesarean, was written 18 months before John Hunter assisted with the first "reported" Caesarean in England, but the wording implies prior successful experiments involving babies saved from murdered mothers. It illustrates the insensitivity of eighteenth-century experimental anatomists:

Reason and example prove that the *foetus in utero* has its own distinct life; and experience teaches, that although the mother be dead, the child may frequently live several hours in the womb. The extraction and preservation of children by the Cæsarian operation, timely performed, after the decease [euphemism for murder] of the mother proves the same. ... And if prostitutes are punished, as an example to others, who destroy the fruit of their body, born at a proper time ... the extraction of such children from the womb may easily be performed, and the infant thereby be happily snatched out of the jaws of death.⁴³

Cook's letter amounted to a call for compulsory Caesareans on pregnant prostitutes, on the presumption they would deliberately kill their babies. The letter urged Caesarean research, and the more it is studied, the more one senses Hunter encouraged the letter, to sound out attitudes to a possible law change. Laws adopting Cook's proposal would have been a godsend for the Hunters; in

42. F. Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson* (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 1996), 218.

43. J. Cook, *The London Magazine*, vol. 37 (London: Baldwin, 1768), 301-02.

providing them with an ongoing and legal supply of pregnant prostitutes to teach Caesareans to students, without risk of prosecution. Any readers shocked into disbelief that man-midwives undertook murder-for-dissection as non-consenting Caesareans, are reminded the last woman burned at the stake was Catherine Murphy on 18 March 1789.

Characterisation in *Four Stages of Cruelty*

There has been debate as to whether Hogarth depicted real people in his prints. Intensely interested in people, far more than animals, he had an uncanny ability to depict real people: "The third scene of his *Harlot's Progress* introduced him to the notice of the great. At a board of Treasury which was held a day or two after the appearance of that print, a copy of it was shewn by one of the lords, as containing, among other excellencies, a striking likeness of Sir John Gonson."⁴⁴ Thomas Clerk cryptically wrote of *Four Stages of Cruelty* in 1812: "All the countenances in this print are strongly characteristic", but he did not elaborate.⁴⁵ Clerk's words imply knowledge of those depicted but, even 60 years later, a reluctance to disclose identities. Inevitably, higher echelons of society tended to protect their friends; the Hunters were alive in 1782, when Horace Walpole conveyed his own wilful blindness:

It is to Hogarth's honour that in so many scenes of satire or ridicule, it is obvious that ill-nature did not guide his pencil. ... Except in the print of the Times, and the two portraits of Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Churchill that followed, no man, amidst such a profusion of characteristic faces, ever pretended to discover or charge him with the caricature of a real person; except of such notorious characters as Chartres and mother Needham, and a very few more, who are acting officially and suitably to their professions. As he must have observed so carefully the operation of the passions on the countenance, it is even wonderful that he never, though without intention, delivered the very features of any identical person. It is at the same time a proof of his intimate intuition into nature: but had he been too severe, the humanity of endeavouring to root out cruelty to animals would atone for many satires. It is another proof that he drew all his stores from nature and the force of his own genius.⁴⁶

In contrast, Henry Fielding implied Hogarth depicted "notorious characters" in *Four Stages of Cruelty*. Fielding's earlier quote regarding "a Tart or a Custard",

44. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 2nd ed. (London: Nichols, 1782), 26.

45. T. Clerk, *The Works of William Hogarth* (Edinburgh: Scholey, 1812), 179.

46. H. Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, vol. 4 (London: Dodsley, 1782), 151.

was part of a satire in *Covent-Garden Journal* criticising “Trunk-makers” and “Pastry Cooks”; epithets used as a means of insult among authors. Fielding’s used an allusion to *Four Stages of Cruelty* to hide a satire targeting anatomists. References imply “Trunk-makers” as anatomists cutting off limbs in converting dead bodies to torsos, and “Pastry Cooks” as man-midwives taking buns out of the oven, i.e. hunting fetuses. Fielding’s double entendre then emerges: “The ingenious Hogarth hath very finely satyriſ’d this, by representing several of the most valuable Productions of these Times on the Way to the Trunk-maker”- an allusion to the “most valuable Productions”, i.e. the Trunk-makers and Pastry Cooks themselves; Smellie and the Hunters, deserving to become “trunks”, upon dissection by “trunk-makers”.⁴⁷ This prompted a defensive satire, probably by Smollett, on the fate of books; as a red-herring to divert attention from Fielding’s message. It was a *Literary Bill of Mortality for 1752*, which recorded; Casualties Among Books: Abortive 7,000, Stillborn 3,000, Miscarriage 17, Complication 98, Found Dead 303, Trunk-makers 1,000, and Pastry Cooks 800.⁴⁸

The Woodcuts

Four Stages of Cruelty is the only known example of Hogarth cutting woodcuts prior to engravings, Figures 13-14. Why was this? Scrutiny of the two woodcuts, *Cruelty in Perfection* and *The Reward of Cruelty*, is important to Hogarth’s motive, and does not support cruelty to animals. Only two animals are depicted, neither being harmed; a flying bat in *Perfection* and, in *Reward*, a dog eating a human heart!

The *Perfection* woodcut is inscribed, “Inv’d and published by Wm. Hogarth, Jan 1, 1750, J. Bell sculp.” (OS date). Early versions of the woodcuts are rare and it is uncertain when they were first issued for sale, probably not before Hogarth died. Some claim a change from woodcuts to engravings was due to excessive cost, but with two blocks already cut this is an obfuscation. Wood was cheaper to purchase than copper, and easier to work in creating an image, unlike the skill needed for a copper plate. Woodcuts were made quickly by a less skilled artisan, so cost less. To abandon two woodcuts based on cost, purports engraving four copper plates was cheaper than making two additional woodcuts. For Hogarth, well experienced in publishing, this makes no sense. He had a different and compelling reason for the woodcuts; a credible reason being a haste to prepare proofs, why the woodcuts lack title and verse.

47. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 167-71.

48. Anon, *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 22 (London: Cave, 1752), 612.



Figure 13. *Cruelty in Perfection* - 1750
woodcut



Figure 14. *Reward of Cruelty* - 1750
woodcut

Hogarth's urgency is explained in discussing the obstetric experiments conducted by Smellie and Hunter. The experiments coincided with magistrate Henry Fielding's efforts to reduce crime during a post-1748 crime wave, associated with demobbed soldiers after the Jacobite rebellion and peace in Europe. In 1749 Fielding published *The History of Tom Jones*, and established the first quasi-official detective policemen, known as the Bow Street runners: succeeded on his death in 1754 by his brother, blind John Fielding. Hogarth verbally challenged Hunter, but without bodies as evidence it was difficult to approach Fielding with an accusation of murder against Hunter. The evidence was gone, with the human remains fed to wild animals in John Hunter's menagerie. Frustrated, Hogarth opted to confront Hunter with woodcut proofs of *Cruelty* and *Reward*, and a threat of public exposure unless experiments ceased.

Hogarth was then completing *The March to Finchley*, whilst supervising Luke Sullivan in preparing a detailed engraving of *The March* for publishing, so he enlisted John Bell to prepare the woodcuts. Hogarth never explained the woodcuts, but they puzzled John Nichols who, seeking an explanation, in 1781 re-interpreted Hogarth's advertisement to propose: "These have been commended amongst the best prints of Mr. *Hogarth*. They are surely the most disgusting in the whole collection. Of the two latter of these there are wooden plates on a large scale, invented and published by W. Hogarth. They were executed by order of our artist, who wished to diffuse the salutary example they contain, as far as possible by putting them within the reach of the meanest purchaser."⁴⁹ In 1782 Nichols modified this to, "They were done by order of our artist who wished to diffuse the salutary example they contain, as far as possible,

49. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 1st ed (London: Nichols, 1781), 116.

by putting them within the reach of the meanest purchaser; but finding this mode of executing his design was expensive beyond expectation, he proceeded no further in it, and was content to engrave them in his own coarse, but spirited manner. Impressions from the wooden block are to be had at Mrs. Hogarth's house in Leicester Fields."⁵⁰ Nichols had erroneously interpolated the advertisement, in opining the woodcuts were abandoned due to expense, a mistake repeated by later scholars. That impressions were noted as available from Mrs Hogarth in 1782, hints the woodcuts were not actually published for sale until long after Hogarth's 1764 death.

The Engravings

Complete re-cutting and re-issue of a print after one month is costly and rare. For engravings to then follow only a month later implies time was still of the essence. *Perfection* and *Reward* were re-engraved and issued, with *The First Stage of Cruelty* and *The Second Stage of Cruelty* as a set of four engravings dated 1 February 1751, only a month later. Confusingly for historians, this was a time of change in the commencement of a year. The full year 1750 ended on 24 March, followed by 1751, which was a short year of 282 days, running from 25 March to 31 December, with the full year 1752 beginning on 1 January. From the twenty-first century it can be difficult to accept 31 December 1750 as the day before 1 January 1751 and so Hogarth anticipated the imminent change to 1751. The four engraved prints, with *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* were advertised in the *General Advertiser* for 13 February 1750/51.

On *Friday* next will be published, price one shilling each. Two large Prints designed and etched by Mr. *Hogarth*, called *Beer-street* and *Gin-lane*. A number will be printed in a better manner for the Curious at 1s. 6d. Each. And on *Thursday* following will be published, Four Prints on the subject of Cruelty. Price and size the same. N.B. As the subjects of these Prints are calculated to reform some reigning vices peculiar to the lower class of people in hopes to render them of more extensive use, the author has published them in the cheapest manner possible. To be had at the *Golden Head* in *Leicester Fields*, where may be had all his other works.⁵¹

The advertisement excludes any reference to the woodcuts, referring instead to six engraved prints; a version in the "cheapest manner possible" for a shilling each, and another "printed in a better manner" for one shilling and sixpence.

50. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 2nd ed (London: Nichols, 1782), 316.

51. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 3rd ed (London: Nichols, 1785), 312.

When analysed carefully, there is a satirical allusion to the series in Hogarth's autobiographical notes; first published in 1798 by John Ireland, and in 1833 reprinted by Nichols:

The leading points in these, as well as the two preceding prints [*Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*], were made as obvious as possible, in the hope that their tendency might be seen by men of the lowest rank. Neither minute accuracy of design, nor fine engraving, were deemed necessary, as the latter would render them too expensive for the persons to whom they were intended to be useful. And the fact is, that the passions may be more forcibly expressed by a strong bold stroke, than by the most delicate engraving. To expressing them as I felt them, I have paid the utmost attention, and as they were addressed to hard hearts, have rather preferred leaving them hard, and giving the effect, by a quick touch to rendering them languid and feeble by fine strokes and soft engraving ... The prints were engraved with the hope of in some degree correcting that barbarous treatment of animals, the very sight of which renders the streets of our metropolis so distressing to every feeling mind. If they have had this effect, and checked the progress of cruelty, I am more proud of having been the author, than I should be of having painted Raphael's Cartoons.⁵²



Figure 15. Miniature from *Le Cas des Nobles et Femmes* (c.1410), by Boccaccio, BNF

52. J B. Nichols, *Anecdotes of William Hogarth* (London: Nichols, 1833), 64.

In the advertisement, Hogarth implicitly refers to six engravings, but not the woodcuts. *Prima facie*, the set of six refer to gin, and cruelty to innocent animals but, as a satire, are “addressed to hard hearts” of Smellie and Hunter; scorned as “men of the lowest rank”. Hogarth’s comment is consistent with the view that unpublished proofs of the woodcuts had been quickly printed to challenge Smellie and Hunter.

It helps to follow Hogarth’s thought process; *Perfection* reveals Hogarth drawing on Emperor Nero’s [hence Tommy Nero] reputed dissection of the womb of his live and restrained mother, Agrippina, to see whence he had come (figures. 15-17). Also prompted by Fielding’s Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, “What could exceed the Absurdity of an Author, who should write the Comedy of Nero, with the merry Incident of ripping up his Mother’s Belly, or what would give a greater Shock to Humanity, than an Attempt to expose the Miseries of Poverty and Distress to Ridicule?”⁵³



Figure 16. Nero and Agrippina - Bayrische Handschrift, c 1410, Heidelberg



Figure 17. Nero and Agrippina - BrLib ms 4425, fol 59R, Flemish, ca, 1500

Cruelty in Perfection

Key in understanding *Perfection* are changes from woodcut to engraving; with those depicted identified by comparison with contemporary images (Figures. 18-25).

53. H. Fielding, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* (London: Millar, 1742).



Figure 18. *Cruelty in Perfection*,
Woodcut



Figure 19. *Cruelty in Perfection*,
Engraving

Hogarth often included self-portraits, including in *Perfection*; Hogarth with his distinctive snub nose looks heavenward in both woodcut and engraving seeking “Gods Revenge Against Murder”, as on a book in the foreground; John Reynolds’s, *Gods Revenge Against Murder*, first published in 1621. Grignion’s engraving of Smellie from a portrait by van Rymdyk, reveals him as Tommy Nero; bald head, dark eyebrows, strong nose, and firm chin. A significant change from the woodcut is alteration of two heads on the left, those of John and William Hunter. In the engraving William’s prominent nose and chin are reduced, and John changed from a smartly dressed young man to a servant; converting them both, and an extra head, into anonymous onlookers. The alteration reinforces the view William saw a proof of *Perfection*, was fearful at his inclusion, and begged Hogarth for changes.



Figure 20. *Cruelty in Perfection* -
Woodcut



Figure 21. *Cruelty in Perfection* -
Engraving

In the woodcut the moon points to the “good” right, away from the church, but in the engraving it points at the “evil” church on the left; on the right a mitre shaped topiary yew shrub is added, as a need for “you” (yew) Church bishops to

halt murders by anatomists. A puzzle with *Perfection* is why it appears to be in a churchyard? But does it? Hogarth includes vignettes to indicate the murder did not take place there. Both assistants, Mackenzie and Harvie, left and right of Smellie are wearing surgeons' aprons, not graveyard attire. To stress the awful truth hidden in *Perfection*, and alert a viewer the print reveals only half of his implied message, Hogarth adds an owl to the engraving. The owl was sacred to Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, with ability to light up Athena's blind side, to see the whole truth, instead of half the truth. The loss of a wig was used to portray a loss of one's reason; Smellie's lack of a wig, taken with the bat and bell tower, signifies Smellie is "mad" with "bats in his belfry". Hogarth puns the tombstone and fully clothed body are "lying" (telling untruths to hide the site of her naked murder), as the tombstone states: "Here lieth the body."



Figure 22. John Hunter



Figure 23. William Hunter



Figure 24. William Smellie



Figure 25. William Hogarth

With these satiric puns read in conjunction with “loose ends” hanging from Ann’s casket, Hogarth alerts the viewer Ann’s death did not occur clothed in the churchyard, but instead as a nude pregnant victim murdered during an experiment. Analysis of *Perfection* in the context of man-midwifery, implies a relocation of the image to Smellie’s rooms, mimicking Emperor Nero and Agrippina, and what Hogarth saw in Hunter’s dissection room. A nervous Smellie is offered a surgeon’s knife by John Hunter and urged to attempt a Caesarean on a pregnant and freshly murdered Ann; with her supine position that of a subject awaiting dissection. Her finger points at her Common Payer book, implying a prayer for *Gods Revenge Against Murder*, as in the title of her book. Other puns show the risks for Smellie of proceeding with a Caesarean; execution by “hanging” was punishment for robbery, as shown by the pistol, silver plate, and “time is ticking” watches; a spectator “drawing” near whispers to Smellie of the threat of punishment by “quartering”; evident in two lanterns and a “quartered” symbol visible over the house door. The bag of silver plate on the right hints a Biblical “thirty pieces of silver” as sufficient to betray Smellie.

Hogarth even reveals the method of murder before commencing a Caesarean. It was vital the fetus not be killed, so poison could not be used and, as it was believed the fetus breathed via the mother, smothering was avoided. Ann has a slit wrist and her throat is cut, with the absence of blood by her neck in the woodcut an indication of careful bleeding to death in the dissection room. Her finger then cut to check if the flow of blood had ceased. The image implies mothers restrained and gagged, their wrists slit to bleed to death as least risk to the fetus, and in the belief its blood circulation was independent of the mother, with the coup de grâce to the throat when the experiment was to commence. The lack of blood on the knife in the woodcut, nor on Ann’s neck indicates bleeding to death. However, in the engraving there is blood on the knife and pooling on the ground by her neck, plus a rope around Smellie’s arm, as a misleading refocus from obstetric experiment, to imply a churchyard arrest for robbery and murder. Nevertheless Hogarth ensures the accompanying verse has dual meaning; “By her Beguiler bleeds” conveys Ann as bled to death by Smellie.

The engraving adds “Thos. Nero” to the envelope, with the name Nero absent from the woodcuts of both *Perfection* and *Reward*. There is a pun on Ann’s human “remains” and a subtle change alters the woodcut letter addressee from “Dear Tommy” to “Dr Tommy”, a pun on Doctor Anatomy. There was a stage in the eighteenth century when “anatomy” was transmuted into “an atomy”. Here Hogarth focuses on “an atomy”, “a Tomy”, then “Dr Tommy”. Jeff Aronson discussed this change in the *British Medical Journal*:

[A]t one time the indefinite articles “a” and “an” were joined to the words that they governed, for example, aman or anoke. When the words were later split again, some spurious words were formed in error, for example, instead of a naranj we have an orange, and instead of a noumpere we have an

umpire. This process is called metanalysis, one casualty of which was “anatomy”. Anatomy is from the Greek “I cut up”. In addition to its current meaning, the study of the structures of the body or the structures themselves, at one time it also meant a skeleton. When the indefinite article was being restored to its separate existence, the word “atomy” was falsely coined from “anatomy” through aphaeresis, by the removal of the supposed indefinite article.⁵⁴

The letters depicted imply Ann’s death at the hand of Smellie, while referring to Tommy: *“Dear Tommy, Do not Fail to meet me in the Church yard as you said you would. For I shall bring along with me all the things I can Lay my hands upon yours Till Death Ann Gill.”* A later state of the woodcut has wording close to that of the engraving: *“Dr Tommy My Mistress has been the best of Women to me, and my conscience flies in my face as often as I think of wronging her, yet I am resolv’d to venture Body & Soul to do as you would have me so don’t fail to meet me as you said you would. For I shall bring along with me all the things I can lay my hands on. So no more at present but I remain yours till Death. Ann Gill.”* The refocus on Ann’s conscience in the second letter seeks to suggest she is guilty of theft, whereas the first letter implies an innocent Ann arriving as an indigent patient with all she owns in her casket, i.e. the unborn child in her belly. The word “Lay” in the letter being a pun on her needing “lying-in”, i.e. for an imminent childbirth.

The Reward of Cruelty

After identification in *Perfection*, the key figures are readily seen in the *Reward* woodcut and engraving, Figures 26-27. After his late 1750 visit to see Hunter dissect a gravid uterus, Hogarth did not need to draw on other works in composing *Reward*, nor even the images of Emperor Nero. He posed Hunter as he had seen him, dissecting the gravid uterus of a murdered woman, John Hunter recording, and with van Rymsdyk preparing drawings. In a parody of a Caesarean, Hogarth depicts William Hunter, with his glasses, distinctive profile, and surgeon’s apron, in the process of hanging, drawing, and quartering Smellie; a punishment reserved for heinous crimes, as Hogarth indicates hanging was inadequate. The rope around Smellie’s neck and agony on his face reveal he was cut down from the gallows while alive, and brought to the table for “drawing”, thence to be “quartered”. His punishment by hanging, drawing and quartering, is hinted in puns through the satire. Smellie’s left (a Latin pun, *sinistra* = left = evil) forefinger points at a “smelly” boiling pot. A dog eats Smellie’s heart; Hogarth’s view of Smellie as “heartless”, but now deservedly “heart less”.

54. J. Aronson, “When I use a Word”, *BMJ* (2000 Oct 14); 321:953.

Van Rymsdyk made many anatomical “drawings” for Smellie and Hunter. For 250 years his appearance was unknown, but he sits in the right foreground of *Reward* “drawing” out Smellie’s entrails. His description corresponds with one by Richard Smith: “*The Ship* was frequented by musicians, artists and interesting Bohemians, who led a jovial rollicking life. Among these characters were Rymsdyke, the painter, who dressed in “large flap waistcoat, immense cuffs to his coat sleeves, with breeches just to the knee, and slit before, with knee buttons”.⁵⁵ Van Rymsdyk had ample access to murdered subjects, and a pause for reflection brings the shocking realisation he required prior warning of each impending murder, to be present at Smellie’s or Hunter’s rooms, with art materials, and ready to draw. That presence is implied in his 1778, threat to expose William Hunter, in the guise of Dr Ibis: “O if I had a mind to speak how could I expose you, in what we commonly call a great length”.⁵⁶

Hogarth left the faces of the Hunter brothers unaltered in the engraving, convincing them they were on the side of meting out justice, whilst retaining his personal view the punishment they deserved was to dissect Smellie. Hogarth at left rear points to the fate of Smellie, with a message for Hunter. There are two niches for skeletons, with Hunter in due course required to occupy the right-hand niche. The unnamed skeletons in the woodcut point at each other, as anatomists blaming each other for their fate, as will Smellie and Hunter when they occupy the niches. For the engraving the skeletons are given names of prominent criminals to divert public attention from man-midwifery. On the left is James Field, tried before Henry Fielding and executed on 11 February 1751. Most changes between woodcut and engraving are minor, but significant is addition of the initials “T N” to the biceps of Smellie, part of the camouflage to imply the man dissected was Tommy Nero, rather than Smellie. John Hunter, as a student learns “at the foot of the master”, William Cheselden, author of *Anatomy of the Human Body*, is at Smellie’s head, answering Ann’s plea for revenge of “an eye for an eye”. Cheselden was so shocked at appearing in *Reward* he gifted fifty guineas to the Foundling Hospital on 3 May 1751; thence retired to Bath, where he had a stroke and died in 1752 (Figures 26-27).

55. J. Thornton, *Jan van Rymsdyk Medical Artist of the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Oleander, 1982), 6.

56. J. Van Rymsdyk, *Museum Britannicum* ... (London: Moore, 1778), 83.



Figure 26. *Reward of Cruelty* - Woodcut



Figure 27. *Reward of Cruelty* - Engraving

Some suggest John Freke presides, but it is more likely Sir Richard Manningham, who stated a Caesarean should be performed only after death of the mother. On the right of *Reward* are other man-midwives, likely Brudenell Exton, Percival Pott, and Benjamin Pugh. The hatted young man on the left is possibly Smollett, with the back-to-back critics as Frank Nicholls, with a prominent nose, and Robert Nesbitt. Nesbitt led a pro-Smellie/Hunter faction, and had a bitter altercation with Nicholls. The accompanying verses were reportedly composed by Rev. James Townley, but references to “tart” and later to “hoary”, are unlikely for a Reverend; with “lawless Love” and “lawless Lust” referring to the sexual nature of crimes against women.

Reward emboldened Mary Cooper to publish the 1751 satirical pamphlet, *A Petition of the Unborn Babes*. Previously attributed to Frank Nicholls, but new research suggests it is a Smollett satire; he often published polemic pamphlets with Cooper; with his identity hidden behind pseudonyms and spurious imprints. The *Petition* puns concern about; “the polite and tender Behaviour of Pocus [Smellie], or the delicate Wit and lively Imagination of Maulus [Hunter]”.

[W]e your Petitioners have of late Years been grievously ill-treated by Dr. *Pocus*, Dr. *Maulus*, and other evil-minded Men ... we your Petitioners particularly charge, that if we cannot leave our Dwellings, and make our Appearance, so soon as is expected, either from the Unwieldyness of our Gates, or by means of any other Obstacle ... we are forthwith drag’d out of our Habitations by Hooks, Pincers, and other bloody Instruments, whereby we are sometimes most miserably torn and bruised, and at other times our Heads are so squeezed, that we are ever after subject to Fits ... And in the case of any the least Resistance, whether on our part, or from the Nature, and

Situation, of our Habitations, we are sentenced to Death as guilty of Rebellion, and in consequence of such Sentence we are sometimes beheaded, and at other times our Brains are torn out by Instruments wickedly contrived for that Purpose ... Or if your Petitioners happen to put an Arm out of Doors, whether in our own Defence, or to feel our way, the said *Pocus*, *Maulus*, and their Confederates, immediately cut off such Arm as high as they can reach; by which means your Petitioners bleed to Death in great Misery and Torture.⁵⁷



Figure 28. Foundling Hospital Arms 1749 **Figure 29.** The Petition - Fetus killed by instruments – Wellcome

The *Petition* ironically attributes Dr Pocus as stating unborn children were not entitled to protection from Church or State, “neither being [baptised] Christians, nor having taken the Oath”. It includes a copper plate, with the reverse of an infant’s pose, similar to a coat-of-arms adopted for the Foundling Hospital (figures 28-29).

The First Stage of Cruelty and The Second Stage of Cruelty

After an initial rebuff by Hunter in December 1750, Hogarth’s anger led him to prepare woodcut proofs to confront Hunter. Hogarth was not in a strong position, with the subjects dissected and gone he was unable to table evidence after Hunter refused to cease. As a sign he was serious, Hogarth told Hunter he would publish engraved plates of *Perfection* and *Reward*, Figures 30-31. Hunter realised he faced risk of trial and execution if *Perfection* and *Reward* were published. Hunter saw an undertaking to halt obstetric research as a chance to persuade the authorities to raise the legal allocation of executed criminals for dissection, beyond the minimal annual allowance of ten bodies. Hunter agreed to cease experiments, provided Hogarth refocused *Perfection* and *Reward* away from

57. Anon, *The Petition of the Unborn Babes...* (London: Cooper, 1751), 4-7.

man-midwifery. Hogarth did this by expanding the series from two to four; in creating two preceding engravings, with a veneer of animal cruelty and Tommy Nero as villain. Titled *The First Stage of Cruelty* and *The Second Stage of Cruelty*; allowing *Perfection* as a notional third stage, and *Reward* as a fourth stage; with the revised set completed a week after issuing *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*.



Figure 30. *First Stage of Cruelty*



Figure 31. *The Second Stage of Cruelty*

In the *First Stage* the actions of young Smellie and Hunter indicate how *The Petition* derived the names Dr Maulus and Dr Pocus. They “fight like cats”, “mauling” the dog and intent on being first to “poke” an arrow into the dog’s vagina. John Hunter joins in, grasping Smellie’s wrist, and saying in the accompanying verse, “take all my Tart”; as he offers a pregnant prostitute as substitute in their “fetus hunt”. The letters on Smellie’s sleeve can be read as “S G” for the parish of St Giles, but Hogarth punned them as “S C” for the Surgeons’ Company, formed in 1745, and to which man-midwives belonged. Adding Nero to a wall helps redirect attention at Tommy Nero. The snub nose of the boy “drawing” a hangman picture shows it as a self-portrait of young Hogarth, foretelling the fate of Smellie and Hunter. In the right foreground of the *First Stage* young van Rymsdyk squats in the same pose as in *Reward*. As implied by boys blinding a bird, Smellie and Hunter face an “eye for an eye”. Vignettes of a rope around one dog’s neck allude to “hanging”, a second dog will soon be “drawing” a bone, and the defeated cat in the left foreground begs for “quarter” from a third dog. The image of a cat [prostitute] and balloons thrown from a window is a pun on the saying “pigs might fly”; but prostitutes can’t fly away, and thus will die. Hogarth alerts viewers to a hidden message in another vignette by the wine motif represented as “the grapes of wrath”. The grapes refer to a Biblical quotation from Revelation 14:19, an apocalyptic appeal for divine justice: “And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God”. The grapes also bring attention to

the acts of sin in Ezekiel 18: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"; salvation does not depend upon hereditary conditions, but upon present personal character, fixed in actual life. The "hanging" of two "fighting cats", adjacent to the "hanging" bunch of grapes shows the two men "fighting like cats" will face divine justice for their murders.

The *Second Stage* contains more vignettes referring to murder, prostitution, and man-midwifery, Figures 32-35. The weeping horse and verse, "The generous Steed in hoary Age, Subdu'd by Labour lies", represents Smellie flogging a helpless "whore", as she cries in painful "Labour", i.e. childbirth. On the right, Hunter kills a "lamb", representing children murdered while innocent as lambs. John Hunter takes study notes with the number "24" referring to Smellie's murders of pregnant women, wherein he took "two for" one murder. The poking with a pitchfork of an overladen and immobile donkey, alludes to man-midwifery impatience and excessive use of obstetric instruments in hurrying full-term and helpless parturient women, struggling in labour. Again there are allusions to Smellie's fate; the juxtaposition of the door frame and whip handle mimic the several "hanging" signs as images of gallows, and the thong of the whip by his neck implies the "hanging" rope. The risk of harming of children by "drawing" is shown in a boy trapped under the dray, "drawn" along by an oblivious driver, with bull baiting and chasing of a bull resembling "quartering", wherein a pack of dogs chased its quarry. The driver of the dray sleeps on his way home after a night collecting "night-soil", with the contents and "smelly" fumes of the barrels expressing Hogarth's contempt for Smellie and his works. The night-soil collector in Figure 32 mimics a similar figure in Hogarth's 1738 *Night*.



Figure 32. *Night Soil Collector*



Figure 33. *John Fielding and Henry Fielding*

The lawyers pun the law's wilful blindness to murders committed by anatomists, with a hanging sign for "Thavies" as a pun on the "hanging" of "thieves". The lawyers are magistrate Henry Fielding and his blind brother, John; note Henry's nose and firm jaw, and John's "baby brother" appearance, Figures

33-35. Fielding grasps the door frame representing gallows, whilst gazing at a poster advertising a fight by James Field; tried and convicted for robbery before Fielding on 16 January 1751, and hanged on 11 February. The poster was added to a preliminary drawing depicting Fielding gazing at a doorway, with dates important in analysing *Four Stages of Cruelty*.



Figure 34. *Blind John Fielding*



Figure 35. *Henry Fielding*

Being after the 1 January 1750 date on Bell's woodcut, they support the original design as the woodcut images of *Perfection* and *Reward* but, published in a set of engravings, were preceded by *First Stage* and *Second Stage*. That late refocus on animal cruelty, is why the prints lack the passion and intensity of *Perfection* and *Reward*. On publication those depicted in *Perfection* and *Reward* recognised their images. Risk of trial and execution, if not hunting down and slaughter by a vengeful public, was incentive for secrecy among man-midwives, even if innocent of crimes.

Hogarth's Original Intent for *Beer Street*, *Gin Lane*, *Cruelty in Perfection*, and *Reward of Cruelty*

Hogarth's cryptic *Satire* in *Four Stages of Cruelty* used irony and exaggeration to challenge cruelty to women: that contrasts with his *Sermon* on animal cruelty. In *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* Hogarth challenged gin-drinking in a *Sermon* for the uneducated:

Choice is clear and unambiguous in *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*, Hogarth draws on a tradition going back at least as far as Defoe's *Augusta Triumphans* (1728), in which beer opposes gin, as good against evil and, of course, industry to

idleness. There is almost no ambiguity here about the contrast between order and chaos.⁵⁸

Beer Street, however responsible for the evils of *Gin Lane*, is nevertheless (Hogarth is saying) all that English artists and writers have to work with, and the future lies in national fisheries and projects that link art and commerce, which indeed he will himself explore in the succeeding years, and not in an attempt to recover classical art and its manner.⁵⁹

Paulson's "clear and unambiguous" opinion of *Beer Street* echoes Steintrager's "almost banal" view of the *First Stage of Cruelty*. There is no reason to doubt the *Sermon*, but what about *Satire*? Are Hogarth's *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* two more examples of satire overlooked for 250 years? Announcement of *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* in the same 1751 advertisement as *Four Stages of Cruelty*, hints at *Sermon* and *Satire* in all six prints. They are of similar dimension, style, verse, and London location; raising caution against a claim Hogarth's satire was limited to four of the six engravings. The challenge is to reveal previously unnoticed satire in *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*; which, linked to *Perfection* and *Reward*, implies a four part-satire was Hogarth's basic intent. A cue is that Fielding wrote of *Beer Street*: "The ingenious Hogarth hath very finely satyriz'd this, by representing several of the most valuable Productions of these Times on the Way to the Trunk-maker".

Fielding's words signal his belief in *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* as ingenious satire. Analysis has uncovered the satire, with numerous Hogarth puns emerging in *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane*. Hogarth used exaggeration as a satirical device, but in *Beer Street* a technique is irony: "the humorous or mildly sarcastic use of words to imply the opposite of what they normally mean," a notional reversal of each vignette. In the preliminary drawing, the man resting while reading a paper has a blacksmith's hammer and grip; tools used to forge "iron" in a "smithy", hence to make "irony". A cobbler has a pile of old shoes, a warning the scene is a "load of old cobblers", or "a load of old nonsense". A paviour lays "cobble-stones", a hint the image is "cobbled together", as "something assembled roughly". A paper is titled *Farthing Post*, with two men pointing and laughing; a warning the scene is nonsense and "not worth a brass farthing", "nor the paper it is printed on". Two fish sellers suggest the scene is "fishy"; i.e. "suspicious, doubtful, or questionable". The sellers read a proclamation, but that would not be, as sellers were illiterate. In the published engraving, the proclamation advertises *A New Ballard on the Herring Fishery*; alerting the vignette as a "red herring", or "something diverting attention from a topic or line of inquiry". A basket of books is addressed to a "trunk-maker": *Modern Tragedys Vo:12*, *Politicks Vol:9999* (both nonsense titles), plus *Hill on Royal Societies*, *Turnbul on Ant[ient] Painting*, and *Lauder on Milton*. They allude

58. R. Paulson, *Hogarth, His Life, Art, and Times*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale, 1971), 269.

59. R. Paulson, *Hogarth Art and Politics, 1750-1764* (New Brunswick, Rutgers, 1993), 34.

to authors whose views were challenged by critics or, as with Lauder, his claim about Milton was fraudulent. Thus, in viewing *Beer Street*; “one should not judge a book by its cover”.



Figure 36. *Hogarth self-portrait ex First Stage*



Figure 37. *Hogarth self-portrait ex Perfection*



Figure 38. *Hogarth self-portrait ex Reward of Cruelty*



Figure 39. *Hogarth self-portrait ex Beer Street*

Hogarth's irony is key to interpreting *Beer Street*. Three snub-nosed self-portraits of Hogarth appear in; the *First Stage*; *Perfection*, and *Reward*; and a fourth self-portrait is in *Beer Street*; the snub-nosed sign-painter standing atop a ladder, “approving of”, but remote from the activities below, Figures 36-39. In *Beer Street* a normal self-portrait would be expected to depict Hogarth's actual corpulence. But a literary convention behind irony prompts an opposing interpretation, requiring Hogarth's corpulence convert to thin. Hogarth's educated peers were alerted to his irony in a thin self-portrait, as a hint his approving visage should

alter to disapproving. He thus still portrays his snub nose, but sylph-like and ragged, to imply he is saying: "Don't take my appearance seriously. Although appearing ragged, and sylph-like, I am a successful artist. My self-deprecating appearance is a cue for you to seek out other things which are not as they seem."



Figure 40. *Beer Street - Preliminary*
Oppê: 73 (76)



Figure 41. *Beer Street - First State -*
Paulson 252 (197)



Figure 42. *Beer Street - Second State -*
Paulson 197 (185)



Figure 43. *Beer Street - Third State -*
Paulson 198 (185)

In seeking Hogarth's trail in Figures 40-43, it is relevant that, a month prior to *Beer Street*, Fielding published his *Enquiry* which, *inter alia*, condemned debauchery:

And though Ranelagh and Vauxhall, by reason of their price, are not entirely appropriated to the people of fashion, yet they are seldom frequented by any below the middle rank. ... Nor should such a fashion be allowed to spread into every village round London, and by degrees all over the kingdom; by which means not only idleness, but all kinds of immorality, will be encouraged. ... the case is very different with these inferior masquerades, for these are indeed no other than the temples of drunkenness, lewdness, and all kind of debauchery".⁶⁰

Although counter to conventional wisdom, *Beer Street* puns reveals Hogarth commenced with a vision of "drunkenness, lewdness, and all kinds of debauchery" at an "inferior masquerade". He then applies irony to individual vignettes, to derive ironic *Beer Street* images which reinforce Fielding's *Enquiry*. For example, the *Barley Mow* sign depicts happy dancing peasants, but irony converts their behaviour into "drunkenness, lewdness, and all kinds of debauchery". Hogarth satirises the King's speech, referring to "Advancement of Our Commence and cultivating the Art of Peace"; ironic allusion to a lack of peaceful thoroughfare, and crimes of robbery and violence, as enumerated in the *Enquiry*. Irony converts the rear "sun" inn-sign to "moon" to convey night, with an ironic peeling away of the chequerboard "licensing" motifs, revealing Hogarth's *Satire* as his vision of a debauched and unlicensed night-time masquerade. The irony continues as more vignettes are unlocked.

The "front door" key to the *First Stage* was an "arrow", whereas central to *Beer Street* a young lady holds a large key, Hogarth hinting "Here is the Key!" The *Barley Mow* sign alludes to courtship, as in a poem by John Gay: "Whenever by yon barley mow I pass, Before my eyes will trip the tidy lass".⁶¹ The courting of Ann Gill is identified via an adjacent vignette where trays of fish have "gills", as does "Ann Gill" and imply her as Hogarth's "angle". Irony demonstrates not courtship, but seduction. Ann is courted by a man often described as a paviour, but pounding mauls as used by paviours lacked chains and shackles. He is instead a dancing-bear owner, with "more tricks than a dancing bear".⁶² He has a pole, chain, and shackle for the bear and seeks the "key" to Ann's affection, to take her "captive". If she succumbs to him, she risks descent into prostitution and pregnancy, as represented by multiple phallic imagery (erect carrots and onions) in her basket; with the poised leg of meat above her head, as her *Sword of Damocles*, anticipating her ultimate dissection as "a leg of meat".

60. H. Fielding, *An Enquiry Into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, &c.* (London: A. Millar, 1751), 9, 19.

61. J. Gay, *Poems on Several Occasions*, vol. 1 (London: H. Lintot, 1745), 110.

62. J. Swift, "Polite Conversation", *Miscellanies*, 4th ed., vol. 9 (London: Davis, 1748), 179.

Ann's fate is reinforced via reference to *Irene* a play by Samuel Johnson, a contemporary of Hogarth, who draws attention to Johnson and hence *Irene*, by hints at his appearance. Johnson, noted for profanity and bawdiness, was strong and bear-like. As noted by David Nokes; "he would 'feed him occasionally with guineas', making the distasteful but understandable comparison of Johnson with a chained-up bear".⁶³ The man courting Ann is thus Johnson, via a vignette linking to *Irene*. Johnson's *Irene* was performed in 1749, the central conflict being whether Irene, a Greek slave girl, will remain faithful to her religion, or succumb to Mahomet, a despotic sultan, to become his queen and lose hope of a Christian heaven. Johnson emphasises how the pursuit of worldly power tends to corrupt. In the play Irene does succumb, but becomes the victim of slander, and Mahomet has her murdered. *Irene* anticipates Ann's fate, with a hint in words below the *Barley Mow* sign. For the *Sermon* Paulson reads this as, "...AN CALVAR[t's] BEST BUTT [Be]ER", hence An[n] Calvar's Best Butt Beer. But in his *Satire* Hogarth puns on Biblical Calvary to show Ann's fate, "...AN CALVAR[y] BEST BUTT[ch]ER", thus "An[n], Calvary, best butcher."

A "leg of meat" as Ann's fate implies anatomists within *Beer Street*. In *Reward and Paul Before Felix* images representing "smell" or smelly" allude to Smellie. In *Beer Street*, "smelly" sellers carry "smelly" fish also alluding to Smellie. The *First Stage* implies Hunter "hunting" prostitutes; on the right of *Beer Street* is the home of a pawn-broker with, in an upper window, a trap for "hunting". A further allusion to Hunter is a pun on "pawn-broker", as "porne-broker", the word "porne" being Greek for prostitute. Hogarth's scholarly friends were familiar with Greek, with porne-broker" implying Hunter "buying" pregnant prostitutes; and irony converting Hunter's wealth and success to *Beer Street*'s run-down house.

A French anatomist is in states one and two of the *Beer Street* engraving, but is replaced by Johnson, Ann, and a leg of meat for the third state. The anatomist is so "small" he is picked up by one hand, even though carrying a "trunk". The French for "small" is "petit" and quoted earlier were comments by Jean Louis Petit, Director of the French Royal Academy: "In order to be sure of our procedure, we must have dissected women who have died both before and after delivery".⁶⁴ Petit's "spurs", sword ("large knife"), and "trunk" signal him as a "horseman" in the *Sermon*, but for the *Satire* as a "whoresman" an anatomist dissecting "whores" to make "trunks". Hogarth became attuned to Petit's research when observing Hunter's dissection of a gravid uterus. Petit has a long queue (pig-tail) of hair, and implying a long "tale" behind his presence. Petit's "spurs" confirm him as a "spur" to obstetric experiments conducted by Smellie

63. D. Nokes, *Samuel Johnson – A Life* (New York: Henry Holt, 2010), 174.

64. J. Petit, "Remarks on various faulty conformations of the Anus in new born Children", ed. M de la Peyronie, *Memoires of the Royal Academy of Surgery*. vol. 1. (London: Cave, 1750), 247.

and Hunter. Hogarth reinforces a focus as man-midwifery, via two men on the left with tools of trade. One has a butcher's steel for sharpening knives, also used by surgeons and anatomists, often described as "butchers". The other has pincers, "a gripping tool consisting of two hinged arms with handles at one end" as used by cobblers, or farriers to "extract" nails. This is a pun on "forceps - a surgical instrument in the form of a pair of pincers", as used by man-midwives to "extract" babies. "Pincers" as "forceps" is also an obstetric pun on the *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* pawn-brokers, "N Pinch" and "S Gripe", as "pinch'n'grip".

Interpretation of Hogarth's *Satire* is akin to a dance of the seven veils, with removal of each veil revealing a *Satire* diametrically opposed to the *Sermon*. Prominent in *Beer Street* are men "raising", "supping", and "draining" "foaming" tankards; alluding to filling a prostitute with a fetus, then emptying her via dissection. Men in *Beer Street* "raise" tankards in a "toast" in anticipation of Ann's imminent "de-flowering". The multiple phallic imagery in her basket showing they expect to participate in her spiral into prostitution. A man on the right with a cross on his chest and relishing a tankard, extends Hogarth's anger to clergy guilty of neglecting to constrain anatomists and seeking out prostitutes. That refocuses on the fish sellers, implied to have a "fishy smell". In the eighteenth century a vaginal "fishy" odour was often associated with prostitutes, as their bodies rarely had time to readjust to a normal bacterial balance between clients. The sellers are thus prostitutes, one clutching an "empty" tankard. This is reinforced by "full tankards" offered in exchange for "empties" through the door of the "pawn-broker", implicitly the location of Hunter's dissection room, "behind closed doors", and a dead baby on his doorstep. The vignette implies John Hunter sourcing pregnant prostitutes for his brother, thus paralleling the pregnant "all my tart" he offers in the *First Stage*. John collects multiple empty tankards, representing the bodies of prostitutes, "emptied" of fetuses by Smellie and Hunter; with their human remains then fed to wild animals in a London menagerie.

Hogarth's disapproval is focussed as a warning to those Londoners involved in licentious behaviour, especially those exploiting prostitutes. Hogarth views their deserved punishment as "hanging", "drawing", and "quartering"; signified by roofers celebrating "topping-off" (completion) of a roof, with "topping-off" also referring to "the hangman's drop". Execution by "hanging" is further implied by a "hanging" barrel, with scaffolding as "gallows", diagonal bracing to imply "quartering", and a woman "drawn" along in a sedan chair. Stripping away the irony reveals her not as old and fat, but young and slim, with her two chairmen raising 'high tankards', punning she is "high glass", i.e. a "high class" whore. Capital punishment for "licentious humour" was recalled in 1748 in the *Gentleman's Magazine*: "this licentious humour was curbed by silencing the preachers and putting to death two or three tailors for some treasonal insolencies

of which they had been guilty".⁶⁵ Hogarth implies that fate via three tailors high up in a garret.

With Hogarth's *Satire* clear, the chronology of *Beer Street* can be contemplated. The central vignette varies between the preliminary drawing, the second engraved state, and the third engraved state. As with the woodcuts discussed previously, it is likely the earlier states reached public hands only after Hogarth's death. Absent from the preliminary drawing, Petit is added to the second state, but removed for the third. Why? Logic proposes Petit's experiments became known to Hogarth via attendance at Hunter's gravid uterus dissection. Hogarth determined to pressure Hunter by publicising Petit's words, and threatening Petit's portrait on *Beer Street*, as evidenced by his lone hand in dead centre of the preliminary drawing (Figure 40). In fright, Hunter undertook to halt his experiments, and Hogarth agreed to split the original set into pairs. He removed Petit to tone down *Beer Street* man-midwifery, but replaced Petit with new cryptic clues to Johnson, Irene, and Ann Gill; and introduced animal cruelty as a *Sermon* in the *First Stage* and the *Second Stage*.



Figure 44. *Gin Lane – Preliminary drawing* – Oppê: 74 (77)



Figure 45. *Gin Lane – Second State* – Paulson 199 (186)

Hogarth's ironic *Satire* continues in *Gin Lane*, as an attack focused more directly on anatomists; the clockwise vignettes itemising the varied sources of subjects-for-dissection (Figures 44-45). Be-spectacled Hunter, as a wealthy pawn-broker holds a coat and surgeon's saw, sign of a man murdered for dissection with his clothes pawned. Hunter is offered a pot for boiling bones, as in *Reward*. Two men are interring, or more likely snatching, a deceased body from a coffin under the conniving eye of a watchman, with a crying orphan as next target. A

65. Anon, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 18 (London: Cave, 1748), 444.

funeral procession at the rear hints at the act of grave robbing. A man with a skewered baby ready for spit-roasting and bellows for the fire, is chased by the baby's mother, and recalls Swift's *A Modest Proposal*. People crushed, as in the falling building, were regular sources of subjects. The "hanging" coffin is marked "T G" for "Tyburn Gate", site of gallows for condemned felons. Hogarth saves the normal image for an executed felon of a hanged body, to show private suicides as sources, as inside the building. The helical tusk on the right alludes to the narwhal, its name derived from the Old Norse word *nár* for "corpse", a reference to the animal's greyish, mottled pigmentation, similar to that of drowned sailors, yet another source. The tusk puns a barber's pole, as prior to 1745 the Barbers' Company and the Surgeons' Company were a single company. Even the name of the distillery puns, "Kilman", for anatomists who "kill men". Two girls sipping gin risk a descent to prostitution and ruin, ending on an anatomist's dissection table. A child, and an adult in a barrow, are forcibly made drunk for easier sale to anatomists, with the blind and lame ready targets. As is a pauper dying in the foreground, and a woman in such a somnolent stupor, a snail is able to crawl onto her shoulder. That brings the scene full circle back to Hunter, and a man sharing a "smelly" bone with a "smelly" mastiff; he is "brute" Smellie; his covetous eyes target a bare breasted, destitute, mother abandoning her baby, and both at risk of being his subjects. In promoting the Foundling Hospital, and seeking to halt the widespread abandonment of infants by society, Hogarth's focal point is a pun on a woman abandoning her baby to take snuff, with an implied protest of, "it's enough!" ("it's snuff!").

The satiric bridge from *Beer Street* and *Gin Lane* to the satire within *Perfection* and *Reward* unites and, in continuing to *Perfection*, the fate of Ann Gill is clear. She did succumb to the dancing-bear owner, descended into prostitution, became pregnant and, destitute, sought charity and assistance for her imminent lying-in from Smellie. He murdered her during a Caesarean experiment; with his deserved fate reflected in *Reward*. The evidence endorses the view Hogarth split his original concept into two pairs, then added the *First Stage* and *Second Stage*. The original four prints, and issued set of six, all demonstrate simple *Sermons*, while retaining cryptic *Satires*.

Stress Testing against the Preliminary Drawings

A comparison of the satiric framework against Hogarth's preliminary drawings is valuable in stress-testing the conclusions. Study of the chronology indicates Hogarth commenced his concept with *Perfection* and *Reward*; then added the *First Stage* and *Second Stage* to give a veneer of animal cruelty. Paul Oppé made a valid observation, which now supports this interpretation, when he wrote in 1948;

Strangely enough, one of the very best subjects in the Cruelty series for which forcible execution would be most suitable, presents one of the best examples of “fine drawing” in Hogarth’s work. In the pencil drawing at Burghley for the *First Stage* (No. 70) everything, except the animals whose struggles have resulted in chaos, is set down gently, almost tenderly, and there is nothing either in the design or in the execution to suggest any emotion in the artist, or to communicate any feeling from him to the observer. In the elaborated version (No. 71) of this subject, ... everything tentative has been eliminated.⁶⁶

Henry Reitlinger made a like comment in 1938, believing designs for the *Idle* and *Industrious Apprentices* must be regarded as a standard by which Hogarth’s drawing style should be judged, as very free, nervous and impulsive.⁶⁷ He thought the highly finished *Four Stages of Cruelty* drawings stylistically had little in common with the sketches, with one free to surmise the presence of another hand in these. However, while Oppé and Reitlinger deserve respect as foremost scholars of their times, their views were expressed many years ago, in an academic environment which failed to read Hogarth’s satire, chronology, and motivation. They made the assumption the design for *Perfection* and *Reward* followed the *First Stage* and *Second Stage*, rather than *vice versa*. Also presuming animal cruelty was his only intent.

Their views need revisiting, although their comments on Hogarth’s artistry are not as inconsistent with the framework now advanced, as may have been expected. The structure is far more intricate, multi-levelled, and inter-related than most Hogarth’s series, with a structure not conducive to a “very free, nervous and impulsive” style. Hogarth’s anger and passion is evident in the composition of *Perfection* and *Reward* and by his singular action in preparing woodcuts. In the *First Stage* and *Second Stage* Hogarth was artistically constrained by a need to create images to precede, and provide a bridge to *Perfection* and *Reward* while including a dual message. On one hand a simple *Sermon* against animal cruelty, on the other, a cryptic *Satire* on human cruelty; where opportunity for artistic spontaneity was secondary to Hogarth’s prime aim, Figures 46-49.

66. A. Oppé, *The Drawings of William Hogarth* (London: Phaidon, 1948), 15-16.

67. H. Reitlinger, *From Hogarth to Keene* (London: Methuen, 1938).



Figure 46. *The First Stage of Cruelty*
preliminary drawing: Oppê: 67(70)

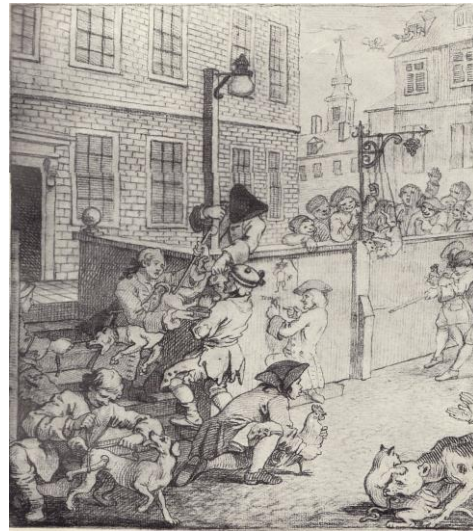


Figure 47. *The First Stage of Cruelty* -
secondary drawing: Oppê: 68 (71)



Figure 48. *The First Stage of Cruelty*
- engraving: Paulson: 187 (201)



Figure 49. *The Second Stage of Cruelty*
- secondary drawing: Oppê: 69 (72)

In the *First Stage* Hogarth began with a preliminary drawing depicting his main characters, surrounded by vignettes which grapple with the elements he needed to bring together; Smellie, the Hunters, van Rymdyk, and his own self-portrait, together with puns on “tart”, “fighting like cats”, “cocking”, and allusions to “hanging”, “drawing” and “quartering”; all under a veneer of animal cruelty. His indecision in deciding how to depict puns involving moving animals, is evident in his repeated overdrawing of several animals. The preliminary and secondary drawings are similar, but with more characterisation and the bunch of grapes replacing a square inn sign. The name Nero is added to the wall to divert

attention at animal cruelty, and away from those with recognisable features. A reference to “an eye for an eye” revenge is added by the boys blinding the eye of a bird, also adding initials SG/SC for Surgeons Company to the boy’s shoulder. In the *First Stage* preliminary drawing, the nature of the item inserted into the dog is unclear, but in the second drawing is either a tube or a stick. In the engraving Hogarth reinforces his attack by changing the tube to an arrow, together with a bow, as symbols of Diana, Goddess of both Hunting and Childbirth.

In considering Hogarth’s inspiration for the arrow, in 1785 John Nichols stated, “The thrusting an arrow up the fundament of a dog, is not an idea of *English* growth. No man ever beheld the same act of cruelty practised on any animal in *London*.”⁶⁸ But prior to an arrow Hogarth intended to show a tube; inspired by a letter published in London in 1747 by David Stephenson. Based at the Tower of London, he knew John Hunter, who obtained bodies of wild animals dying in the menagerie. Stephenson proposed many experiments with electricity, Experiment 18 proposing the use of electricity during Caesareans, if necessary for revival, and Experiment 11 mooted as:

Whether by putting a tube into the anus of any animal, the electric vapour may not be propagated through the whole compound intestinal canal to the mouth; and contrariwise from the mouth to the anus, and be transmitted also through the lacteal vessels to the blood, and so communicated to the whole animal system? ... And what effects will this æthereal vapour have, if communicated to the womb of animals either pregnant or not, and likewise to the urinary bladder.⁶⁹

68. J. Nichols, *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth*, 3rd ed. (London: Nichols, 1785), 317.

69. D. Stephenson, *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 17 (London: Cave, 1747), 141.



Figure 50. *The Second Stage of Cruelty* – engraving: Paulson: 188 (202)



Figure 51. *Cruelty in Perfection* – woodcut: Paulson: 189 (203)

No preliminary drawing for the *Second Stage* has been located, but a secondary drawing (Figures 49-50) focuses on Smellie and the Hunters, with a prostitution pun, “hoary” [whore]; in the verse, and vignettes alluding to “hanging”, “drawing”, and “quartering”. The Fielding brothers are added and, in the secondary drawing, John has closed eyes to indicate his blindness. In the engraving Hogarth made changes to strengthen his attack, a pitchfork is applied to the overladen donkey representing man-midwifery impatience with parturient women in labour, and the number 24 replaces 4, to imply “two for” one, when murdering a pregnant woman and her baby. Added is a poster naming James Field, to strengthen a hint to Fielding.

There are three versions of *Perfection*, a woodcut with no preliminary drawing, a secondary drawing as model for the engraving, followed by the engraving (Figures 51-53). Changes between woodblock and engraving were discussed earlier. An intriguing difference between secondary drawing and engraving are initials on a casket in the foreground, the emptied casket representing an emptied womb. The change from “E G” to “A G” shows Hogarth developing the concept, originally E G for e.g., an example of a pregnant woman. Hogarth realised he could better make his “point” with a pun on “angle”, in coining “Ann Gill”. He added Ann Gill to the woodcut letter, even though the casket lacked initials. The initials aid with chronology; the letters on both woodcut and engraving are signed Ann Gill and the engraving has A G on the casket, whereas the secondary drawing shows E G on the casket. The name Ann Gill in woodcut and engraving implies the secondary drawing with “E G” was drawn before Hogarth opted to use Ann Gill on the woodcut, adding credence to the view he prepared the design of the *Perfection* engraving before the 1 January 1750 date of the woodcut, and before the refocus on animal cruelty. If the

secondary drawing had been made after the woodcut, Hogarth would have shown the casket initials as "A G".



Figure 52. *Cruelty in Perfection* - secondary: Oppê: 70 (73)



Figure 53. *Cruelty in Perfection* – engraving: Paulson: 279 (190)

A similar argument applies to an owl in the secondary drawing, but not in the woodcut. That reinforces Hogarth's need for woodcut proofs was urgent; he instructed Bell to cut them in parallel with cutting of copper plates for *Perfection*, *Reward*, *Beer Street*, and *Gin Lane*. Visages of William and John Hunter are the same in woodcut and secondary drawing, but altered in the engraving; a sign of parallel preparation of woodcut and engraving, and an undertaking to alter their visages for the engraving.

There are four versions of *Reward* (Figures 54-57). The woodcut incorporates changes from the preliminary drawing, where the visages are less characteristic, the bent nose of Frank Nicholls is not prominent, there is a third skeleton in a central niche instead of the presidential chair and coat of arms, and spectators lack academic head-wear. Hogarth adds spectacles to Hunter to stress his identity. Hogarth's line of thought is evident, as a left forefinger pointing at the "smelly" boiling pot is added to woodcut and engraving to reinforce Smellie's identity, whereas in the preliminary drawing his fist is merely clenched. In contrast with *Perfection* there is an indication the *Reward* woodcut was prepared before the secondary drawing. The rear figure of Hogarth has a snub nose in the secondary drawing, but not in the woodcut and his wig is different. He appears to be a late change for the engraving. If the secondary drawing was been made before 1 January, Hogarth would have shown himself in the woodcut with a snub nose. Other visages are similar as between the versions.



Figure 54. *The Reward of Cruelty* – preliminary: Oppê: 71 (74)



Figure 55. *The Reward of Cruelty* – woodcut: Paulson: 203(189)



Figure 56. *The Reward of Cruelty* – secondary: Oppê: 72 (75)



Figure 57. *The Reward of Cruelty*– engraving: Paulson: 204(190)

Tobias Smollett and *A Dissertation on Mr. Hogarth's Six Prints*

On 28 February 1750 the *General Advertiser* announced; "This day is published ... *Gil Blas* ... A New translation by the author of *Roderick Random*." This was shortly after *Four Stages of Cruelty* was advertised on 13 February; a week

later Smollett published his *Peregrine Pickle*, a novel mocking Hogarth as artist Pallet. Most of Smollett's works were published anonymously; with his authorship only known by those close to him. Key among his anonymous works is a 59-page pamphlet, *A Dissertation on Mr Hogarth's Six Prints*, published in April 1751, soon after Hogarth's prints.⁷⁰ Largely overlooked by scholars, this pamphlet is believed to have inspired the 1751 observation: "One Man prints a Sermon, which may as well be called a Satire ... Our Poetry is all Prose, and our Prose is false English".⁷¹ In 1781 John Nichols published his *Biographical Anecdotes of William Hogarth* without mention of *A Dissertation*, but in a second edition he refers to a "stupid pamphlet".

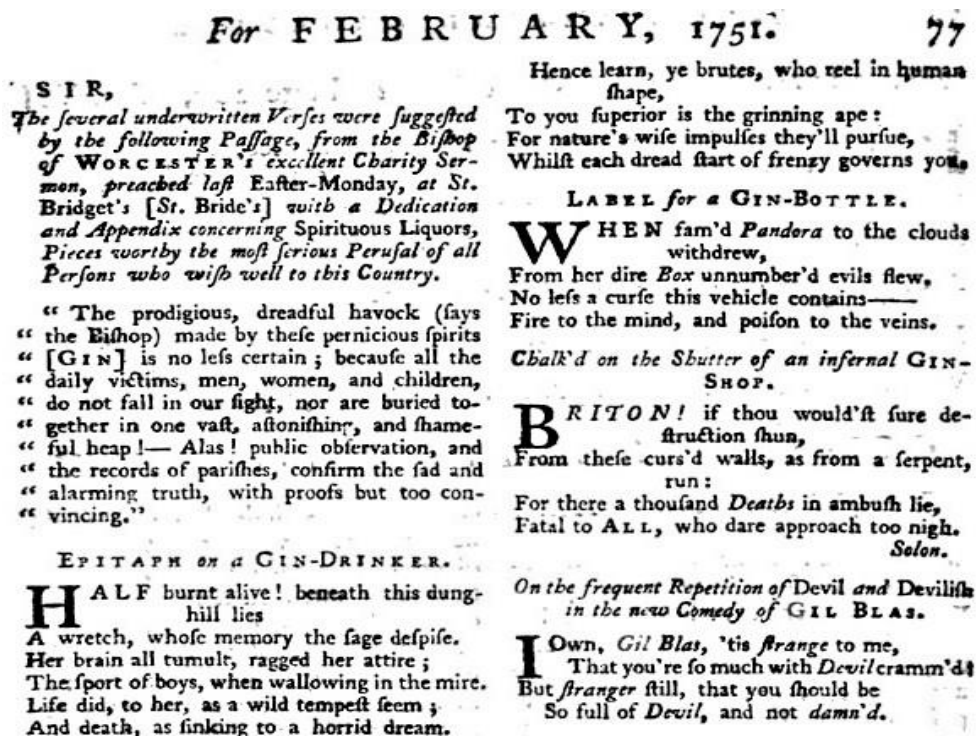


Figure 58. *Universal Magazine*, 1751

A Dissertation quotes the Bishop of Worcester and, in implying a shared author, *Universal Magazine*, also quotes the Bishop; but accompanied by four satiric verses, (Figure 58). The fourth poem scorns a comedy version of *Gil Blas* by Edward Moore, and reinforces a Smollett attribution of *A Dissertation*. Smollett had translated *Gil Blas*, and here contemptuously remarks: "I own, *Gil Blas*," and finds it "stranger still" the comedy version is "So full of *Devil*, and not *damn'd*". In the context, "*Devil*" is a pun on "*Shit*". Smollett wrote many poems, and multiple

70. T. Smollett, *A Dissertation on Mr Hogarth's Six Prints* ... (London: Dickinson, 1751).

71. C. Smart, *The Midwife, or, The Old Woman's Magazine*, vol. 2 (London: Carnan, 1751), 116.

scatology allusions are often a clue to his pen; here the poem, *Epitaph on a Gin-Drinker*, also includes, “beneath this dung-hill lies” and “wallowing in the mire”. To divert attention from Hogarth's attacks on man-midwives Smellie and Hunter, Smollett's *A Dissertation* includes lengthy exaggeration of the evils of gin. It discusses *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street* in 32 pages; criticising Henry Fielding, as Chief Magistrate, for gluttony and lax enforcement of the law. Although purportedly a dissertation on Hogarth's series of six prints, Smollett makes only passing reference to the *Stages of Cruelty*: *First Stage* in three pages, *Second Stage* in two pages, *Perfection* in three pages, and *Reward* in three. Then, as a red-herring, sixteen pages discuss completely unrelated murders. The intent of *A Dissertation* is clear, as a literary cacophony, sufficiently bold to divert scrutiny from Hogarth's challenge to Caesarean experiments by Smellie and Hunter. In this, Smollett was successful; with his misleading references to gin and animal cruelty, accepted, and then perpetuated by subsequent scholars.

Paul Before Felix Burlesqued as a Stage of Cruelty

A review of sources c.1749-52 reveals a range of concerned satire about the activities of anatomists and man-midwives, beyond those tabled here. A satiric thesis appeared in Newbery's *The Student*, likely written by Christopher Smart. The thesis purported to have been read before Haller, in October 1749, by F. G. Zinn (effigy [of] sin). It satirised dissections at Hunter's anatomy school in twelve gruesome examples, with explicit detail of the cruelty inflicted. Hunter inspired a Johnson satire in *The Rambler* on 29 December 1750, it was signed Quisquilius, Latin for rubbish, and directed at Hunter, a noted collector. In January 1751 *The Rambler* published a letter ruminating on mothers of Foundling Hospital children.



Figure 59. *Paul Before Felix – Burlesqued - but implicitly The Trial of Smellie.*

The ridicule of Hogarth in *Peregrine Pickle*, and Smollett's distortion of *A Dissertation* so angered Hogarth, he opted to pillory Smollett in his May 1751, *Paul before Felix Burlesqued*, as a parody of a serious Hogarth print, *Paul before Felix, at Caesarea* (Figures 59-63). It could fairly be re-titled *The Trial of Smellie*, as its effective chronology nests between his crime, *Perfection*, and his punishment in *Reward*. A court of justice, and a location pun, Caesarea, confirm Smellie's Caesarean experiments; with a Dutch windmill across the water, proving the trial is in London. Clues that defendant Paul is Smellie, are spectators holding their noses against the "smell" or mouthing "smelly".

For his misleading defence in *A Dissertation*, Smollett, as Felix the judge, recoils at being required to judge his friend Smellie. Via a Tobias pun, Hogarth conveys the *Bible* message in the book of *Tobias*, is that God is both just and free, and in the long run rewards the just, and punishes the wicked. The scribe, sharpening a quill and blank pages, thereby puns Smollett has written nothing of value. Fielding is represented as Tertullus, the lawyer employed by the Jews to state their case against Paul, before Felix. Fielding tears up his prepared indictment on hearing Smellie confess, the discarded words reveal they are no longer irrelevant.



Figure 60. *Smollett as Felix*



Figure 61. *Tobias Smollett*

The tree of knowledge leans towards Justice, portrayed as a midwife expert about medical facts around undelivered deaths. She wields as her licence, a knife bearing the arms of London, and as used for severing umbilical cords; one eye is uncovered as she judges the evidence, and scales await her verdict. Hunter is the biblical Ananias, of whom Peter stated, Ananias lied not to men, but to God, and died on the spot. He is restrained by a muscular man-midwife's arm, and is aghast at Smellie confessing; the halo and beam of light show Smellie is telling the truth. The dog from the *First Stage* waits to dine on Smellie's remains after he is dissected. The devils in the foreground satirise Smollett's claim to own *Gil Blas*, and pun on the reference to "Devil" in the *Gil Blas* verse, to show Smollett is also full of "Shit". The only support for Smellie is Lucifer, a fallen angel, representing Satan. A devil cuts the support from beneath Smellie; his crimes will result in his execution, and a fall into eternal damnation.



Figure 62. Fielding as Tertullus



Figure 63. Henry Fielding

First issued only as a ticket receipt, *Paul Before Felix Burlesqued* was so popular, in December 1751 Hogarth had it re-engraved. Smollett was incandescent with shame as it circulated; shocked to see himself, but accepting Hogarth held the cards in any ongoing dispute. To admit defeat, in a 1758 edition of *Peregrine Pickle*, he revised his description of Pallet, to portray Hogarth more favourably.

In 1751 Smollett was editing Smellie's *Treatise on Midwifery*, whilst Fielding was writing and publishing *Amelia*. Smollett's "gluttony and gin" attacks prompted Fielding to pen *Amelia* as a side-swipe at Smollett's heroine, *Emilia*; with Booth as *dextra* to Pickle's *sinistra*. Added insult casts Smollett as the unnamed Author at Mr Bondum's sponging-house, an incident so removed from the plot it begs review.⁷² In *Amelia* Fielding has Booth meet the Author, clearly intended as Smollett, to probe the Author's knowledge; implying Author/Smollett's pretence to a far greater knowledge of classics and literature than he possessed. Fielding has the Author observe "his Story of a Cock and a Bull is excellent", for *Amelia* readers to thereby interpret *Peregrine Pickle* as "a cock and bull story". Bondum comments of the Author: "He writes your History Books for your Numbers" and, of news "he makes it as he doth your parliament speeches for your Magazines". This supports a view Smollett as author of both the *Lilliput Debates* and *Proceedings of the Political Club*. As intimated by Smollett; Pickle "sent it to the author of a weekly paper, who had been long a professed reformer in politics; and it appeared in a very few days, with a note of the publisher, desiring the favour of a further correspondence with the author".⁷³ In contrast, Fielding, as

72. H. Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. L. Bree (London: Broadview, 2010), 323-40.

73. T. Smollett, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*, ed. J. Clifford (London: OUP, 1964),

Booth, scathingly observes Author/Pickle/Smollett “was the most impudent and illiterate Fellow he had ever seen; and that, by his own account, he was the Author of most of the wonderful Productions of the Age”.

Hogarth’s print attacks on Smellie and Hunter remained behind this. Smollett had denigrated Fielding and Hogarth in seeking to defend Smellie and Hunter from risk of trial and execution. That stance was immoral in Fielding’s eyes, with his opinion of Smollett conveyed to Hill on 9 January 1752: “The author of *Amelia* ... told me ... he held the present set of Writers in the utmost Contempt, and that in his Character of Drawcansir he should treat them in a most unmerciful Manner”.⁷⁴ Resentment over Smollett’s “gluttony” attacks, was a factor in Fielding founding *Covent-Garden Journal* in December 1751. Self-promoted as the “Journal of the present Paper War between the Forces under Sir Alexander Drawcansir and the Army of Grub-street”, the 6 January 1752 issue contained a satire targeting Smollett:

The greater Part of these were garrisoned by Detachments from the Regiment of Grub-street, who all retired at the Approach of our Forces. A small Body, indeed, under the Command of one Peeragrin Puckle, made a slight Show of Resistance, but his Hopes were soon found to be in *Vain*; and, at the first Report of the Approach of a younger Brother of General Thomas Jones, his whole Body immediately disappeared, and totally overthrew some of their own Friends, who were marching to their Assistance, under the Command of one Roderick Random. This Roderick, in a former Skirmish with the People called Critics, had owed some slight Success more to the Weakness of the Critics, than to any Merit of his own.⁷⁵

Smollett’s embarrassment at Fielding’s *Amelia* satire on him, as the Author, together with that on 6 January roused Smollett to respond on 15 January, in a venomous pamphlet, *A Faithful Narrative of the Base and Inhuman Arts ... lately practised upon the Brain of Habbakkuk Hilding*.⁷⁶ Fielding reacted to Smollett’s *Hilding* attack in 21 January 1752, with a satire on Trunk-makers and Pastry Cooks, ostensibly on the life and death of books, but thin cover for a charge of murder of pregnant women, “Many of them cut off in their very Prime; others in their early Youth; and others, again, at their very Birth; so that they can scarce be said ever to have been”. Fielding puns include “Trunk-makers” as anatomists cutting off heads and limbs to convert dead bodies to trunks, and “Pastry Cooks”

676-77.

74. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 42.

75. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 145.

76. T. Smollett, *A Faithful Narrative of the Base and Inhuman Arts* (London: Sharp, 1752).

as man-midwives who “take buns out of the oven”, i.e. hunt fetuses. Fielding’s message emerges: “The ingenious Hogarth hath very finely satyri’d this, by representing several of the most valuable Productions of these Times on the Way to the Trunk-maker”; implying Smellie fated to become a “trunk” after the trial in *Paul Before Felix Burlesqued*.

Other puns include; “dismembering Authors” as dissecting bodies, “a Piece of Poetry” as a female sexual organ, “a Sheet of Romance” as a beautiful face, “mangled Libels” as mangled limbs, “Moderns” as the living, “best Performances” as dissections before invited audiences, cooked red “Juice of Gooseberries, Currants, and Damascenes” as blood and entrails, “wondrous Performances” preventing mother’s milk as “Food for the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings”, and “Tarts and Pies” as prostitutes at risk for “the Use and Inspection of the few”, i.e. man-midwives. The phrases, “Arcana Naturæ” and “Denudations of Nature” refer to van Rymsdyk’s anatomical drawings, and a fear they will be of prurient interest to the young:

Next to the Booksellers are the Trunk-makers, a Set of Men who have of late Years made the most deplorable Depredations on modern Learning. The ingenious Hogarth hath very finely satyri’d this, by representing several of the most valuable Productions of these Times on the Way to the Trunk-maker. ... they seem to take a Delight in dismembering Authors; and in placing their several Limbs together in the most absurd Manner. Thus while the Bottom of a Trunk contains a Piece of Poetry, the Top presents us with a Sheet of Romance, and the Sides and Ends are adorned with mangled Libels of various Kinds. The third Species of these Depredators are the Pastry Cooks. What Indignation must it raise in a Lover of the Moderns, to see some of their best Performances stain’d with the Juice of Gooseberries, Currants, and Damascenes! But what Concern must the Author himself feel on such an Occasion; when he beholds those Writings, which were calculated to support the glorious Cause of Disaffection or Infidelity, humbled to the ignoble Purpose of supporting a Tart or a Custard! ... many of these wondrous Performances are calculated only for the Use and Inspection of the few, and are by no means proper Food for the Mouths of Bates and Sucklings. ... Lastly, there are certain Arcana Naturæ in disclosing which the Moderns have made great Progress, now whatever Merit there may be in such Denudations of Nature, if I may so express myself, and however exquisite a Relish they may afford to *very* adult Persons of both Sexes in their Closets, they are surely too speculative and mysterious for the Contemplation of the Young and Tender, into whose Hands Tarts and Pies are most likely to fall. ... I hope for the future, Pastry Cooks will be more

cautious than they have lately been. In short if they have no Regard to Learning, they will have some, I hope, to Morality.⁷⁷

In calling for morality by “Pastry Cooks”, Fielding was warning Smollett of the risks from his attacks; as Hogarth had done with *Paul Before Felix Burlesqued*, to condemn Smollett’s friends to trial and execution if Fielding wrote overtly, rather than covertly, on “Trunk-makers” and “Pastry Cooks”. Fielding’s 21 January satire reinforced *Four Stages of Cruelty* and *Paul Before Felix Burlesqued*, as well as the *Petition of the Unborn Babes*. The battle continued, with pamphlets and Fielding’s satire on Pastry-Cooks prompting on 14 February 1752, *A Vindication of Man-midwifery*, a 20 page defence of Smellie and Hunter; and more Smollett polemics. It includes Biblical, medical, classical, and Latin references, even Swift’s *Tale of a Tub*, and was satirically disparaging of women: “You will be pleased likewise to consider that *Women* are wholly illiterate, and never brought up to any Thing of Letters, beyond their Sample; Men on the contrary are always brought up to something or another.”⁷⁸

On 10 March 1752 Fielding responded to Smollett’s *Vindication*, using the case of Mary Blandy as a threat, in a long and caustic satire on man-midwifery describing Smellie as a “Wretch”. Hidden inside a discussion of Blandy, but via a strong defence of women, “misled by Men” under the guise of man-midwifery. Fielding’s reference to “*Destruction, both of Body and Soul*” is to obstetric murder-for-dissection; “an officer in the army” to Smellie’s navy service; “eternal State of real Hostility with the female sex” to man-midwifery; and “to destroy our Wives and Daughters” to man-midwives’ premature intervention in childbirth resulting in needless deaths:

Let us for a Moment only cast our Eyes on the Wretch, who hath caused all this, who hath hitherto escaped the Hands of Justice ... But I will leave this Wretch likewise to the Horrors of his own Conscience, to Wandering, to Beggary, to Shame, to Contempt. This Letter is designed for the Use of the loveliest, and I sincerely think, the best Part of the Creation, who seldom stray but when they are misled by Men; by whom they are deceived, corrupted, betrayed, and often *brought to Destruction both of Body and Soul*. In the Sequel therefore, I will treat in general of these Corrupters of the Innocence of Women, and of the extreme Baseness as well as Cruelty of this Practice, how favourably soever the World may please to receive it. This base and barbarous Man was, they say an Officer in the Army; a Sort of People who, I know not for what Reason, live in an eternal State of real Hostility with the female Sex; and seem to think that by destroying our

77. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen. (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 167-71.

78. Anon, *A Vindication of Man-Midwifery ...* (London: Carpenter, 1752), 6.

Enemies in War, they contract a Right to destroy our Wives and Daughters in Time of Peace.⁷⁹

In confirming the satire, Fielding alludes to "Ruin of a Woman," from obstetric experiments as, "the Subject of Mirth"; surgeons as "military Gentlemen" in an army of surgeons, and "new Laurels" as obstetric discoveries. "Levity" by "fashionable Authors" refers to Smollett's satires; *Peregrine Pickle*, *A Dissertation*, *A Petition*, *Habbakkuk Hilding and Vindication*, and "this Practice" to murder-for-dissection.

[T]he Ruin of a Woman is far from being regarded amongst our military Gentlemen, or indeed amongst others, with that Abhorrence and Detestation which it deserves. It is often made the Subject of Mirth: nay, I am deceived if, instead of being considered on the Man's Side as a Mark of Disgrace, it is not sometimes treated as a Point of Honour, viewed in the Light of a Victory, and thought to add new Laurels to those which have been acquired in the Field. The Reason of this, in a great Measure is the Levity with which this Matter hath been handled by some of our fashionable Authors; who instead of exposing so execrable a Vice in it's proper odious Colours, have given it the soft Term of Gallantry; have at most endeavoured to make it the Subject of Ridicule; I am afraid have even represented it in an amiable Light to their Readers. I will endeavour therefore to strip the Monster of all its borrowed Ornaments, and to display it in its native and true Deformity; such as I think cannot fail of attracting all that Abhorrence and Contempt which is its Due. I shall at present pass by all those dissuasive Arguments which Religion affords against this Practice.⁸⁰

Literary, Legal, Social, and Obstetric Legacies from *Four Stages of Cruelty*

In representing *Four Stages of Cruelty* as a satire, this essay has noted clear likenesses compared to contemporary portraits. Implying those depicted were recognisable by their peers. In appearing soon after *Four Stages of Cruelty*, for Smollett to feign ignorance in *A Dissertation*, of those depicted, and of Hogarth's puns, strains credulity. For example page 35 of *A Dissertation* praises the offer, in the *First Stage* verse, of a tart as food, which seeks to divert attention from "tart"

79. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 255.

80. H. Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal*, vol. 1. ed. G. Jensen (New Haven: Yale, 1915), 255.

as “prostitute”: “How lovely is it to see him exerting his Benevolence, and striving with all his Might, and offering his sweet Morsel of a Tart, perhaps his whole Breakfast, to prevail on the cruel Tormentors to leave off their Barbarity”. Smollett recognised red-herrings were vital in distracting viewers, as scrutiny would reveal Hogarth's intent. In misleading scholars, to imply *Four Stages of Cruelty* was a *Sermon*, rather than a *Satire*, Smollett succeeded, as his false trail led scholars astray for over 250 years.

Hogarth's message, whilst opaque for subsequent historians, was clear to Smellie and Hunter. Hogarth's concern about illegal procurement of subjects for dissection was not a new issue. The existing legislation provided an annual combined limit of only ten executed bodies for both Surgeons' Company and Physicians' Company. The objectives of Hunter and Hogarth merged in 1751. Hunter to reduce his risk of arrest, and seek legal access to more corpses for teaching and research, whereas Hogarth had concern about murder-for-dissection.

Publishing of *Four Stages of Cruelty* was a tipping point in a behind-the-scenes debate and, given subsequent events, reached Prime Minister Pelham. Fielding's portrait in the *Second Stage* stirred him to action: the theme was clear, Hogarth's concern at murder of subjects by Smellie, Hunter, and other anatomists, together with the law's inaction in punishing the murderers. Lobbying by the unlikely alliance of Fielding, Hunter, and Hogarth resulted in the 1752 *Murder Act*, removing the legal limitation on dissection of executed felons, in words close to the 1746 letter: “after such execution, the body shall be delivered by the sheriff to the surgeons company, who shall give a receipt for it, and cause it to be dissected and and anatomized ... in no case shall the body of any murderer be suffered to be buried unless it shall have been so dissected and anatomized”.⁸¹ The Act thus enshrined *The Reward of Cruelty*, in making surgeons executors of the sentence and linking dissection to criminal justice.

Ripples from *Four Stages of Cruelty* continued, although reducing in intensity after Fielding's 1754 death. Although Hogarth was proud in a belief he had halted obstetric experiments, neither he nor Fielding could make a public claim or discuss their efforts, being at physical risk at public wrath from any wider knowledge. On 15 November 1753 King George II opened Parliament, saying, “It is with the utmost regret I observe, that the horrid crimes of robbery and murder, are, of late, rather increased than diminished. I am sensible that works of reformation are not to be effected at once; but everybody should contribute their best endeavours; and let me earnestly recommend it to you, to continue your serious attention to this important object”.⁸² Given the timing, amid a decline in Old Bailey murder convictions, the King's words were for public consumption; really referring to robbery of graves and murder-for-dissection. As availability of

81. Anon, *The Scots Magazine* (Edinburgh: Sands, 1752), 242-43.

82. Anon, *London Magazine, and Monthly Chronologer* (Dublin: Exshaw, 1753), 579.

executed bodies remained insufficient, murder and grave-robbing continued, rising over the next eighty years as public opinion turned against executions, and resulting in the 1832 Anatomy Act.

Smellie continued with secret obstetric experiments, even after *Four Stages of Cruelty*. In July 1752, Peter Camper, a Dutch man-midwife and anatomist travelled to London to undertake forceps experiments with Smellie, and draw images of their use on freshly murdered pregnant cadavers. As evidence of murderous intent, Camper needed to be certain, before leaving Holland, that Smellie would have pregnant subjects available to dissect.⁸³ Progressive images demonstrating the use of forceps on a murdered woman, as drawn by Camper, appear as Smellie's Tables XII and XVI-XIX. The drawings include minor re-arrangement of cadavers and fetuses of victims, to better demonstrate abnormal fetal presentations: then included Smellie's atlas as published in 1754.⁸⁴ Most other plates were drawn by van Rymdyk in 1750. Twelve of Smellie's fifteen undelivered victims are at or near full term, with Tables X-XV revealing mothers killed during progressive stages of labour to study the turning of the head during descent. The evidence of murder in Smellie's atlas was obvious to midwives; as noted by Elizabeth Nihell, "you will find the merit of [Smellie's] whole works shrink to little or nothing, under the appraisalment of common sense".⁸⁵

Henry Fielding died in 1754 and was succeeded by brother John, but the latter's blindness prevented him from seeing the evidence of murder in the atlas. Publishing of Smellie's atlas and its evidence, raised concern among man-midwives. Mackenzie was dismissed by Smellie in 1755, supposedly for dissecting without consent, but in reality to provide Smellie with a scapegoat if one became necessary. In 1756 George Macaulay convened London man-midwives, under guise of a discussion over the contracted pelvis. As a result, Smellie, Hunter, John Hunter, Jenty, Burton, Harvie, and Mackenzie all ceased gravid uterus research. John Hunter and Jenty joined the army and van Rymdyk left for Holland; re-emerging in Bristol as an impecunious artist, then returning to London when research resumed after Hogarth's 1764 death.

Hunter continued secret Caesarean experiments with five undelivered subjects dissected in 1750-54 and twelve more in 1764-74. In the interim, 1754-64, Hunter's peers criticised his "holier than thou" adoption of an excessively rigid stance against Caesareans, a sign of his fear of exposure. Hunter's atlas was eventually published in 1774, focussing on changes from embryo to birth, and his preface discussing the final stages of pregnancy; "The pregnant uterus undergoes such gradual changes from the time of conception to the hour of delivery, that in giving the anatomy of this part it will be necessary to fix upon some one time in

83. P. Camper, "Itinera in Angliam", *Opuscula Selecta Neerlandicorum*, vol 15. (Amsterdam, Sum. Soc., 1939), 121-165.

84. W. Smellie, *A Sett of Anatomical Tables with Explanations ...* (London: Freeman, 1754).

85. E. Nihell, *A Treatise on the Art of Midwifery* (London: Morley, 1760), 147.

the wide period of nine months".⁸⁶ To have studied "such gradual changes" in the uterus to "the hour of delivery", not "the day of delivery", confirms Hunter had conducted multiple Caesarean dissections of full term murdered subjects.

Despite the evidence of murder in his atlas, Hunter prevaricated about Caesareans: "In London, Dr. Hunter, in thirty-nine years extensive practice never met but one instance, where it was necessary to have recourse to the Caesarian operation, and that case proved fatal".⁸⁷ As Hogarth's engravings containing Hunter's image continued to circulate when Hunter published his atlas in 1774, his concern about a potential charge of murder caused him to defer publishing any descriptions of the plates. They remained unpublished at William's 1783 death, also at John's 1793 death, only being revised, sanitised, and published by Baillie in 1794, more than 40 years after van Rymdsdyk made his initial drawings.⁸⁸

As close friend of Smellie and Hunter, Smollett was aware of their murder of prostitutes, the nature of Caesarean research, and of Hogarth's concern. Smollett made a practice of defending doctors, especially Scots. In 1750/51 Smollett was sanitising, to remove any murder inferences in Volume I of Smellie's *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Midwifery*, later also editing Volumes II and III.⁸⁹ Evidence of Smollett's sanitising, given the obstetric need to understand reasons for undelivered deaths, is that not a single undelivered example, as depicted in Smellie's atlas, is included among 531 midwifery cases discussed in Smellie's *Treatise*; nor is there any reference to undelivered deaths in the 1370 pages of the *Treatise*.

The two atlases contain seventy forensic quality plates of dissected pregnant women, as eighteenth century equivalents of modern autopsy photographs. They depict 32 murdered women and fetuses, one with twins, thereby 65 victims; a total in conflict with Hunter's claim in his preface, "the opportunities for dissecting the human pregnant uterus at leisure, very rarely occur. Indeed, to most anatomists, if they happen at all, it has been but once or twice in their whole lives". The depictions in the two atlases are representative examples of total victims, more must be among the 400 obstetric preparations still housed at the Hunter Collection in Glasgow, with even greater numbers murdered for teaching purposes now lost to history. The evidence of murder in the atlases of Smellie and Hunter has lain unremarked for over 250 years.

86. W. Hunter, *The Anatomy of the Human Gravid Uterus* (Birmingham: Baskerville, 1774).

87. W. Dease, *Observations in Midwifery* (Dublin: Williams, 1793), 71.

88. W. Hunter, *An Anatomical Description of the Human Gravid Uterus* (London: Johnson, 1794).

89. W. Smellie, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Midwifery* (London: Wilson, 1752), 64.

Concluding Remarks

Hogarth believed he had halted obstetric cruelty, and saved many innocent lives via the 1752 *Murder Act*. He assumed his threat was so powerful neither Smellie nor Hunter would dare resume Caesarean experiments, but Smellie continued secret experiments with Camper in 1752, before limiting himself to routine man-midwifery after 1755, and retiring to Scotland in 1759. Hunter continued secret experiments until Smellie's atlas was published in 1754; then paused, before resuming obstetric research with his brother John and van Rymdsdyk in 1764, as they believed the risk of exposure had receded on Hogarth's 1764 death.

A logical question is why Hogarth's satire in *Four Stages of Cruelty* has remained unnoticed? The short answer was secrecy in a male-dominated medical world, but Smollett's anonymous and misleading defence in *A Dissertation* was also a factor in diverting attention. Secret anatomical research based upon murder of men, women, and children continued as a closed shop.

Historical truths revealed by study of the two anatomical atlases, and of Hogarth's prints, suggest medical historians need to go beyond limits of the written word, and bring art into the research orbit. Modern histories of British anatomy such as Cunningham (2010), lack scrutiny of the 72 plates of undelivered subjects depicted in the anatomical atlases of Smellie and Hunter. The omission means undelivered deaths and murder are unmentioned in texts on maternal mortality, infant mortality, and man-midwifery⁹⁰. Unaccountably, that disconnect, and the clear evidence of murder for dissection, are unaddressed by modern biographers of Smellie⁹¹ and John Hunter⁹². Instead, Smellie, Hunter, and the experiments, are portrayed with admiration.

It may be asked whether the atlases of Smellie and Hunter should be withdrawn to respect the innocent victims depicted, with wet and dry preparations of victims still housed in the Glasgow Hunterian Museum and London Hunterian Collection being respectfully buried. That is seen as impractical, instead it is proposed medical collections display a prominent "Unknown Patient" memorial, acknowledging their preparations include subjects murdered by anatomists. Where the atlases and preparations are used for teaching purposes, it should be stressed they are memorials to unknown victims, and not trophies.

90. J. Donnison, *Midwives and Medical Men* (London: Heinemann, 1988); I. Loudon, *Death in Childbirth* (Oxford: OUP, 1992); A. Wilson, *The Making of Man-midwifery* (London: UCL, 1995); R. Woods, *Death before Birth* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).

91. H. King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics, and the Rise of Gynaecology* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007).

92. W. Moore, *The Knife Man* (London, Bantam, 2005).

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Walter Charleton's Theory of Matter: How Politics and Scientific Societies Influenced his Works

By Elli Papanikolaou*

This paper investigates how the politics and the scientific societies influenced Walter Charleton's matter theory. Initially, the study refers to two different historical theories of analysis of Charleton's theory of matter, explaining, through the analysis of his most well-known works, why these historical perspectives are both correct. Next, the study undertakes a close reading of Charleton's life, with the aim of explaining why he divorced himself from the alchemical doctrines in public, while he continued to use the alchemical terms. Investigating his life, the study shows how he was influenced by the politics, religion and scientific communities of his era. As Charleton, a Royalist, lived in the period of the Interregnum and Restoration and his major goals were to acquire a position and funds from the College of Physicians and Royal Society. Finally, the study provides a different historical view about Charleton's eclecticism, which is used to his theory, in order to be part of the "elite" of scholars in England. This study concludes that Charleton's matter theory can be considered hybrid of vitalistic and mechanistic philosophy and is an example of how the scientific theories, in the late seventeenth-century, began to differentiate from the old ones.

Introduction

The last decades, research in the field of history of alchemy is increasing rapidly. Many historians of science study the relationships of alchemy to medicine, philosophy, religion and theories of matter. Particularly, the vitalistic corpuscular theories are of great interest to researchers, as they can help us understand how the alchemical theories have influenced the development of both chemistry and other disciplines. The last years, one of the most important actors of these investigations is Walter Charleton (1619-1707). Although Charleton was a physician, many historians of alchemy study him, because not only did he create his own particle theory, but he also was one of the first English scholars, who dealt with the corpuscular theories and translated the works of Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) and Jan Baptiste van Helmont (1580-1644) introducing and making the theories of matter widely known to the wider English speaking public.

Charleton is a controversial figure among the historians because of the differences, which exist in his matter theory. On the one hand, the majority of historians support that his theory belongs to mechanistic philosophy, for the reason that he was influenced by Pierre Gassendi and was a supporter of the Epicurean philosophy. On the other hand, the last years some historians, who have studied his works, like Piyo Rattansi, explain that his theory can be

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considered vitalistic, as he was studying the alchemical theories and was inspired by them. The purpose of this article is to analyze these two different historical opinions explaining why both views are correct and to investigate the reasons of why his corpuscular theory constitutes a controversial subject providing a different historical opinion.

In order to achieve this purpose, the methodological tools, which were used, were the study of primary sources as well as the secondary literature. Initially, Charleton's book "*A Ternary of Paradoxes*", books and articles of great historians were studied, with the purpose of understanding his corpuscular theory and how it changed between his early and latter works. Through the secondary literature and comparative history, Charleton's life, the eclecticism of his works, and the two different historical views on his theory were examined in an effort to propose a different historical exegesis of how the politics and scientific societies influenced his matter theory.

The Different Historical Perspectives about Charleton's Theory of Matter

In the seventeenth century the iatrochemistry and the corpuscular theories dominated and inspired many scholars in England. The doctrines of *semina rerum*, *minima naturalia* and the distillation of *spirits* had an important role not only in alchemy, but also in medicine and natural philosophy. The atomic theories were used by many physicians, in order to explain the function of the human body, and were considered the beginning of movement and life; and many natural philosophers tried to explain the world with the aid of the atoms. One of the most important physicians, who was interested in the atomic theories, is Walter Charleton.

Charleton was well informed about the particle theories and translated important works introducing the atomism to England. Nowadays, the majority of historians consider his theory mechanistic, stemmed from the fact that he embraced the Epicurean philosophy and Gassendi's reformed atomism supporting that it was both philosophically sound and theologically acceptable¹. Indeed, Charleton was a follower of Pierre Gassendi and his two most important works "*The Darkness of Atheism Dispelled by the Light of Natures*" (1652) and "*Physiologia-Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana: or a Fabrick of Science Natural, Upon the Hypothesis of Atoms*" (1654) were based on Gassendi's work and were created so as to present and defend the revived Epicurean atomism. Charleton's "*The Darkness of Atheism*" and "*Physiologia*" not only intended to present the views of Gassendi's "*Animadversiones*" (1649) to the English audience, but they were more than a

1. Matthew R. Goodrum, "Atomism, Atheism, and The Spontaneous Generation of Human Beings: The Debate over a Natural Origin of the First Humans in Seventeenth-Century Britain," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 63, no.2 (2002): 207-224, on 215.

translation, because he incorporated into its fabric his own atomic theory and he wanted to exonerate atomism of any taint of atheism, as he believed that atomism could provide the foundation for a mechanical philosophy of nature.

Although in the seventeenth century the corpuscular theories were well-known, especially among the natural philosophers, alchemists and physicians, during the 1640's Epicureanism was already a subject of controversy, since it was characterized by atheism and many scholars attacked upon it. Charleton, as a supporter of Gassendi's philosophy, wrote these books in an effort to point out that the atomic philosophy was capable of explaining the flux of nature without harming the religion. The "*The Darkness of Atheism*" established the basic framework for Charleton's system of nature. Initially, he established God's existence and he proceeded to prove God's creation of the universe. In this book Charleton, relying on the argument that the cause of an idea must have at least as much objective reality as the idea, supported that the corporeal entities exist, but unfortunately knowledge of them is limited only to a few of their properties. These properties are *magnitude, figure, situation, duration, gravitating or weight, motion and number*.² Thus, he explained that clear and distinct knowledge of the material world is restricted to the properties of the atoms and the primary qualities of the body and he tried to stress out that the "*Darkness of Atheism*" was a physical theology, which proved that the Epicureanism is harmless to religion.

In his second book "*Physiologia*" Charleton translated the work of Gassendi and he dealt with the atoms and their properties; size, shape and motion. He claimed that the atoms have the attribute of the first matter and he struggled to show their essential properties. What is really interesting in the "*Physiologia*" is that he made clear that magnitude is the first essential property of atoms. Through this argument he proved that atoms are entities, realities, endowed with certain corporeal dimensions and not mathematical points. In fact, he did the calculation of atoms, like the atoms of a grain of frankincense (777,600,000,000,000,000) and the atoms of magnenus, (secundum altitudinem 720, secundum latitudinem 900, in longitudine 1200, in superficie 648,000 in area 777,6000,000). In the last section of *Physiologia* Charleton explained the motions of atoms and purified and Christianized the atomism of Epicurus and Gassendi, as he stated that the atoms were created by God, who gave them an internal energy.³

Hence, with these books Charleton introduced the mechanical philosophy of Gassendi and Epicureanism in England and he Christianized them. For him atomism was the true explanation of the origin of physical qualities and their alternatives. He believed to have solved the problem of the so-called "occult

2. Margaret J. Osler, "Descartes and Charleton on Nature and God," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, no.3 (1979): 445-456, on 447-455.

3. G. B. Stones, "The atomic view of Matter in the VXth, VXIth, and VXIIth Centuries," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 10, no.2 (1928): on 97-117.

qualities" by reduced them to the action of matter in motion.⁴ As a result many historians of science support that his atomic theory of motion, size, shape and number belongs to the mechanical philosophy and credit him for making the Epicurean atomism politically respectable for Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton.⁵

Nevertheless, in the last decades the investigations of some historians, like Antonio Clericuzio, bring to light new evidence about Charleton's theory of matter. Several historians of science now claim that his corpuscular theory cannot be considered mechanistic on the grounds that he was interested about the theories of alchemists, (he had studied Paracelsus and Severinus), and was inspired by them and this inspiration can be tracked into his work. In fact, the first books that Charleton published were about alchemy. Before the creation of the "*Darkness of Atheism*" and the "*Physiologia*", Charleton's first book was the "*The Spiritus Gorginicus*" (1650), which is about the formation of stones in the body, the forming spirit and the microcosm macrocosm analogy, based on Paracelsian and Helmontian sources. Then he wrote the "*Ternary of Paradoxes*" (1650), which furnishes an introduction and supplements to his translation of van Helmont's "*Magnetic Cure of Wounds*", and the "*Deliramenta Catarrhi*" (1650), in which included van Helmont's work and he opposed to the Galenic tradition.

Thereupon, Charleton was well informed about the alchemical theories and vitalism, and, certainly, was influenced by them. If we investigate carefully his atomic theory, we will understand that it cannot be considered purely mechanistic. Charleton was a follower of Severinus, Libavius, Sennert and van Helmont and in his works exist a compromise between the Aristotelian and Paracelsian doctrines. In the "*Translator's Supplement*" Charleton verified how important is the magnetism for the cure of the body, like van Helmont did, and for the natural philosophy, as he believed that through the magnetism the problems about the origin of forms, the causes of sympathies and antipathies and the power of imagination can be solved, stating that the action from a distance should not be rejected from natural philosophy "*I am bound to believe that in the magazine of Nature are to be found Agents not obliged to the dull conditions of an immediate Corporeall Contact, but richly endowed with an influential or Radiall Activity*".⁶ Even in the work "*The Darkness of Atheism*" he rejected some epicurean doctrines and specified the Creationist view of nature and matter and he supported that the motion is one of the primary properties of atoms, but the matter is active. Furthermore, despite the fact that in the "*Physiologia*" Charleton did retract his previous adherence to van Helmont's magnetic cure of wounds, he

4. Robert Kargon, "Walter Charleton, Robert Boyle, and the Acceptance of Epicurean Atomism in England," *Isis* 55, no.2 (1964): 184-192, on 186-187.

5. Thompson Helen, "Plotting Materialism: W. Charleton's "The Ephesian Metron, E. Haywood's "Fontomina" and Feminine Consistency," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no.2 (2002): 195-214, on 196-197.

6. Walter Charleton, *A Ternary of Paradoxes: The Magnetic Cure of Wounds, The Nativity of Tartar in Wine, The Image of God in Man*, (London, 1650), 16-17.

simultaneously referred to the *plastic spirit* or *Archeus* of van Helmont, the particles of which are thin and active. The alchemical spirits have a central role in his works about medicine,⁷ especially, via the doctrine of *animal spirits*, he explained the functions of blood and brain.⁸ For Charleton alchemy was really important, because, as he stressed out, the alchemical doctrines and experiments can prove the existence of atoms.⁹

Consequently, from this historical perspective Walter Charleton's theory of matter cannot be considered purely mechanistic, as, even in his two most well known works of Epicureanism, he was still influenced by the alchemical doctrines and theories and that is why he used them. The last investigations in his works show that he never followed only the mechanistic philosophy, and that is why several historians of alchemy reveal that his theory of matter has many vitalistic views. However, if we examine closer his works, we will conclude that his theory is more complicated and both of these opposite historical views are correct. For this phenomenon Charleton is a controversial historical figure for many historians.

How Politics and Scientific Societies Influenced his Works

Although Charleton is best known as the mechanistic author, who introduced the Epicurean atomism, his earlier works, which are spagyric, indicate that he was influenced and supported the Hermetic ideas. In the "*Spiritus Gorginicus*" Charleton made references to Hermetic authors, like Severinus and Paracelsus, and in the "*Ternary of Paradoxes*" he translated van Helmont's essays "*The Magnetic Cure of Wounds*", "*The Nativity of Tartar in Wine*", and "*The Image of God in Man*". In the "*Prolegomena*" he referred to Robert Fludd and Sir K. Digby, clarifying that he was widely conversant with the Hermetic literature believing in some sort of spiritual influential interdependence of various parts of the universe. Therefore, he was not interested only in the Hermetic Art, but he considered himself an alchemist and that is why he praised the learning of Paracelsus and Hermes Trismegistus¹⁰ and portrayed van Helmont as a bold and free spirit. Until the year of 1650, Charleton had embraced Helmontian and Paracelsian philosophy. Nevertheless, in his latter books he turned against Paracelsus's and van Helmont's theories, as in public he denoted van Helmont "*Hairbrann' d*" and the Paracelsians

7. Antonio Clericuzio, *Elements, principles and corpuscles, A study of atomism and Chemistry in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 92-95.

8. Antonio Clericuzio and Piyo Rattansi, *Alchemy and Chemistry in the 16th and 17th centuries* (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2013), 67.

9. Clericuzio Antonio, *Elements, principles and corpuscles*, 96-97.

10. Andrew J. Mandelsohn, "Alchemy and Politics in England 1649-1665," *Past & Present* 135(1992): 30-78, on 33.

"stupid admirers of that Fanatic Drunkard Paracelsus". Even so, investigating carefully his works, we realize that he never abandoned these alchemical theories and the Hermetic influence can be tracked in his later works in the points where the limitations of the mechanical explanations are.¹¹ The atoms to which Charleton referred in his last books, like "*Natural History of Nutrition, Life, and Voluntary Motion*", are qualitative *minima*, as he was trying to explain the atoms of blood with the terms of *vital spirits* and *vital heat*. Thus, when Charleton wanted to explain the generation of the humans and animals and the human body, he understood that these phenomena cannot be explained in terms of mechanistic theory and, even when he had refused in public the Helmontian and vitalistic theories, he, simultaneously, accepted and used these concepts.¹²

On the surface Charleton rejected the fundamental doctrines of the Hermetic philosophy, but he was continuing to borrow alchemical ideas. That is why his theory of matter is controversial. At this point the most crucial question for a historian of alchemy is why he did this. Why did Charleton want to divorce himself from the alchemical tradition in public, despite the fact that he continued to make use of the alchemical terms?

Trying to answer this query, some historians support that Charleton denied the alchemical tradition, because of a political and religious order. Some others explain that Charleton's philosophy of nature is an example of early modern eclecticism, while he wanted to reconcile the Aristotelianism with the modern view of his era and he was influenced from both vitalistic and mechanical ideas keeping what he needed, so as to create his own theory. However, in order to answer this question, we should take under consideration these two opinions and examine not only his works, but also his life and the era in which he lived.

To start up with, Walter Charleton was born on 2 February 1620 in the rectory at Shepton Mallet. He was interested in medical practice and entered the Magdalen Hall, Oxford on 3 July 1635. He took up medicine and was granted the D.M in January 1643; and almost immediately he was appointed physician-in-ordinary to Charles I. One of Charleton's friends was Viscount Brouncker, who was a gentleman of the privy chamber to Charles I, and vice-chamberlain to his son, Charles, Prince of Wales, probably helped him catch the attention of his royal master. In the war years Charleton met many Royalists, who were interested in medicine and natural philosophy and who joined the court at Oxford.¹³ Consequently, it is easy to realize that Charleton was a supporter of the king and

11. Nina Gelbart Rattner, "The Intellectual Development of Walter Charleton", *Ambix* 18, no.3, (2013): 149-168, on 150-154.

12. Nina Gelbart Rattner, "The Intellectual Development of Walter Charleton", on 157-162. See also Justin E. H. Smith, *The Problem of Animal Generation in Early Modern Philosophy* (England: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 131-136.

13. Lindsay Sharp, "Walter Charleton's early life 1620-1659, and relationship to natural philosophy in mid-seventeenth century England," *Annals of Science* 30, no.3 (2006): 311-340, on 312-318.

the Crown. In 1648 Charleton stayed in the senior royal physician, Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne (1573-1655), who was an exponent of iatrochemistry and was influenced by the work of Paracelsus and Jean Baptist van Helmont. Since Charleton occasionally worked as his assistant, we can state that he was inspired from his teacher and Sir Theodore de Mayrerne was the main cause that Charleton became a believer in the alchemical therapy of Paracelsus and van Helmont.

In addition, he registered himself at the College of Physicians in June 1649 and in early 1650 was a period of reconciling himself to the new government, something which helped him to extricate the problems arising out his support for the king. So, Charleton was able to set up his medical practice in Russell Street, Covert Garden. In the same year he was proposed and elected as a candidate in the College of Physicians and embarked on his publishing career with his first three books (*The Spiritus Paradoxes*, *Ternary of Paradoxes*, *Deliramenta Catarrhi*). These books established him in the medical world and show us that he was inspired by specific alchemists. However, in the end of 1650 the books received severe and negative critics, which plagued him not only as a writer but also as a doctor. Therefore, his reputation as a private doctor was called into question¹⁴ and maybe this is one of the reasons why in the following years Charleton refused the alchemical therapies in public. As these critics could have influenced negative his position into the College of Physicians and, along with this position, the funds and the prestige that he wanted to gain through this scientific community.

In 1652, as we analyzed above, with the publishing of the "*The Darkness of Atheism*" Charleton criticized in public the Paracelsian and Helmontian doctrines and supported the mechanistic philosophy of Gassendi, although, in his writings we can track Hermetic ideas. That indicates us that he had never really distanced himself by them, so there should be a different explanation of his public denial. May this explanation can be tracked on 4 July 1655, when he failed to secure a fellowship of the College of Physicians, probably because he had supported iatrochemistry or Epicureanism, which for most intellectuals still smacked of atheism and immortality. Probably in 1656 he was appointed physician-in-ordinary to Charles II in exile, and he was asking help from patrons. While in 1664 he undertook a series of presentations to the Royal Society on the brain.¹⁵ That means that he was interested about his prestige in the scientific communities and he was trying to acquire his colleagues and patrons' favor by supporting what was acceptable by them.

What is really interesting is that after the Restoration Charleton's career reached its zenith, since he was one of the earliest fellows of the Royal Society being elected on 15 May 1661. Also, in December 1664 he became one of the

14. Lindsay Sharp, "Walter Charleton's early life 1620-1659", pp. 319-323.

15. Walker Matthew, "Architecture, Anatomy, and the New Science in Early Modern London: Robert Hooke's College of Physicians," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 72, no.4 (2013): 475-502, on 478-481.

seventy-four honorary fellows of the College of Physicians and gained a full fellowship in 1676. After this he became a prominent member of the College and president in 1689, 1690, 1691. Even though his career went really well, in 1691 he suffered a great adversity and in 1707 he died in London as a poor person. Unfortunately the historians do not know yet why he died under these terrible circumstances, as he had noble friends and patrons, but we comprehend that probably the politics was one of the main causes for his poorness and, as some historians support, for the controversy which exist in his theory.

Charleton lived the periods of the Interregnum and Restoration, where there was a huge upheaval and rearrangement that affected both the political and social life of England as well as the development of "science"¹⁶. During the civil wars of the English Revolution the political situation was constantly changing and the alchemical occult theories were considered primarily and necessarily radical and equated with radical politics and religion, as after 1649 alchemy became identified with the subversion of political and religious order.¹⁷ Especially the doctrines of Paracelsians and Helmontians were used to provide the content of a radical political programme and after 1650 were named sectaries. Although Charles I and Charles II had their own alchemists and supported them and Charleton, at least at first, believed that chemistry could contain private Royalist political meaning, in 1650, probably had fled to atomism, because of the dangers of van Helmont's Hermetic alchemy.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it should be noted that the turbulent political system is not the only main cause of his public denial of alchemy.

The College of Physicians of London had been founded in 1518 and its primary responsibility was to ensure high standards in medical practice throughout the capital. The same purpose had the foundation of Royal Society in 1660, to which jointed members of the College of Physicians. Its main goal was to promote the scientific thought and to remove the sects that have degraded scientific research and promoted, what we call today, pseudo-science. To be able to do this, the members of the College of Physicians and Royal Society attacked to the followers of Paracelsianism, Helmontianism as well as to the Masons promoting that those followers were not scholars and were harmful for the scientific development of thought.¹⁹ As a result, since Charleton was a member of the College of Physicians and Royal Society, he, probably, recanted his former allegiance to van Helmont and Paracelsus, because their followers were considered members of sectaries.

16. It should be mentioned that in the article notions of "science" and "scientists" sometimes are used anachronistically, as the scholars of that era usually did not call themselves "scientists" or always use the term "science", as we do today. However, I use anachronism for the sake of better understanding and convenience.

17. Mandelsohn J. Andrew, "Alchemy and Politics in England 1649-1665", 31, 34, 70.

18. Ibid, 45, 47.

19. P.M. Rattansi, "The Intellectual Origins of the Royal Society," *Royal Society* 23, no.2 (1968): 129-143, on 136.

As it was mentioned above, Charleton wanted a full fellowship from the College of Physicians and his first books received negative critics. Thus, he understood that if he wanted to be acceptable by his colleagues and to receive good critics and funding, he had to publicly reject any relationship with what was considered sect or non-scientific by the other scholars. Of course, he was influenced by the political system of his era and his philosophy can be characterized as an example of early modern eclecticism, given the methodological pluralism in his theory,²⁰ but the main cause of the public rejection of alchemical occult theories was his participation in the College of Physicians and in the Royal Society and his constant striving to be accepted by the other members.

Consequently, we realize that Charleton never really abandoned his vitalistic ideas and his “shift” from the vitalistic theories to the mechanistic philosophy, even though in his last books he continued to use vitalism, can be explained through the political system and his participation in these two scientific societies. This assumption can be substantiated in his two most important books. In the “*The Darkness of Atheism*” and the “*Physiologia*” Charleton attacked on the followers of Paracelsus and van Helmont, but he did not offer any specific argumentation against these doctrines, which preached those “dogmatists”.²¹ He only attacked on them and, as many historians support, objected in the notion of sympathies and antipathies as a doctrine of occult qualities. However, in “*Physiologia*” Charleton did not attacked on occult qualities, but he tried to explain them in terms of atomism. In reality he objected to the doctrine of occult qualities used as an intellectual refuge, so as the scholars not to initiate an enquiry. This proves us that he clearly wanted to separate himself from specific alchemists, who were considered dogmatists, but he knew that only through the vitalistic theory of *spirits* was he capable to explain the function of the human body. Charleton’s theory can be considered both vitalistic and mechanistic, that means that he followed an eclecticism, with the aim of prescribing a remedy to the perceived threat of a rampant sectarianism and to be acceptable by his colleagues in the College of Physicians. He knew that in order to be a part of the “elite” of those scholars, due to which he would have a career, he had to pay close attention on how he defined his views and theory. What is more, Charleton followed the stream of his time. He believed, as many scholars did, that in order to find the truth he had to seek multiple sources and to try to explain the nature with the help of observation, enquiry, experiments and correct explanation, which is based on the facts and is not against the God’s words.

20. Justin E. H. Smith, *The Problem of Animal Generation in Early Modern Philosophy*, 125-126.

21. Eric Lewis, “Walter Charleton and Early Modern Eclecticisms,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62, no. 4 (2001): 651-664, on 661.

Conclusion

Charleton is a controversial figure for the historians of science, owing to the fact that his theory of matter belongs to both vitalistic and mechanistic philosophy, is a hybrid. Trying to explain this phenomenon some historians argue that Charleton denied the alchemical tradition on account of the upheaval in politics and religion in the periods of Interregnum and Restoration. While other historians support that his theory is an example of early modern eclecticism. Whereas these opinions are true, the reasons for this hybrid theory are more and for finding them we should focus on his life.

Charleton had studied medicine in one of the most famous universities and he wanted to acquire a career. He was a follower of van Helmont and he criticized the Galenic theory, as Paracelsians and Helmontians did, but he also understood that the majority of scholars wanted to overthrow the alchemy as "non-scientific" and that the members of the College of Physicians would accept him easier, if he had denied in public these alchemical doctrines. Simultaneously, he had many noble and scholars friends and from his travels to French he realized that the mechanical philosophy could help him explain the nature and would be supported by many people.

As a result, in combination with the severe critics, which his alchemical books had accepted, he realized that it would be better to separate himself from the alchemical doctrines and to follow the mechanistic philosophy. His membership in the College of Physicians and in the Royal Society played a great role in this "shift". Nevertheless, he never abandoned the vitalism, as he used it when it was necessary. The investigation of his life and his works show us that he wanted to prove that the occult theories of alchemy are not occult at all and they can be explained by the corpuscular theories. Last but not least, Charleton had comprehended that if he wanted a career, he had to follow the "elite" of science and that the new knowledge will come only if he studied carefully all the sources that existed, included ancient. His controversial theory is an example of how the scientific theories in the late seventeenth-century began to differentiate themselves from the older ones, exemplifying a new form of science and social institution.

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