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EDITORS' NOTE

Now in its seventeenth volume, *Herodotus* is a student-run journal which highlights the scholastic achievement and intellectual passion of undergraduate students in the Stanford University Department of History. Although we received many outstanding submissions this year, we found the following essays particularly exceptional not only for the quality of their historical analysis, but also for their variety of perspectives, attention to detail, and creativity.

Although *Herodotus* is an entirely student-run publication, it would have been impossible to produce without the guidance and enthusiasm of Margo Richardson and Monica Wheeler. We would also like to acknowledge the Carl F. Brand Fund for its generous financial support without which *Herodotus* would not exist.

We encourage feedback and questions about this year's volume and about the journal in general. Please address comments to the staff of the Department of History. We hope you find the following essays thought-provoking and enjoyable.

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REDATING THE EAST-WEST SCHISM:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE
SACK OF CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1204

MICHAEL J. PETRIN

In 1054 A.D., three papal legates, led by Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida, were sent to the city of Constantinople on a conciliatory mission by Pope Leo IX. The pope sent these legates to meet with the Patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, in the hope of resolving certain points of disagreement between Greek and Latin Christians. However, the visit went poorly and, as a result, the papal legates entered Hagia Sophia one fateful day while the priests were preparing to celebrate Mass and placed a Bull of Excommunication against Cerularius upon the main altar.¹ This offense sparked rioting in the streets of Constantinople and caused the patriarch and his synod to respond with a formal anathema against both the document itself and all those responsible for its production. It is on account of these events that the consummation of the East-West Schism between Greek and Latin Christianity (also known as the Great Schism) has traditionally been dated to the year 1054.²

Although 1054 is indeed the date most often found on timelines and in textbooks—and therefore the date most often memorized by students of the medieval period—the majority of modern scholars recognize that the East-West Schism was in fact, as Timothy Ware writes, “something that came about gradually, as the result of a long and complicated process.”³ This gradual process had already begun long before 1054, propelled by tensions between Greek and Latin Christians over issues such as ecclesiastical authority, doctrine, and liturgy, as well as by cultural, economic, and ideological differences. On account of this, attempting to date the consummation of the East-West Schism is a very difficult undertaking, to say the least.

It is evident that early in the Middle Ages there existed a united Christendom wherein all Christians, both Greeks and Latins, believed themselves to be members of a single Church. It is also evident that later there existed a divided Christendom, with Greek Christians on one side and Latin Christians on the other—each side claiming to be the one, true Church. Yet although we are aware of both these historical realities, it is far from easy to pinpoint when the relationship between Greek and Latin Christianity shifted from one reality to the other. What is apparent, however, is that if we hope for an accurate dating of the consummation of the East-West Schism, we ought not to ignore the sack of Constantinople in 1204 by Western crusaders.

The series of events leading up to the sack of Constantinople began when a great army of Latin Christians, recently having set forth to participate in the Fourth Crusade, was diverted from its ultimate goal of reconquering Jerusalem by an entreaty for help from Alexius the Younger (son of the recently dethroned Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelus).⁴ The crusaders responded to this request in a spirit of goodwill, agreeing to travel to Constantinople in order to help Alexius and his father Isaac to regain the throne. However, although they were successful, a dissident courtier strangled Alexius to death soon afterward.⁵ The unfortunate murder of young Alexius triggered an outbreak of fighting between the Latin crusaders and the citizens of Constantinople, which predictably ended with the crusaders conquering the city. Having emerged victorious, the crusaders then sacked Constantinople, stealing holy relics, abusing the populace, and, afterward, audaciously naming both a Latin emperor and a Latin patriarch to hold power in the East.

Instead of blindly accepting the convenient and familiar date of 1054 for the consummation of the East-West Schism, we ought to reexamine our dating of the schism with especial attention to the sack of Constantinople by Latin crusaders in 1204—an event which is far too often overlooked, but which provides an invaluable reference point for those who seek an accurate understanding of the East-West Schism. Given the importance of both the excommunications of 1054 and the sack of Constantinople in 1204, this essay deals with three main time periods: the period prior to 1054, the period after 1204, and the intermediate period (that is, the period following 1054 but prior to 1204). If the schism was consummated by the excommunications of 1054, then there ought to be evidence of this in the intermediate period (prior to any possibility of influence by the sack of Constantinople in 1204). However, if the schism was consummated by the sack of Constantinople, then there ought not to be evidence of a schism until the period after 1204. In this essay, I compare the relationship between Greek and Latin Christians during the intermediate period to their relationship in the period after 1204 and, after examining the evidence, I advance the argument that the sack of Constantinople by Western crusaders in 1204 ought to replace the excommunications of 1054 as the occurrence by which we mark the consummation of the East-West Schism.

The Power of the Collective

Religion can be viewed and studied in many ways. However, no matter what approach one chooses, one should not ignore the collective nature of religion. One of the most compelling expositions of the importance of the collective may be found in Émile Durkheim's seminal

work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, where he claims that “religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities.”⁶ He argues that religion ought not to be viewed as an institution created and forced upon society by an elite minority, but as “an eminently collective thing”—as the product of the collective consciousness.⁷ Durkheim’s focus on the collective origin of religion presents us with a compelling account of religious phenomena; his is an account which calls us to recognize that religious reality is not the result of the caprice of the most elite members of society, but the product of the collective, of society as a whole.

The methodological approach of this essay takes inspiration from Durkheim’s theory of religion, particularly from his emphasis on the collective. However, I expand Durkheim’s theory by focusing not on ritual or morals, but on collective sentiment. I investigate collective reality by gleaning collective sentiments and attitudes from the historical events, actions, and words of which we have records with the goal of discovering when the collective feeling of solidarity shared by Greek and Latin Christians gave way to the reality of each side being manifestly and collectively estranged from the other. An attempt is not made to date the schism—a fundamentally religious phenomenon—by official pronouncements from elite individuals but by when it is reflected in the collective sentiment of each population, for a focus on elite pronouncements prohibits full consideration of the collective and religion is, as Durkheim claims, “an eminently collective thing.”

The Intermediate Period

Although relations between Greek and Latin Christians following the excommunications of 1054 were often undeniably antagonistic, ample evidence nevertheless suggests that a collective feeling of solidarity persisted between the East and West even during the intermediate period following 1054. This feeling of unity manifested itself in many ways, perhaps most noticeably in the respect and admiration which Greeks and Latins showed to one another. For instance, in his writings on the Third Crusade, the Greek historian Niketas Choniates offers an extremely laudatory portrayal of the Western king and emperor Frederick Barbarossa. He praises both Barbarossa’s military prowess and his religiosity, claiming that his “zeal was apostolic, his purpose dear to God, and his achievements beyond perfection.”⁸ The same Choniates also praises other Western knights in a similar, albeit more muted, fashion.⁹ These praises are particularly noteworthy because the Greek historian lived through the sack of Constantinople in 1204. Given this, we might expect all of his discussions of Latins to carry a negative bias, but as the aforementioned praises demonstrate, this is far from the case. As

the sack of Constantinople would have provided Choniates with ample reason to portray Latins negatively, we must conclude that he has a good reason for praising the Latins that does: his praises are almost certainly the result of authentic sentiment from prior to 1204, when Greek attitudes toward Latins were as yet untainted by the sack of Constantinople.

Records of a public debate between Anselm of Havelberg (a Latin bishop) and Niketas of Nicomedia (a Greek archbishop) further reveal the esteem each side held for the other. Held in Constantinople in 1136, this debate dealt with a variety of controversial topics which stood at the forefront of the tense relationship between Greek and Latin Christians. However, even though the men argued for sharply divergent positions on very contentious issues—such as papal primacy and the *filioque*¹⁰—the debate is remarkable because of the profound respect demonstrated by both participants. Each man—though in no way compromising his beliefs or arguments—is recorded as conducting himself in an extraordinarily courteous and respectful manner. The records even show that they used many terms of endearment for one another, as when Anselm refers to Niketas as “*frater charissime*” [“beloved brother”].¹¹ As Aresteides Papadakis remarks in his reflections on the respect demonstrated by the debate’s participants: “Evidently, the doors to dialogue for both participants were wide open.”¹²

Yet the feelings of brotherhood and solidarity did not stop at mere acclamations; the mutual respect displayed by Greek and Latin Christians also motivated them to elevate one another to positions of power and sanctity. During the reign of the Byzantine emperor Alexius I Comnenus, for example, many “Westerners held high positions in the Byzantine army and at the imperial court.”¹³ Another example, in the properly religious—rather than secular political—realm, may be found in the Greeks’ acceptance of some Westerners “as saints of the Greek Orthodox Church.”¹⁴ The willingness of the Greeks and Latins to elevate one another to positions of the highest honor further reinforces the idea, first evident in the mutual praises noted above, that a collective feeling of solidarity persisted even after 1054.

Intermarriage between Greeks and Latins during this intermediate period provides yet another indication of the collective feeling of solidarity. Due to geographical and linguistic separation, weddings between Greeks and Latins were generally unfeasible, but they did happen occasionally, as shown by the marriage of Renier of Montferrat, a young Italian noble, to Maria, the daughter of Byzantine Emperor Manuel I.¹⁵ Their marital union presents compelling evidence against a fully realized estrangement between East and West, since it would be absurd for either side to have consented to the marriage if they did not feel any sense of solidarity or commonality with the other

Not Yet a Schism

The aim of this essay is not to claim that the relationship between Greek and Latin Christians after the excommunications of 1054 was one of untainted amity; one need only glance at the polemical literature of the time to see that this was not the case. For example, the Greek historian Niketas Choniates, whose laudatory descriptions of Latins we noted above, more than a few times speaks of Latins' inhumanity, driveling, and arrogance.¹⁶ Moreover, with regard to the debate between Anselm of Havelberg and Niketas of Nicomedia, the evident respect and charity ought not to obscure the fact that these two men stood on opposite sides of a bitter, ongoing doctrinal and ecclesiastical debate between East and West. Nevertheless, the preceding examples demonstrate that although a great deal of antagonism and disagreement between the East and West existed during this period, there nevertheless persisted a collective feeling of solidarity—a feeling of solidarity strong enough for Greek and Latin Christians to praise, honor, and even marry one another.

Given the absence of a pervasive, collective feeling of estrangement during the intermediate period, we cannot conclude that the excommunications of 1054 consummated the East-West Schism. However, let us take a moment to consider why the excommunications of 1054 did *not* lead to a collective feeling of estrangement between Greek and Latin Christians. Scholars such as Alexander Kazhdan argue that “political conflicts are...a questionable litmus test for the evaluation of cultural relations.”¹⁷ However, to the modern student of medieval history the excommunications of 1054—political conflicts—seem so extraordinary that it is somewhat counterintuitive to think that this sensational sequence of events did not in fact galvanize Greek and Latin Christians to feelings of estrangement.

Nevertheless, if examined within their proper context—the Middle Ages—the excommunications of 1054 were not all that unique. While the excommunications were undeniably noteworthy, political disagreements in this time often ended in very forceful action and, while not exactly commonplace, excommunications (especially those of leaders and princes) were far from unknown.¹⁸ In fact, a similar set of excommunications were exchanged just two centuries earlier between Patriarch Photius I of Constantinople and Pope Nicholas I, and were later resolved. Hence, within their proper context the excommunications of 1054 were not actually as extraordinary as they might first appear.

Furthermore, the excommunications of 1054 took place at an elevated level, far above the conscious experience of the general population, and for this reason they failed to galvanize collective feelings of

estrangement. Not only were the excommunications made by and against elite ecclesiastical authorities, but most of the disagreements that strained the East-West relationship and helped provoke these excommunications were far from simple; they dealt with issues (papal primacy, the *filioque*, etc.) beyond the understanding of anyone without a thorough knowledge of the theological complexities involved. Hence, the disagreements surrounding the excommunications were only accessible to a small stratosphere of society and did not effect a shift in collective reality.¹⁹

After the Sack of Constantinople

Following the sack of Constantinople by the Western crusaders in 1204, however, the collective feelings of East and West did shift from solidarity to estrangement. The first indication of a collective feeling of estrangement after the sack of Constantinople can be found in the Greeks' immediate reaction to the incident. An excerpt from Niketas Choniates' account of what transpired once the crusaders had conquered the city conveys the disgust and anger which the Greeks felt toward the Latins:

There were lamentations and cries of woe and weeping in the narrow ways, wailing at the crossroads, moaning in the temples, outcries of men, screams of women, the taking of captives, and the dragging about, tearing in pieces, and raping of bodies heretofore sound and whole.²⁰

The Latin crusaders' actions came as a shock to the Greeks and incited a radical shift in their collective sentiments. No longer was the conflict between East and West an affair far removed from the mind of the general population; the Greek citizens themselves were now suffering direct humiliation at the hands of the Latin crusaders. And, as a result, the Greeks began to view the Latins as flagitious and despicable.

Pope Innocent III notes this view in a letter to Cardinal Peter Capuano rebuking the crusaders for their deplorable conduct in Constantinople. The pope writes that, "having seen in the Latins nothing except an example of affliction," the Greeks now rightly detest the Latins "more than dogs."²¹ The Greeks began to regard the Latin crusaders not only as shameful, but as ungodly. Choniates—after a description of the crusaders' sacrilegious treatment of icons, relics, and the Eucharist—refers to the crusaders as "forerunners of the Antichrist" and compares them with those who disrobed and mocked Christ at his crucifixion.²² Such acerbic characterizations were written in direct reaction to the appalling conduct of the crusaders and provide unmistakable evidence of the hostility toward

the Latins that began to boil over among the Greeks after the sack of Constantinople.

Evidence of a powerful collective sentiment of estrangement also appears on the Latin side. Although, the hostility felt by the Latins was not as intense as that of the Greeks (given that they were the victors), their feelings of estrangement were no less real. The Latin crusaders felt that they had been manipulated by the Greeks, for when the crusaders had assisted Alexius the Younger to regain the throne, they had been under the impression that he would be welcomed back wholeheartedly by the people of Constantinople. Hence, when Alexius was killed, the crusaders felt a sense of betrayal.

The crusaders' disgust at the Greeks' rejection of Alexius—whom the Latins thought to be the rightful ruler of Constantinople—only magnified the crusaders' ire. Out of their attempts to grapple with these feelings of betrayal, the Latin crusaders began to hold a belief that would soon become widespread throughout the West: that it was God Himself, “who has dominion over the Kingdom of Man...[who had] transferred the empire of Constantinople from the proud to the humble, from the disobedient to the devout, from schismatics to Catholics, namely from the Greeks to the Latins.”²³ Thus, in addition to their own piety, the crusaders believed that their victory was in some way a consequence of the Greeks' disobedience and the fact that they had become “enemies of God.”²⁴ This belief, a striking counterpart to the aforementioned Greek opinion that the Latin crusaders were ungodly, provides a clear testament to the rise of collective feelings of estrangement in the West—as well as in the East—following the sack of Constantinople.

Further indication of the previously unknown sense of estrangement between Greek and Latin Christians can be seen in a certain rhetorical technique that became somewhat common after the sack of Constantinople. Writers of each side, in writing disparagingly about the other, began to compare and relate the other side to other religions. For example, in wondering why the Greeks refused to accept the *filioque* clause as part of the Creed, Pope Innocent III concluded that their beliefs must have been corrupted by the Jews.²⁵ Likewise, Niketas Choniates wrote in his *Annals* of how even the enemies of Christ—the Muslims—were more magnanimous than the Latin crusaders who came to Constantinople in 1204.²⁶ This rhetorical technique marks a major departure from the pre-1204 sentiment that, although divided on many issues, the East and West were nonetheless both siblings in Christ and members of one Church. As each side associated the other with religions other than Christianity, the implication became clear: the Eastern and Western Churches were now truly separate.

This divide is also evident in Pope Innocent III's exhortation that "all the clergy and people in the Christian army residing at Constantinople" to remain in the region on crusade.²⁷ This instruction was aimed at solidifying Latin control over the Greek lands and, like other papal calls to crusade, promised remission of sins to all who obeyed. Although the pope's letter maintains the conquest of Jerusalem as the ultimate goal, he claims that "to hold one [Constantinople] is almost to recover the other [Jerusalem]."²⁸ The fact that domination of the Greeks became the target of crusade after 1204 provides for an interesting contrast to the year 1095 (just a little over a century earlier) when it was the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I Comnenus' plea for help which initially prompted Pope Urban II to summon Latin Christians for the First Crusade. Seen in the light of this contrast and given its use of crusade language, it is clear that Innocent III's letter signifies a remarkable shift away from the collective solidarity that had formerly allowed for alliances between East and West and toward a more collective estrangement indicative of a schism.

The collective feelings of estrangement after the sack of Constantinople in 1204 were also manifested in the West's institutional consolidation of its power in the East. Very soon after the crusaders took Constantinople, they established both a Latin emperor and a Latin patriarch. Count Baldwin of Flanders and Hainaut was crowned emperor, thus beginning the Latin empire of Constantinople and a short time later the crusaders elected Thomas Morosini as the Latin patriarch.²⁹ Although Pope Innocent III knew that the election of Morosini had been uncanonical and that the Greek patriarch John X was still alive, he nonetheless saw fit to confirm Morosini as patriarch of Constantinople. The institutionalized power wielded by the Latins in the East deepened still further the estrangement that the Greeks felt from the Latins.

Though those in the West might have thought that, because they had conquered Constantinople and put the East under papal jurisdiction, there was no more conflict to speak of between East and West, many Greek Christians still did not recognize the Latin patriarchate and continued to hold fast to beliefs of which the Latin Church did not approve. Furthermore, the Greeks did not quickly forget the nightmarish actions of the crusaders during the sack of Constantinople. Hence, though it might have appeared from a juridical standpoint that the conflict between East and West was over, the truth is that the Latin-ruled East was still not a fully conquered society and collective feelings of estrangement between East and West persisted, even after the initial shock caused by the sack of Constantinople. A Westerner of the time made this observation about the Greeks living under Latin rule: "Although they are obedient in words," he said, "they are nonetheless hardly obedient in their hearts, though temporal and spiritual authority is in Latin hands."³⁰

Conclusion

An examination of collective sentiment among Greek and Latin Christians both in the intermediate period (between 1054 and 1204) and in the period after 1204 indicates that the consummation of the East-West Schism ought not to be dated to the excommunications of 1054 but to the sack of Constantinople by Western crusaders in 1204. As the East-West Schism was a fundamentally religious—and therefore collective—affair, we have examined the evidence with a focus on the collective feeling of solidarity shared by East and West and when this feeling shifted to a collective feeling of estrangement, rather than with a focus on the pronouncements of elite officials. In so doing, we have seen that, even after 1054, solidarity persisted; but following the sack of Constantinople, there was a marked shift toward estrangement in the collective sentiments of both Greek and Latin Christians. Thus, by challenging the assumption that the official proclamations of the elite are the best way to date religious events and instead approaching the schism with an eye to its basis in the collective, we have seen that the consummation of the East-West Schism ought to be dated to the sack of Constantinople in 1204, for it is at this point that collective estrangement made the schism a reality.

Notes:

1. "A Brief or Succinct Account of What the Ambassadors of the Holy Roman and Apostolic See Did in the Royal City", trans. William L. North from the edition of C. Will, Acta et Scripta Quae de Controversiis Ecclesiae Graecae et Latinae Saeculo Undecimo Composita Extant, (Leipzig & Marburg 1861), Documents VIII-X, 150-4, <http://www.acad.carleton.edu/curricular/MARS/Schism.pdf>.
2. Cf. Edward Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. J.B. Bury, (London: Methuen 1909; rpt. AMS 1974), 370.
3. Ware, Timothy, The Orthodox Church, (London: Penguin 1997), 43.
4. Gunther von Pairis, The Capture of Constantinople : the Hystoria Constantinopolitana of Gunther of Pairis, ed. and trans. Alfred J. Andrea, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1997), 82.
5. Ibid., 95.
6. Émile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, trans. J.W. Swain, (New York: The Free Press 1915), 22.
7. Ibid., 62-63.
8. Niketas Choniates, O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates, trans. Harry J. Magoulias, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press 1984), 417.

9. Cf. *Ibid.*, 116, 181 & 201.
10. The phrase “*filioque*” [“and the son”] was a controversial addition to the Nicene Creed which was accepted in the West but which met with heavy resistance in the East.
11. “Anselmi Havelbergensis Episcopi Dialogi”, ed. J.P. Migne, Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Latina, (Paris 1844-55), 188: 1219.
12. Papadakis, Aristeides, The Christian East and the Rise of the Papacy, (New York: St. Vladimar’s Seminary Press 1994), 156.
13. Alexander Kazhdan, “Latins and Franks in Byzantium: Perception and Reality from the Eleventh to the Twelfth Century”, The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy P. Mottahedeh, (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks 2001), 94.
14. *Ibid.*, 84; Cf. C.P. Kyrris, “The ‘Three Hundred Alaman Saints’ of Cyprus,” The Sweet Land of Cyprus, ed. A. Bryer, (Nicosia 1993), 203–35.
15. Choniates, O City of Byzantium, 171.
16. *Ibid.*, 301 & 39.
17. Kazhdan, “Latins and Franks”, 83.
18. E.g., the well-known excommunications of King Henry IV by Pope Gregory VII; Cf. Elisabeth Vodola, Excommunication in the Middle Ages, (Berkeley: University of California Press 1986) for an extensive account of excommunication “from its fragmentary origins in biblical times to its entrenchment in the religious and social institutions of the middle ages” (vii).
19. See “A Brief or Succinct Account”, trans. North: The dichotomy between ecclesiastical authorities and the general population is laid out by Cardinal Humbert himself in the Bull of Excommunication against Patriarch Cerularius. Before launching his attack on the patriarch, Humbert asserts that, “as far as the columns of the imperial power and its honored and wise citizens go, this city is most Christian and orthodox.” These words of praise demonstrate his understanding of the fact that disagreeing with the leader of the Greek Church is not necessarily equivalent to being estranged from all Greek Christians.
20. Choniates, O City of Byzantium, 574.
21. Alfred J. Andrea, Contemporary Sources for the Fourth Crusade, (Leiden: Brill 2000), 166.
22. Choniates, O City of Byzantium, 573.
23. Andrea, Contemporary Sources, 116-117.
24. Robert de Clari, La Conquête de Constantinople, ed. Peter Noble, (Edinburgh: Société Rencensvals British Branch 2005), LXXIII, 89.
25. Andrea, Contemporary Sources, 121-122.
26. Choniates, O City of Byzantium, 576.

27. Andrea, Contemporary Sources, 161.
28. Andrea, Contemporary Sources, 162.
29. Cf. Andrea, Contemporary Sources, 107-108.
30. R.M. Setton, The Cambridge Medieval History, ed. J.M. Hussey, (Cambridge 1966), 4, 1:429.

FOR BIRDS OR BARRIO
HOW CLEANING UP THE SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO BAY WILL DESTROY
THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF ALVISO, CALIFORNIA

BRITTON CAILLOUETTE

Introduction

The South San Francisco Bay is above all a mixing ground, where elements clash with one another and swirl around in attempt to find an appropriate balance. But like the delicate biology of an estuary, when certain elements overwhelm others, the balance shifts, and the entire system suffers. In this narrow sliver of geography, situated roughly between the Dumbarton Bridge (84) and the 237 freeway to the north and south, and the 880 and 101 freeways to the east and west, distinctions like—urban and natural, salt water and fresh water, rich and poor, the built environment and open space, progress and preservation—become blurred in the physical space of the human drama, and as in all stories where resources, communities, and ideologies are at stake, there are winners and there are losers.

At the apex of this estuary is Alviso, California. Tucked away in the marshes and salt ponds that make up the southern tip of the bay, this 14-mile stretch of shore lands holds the honorable title as the last remaining small town in the Silicon Valley.¹ With a population of roughly 2,200 people, two thirds of whom identify themselves as Hispanic, this relic of a bygone era has been a hotbed of controversies spanning many decades. The town is quite literally a *barrio* on the bay, a highly uncommon occurrence in an area where real estate is so valuable. Due to its geographic location, Alviso's environment has been a major player in the town's history. A century of isolation, neglect, salt production, and environmental destruction transformed Alviso into the backwater of the Bay Area. Though on this ground, a proud community of working men and women began to call this marsh their home. With the enormous urban expansion of the Silicon Valley, the future of this community has become threatened. Interest in redeveloping the area in conjunction with a massive campaign to restore the wetlands of the South Bay will cause land values to soar, driving out low-income residents and disintegrating the Mexican-American community. The process has already begun.

The Rise of a Barrio

The transformation of this small parcel of marshland at the edge of the South Bay into a poor, Mexican-American enclave was a gradual process marred with stories of neglect, injustice, and deceit. One of the oldest towns in Santa Clara County, Alviso was originally part of a land grant given to a Spanish explorer, Ignacio Alviso, who had crossed the desert into California with the party of Captain Juan Batista de Anza in 1776.² Throughout the mid 1800s, Alviso acted as an important stop for overland routes to the Bay Area, as well as a prominent port.³ When the railroad decided to bypass Alviso in the 1870s, the town became isolated.⁴ Prohibition brought the area a rough reputation. People from the surrounding area took advantage of Alviso's lack of police enforcement to indulge in gambling, alcohol, and prostitution.⁵

Migrant laborers sought work in the pear orchards in the nearby Santa Clara Valley. Beginning in the 1940s, Mexican immigrants, who had been displaced from other areas and jobs, came to Alviso in search of cheap, clandestine housing opportunities.⁶ Known then as "New Chicago," the town housed workers who squatted in shacks and transplanted discarded buildings from the San Jose area.⁷ As Mexican-American activist and Nobel Prize nominee Dr. Ernest Galarza describes in his manuscript about Alviso, "Mexican barrios grew in spots of land rated low at the time for industrial or urban potential."⁸ Also known as "colonias," settlements like these mixed low-cost living with accessibility to jobs in trades that required minimal skill, for as Galarza acknowledges, "Mexican workers were the lowest of the lowly paid."⁹

If one thing is true about low-down areas, it's that consequences tend to collect. Between 1950 and 1970, Santa Clara County tripled in population from 300,000 to 1 million residents.¹⁰ Already somewhat of a slum and isolated from the rest of the surrounding area by an uncommon amount of open space, Alviso became the dumping grounds for the trash of Santa Clara, San Jose, and other cities.¹¹ Soon, two private solid waste dumps sprung up (Zanker Road and Owens-Corning), becoming a major political stakeholder in the area, in addition to a sewage treatment plant that spewed millions of gallons of fresh water into the South Bay daily.¹² By the 1970s, Alviso was bearing the burden of 80% of Santa Clara County's solid waste, as well as 90% of the waste coming from San Francisco.¹³

Controversy struck the town in 1968 when San Jose proposed the annexation of Alviso into its jurisdiction. With the increased demands of urbanism in the area, San Jose recognized the necessity of winning legal control over one of the South Bay's only remaining corridors of open space. Through incorporation, San Jose could gain access to the bay

and the ability to claim the sewage treatment facility for future expansion. As a trade off, San Jose promised Alviso city services.¹⁴ Bob Gross, a long-time member of the Santa Clara Valley Water Board and Alviso property owner, has acknowledged “there would be no Silicon Valley if San Jose hadn’t taken over Alviso.”¹⁵ San Jose tried twice to annex the town and failed because of community objections. But in 1968, Alviso representatives approved the takeover by a slim vote of 189 to 180.¹⁶ Dr .Ernesto Galarza has described the Mexican-American majority of Alviso as victims of political co-optation, public misinformation, lack of capital, and widespread negativism.¹⁷ Most Alvisans were not homeowners, but renters that shared a cultural identity based on their “common Mexican ancestry” and geographic location.¹⁸ At the end of the 1960s, Alvisan natives owned only about 10% of the total real estate in the area. Politically, this discrepancy between Mexican-American renters and Anglo property owners, most of whom lived outside the area, expressed itself in a “self-perpetuating group of decision makers” who were largely unrepresentative of the community’s interests.¹⁹

Many native Alvisans believed that San Jose never held up their side of the agreement. San Jose expanded the sewage treatment plant, but did not provided the services they promised. In the early 1970s protesters in Alviso blocked off a street and charged motorists a toll to pay for much-needed street repairs. The city heard complaints of a complete lack of police enforcement and animal control.²⁰ San Jose claimed that “no community of Alviso’s size has its own library branch, police patrol, or fire station,” but accusations of neglect peaked in 1983, when the Coyote Creek overflowed its levee’s and flooded Alviso with 8 feet of water.²¹ Without warning, residents were forced to evacuate by helicopter.²² Former City Councilwoman, Shirley Lewis, admitted that the city did not have adequate flood-control plans in place.²³ The weaknesses of the dikes had been known for a very long time. The Santa Clara Planning Department published a document in 1973 warning that “the outboard dikes do not provide adequate flood protection for the Baylands.”²⁴ After the flood, San Jose rebuilt the levees, which were later found to contain large amounts of asbestos.²⁵ The town filed a class action lawsuit, and the Santa Clara Valley Water District and the city of San Jose were forced to pay a total of \$13 million dollars to 1000 residents.²⁶

Only three years later, Alviso was placed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Superfund list of areas in need of toxic cleanup, finally taking some responsibility for the decades of neglect and abuse.²⁷ All the while, Alvisans had remained in the area, preferring the low cost of living to the inconveniences of the environment. As Galarza put it, “The refugees had become settlers.”²⁸ With change, though,

emerged a new question: what happens when a barrio is cleaned up? In Alviso's case, development followed and the community began to disintegrate.

A Win-Win Situation

There are not many places in the Bay Area where human beings have had such a dramatic of an impact on the natural environment than in the wetlands of the South San Francisco Bay. As long as people have inhabited the area, human industry has affected the wetlands, constantly shaping the landscape to fit our demands. Today, when one flies over Alviso on the way to San Jose International Airport, one only has to look out the window at the complex patchwork of bright colors below to see one of the area's most aggressive change agents—salt.

Salt production has been taking place in the marshes of the South Bay for hundreds of years. When Spanish missionaries arrived in the area, they found Ohlone Indians making salt from the shallow ponds of the wetlands.²⁹ At the time, production was small, and the wetlands were a thriving ecosystem where millions of migratory birds stopped each year on their way from Mexico to Alaska.

Industrial salt production began in 1854. By 1868, eighteen salt companies had established themselves all over the Bay Area. Seventy years later, these eighteen companies had been consolidated under one name—Leslie Salt.³⁰ When Leslie Salt finished expanding, 36,000 acres of salt ponds covered the bay.³¹ Since 1854, 85-90% of San Francisco Bay's original tidal marshlands had been filled in or "significantly altered...for urban development, agriculture, and salt production."³²

This chain of development set the bay into environmental crisis. The salt flats with their networks of ponds, each one saltier than the previous, had completely altered the native ecosystem, throwing it out of balance. While several native species dwindled rapidly in numbers, others thrived as conditions shifted in their favor. Over 30 species, mostly birds like the Western Snowy Plover, California Brown Pelican, California Least Tern, and the California Clapper Rail, became endangered.³³

As attitudes toward the relationship between man and nature changed in the 1960s and 1970s, a wave of environmentalism swept over the South Bay and addressed the need for change. With its toxic waste and delicate situation on the edge of the "wilderness," there was no better place to play out this battle for the environment than Alviso. In a 1973 report to the San Jose Board of Supervisors the Santa Clara County Planning Commission summed up the shift in consciousness beautifully:

Man must be a steward of the land, not a despoiler of

it. Modern man can no longer afford the pioneer ethic of 'conquer the wilderness.' It should be clear by now he must learn to live with nature if he is to live at all."³⁴

Although they were reacting against this Man v. Nature dialectic, environmentalists began to define the problems of the South Bay in these terms. "The Baylands" said the Planning Commission, "combined silently beautiful marsh areas with scarred, barren wastelands."³⁵ Some parts of the South Bay were full of wildlife, but coastland areas had become "marred with sewage plants and bulldozers."³⁶ Of course they were talking about Alviso—where millions of gallons of wastewater from the sewage treatment plant were the primary cause of water pollution, where mercury from decommissioned mines choked the waterways with toxic sludge, and where decomposing garbage from the city dumps poisoned the ground waters.³⁷ As preservationist rhetoric gained popularity, Alviso came to represent all of the crimes committed against nature; in the minds of many Bay Area residents, urban development had scarred the beautiful earth.³⁸ Activists lobbied for the preservation of open spaces—as long as they were preserved for the birds, not the Barrio.

In 1974 U.S. Congressman Don Edwards responded to the pressures of local citizens by lobbying Congress for the establishment of a wildlife refuge in the South San Francisco Bay. As a result, 13,000 acres of Leslie Salt evaporation ponds were condemned and turned into the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, the first urban national wildlife refuge in the country.³⁹ In 1978 Leslie Salt sold all of its holdings to the agricultural giant the Cargill Corporation, which was allowed to continue salt production in the refuge.⁴⁰ Though environmentalists claimed a victory, the government would not dare threaten businesses. In fact, the same planning commission that had advocated for open space preservation confessed in the same report that:

The private sector has exerted a major influence in shaping the broad pattern of development in Santa Clara County. The Role of government, particularly local government, has in general been one of accommodating private enterprise.⁴¹

Could it be that the creation of the Don Edwards Refuge was just the first step in the process of reclaiming and redeveloping the entire South Bay, which began to be seen as a land of business opportunity as long as it could be cleaned up? Or was the fact that Alviso got wrapped up into the environmentalists' fight a sheer matter of geographic location? Either way, Alviso was portrayed as the adversary. As conditions in Alviso worsened

over the next couple of decades, the environmental movement gained momentum.

In 2000 the Cargill Corporation announced that it would be consolidating its holdings in the Bay Area and offering up 16,400 acres of salt ponds and salt making rights for sale.⁴² Immediately, environmental groups leaped in to action at the thought of doubling the size of the San Francisco National Wildlife Preserve. For many this was a dream come true—a chance to finally repossess nature from the destructive clutches of industry and restore the wetlands to their original beauty. The movement needed a leader, and they found one in California Senator Diane Feinstein—a Democrat environmentalist and staunch supporter of the controversial 1994 ballot Proposition 187, which denied illegal immigrants social services, health care, and public education. Feinstein negotiated a Framework Agreement among the many non-profit interest groups like the National Audubon Society, Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge, Save the Bay, the Hewlett Foundation, the Resources Legacy Fund and many others, who were lobbying for the acquisition of the Cargill land by public agencies.⁴³

Feinstein's work paid off. In 2003 federal and state agencies, with help from non-profits and foundations, raised the \$100 million dollars necessary for the purchase of 15,000 acres in the South Bay and 1,400 acres in the North Bay.⁴⁴ The White House and the EPA gave the "Coastal America Spirit Award" to Cargill for their decision to sell the lands, though the company's motivations were probably economic and they stood to gain about \$150 million in tax breaks.⁴⁵ Regardless, this was another major victory for environmentalists, who saw the new addition as much more than a place for birds:

These restored lands will be an oasis in an urban landscape, a tremendous source of solace for many people...So providing access is extremely important: We have to determine appropriate uses, and make sure the opportunities to pursue them exist, whether it's bird watching, bicycling, fishing, or duck hunting.⁴⁶

Like Olmstead's park in the city, the restored wetlands could become the new psychological safe haven in the oppressive built landscape of the Bay Area. Unfortunately, the barrio of Alviso had been ideologically lumped together with this "oppressive landscape," a fact that would hold great consequences for the future of the community there. In a recent magazine article congratulating environmentalists for their hard work, a reporter said this of the project, "A good restoration is the axiomatic win-win situation. Everybody gets something."⁴⁷ What Alvisans got was

a movement that would inadvertently drive them from their homes, in a manner that developers had been trying to figure out for decades—they certainly didn't win.

Good Progress

Who could have thought that environmentalists, city planners, and developers would ever agree on anything, but at the recent turn of the century all groups, probably without realizing it, were working toward the same goal—clean up the South Bay in order to attract outsiders. Of course, implicit in this goal was the fact that Alvisans, the only “true” locals, would want this as well. They did not. To them this represented only the latest front of the threat of urban encroachment and eventual displacement that they had been feeling since its 1968 incorporation.

For developers and local real estate owners Alviso has always been one thing—one of the best-kept secrets in the Bay Area. According to Ernesto Galarza, “the political expression of the increasing interest in Alviso by private and public developers was the campaign to annex the town to the City of San Jose.”⁴⁸ Most Alvisans would agree with this statement, especially in the more recent context of the technology boom that has dramatically increased the demand for real estate. “How can we live with these things coming here?” said a schoolteacher in Alviso to a reporter as she pointed to the surrounding hillsides bulging with track homes and tech campuses.⁴⁹ The truth of the matter is that many people are poised to make millions of dollars by sitting on land in Alviso. The Richard Perry-John Arrillaga development partnership bought up cheap land along First Street just outside of Alviso in the mid 1980's and sold it for incredible prices during the technology boom, which secured both of them a place on the *Forbes* list of the 400 wealthiest Americans. Today, their company holds 50 acres of property in Alviso valued at a cool \$20 million dollars.⁵⁰ Also, Santa Clara Water District Chairman Bob Gross and his wife, both non-residents in Alviso, own three dilapidated buildings in the prime downtown district. These people just have to wait as their property values continue to increase.⁵¹

If annexation was the political arm of change, then zoning is the technical arm. In 1998 the city of San Jose introduced the Alviso Master Plan for rezoning the land use of the city. A task force assembled by the city council to debate the plan.⁵² It became increasingly clear over time that the task force had merely become another example of political co-optation by pro-development interests. Pro-housing interests (read Mexican-American Alvisans) were eventually bullied off the Task Force. Out of the 21 members originally appointed, only 5 showed up to the last meeting.⁵³ In their eyes, the point of the Alviso Master Plan was clear:

“facilitate development by moving the Mexican-American community out and moving other people in.”⁵⁴ As the Master Plan passed it became clear what was going to happen—most open spaces in the town would be eliminated by being rezoned as light industrial (tech) or commercial land.⁵⁵ In fact the Master Plan is a dream come true for developers and landowners. All they have to do is wait.

Historically two things have kept developers from having reaped this bonanza decades ago. This was the fact that Alviso was a hazardous and isolated place to live. Pollution, sewage, toxic waste, and salt company guards that patrol the levees have all kept land values low and people away from Alviso. Most significant is the threat of flooding, which almost wiped the entire community off the map in 1983. The Santa Clara County Planning Department acknowledged this time and time again in their reports. In 1972:

The threat of flooding is the single most important factor in land use planning in the Baylands. The salt ponds, and a fringe of land to the south of the ponds, are all below mean sea level, and would be continually under water if they were not protected by a series of dikes.⁵⁶

And again in 1973:

There is currently a need to improve flood control facilities to protect developed or developable dry land areas in the Baylands against saltwater flooding.⁵⁷

In addition to warning policy makers about the effects the threat of flooding has on the area's development potential, the Planning Department offered a cheap solution: create a “permanent open space flood plain” that would take some of the burden off the dikes.⁵⁸

With this in mind, the creation and expansion of the San Francisco Bay Wildlife Refuge made perfect sense. In fact this was a large selling point when the project was trying to raise money for the purchase of the Cargill lands. “Flood management,” the South Bay Restoration Project website claims, “is integrated with restoration planning to ensure flood protection for local communities.”⁵⁹

The push for flood control has historically run parallel to with the desire for public use of the open space. Even before the first parcel of the Don Edwards Refuge was purchased, the Planning Policy Committee pushed for a network of trails to be built along side open spaces in order

to attract people to the Baylands and provide a diversion from the ills of the city.⁶⁰ Access remained a key issue with the launch of the 2003 restorations project:

The acquisition of such a large area of open space in the South Bay allows for the provision of public access, wildlife-oriented recreation, and education opportunities, being planned concurrently with restoration and flood management. Public uses could include creation of Bay Trail segments for biking and hiking, and provision of hunting and angling opportunities, bird watching, environmental education, and other recreational opportunities.⁶¹

This dream has become a reality in recent years as funds continue to rise, in part by non-profits like Bay Access, Inc., in order to ensure that the refuge will be for people as well as flora and fauna. In October of 2005, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger launched the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail, an effort by local government to publicize and develop over 80 launch sites for non-motorized watercraft in the South Bay.⁶² Also, this past September funds were approved to connect the gap in the Guadalupe River Trail, which connects San Jose and Alviso. This would allow bikers to ride from San Jose to the bay front without having to ride on busy streets.⁶³

Already, the efforts to bring people out to the bay have paid off. In the year that the Cargill ponds were purchased in order to extend the refuge, a record 700,000 visitors were counted visiting the marshlands.⁶⁴ Alviso even became the headquarters of the Environmental Education Center run by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. When Senator Feinstein took a tour of the Alviso center and the trail that circles the Don Edwards Refuge, she addressed a small audience stating, "This is definitely good progress."⁶⁵

The Future of Alviso

Dr. Ernesto Galarza may have been prophetic when he warned in 1973 of the threats that urban progress posed to the Mexican-American community of Alviso. He was able to make predictions about Alviso because he witnessed similar dislocations of Mexican barrios throughout the Southwest at the hand of progress and development.⁶⁶ With the Don Edwards Refuge, he saw change coming:

If and when the silted channels of the bayshore are

dredged, a marina complete with lagoons, parks, beaches and seaside residences may replace what is now the residential sector of the community. A national wildlife refuge of some 23,000 acres has been created by an act of Congress with good prospects that Alviso may become the administrative headquarters and a source of employment, as well as an attraction for commercial enterprises that the foot traffic of the refuge is expected to bring.⁶⁷

Though much of this has not happened yet, one might see it in the very near future. The new zoning is in order and one can bet that as foot traffic in the area increases and the wetlands become restored, the hazards of the area will diminish.

Development has already come to Alviso. Tech giants TiVo and Cisco Systems have recently moved to large campuses in Alviso, and a new track home subdivision sits opposite a row of old-town bungalows on Michigan Avenue. Still, walking around Alviso today feels like a ghost town. Buildings crumble in disrepair and there is no grocery store, gas station, shopping center, or movie theater. One can't help but notice the presence of "For Sale" signs on empty lots. As landowners continue to hold out for higher property values, the nearby wetlands teem with wildlife and urban visitors running the trails.

Under the surface problems still lurk and no easy solution is at hand. Though the restoration effort has brought record bird counts back to the area, it comes with a price tag that the public did not bargain for.⁶⁸ Originally thought to cost no more than \$300 million dollars, the reengineering of the marsh is now predicted to cost over \$1 billion dollars and take over 50 years to complete.⁶⁹ This is largely due to the fact that the Coastal Conservancy needs to develop a method of restoration that encourages a return to the original ecosystem without harming those species that have become accustomed to a high salinity environment.⁷⁰

Dr. Ernesto Galarza may have put it best when he acknowledged the complexity of the issue at stake. In an interview in 1974 he said, "What happens after you save a barrio? It's still a bad place to live in. It's still an unattractive place to live in. If you stop there you haven't gone very far."⁷¹ The Mexican-American's of Alviso have been a historically marginalized community that was driven into the barrio by poverty and prejudice. It is these two things that must change before any redevelopment or cleaning up of the barrio can take place, or else the members of the community will be displaced and scattered, in the same condition but this time without a place to call home. In a post-Katrina world, where deep social and environmental injustices have

been exposed, it is important to remember Alviso and the role that local government could have played in preserving a community and improving the environment. Instead, private enterprise dreamed big dreams while the representatives of the people put them into action.

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UTILITARIAN TRADITION
THE GOLD COAST INTELLIGENTSIA, 1890-1926

JULIE FALLER

Introduction

The African intelligentsia has been labeled many things: self-loathing collaborators and nationalist heroes, prophets of independence and traitors who facilitated the death of tradition.¹ Equally stringent binaries have been applied to the concept of tradition. Some have read tradition as a composite of timeless social structures of unquestionable value while others have defined it as a fabrication designed to facilitate complete colonial domination.² These binaries obscure rather than illuminate the complex struggles for power during the colonial experience and the relationships surrounding these contests. Therefore, when examining how conceptions of tradition developed, we must focus on the dynamism of the process and the shifting forces and contexts in which people acted to instead of relying on simplistic dualities.³

In this paper I examine how the African intelligentsia of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) invoked the idea of "tradition" in response to pressures of British colonial presence between 1890 and 1926. The period begins with the British conquest of the interior region of Asanti and accompanying imposition of colonial power on the coast. In the following years, important intellectual battles were waged to define "legitimate" use of power and the true nature of "African" government. Furthermore, this period has been described as "a golden age in Gold Coast political leadership and journalism."⁴ Thus this period offers a wealth of material to analyze the rhetoric of the intelligentsia.

In order to meaningfully evaluate their changing use of rhetoric, it is of fundamental importance to define the intelligentsia. In this paper, I am defining the African intelligentsia as the relatively small group of Gold Coasters who had achieved high levels of education either in Europe or through European-style schooling.⁵ The small numbers and high level of interaction between members of the intelligentsia in the Gold Coast at this time justifies their group treatment. The men in question "showed a high level of education, occupational success, high status both in traditional society and in their occupational group, a high occurrence of family, education and occupational interrelationships, and personal histories of nativist activities."⁶ The same men were also often deeply involved in the Gold Coast press, a state of affairs that is "not

surprising [...] considering how small the educated community was.”⁷

Class divisions were not hardened in this period. In fact, the putative three poles of African society: commoners, chiefs and the Western-educated elite were not as compartmentalized as such labels suggest.⁸ The British administered the Gold Coast through indirect rule, which tried to use existing structures of chiefly hierarchy once they had been modified according to British needs. Indirect rule “enhanced [the] status” of the native order because of power associated with the colonial state, thus “rapidly precipitat[ing] competition for traditional office from a new generation of educated elite.”⁹ This competition further blurred class distinctions. However, those who competed for these offices were often those members of the elite with lower levels of education. Those with higher levels of education, who self-identified as members of the intelligentsia, disdainfully called these men with elementary education “scholars.”¹⁰ In response to available sources as well as to their unique position in influencing the way tradition was used rhetorically, in this paper I am focusing on the members of the elite who had achieved high levels of education and eschewed seeking tribal offices. I will call them “the intelligentsia” since that is what they called themselves.

In their quest to secure and protect the political rights of natives of the Gold Coast, the intelligentsia faced opposition from many directions. The British found that “from the utilitarian view, educated Africans were necessary to assist in the day-to-day business of government; once educated, however, they were no longer so easy to manage and were apt to challenge authority in unpredictable ways.”¹¹ Many British officials perceived the political activities of the intelligentsia as unnecessary agitation from a minority population that had no business speaking for the masses. Thus, the British often viewed members of the African intelligentsia as “discontented and amateur demagogues.”¹² As the activities and aspirations of the intelligentsia expanded over the given time period, they also increasingly clashed with the Chiefs, who believed that “social hierarchy descended in clearly defined stages and [...] status depended on birth and lineage rather than individual qualifications or achievements.”¹³

In pursuing their political agenda, the intelligentsia found itself somewhat paradoxically arguing for the preservation of or creation of political rights using the rhetoric of tradition, but with British-style briefs and British legal logic. In doing so, they actively sought social leadership while lionizing a social system in which “traditionally” their class would not exist. Both British colonial officials and “natural leaders” noticed and capitalized upon this contradiction. Therefore, one of the central challenges that the African intelligentsia confronted throughout this period was the task of legitimating its leadership, while continuing to

exploit the rhetoric of tradition.

In confronting these challenges, the African intelligentsia did not employ one static concept of tradition. Instead, both the definition of tradition and manner in which they invoked it varied in response to three aspects of their environment: Gold Coast legislation, international events, and local politics (or jockeying for influence). In response to local legislation the intelligentsia tended to cite substantive aspects of traditional governance, primarily in efforts to block legislation. Conversely, in response to international events and in international fora, the Gold Coast intelligentsia tended to invoke the "spirit" rather than substance of tradition. In this process, they generally tried to gain opportunities for local participation in political processes. When matters of local political influence were in play, the most consistent trait of tradition was that it always seemed to benefit the speaker. The rhetorical use of tradition also shows a marked chronological trend; as international events favoring self-determination for nations occurred, the tendency to invoke "spirit" rather than "substance" of tradition grew.

Any periodization of history is unavoidably somewhat arbitrary, however, for the purposes of this paper I have found it convenient to divide the era in question into three stages. In the first stage, from 1890 to 1911, the African intelligentsia was primarily concerned with defining tradition as a defense against unwanted colonial encroachment. In the second period, from 1911 to 1922, the intelligentsia was split (often in very personal and intense ways) over whether to continue defensive actions as had been used in the past or embrace the cause of West African unity with the possibility of gaining even more political power. This struggle within the intelligentsia was not definitively settled until 1922; however, the period in which the dream for West African unity flourished really began in 1920. From 1920 to 1926, the congressional movement, using the logic of Pan-Africanism's racialized "African" tradition triumphed.

Definition as Defense, 1890-1911

The Gold Coast in 1890 was an area under siege. Europeans had been in contact with the Gold Coast since the fifteenth century and for almost four centuries various European powers struggled to establish and maintain coastal trading forts. The end of the nineteenth century saw a profound shift in this pattern of relationships. With the "scramble for Africa" just beginning, the British were in the midst of aggressive territorial expansion "far beyond the limits of the old coastal settlements."¹⁴ The British engaged in a campaign to conquer the interior region of Ashanti and solidify control of the Coast, as a result "by

1900 a boundary had been drawn around approximately 78,000 square miles of territory stretching from a 334-mile coastline back to the 11° N. parallel.”¹⁵ Meanwhile, in Coastal society, the site of centuries of interaction between the British and the Fanti, “the traditional rulers, often supported by the educated elite, continued to resent systematic whittling down of their power and influence.”¹⁶

Adding to the pressure, this political and territorial flux took place in the midst of clear feelings of British superiority. The editors of the *Gold Coast Chronicle* bluntly condemned racist colonial officials, saying “Send out an officer [...] who is born with a hatred of the Negro, and we say it is madness to expect, for even one single moment, a prosperous state of things.”¹⁷ Ideas of European civilization contrasting with African barbarism shaped this ideology of superiority. Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford demonstrated how this ideology could affect government policy when he quotes “the right honourable member of the West Birmingham” who, during a debate in the British House of Commons in 1901, attributed the Asante uprising to “the bloodlessness of the previous expedition. The people of Ashanti, in common with every savage tribe, hold it to be a point of honour to fight for their chief, and to fight for their cause. They are ready to accept defeat, but they are not ready to accept the consequences of defeat without being actually defeated.” Casely Hayford responded by ironically lamenting “Unhappy Ashanti, a nation steeped in grossest barbarism, addicted to human sacrifices, slave-raiding, and the breaking of treaties!”¹⁸

In the face of onslaughts on such varied fronts, the intelligentsia, together with the chiefly class, felt compelled to define itself in order to protect Gold Coast society from British political power grabs and cultural defamation. Indeed, the increasing British involvement “led the educated elite to see the need to study and interpret the traditional institutions and customs for the purpose of defending them effectively against the British encroachment. Thus it helped further to foster cooperation between the Chiefs and the educated elite.”¹⁹

Attempts to define traditional native institutions included organizations that were both cultural and political. For example, in 1889 John Mensah Sarbah, who was the first Gold Coaster to be called to the bar in London, helped found the Mfantse Amanbuhu Fékuw (Fanti National Political Society). The Society was created explicitly to negate “the demoralising effect of certain European influences” and to “stop further encroachment into ... (African) nationality.”²⁰ The Society, far from being only political, “undertook to study all aspects of traditional life.”²¹ Furthermore, throughout this period, consciousness grew of the idea of “an ‘African personality’ resonant with romantic nationalist ideas from Europe – inspired the Pan-African consciousness emerging across

the African diaspora.”²² In the Gold Coast, however, Pan-Africanism was still an idea of cultural and intellectual resonance rather than being a viable plan for political action.

Editorials that blamed economic and political misfortune on cultural amnesia were common throughout this period. For example, in 1906 an opinion piece proclaimed, “The people have been led to forsake their own mode of living. High collars and Top Hats have taken the place of their simple attires [...] They have been taught to [...] to fill [sic] ashamed of their own native names – in a word for all the noble qualities of the people that have been taken away nothing truly valuable has been substituted.”²³ Two years later, another piece continued in the same vein, opining that, “Our misfortune lies in the fact that we are too deeply steeped in European fashions, and to rid ourselves of them, becomes a tug of war.”²⁴

More explicitly political responses took several forms. This period saw an outpouring of descriptive ethnographic works that aimed at reducing British interference with native society. These works were radical in some ways: they flatly rejected concepts of British superiority and suggested that colonial laws defer to customary precedent in every possible situation. They were also mainly defensive; they presented detailed accounts of tradition in an attempt to secure a way of life under siege and preempt further legislative encroachment by the British.

Sarbah’s two great works, Fanti Customary Laws and Fanti National Constitution, were published in 1897 and 1906 respectively. In the preface to Fanti Customary Laws, Sarbah explains the purpose of his book to a friend, saying “I know that you have often given the first correct idea on Customary Laws to newly arrived European officials, who, having no intelligent person to explain things to them, would fain say there were no Customary Laws. I know how it had constantly pained and grieved you to notice any local Customary Law or Usage distorted by any practitioner from beyond seas solely bent on snatching a verdict.”²⁵ Later, he makes the defensive intent of his work explicit, writing:

The alien would-be-reformer, reckless and in haste, should ever remember in his dealings the common saying: ‘Wo-sí, Ko man Ko tu; wo-nsí, Ko man kasin’ – the saying is: ‘Enter into a community and settle ; not, enter into a community to boast.’[...] For any reform to be permanent and enduring, it must be based on and rooted in the principles of the aboriginal institutions.²⁶

He continued in the same vein in his next book, stating that “to effect beneficial legislation, it is prudent for the lawmaker to understand the

reasons of any existing system and the exact advantages to be gained by its alteration.”²⁷

These works covered wide ranging topics. The table of contents of Fanti Customary Laws illustrates its breadth; the book covered persons (in relation to the family, marriage and divorce), property, tenure, suretyship, alienation, slander, and modes of enforcing payment. Furthermore, the book treats the subjects in detail. For example, on the subject of concubinage, Sarbah says that “a woman living with a man as concubine, mistress or friend, is not encouraged in the eyes of the Customary Law” but that given that such things occur, “she shall not be liable to return to him anything whatsoever he may have given or entrusted to her for safe keeping, sale, or any purpose whatsoever.”²⁸

His next book, Fanti National Constitution, narrated the history of interaction between the British government and Fanti people, which Sarbah divided into “the origin, constitution and government of Akan communities, the discovery and early history of the Gold Coast, rise of British jurisdiction, legislative experiments, treaties and other illustrative papers, and administrative questions.”²⁹ While historical, this work also clearly attempts to delineate realms of African affairs into which the colonial government should not venture, saying, for example “Assuming the King of England is the only independent sovereign in this territory, the aboriginal rulers, however, enjoy several sovereign rights, not the least of which has been the exercise of judicial functions and other rights which are admitted by every one conversant with Gold Coast political matters to be vested in these rulers.”³⁰ Thus Sarbah used the power of precedent and tradition to attempt to protect from British intervention.

Casely Hayford, another prominent member of the intelligentsia, also published his three full-length books in this time period: The Truth about the West African Land Question (first edition: 1898, second edition: 1913), Gold Coast Native Institutions (1903), and Ethiopia Unbound (1911). His first two books were written with similar purpose and style as Sarbah’s, although they covered different material. Casely Hayford states his political aims to be “the imperialisation of the Gold Coast and of Ashanti on purely aboriginal lines.”³¹ Thus Casely Hayford’s goals at this time were not revolutionary; he did not seek Gold Coast independence. Instead, he wished the Gold Coast to receive the rights associated with membership in the British Empire, while Africans maintained control over the actual governing.

Ethiopia Unbound differs from Casely Hayford’s first works in form and content. While published in 1911, it foretells the coming years in which Casely Hayford would argue for West African unity. Written in novel form, Ethiopia Unbound explores issues of identity, race and ethics, rather than focusing solely on current political struggles or historical

institutions. In the closing passages, Casely Hayford explores the idea of “millenarian Ethiopian rebirth” leading Africans to “return to ‘the essence of Godhead.’”³² The contrast between this philosophical work heralding racial unity and Casely Hayford’s earlier descriptive works that focused only on traditions of the Gold Coast parallels the tension that would exist within the intelligentsia in the years to follow.

These works were not just academic exercises; they were tied to concrete political actions, mainly carried out in this period by the Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society (A.R.P.S.). Sarbah and later Casely Hayford were both influential members of the A.R.P.S. In fact, Casely Hayford began his research for Gold Coast Native Institutions while completing a brief for the A.R.P.S. The works of Sarbah and Casely Hayford and the A.R.P.S. were “partly responsible for – and partly stimulated by – the revival of interest in the past.”³³

The Aborigines’ Rights Protection Society was an organization whose course of action was heavily influenced by the circumstances of its founding. Within its first action, the A.R.P.S. established the operating procedure that would govern it until wholesale leadership change a quarter of a century later. The A.R.P.S. was created to oppose the Crown Lands Bill (sometimes called the Maxwell Lands Bill). This bill attempted to transfer “so-called ‘waste lands,’ which the government defined as lands unoccupied or unexploited by native people” to the possession of the Crown.³⁴ The bill was justified primarily in philanthropic terms, in order to prevent exploitation of natives by unscrupulous chiefs or whites. Governor Maxwell, after whom the bill is sometimes named, explained the crux of government arguments in a debate in the Legislative Council. He said:

I want to give to the natives of this country the right of proprietorship, which, in many cases [...] they have not got. [...] We must not do anything which would lead to collusion between natives with customary rights and foreigners without any. Otherwise, land might be temporarily taken up by natives simply in order to have something to sell to a white man [...].³⁵

The Bill was highly controversial and viewed by many as “trying to divest the native peoples of their birthright.”³⁶ Because of the pressure of public opinion, the Colonial Office withdrew the Bill, and issued a new one that “did not claim Crown ownership of unused land, but only the right of the Crown to administer these lands in the public interest.”³⁷

The intelligentsia saw this change as cosmetic, and members of Mfantsi Amanbuhu Fékuw met in order to plan action to foil this new bill. They soon adopted a new name, the Aborigines’ Rights

Protection Society. The Society's stated goals were to "study all proposed Government measures, to give political education to the people, and to make the people understand the effect of such measures."³⁸ The A.R.P.S. argued against the Lands Bill before the Legislative Council based on specific customary laws they believed it violated. Sarbah, speaking on behalf of the A.R.P.S., "maintained that the main objection to the Bill [...] was its encroachment upon their natural right of absolute ownership of their lands and the fundamental change of their status to that of mere holders and settlers."³⁹

The British claimed that opposition to the bill was largely due to educated rabble rousers who were unrepresentative of the masses. In response, the press launched a defense of the A.R.P.S. For example, the *Gold Coast Methodist Times* ran an editorial entitled "Why Blame the educated?"⁴⁰ The A.R.P.S., for its part, hastened to point out that it acted on behalf of the Chiefs. Eventually, a deputation consisting of three merchants – J.W. Sey, T.F.E. Jones and George Hughes – was able to secure a meeting with the Colonial Office. In order to demonstrate their legitimacy, "so much stress was laid on the fact that the deputation genuinely represented the 'Natural Rulers' that the A.R.P.S. was not mentioned either in the petitions drawn up in London, or in the official report of their interview with the Secretary of State."⁴¹ Chamberlain responded to the deputation's objections by assuring them that "in all cases where the natives are concerned the native law [would] remain and prevail."⁴²

Several other reasons have been proposed for Chamberlain's acquiescence, including commercial interests, Governor Maxwell's death, or problems within his own political party. However, in the Gold Coast, the shelving of the Lands Bill was seen as a triumph for the A.R.P.S. When writing Sarbah's biography in 1971, Azu Crabbe demonstrated the power of this interpretation, saying, "The disallowance of the Lands Bill, 1897, was a personal victory for Sarbah and to him and the other leaders of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society this country owes a perpetual debt of gratitude."⁴³ Thus "from 1898 onwards the A.R.P.S., having rallied mass support to protect land rights, became the self-appointed mouthpiece for constitutional demands."⁴⁴

The steps taken within this action became the Society's standard mode of operation until 1922. The members used specifics of tradition, namely "the immemorial right to their lands," to oppose proposed legislation, using constitutional processes.⁴⁵ Casely Hayford exemplifies this approach in The Truth about the West African Land Question, which, while not an A.R.P.S. publication, uses the same tactics as were employed by the Society. First Casely Hayford argues that since "the Gold Coast, unlike Northern Nigeria, or even Ashanti, has never been acquired

by Great Britain either by conquest, concession, or purchase" African customs for the use of land apply.⁴⁶ He then outlines these customs:

The King, *qua* king, does not own all the lands of the State. The limits of his proprietary rights are strictly defined. There are, first of all, lands which are the ancestral property of the King. These he can deal with as he pleases, but with the sanction of the members of his family. Secondly, there are lands attached to the stool which the King can deal with only with the consent of the Councillors. Thirdly, there are general lands of the State over which the King exercises paramountcy. It is a sort of sovereign oversight which does not carry with it the ownership of any particular land.⁴⁷

Finally, he concludes his argument saying, "the true view is that the West African is unalterably attached to his land, and that, legally, his status cannot be changed to that of a serf."⁴⁸

This method of asserting native jurisdiction and defining native laws would continue to be used by the A.R.P.S. in attempts to block government intervention. Their first petition also "set forth a definite claim to leadership on behalf of educated Africans."⁴⁹ They claimed that:

Kings, Chiefs, and other inhabitants had sent their sons to be educated in England, 'and to be trained there in the English system of Parliamentary Government and as professional men' [and thus] there was now an educated class capable of leadership: "These gentlemen, from their education and position, have become the leaders of their fellow countrymen, by whom they are followed, trusted and beloved."⁵⁰

As long as the interests of the intelligentsia and the "natural leaders" with regard to the colonial government remained similar, such claims to leadership were tolerated. However, once those interests diverged, the "natural leaders" as well as colonial officials would question the legitimacy of the intelligentsia's claims to leadership.

The birth of the A.R.P.S. was glorified in the press and used in attempts to preclude British government intervention for years to come. For example, the press often invoked the Lands Bill in opposition to the Forestry Bill, saying "It seems to us particularly unfortunate that in the year 1911 it should become necessary for us to go over the same

ground that was practically covered in the year 1897 when the underlying principles of the famous Lands Bill were thrashed out, and we had hoped that all misunderstandings as to the nature of land tenure obtaining on the Gold Coast had been forever settled.”⁵¹ Later, they acridly remarked that “The Forestry Bill, 1910 has now been thoroughly explained and interpreted to the Cape Coast public [...] The principles underlying the Bill are common property and the masses as well as the classes are satisfied that the difference between the ‘Forestry Bill’ of 1910 and Maxwell’s Lands Bill of 1897 is analogous to that between Tweedledum and Tweedledee – a difference without distinction.”⁵²

Thus the political activity of the intelligentsia between 1890 and 1911 was characterized by its careful use of substantive matters of traditional law to defend against greater involvement by British colonial officials. While colonial officials still tended to paint the intelligentsia as unrepresentative, or even un-African, rabble-rousers, their alliances with the Chiefs seemed to negate such an assessment. However, John Mensah Sarbah died unexpectedly at the end of the period and the intelligentsia found itself not only facing increasing external opposition, but also experiencing conflict within its ranks.⁵³

Tried and True or Unification: Conflict of Leadership 1911-1922

In the years following Sarbah’s death, the intelligentsia of the Gold Coast faced a fundamental choice: whether to continue with previously established constitutional avenues to protect Gold Coast society, or to expand their goals and conceptions of tradition in a bid for greater West African unity. The years from 1911 to 1922 were largely devoted to the resolution of this question. In 1911, *The Gold Coast Leader*, “the outstanding paper of the period,” published editorials expressing confidence in the A.R.P.S. and the liberal constitutional principles to which it was wedded; however, by 1922 the leadership of the A.R.P.S. was replaced wholesale by leaders of the congressional movement with the approval of the paper.⁵⁴

A number of factors allowed the growth of this debate: change in leadership, a more interventionist colonial government and international events that increased the visibility of Pan-Africanist ideology within the Gold Coast. The debate between factions of the leadership not only involved the future goals of the intelligentsia, but also how “tradition” was to be defined. When the leaders of the congressional movement triumphed, they assured the use of a broader pan-Africanist idea of tradition in political discourse.

J.B. Danquah, in the introduction to Magnus Sampson’s Gold Coast Men of Affairs described the Gold Coast after Sarbah’s death as

in “an age of transition.”⁵⁵ He notes that Sarbah’s death necessitated experimentation with ideologies, saying “the succession to national leadership in 1910 was not in the automatic ‘apostolic’ style. Men had to be tired. Ideals had to be tested.”⁵⁶ Sarbah’s death, therefore, was significant not just because he was a respected leader, but also because it created the opportunity for Pan-Africanist interpretations of tradition to be heard.

Additionally, the Colonial government was “trend[ing] towards a more interventionist indirect rule policy, which became evident from as early as Sir Hugh Clifford’s governorship (1912-1919).”⁵⁷ Controversial new policies such as stricter sanitation laws prompted by the 1910 outbreak of yellow fever in Sekondi (including the Destruction of Mosquitoes Bill, 1911), the Forestry Bill (introduced 1910), the Palm Oil Bill (passed 1913), provoked outrage from the intelligentsia. Furthermore, as they were passed through the Legislative Council “African Councilors found themselves challenging (with little success) unpopular decisions.”⁵⁸ While opposition to “the government’s interventionist actions” was largely unsuccessful, the lack of success “provoked more stubborn opposition to these policies, which in turn resulted in an even more interventionist government policy.”⁵⁹ Frustration with limited African (particularly intelligentsia) influence in the Legislative Council made the congressional movement even more appealing.

Additionally, international events led to Pan-Africanism receiving more prominent attention in the Gold Coast media. By 1911, Pan-Africanist ideology was no new phenomenon; the first Pan-Africanist Congress had met in London in 1900. However, calls for unity were gaining frequency and prominence, though still tempered by pragmatism. For example, in 1912 the *Leader* reprinted an article from the *African World* regarding “Dr. Abdurahman, president of the African Political Organisation,” who believed that “the coloured races were rapidly beginning to see the necessity for union, which was their only means of securing and protecting their existing rights [and] that the white policy meant a war of extermination against the coloured races and natives.” However, a mitigating editorial note proclaimed that “The somewhat inflammatory language of this speech is condemned as injuring rather than benefiting the coloured cause. Responsible journals urged the coloured people to trust to the slow but steady growth of principles more liberal than those embodied in the South African Constitution.”⁶⁰ Later in the same issue, David Gwira argued that to escape “the abysmal depths of national decrepitude and [...] the realms of social insignificance [...] it was necessary] to destroy the idol of disunion and tribal differences [and to] lay our foundation on unity, benevolence and concord.”⁶¹ It is significant that instead of the previous emphasis on the polluting influence of

European culture, these pieces stress the need for African unity exceeding that which had existed before colonial rule.

In 1912, Dr. Edward Blyden, often described as a prophet of Pan-Africanism, died. Dr. Blyden's works stressed the importance of racial unity. For example, in 1872 he had written of Black Americans that "being of the same race, and in some instances of the same tribal origin as ourselves, with all the natural affinities, they will easily assimilate. It will be but ingrafting the wild plant upon the improved plant of the same common stock."⁶² He furthermore explicitly made the link between racial characteristics and the traditional organization of society. Blyden was a racial essentialist; he argued that "the duty of every man, of every race is to contend for its individuality" and that for Africans this meant the maintenance of an "African personality."⁶³ Therefore, he saw it as only natural that this racial personality had produced the same traditional social structures. He explicitly outlined African traditions, as:

1st. The Family, which in Africa, as everywhere else is the basic unit of society. Every male and female marries at the proper age [...] 2nd. Property. The land and the water are accessible to all. Nobody is in want of either, for work, for food, or for clothing. 3rd. Social Life. This is communistic or co-operative. All work for each, and each works for all. 4th. The tribes have laws regulating every function of human life and the laws are known to all the members of the tribe [...]⁶⁴

Thus Blyden's work redefined tradition as something that extended beyond tribal customs and was the result of Africanness itself. While he acknowledged tribal differences, he thought them inconsequential compared with the fundamental similarities that all African societies shared.

When he died, the editors of the *Gold Coast Leader* demonstrated similar tendencies to laud the ideals of unity, but balk at practically pursuing such a policy. The tenor of the article memorializing Dr. Blyden is captured in its final sentence: "We may criticize Dr. Blyden and his work: we may call him a dreamer – a splendid although impractical dreamer – but no one can deny his claims to greatness among the sons of men."⁶⁵

Despite its apparent limits in practical application, the idea of African unity was gaining force. For example, in his book The Gold Coast Nation, the Reverend Attoh Ahuma addressed not only issues of the Gold Coast as a state, but also advocated racial nationalism. He wrote

that “We shall always miss the pulsation, vibrancy and full volume of life as a nation until we have understood what it is to think nationally – to spend and be spent for the highest good of our country and our race.”⁶⁶ In its appeals, Pan-Africanism invoked the idea of unity based on the deepest kind of tradition – the shared racial traits that were a result of nature itself.

Then, beginning in 1914, the Gold Coast was confronted with the “repatriation” of Black Americans in a very concrete way. Chief Alfred Sam, a native of the Gold Coast, in a plan that was both a “commercial venture” and a part of an “African movement” recruited some sixty Black Americans to settle in West Africa.⁶⁷ While the ship was seized “as a prize vessel by a British warship” and bureaucratic hurdles and insufficient planning led “the African movement [to] collapse” “amid great disappointment” by September 1915, the episode transformed the way the Gold Coast Press viewed such movements.⁶⁸ In January 1914, the *Gold Coast Leader* “condemned the ‘Back to Africa’ movement” questioning Chief Sam’s integrity and the ability of “coloured Americans” to withstand “our *Anopheles* and *Stegomyia*.”⁶⁹ In the face of the official opposition to the movement and obstacles created for the colonists by colonial officials, however, the editors revised their opinion. By the end of January 1915, they “claimed that the whole of British West Africa was unanimous on the idea of the African Movement and that Africans in the four colonies would not tolerate official opposition to ‘this patriotic movement.’”⁷⁰ Thus Chief Sam’s movement had the dual effects of uniting the editors behind the idea of a “Back to Africa” movement to reach throughout the diaspora as well as presenting an opportunity for the press of British West Africa to maintain a unified position.

While Pan-Africanism continued to grow internationally and play a larger role within the Gold Coast, the intelligentsia still had old battles with which to concern itself. They continued to write against the Forestry Bill, and in doing so depended upon the constitutional tactics of the A.R.P.S. Furthermore, they were still accused of incendiary demagoguery. For example, E.D. Morel, a British journalist who gained fame writing against the abuses of the colonial regime in the Belgian Congo, wrote that “The agitation [against the Forestry Bill] is inspired by certain leading members of the Educated Native community of Cape Coast, who have succeeded in imbuing a number of Native Chiefs with the idea that the Ordinance covers a dark design to rob the people of the Gold Coast of their land and its products.”⁷¹

In response, the editors of *The Gold Coast Leader* wrote a series of pieces in which they again defended the legitimacy of the intelligentsia’s political actions. They saw colonial criticism of the educated as self-serving, noting that “[an] educated native [...] becomes

[...] disloyal and a scoundrel when he is able to see through [colonial] laws, he is a misinterpreter of their ways and Ordinances, when he sees through them and warns his people against such laws he is a dangerous character.⁷² This conflict echoed one that had been occurring between the African intelligentsia and colonial officials since 1865 when “the ‘scholars’ were particularly blamed [...] for encouraging a demand for self-government that had not previously existed.”⁷³ Additionally, colonial officials “drew a sharp distinction between the tribes of the interior and the educated Africans in the towns.”⁷⁴ In response, the intelligentsia had argued with remarkable consistency that “it was only natural that educated Africans should make their homes in towns, where they could find the employment for which they had been trained [...] but that] this did not mean they had cast off all tribal allegiance or kinship obligations.”⁷⁵ Thus while growing calls for African unity marked the beginning of this period, the intelligentsia continued to act through the A.R.P.S. in response to local legislation and questions to their authority.

Soon, however, conflict between the leadership of the A.R.P.S. and Casely Hayford and his supporters appeared through the local press in an extraordinarily public way. In this conflict, ideological differences and personal animosities were interwoven, and each side used tradition in order to justify its actions.

Casely Hayford used a racialized conception of tradition in order to justify his goals. He wanted to work toward “the central theme of his political philosophy: [...] unity among the Gold Coast people, unity in West Africa and unity of the coloured races.”⁷⁶ As a practical politician, he wanted greater numbers banded together to achieve a more effective bargaining position with the British Empire. He also “attributed a spiritual world-role to his race and saw West Africa as the vanguard of a Pan-African movement but [...] his race-consciousness was tempered by political moderation and by a recognition of the benefits of British rule.”⁷⁷

Casely Hayford was profoundly influenced by the work of Dr. Blyden, a fact he acknowledged by titling a chapter in *Ethiopia Unbound*, “Race Emancipation – General Considerations: Edward Wilmot Blyden.” In this chapter, he praises “the African school of thought, represented by Dr. Blyden, [in which] the black man is engaged in a sublimer task, namely, the discovery of his true place in creation upon natural and national lines.”⁷⁸ Following in Blyden’s intellectual footsteps, the tradition to which Casely Hayford appealed was that of a deep African tradition based on racial essentialism. He wrote of the “extraordinary [...] spectacle of this huge Ethiopian race – some millions of men – having imbibed all that is best in western culture in the land of their oppressors, yet remaining true to racial instincts and inspirations, customs and institutions, much as did

the Israelites of old in captivity!" He believed that only with this fidelity to the deep African tradition, including living according to "the general traditions and institutions of their ancestors" would "it be possible for our people in bondage 'metaphorically to walk out of Egypt in the near future with a great and real spoil.'"79

To the old guard members of the A.R.P.S., Casely Hayford's efforts to forward his agenda appeared to be merely attempts to increase his personal influence. They were not convinced of the desirability of West African unity, and certainly did not believe in its desirability if Casely Hayford were at the center. To legitimize their continuing hold on power, they used the more recent history of the A.R.P.S.'s success in defending the traditional law of the Gold Coast, its accord with the Chieftaincies, and fidelity to Gold Coast traditional law. *The Gold Coast Leader* implicated the leadership of the in a 1912 editorial in which they noted the "general [...] dissatisfaction" with the A.R.P.S. and attributed it to "some members behaving as if the Society were their own private concern and not a public body."⁸⁰

The beginning of World War I dramatically changed the terms in which such debates were conducted. The war presented an opportunity for the intelligentsia to establish patriotic credentials and eventually vaulted the rhetoric of democracy and self-determination into a central place in the world stage. The intelligentsia also viewed the expression of loyalty as an opportunity to gain rights. This linkage became a central theme in writing in the press almost immediately after the war began. For example, an editorial in the *Leader* proclaimed that "England has faults and does us wrong in many things, but [...] with all her faults we love her still, and we would not exchange her for any other European master." They quickly connected their loyalty to their own interests, saying "we do not relish the idea of fighting as mercenaries with no soul or heart in the thing and for monetary reward only. The position must be considered, and the events at present going on in Europe may bring out one good result for us."⁸¹

Casely Hayford also hastened to demonstrate both his own loyalty and that of the colony by establishing "a scheme with the object of the Gold Coast Colony making some humble contribution to Great Britain in support of the mighty effort she is now making in the cause of liberty and justice."⁸² To complete this picture of propriety, Casely Hayford even made sure that the Governor of the colony acted as Chair of the resulting Sekondi War Fund.

This move proved to be controversial; the members of the A.R.P.S. interpreted it as a brazen grab for the influence that rightfully belonged to the Society. Therefore they established a competing fund. In their publication, *The Nation*, they explained that "The Society, as

the accredited representative body of our Natural Rulers and People, may be regarded as the microcosm of our political world. No national movement or scheme has been initiated or undertaken since its institution without the same owing its inception to the Society.⁸³ To members of the A.R.P.S., any political action that took place outside their purview was necessarily illegitimate. The incensed editors of *The Gold Coast Leaders* defended Casely Hayford, calling “those who are trying to make people believe that an attempt has been made to slight the Aborigine Society” “wicked” and the attack “senseless.”⁸⁴ Thus both camps of the African intelligentsia attempted to take advantage of the wartime opportunity to establish their patriotic credentials, and in doing so to try to increase their own influence.

Wartime rhetoric, which tended to vilify Germany because of its autocratic government, also gave greater value to vocabulary of freedom and democracy. The leaders of the intelligentsia fully exploited this rhetoric. They wrote that “speaking generally, the African has awakened to a sense of liberty and justice, to a sense of higher civilization which makes for the stability and progress of mankind and that he is prepared to maintain his part in the struggle toward that great consummation.”⁸⁵ They also asserted that having fought for “Right and Justice” those principles could not “possibly be displaced in her dealings with her subject races, nor can Englishmen without compunction go about tramping under foot the rights, feelings and interests of their subject peoples as unfortunately was getting too frequently the case before the war started.”⁸⁶ Rhetorical flourishes aside, they took nothing for granted and warned “the subject races [...] to make a careful study of their position, know exactly what they want and produce leaders among themselves who will lead them to the goal of their ambition as British subjects.”⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the intelligentsia continued to try to attain greater representation. The idea of a conference to bring together the “leading men” of West Africa was probably first conceived in 1914.⁸⁸ The desire for such a conference demonstrates the frustration the intelligentsia felt with how the Town Councils and national Legislative Council functioned. With regard to Town Councils, “the upper echelons of the Western-educated elite [...] had almost no influence in framing its policy. All they could do was ineffectually oppose its most unpopular decisions.”⁸⁹ In 1916 the number of unofficial members of the Legislative Council “was increased to nine, and the practice was adopted of nominating three Europeans, three paramount chiefs and three representatives of the educated Africans.”⁹⁰ However, this amendment was a disappointment for the members of the intelligentsia, who wished for far greater influence. Combining “the ambitions for constitutional progress that had been aroused by the First World War” and ideals of West African unity,

the idea of the Conference continued to gain popularity.⁹¹ It also drove a further wedge between the A.R.P.S. and Casely Hayford's followers.

By 1916, a column appearing under the heading "Proposed West African Conference" demonstrated how the A.R.P.S. had fallen in esteem. It said that "the Aborigines' Society is quite competent to be entrusted with that duty [of organizing the conference]. Before undertaking such an important duty however, the Society must remodel itself, adapt itself to a *progressive humor* and harness into its service all the enlightened intellects in the country."⁹² The A.R.P.S. was no longer going to be unquestioningly accepted; unless they adopted calls for unity, they would be leaders without followers. In 1918 the A.R.P.S. was still being admonished to "do its duty by the country in this important racial movement, and [...] to give an active material impetus to the proposal, if the Society is to maintain its reputation as the first political institution of the country."⁹³ However, in that year the A.R.P.S. decided that the Chiefs could not participate in such a conference.⁹⁴ In rejecting the conference that was "the burning question throughout British West Africa," the leaders of the A.R.P.S. relegated themselves to political impotence.⁹⁵ The majority of the intelligentsia had by now been convinced by Casely Hayford's assertion of the need for African unity rather than purely defensive actions based on Fanti or Asante tradition. The first meeting of the National Congress of British West Africa occurred in Accra in 1920 with Casely Hayford as the triumphant Vice-President of the conference.

The triumph of the Congressional movement was made possible by a confluence of events: the death of John Mensah Sarbah, continued frustration with the Colonial government and Legislative Council and the growing prominence of Pan-Africanist ideals internationally, influencing the Gold Coast intelligentsia. When the leadership of the A.R.P.S. was replaced wholesale with supporters of Casely Hayford in 1922, the vision for West African unity and a Pan-Africanist reading of tradition overcame the older descriptive reading of tradition, fulfilling a process that began with Sarbah's death.

Triumph of Unification 1920-1926

After it became clear that Casely Hayford's vision of unity had triumphed among the African intelligentsia, the challenge of obtaining political rights with this more expansive interpretation of tradition remained. In response to this challenge, the African intelligentsia implemented a new vocabulary of tradition to push for democratic reform. "Encouraged by Woodrow Wilson's new edition of nineteenth-century liberal democracy, by the general optimism of the post-war years, and by the prospect of a new world-wide reconstruction [...]" the

nationalist groups in West [...] Africa, seriously came to believe in their ability” to affect global events.⁹⁶ In order to do so, they capitalized upon the new international respect for self-determination by emphasizing the nationhood of their people and the democratic spirit of traditional systems of government. This rhetoric also deemphasized the importance of the Chiefs and thus brought the intelligentsia on a collision course with the “natural leaders.”

This rhetoric emphasizing the democratic spirit of traditions was most prominently used in the intelligentsia’s campaign to reform the Legislative Council. The composition of the Legislative Council, which favored European and Chiefly interests, had long been a sore spot for the African intelligentsia. In fact, the deputation sent by the A.R.P.S. to discuss the Lands Bill of 1897 also carried a petition to reform the Legislative Council, which Chamberlain refused even to discuss. The A.R.P.S. had again petitioned to reform the composition of the Council in 1912. This petition was similarly fruitless. More unofficial members were added to the Legislative Council in 1916, but the intelligentsia was still unsatisfied, and the issue of legislative reform was prominent among those discussed at the National Congress’s meeting in 1920.

The result of the discussion at Accra was the *Petition for the Reconstitution of the Several Legislative Councils*. This petition proposed “that the people may be given the opportunity of electing one-half of the Members of the Legislative Council, the other half being nominated by the Crown.”⁹⁷ The petition emphasized the democratic nature of the traditional laws that the British government claimed to be committed to upholding, saying “in asking for the franchise, the people of British West Africa are not seeking to copy a foreign institution. On the contrary [...] the principle of electing representatives [...] is inherent in all the systems of British West Africa, which are essentially democratic.”⁹⁸

The organizers of the National Congress had already made a powerful enemy in Nana Ofori Atta, an influential chief, who objected not to the goal of such a meeting, but to “the untraditional method of procedure, and its implications for chieftaincy.”⁹⁹ The petition then exacerbated this conflict by openly challenged the authority of the Chiefs in several ways. It bluntly asserted that “according to the African system no Headman, Chief or Paramount Rulers has an inherent right to exercise jurisdiction unless he is duly elected by the people [...] and that the appointment of political officers also entirely depends upon [...] the will of the people.” The petition also sought to replace the authority of the Chiefs with that of the members of the Congress, saying “a large class of well-educated men [...] have become the natural leaders of their people.”¹⁰⁰

While in London, the deputation also met with the League of Nations Union. In this meeting they also took care to emphasize the democratic nature of their traditions as well as to establish their legitimacy as representatives. Referring to Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which established the “tutelage” of areas “inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world,” Casely Hayford said “In British West Africa you are not dealing with primitive races as is sometimes conceived in this country.”¹⁰¹ Casely Hayford went on to emphasize the democratic nature of the “family system” of government explaining that the selection of members of the Legislative Council by the Governor was “a system repugnant to our own ideas [since] instead of our elected members from the family system in the African community as heretofore, we have men forced upon us.”¹⁰² Casely Hayford also went to great pains to avoid the prejudices commonly directed against the political actions of the educated class. Near the beginning of the meeting he asserted that “it is not true or accurate to say that we are divorced from the institutions and customs of our people. [...] I and my friends have identical interests with the people [...] educated or uneducated, we sink or swim with our people.”¹⁰³ However, this meeting, as well as the petition, were to be in vain because of the fervent opposition the petition provoked in the Gold Coast.

Predictably, the petition drew outrage from the Chiefs. Furthermore, when the National Congress sent the deputation to London to deliver the petition, it appears to “have fallen foul of a progressive and sympathetic Governor [Guggisberg].”¹⁰⁴ Nana Ofori Atta judged the deputation to be a sufficient threat to “launch a devastating attack on the claims of the Congress leaders in the Legislative Council in December 1920.”¹⁰⁵ In these attacks, Ofori Atta asserted that the Gold Coast “consist[ed] of a great number of States [...] absolutely independent of any other State in the Colony,” thus denying the premise of the Congress.¹⁰⁶ The combined force of the ire of the Chiefs and annoyance of the Governor rendered the petition ineffective.

H.J. Read of the Colonial Office responded to the petitioners with disdain. He noted that the Governors of Nigeria and the Gold Coast had given the office:

Information which shows that ‘the National Congress of British West Africa’ is in no way representative of the native communities on whose behalf it purports to speak, that its pretensions in this respect are expressly repudiated by the most authoritative exponents of native public opinion (including practically all the Chiefs in the Gold Coast), and that the scheme put

forward by the Congress would in their opinion be inimical to the interests of the community.¹⁰⁷

The Governor, for his part, responded to the petition with a speech at the Legislative Council in which he condemned the methods of the National Congress (though not explicitly the ends). He accused the Congress of unfair tactics, noting that “any attempts to get at the people behind the backs of the Chiefs and their Councilors will be bound in this country to create unrest and enormous opposition from those who support the maintenance of national institutions.”¹⁰⁸

In their next petition for reforms to the Council in 1925, the A.R.P.S. was more careful with its language. It took pains to pay lip service to the Chiefs, saying that “it is not correct that the educated classes desire the Chiefs to be kept back.”¹⁰⁹ They also attempted to present the Chiefs as in agreement with the A.R.P.S., saying that “the Chiefs [...] are aggrieved that such representation should be restricted to the class of Head-Chiefs.”¹¹⁰

Despite these rhetorical changes, they continued to argue that representation was imperative to fulfill the democratic spirit of African traditions. The petition listed the ills of the Council as follows: “the Order in Council is conceived in a most illiberal spirit; that it confers but a restricted measure of elective representation on the people; that it strikes a deadly blow at the federal union of the Native States and at independence of the Chiefs; that it violates the Customary Law in its most vital particulars [...]”¹¹¹ This order is significant, ascribing as it does greater importance to liberalism than to any violation of customary law.

This petition was also ineffective, and after initially protesting the Constitution of 1925, in the interest of pragmatism Casely Hayford accepted the Constitution. However, by this time the intelligentsia had redefined the tradition of their rhetoric from the collection of customary practices that they employed to defend against British intervention to a fundamentally democratic system that they used to demand political rights.

Conclusion

The research in this paper has many limitations. The primary limitation is one of subject: the educated community of the Gold Coast was a very small minority. My research does not address the important voices of the “natural leaders” or those of colonial officials with any detail. In silencing these members of the community, extremely important contributions are missing from the conversation that defined tradition in the colonial context. More fundamentally, it leaves completely

unaddressed how such changes in rhetoric affected people who were not members of the elite. Furthermore, the research is limited by sources used. This research relies very heavily on *The Gold Coast Leader*.

Further research could focus on complicating the interpretation of the elite presented here by including the members of the elite with lower levels of education and examining the rhetoric they used in their contests to hold traditional office. Deeper investigation into the roles that ethnic and geographic distribution played in interpretation of tradition could also lead to a more nuanced analysis. Additional research using more conservative media sources would also allow the conflict within the intelligentsia to be studied more completely. Outside the realm of the educated elite, the further research could also present opposing interpretations of tradition by the “natural leaders” and colonial officials and thus reflect the complete dialogue on the meaning of tradition.

Despite these limitations, the study of the intelligentsia nonetheless affirms important conclusions. The varied invocation of tradition by the African intelligentsia in the Gold Coast demonstrates that tradition is neither the completely static nor completely fabricated concept that it has been called. Instead, in invoking tradition the intelligentsia responded to local legislation, international events and interpersonal jockeying for influence. The shift toward emphasizing democratic institutions in traditional government also demonstrates how changes “are slowly assimilated into tradition through projection of the present into the past [...] such that tradition appears both seamless and timeless.”¹¹² In the Gold Coast, tradition was indeed the subject of “continual renegotiation.”¹¹³

Notes:

1. See for example, Magnus Sampson's descriptions of members of the intelligentsia in *Gold Coast Men of Affairs*, in which he describes Casely Hayford as “the most extraordinary statesman and hero who had had to guide the destiny of the Gold Coast for a long period of time,” 163. For contrast, see Basil Davidson's *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*, which argues that the African educated elite attempted to modernize Africa by denying Africa's past. This book centers on the later period of decolonization, however it demonstrates constructed binaries between “Europeanness” and “Africanness.”
2. Margaret Priestly's *West African Trade and Coast Society* demonstrates the static interpretation of tradition, while *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm argues forcefully for tradition's construction to facilitate colonial domination.

3. In his article *Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa*, Thomas Spear exhorts historians to “focus on the dynamics of traditions, customs and ethnicities; on the contradictions of colonial rule; on shifting resource endowments and access; on how African and European intellectuals reinterpreted traditions in the colonial and post-colonial context; and on why others believed them.”
4. K.A.B. Jones-Quartey. *A Summary History of the Ghana Press, 1822-1960* (Accra: Ghana Information Services Dept.,1974), 21.
5. In *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas*, Philip Zachernuk warns that historians of this period often conflate the elite with the intelligentsia. I have tried to define the intelligentsia narrowly to avoid this.
6. J. Ayodele Langley. *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 175.
7. Marshall Clough. *This Far and no Farther: The African Educated Community of the Gold Coast and the Lands Bill, 1894-1898*. In *Occasional Papers on African Intellectual Responses to the West* (Stanford: Stanford University Department of History, 1971),7.
8. Roger S. Gocking *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities Under Colonial Rule* (Lanham MD: University Press of America, 1999), 177.
9. *Ibid.*, 149.
10. The use of tradition by these “scholars” in their competition for traditional office presents a new set of challenges that should be studied further.
11. David Kimble. *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism 1850-1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 87.
12. *Ibid.*, 92.
13. *Ibid.*, 62.
14. *Ibid.*, 301.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Hollis Lynch. Introduction to *Fanti Customary Laws: A Brief Introduction to the Principles of the Native Laws and Customs of the Fanti and Akan Districts of the Gold Coast* by John Mensah Sarbah (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1897), xii.
17. *Gold Coast Chronicle*, 18 October, 1894.
18. J.E. Casely Hayford. *Gold Coast Native Institutions with Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and the Ashanti* (London: Sweet and Maxwell Ltd., 1903), 12.
19. *Ibid.*, xi.
20. *Ibid.*, x.
21. *Ibid.*, x.

22. Philip Zachernuk. Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 2.
23. The Gold Coast Leader, 24 February, 1906.
24. Ibid, 15 August, 1908.
25. Lynch, x.
26. Sarbah, John Mensah. Fanti Customary Laws: A Brief Introduction to the Principles of the Native Laws and Customs of the Fanti and Akan Districts of the Gold Coast (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1897), 31.
27. Ibid, 121.
28. Ibid, 51.
29. Ibid, xxv-xxviii.
30. Ibid, 91-2.
31. J.E. Casely Hayford. Gold Coast Native Institutions with Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and the Ashanti (London: Sweet and Maxwell Ltd., 1903), ix.
32. Lodge, Tom. Introduction to The Truth about the West African Land Question (London: C.M. Phillips, 1913), xv.
33. Kimble, 523.
34. Clough, 14.
35. G.E. Metcalf. Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History 1807-1957 (Suffolk: Richard Clay and Company Ltd., 1964), 499.
36. Clough, 15.
37. Ibid.
38. Azu Crabbe. John Mensah Sarbah, 1864-1910 (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1971), 21.
39. Ibid, 23.
40. Gold Coast Methodist Times, 30 April 1897.
41. Kimble, 351.
42. Ibid, 354.
43. Crabbe, 25.
44. Kimble, 552.
45. Metcalf, 498
46. Casely Hayford, 20.
47. Ibid, 54-5.
48. Ibid, 70.
49. Kimble, 91.
50. Ibid.
51. Gold Coast Leader, 4 February 1911.
52. Ibid.
53. No consensus exists as to the exact date of Sarbah's death. Kimble places it at 1911, whereas Sampson and Crabbe cite evidence that he died in November of 1910. Suffice it to say that by early 1911 he was certainly

dead.

54. Jones-Quartey, 20.

55. J.B. Danquah. Introduction to Gold Coast Men of Affairs by Magnus Sampson (London: Dawsons, 1937), 21.

56. *Ibid*, 22.

57. Gocking, 167.

58. *Ibid*, 136.

59. *Ibid*, 168.

60. *Gold Coast Leader*, 3 February, 1912.

61. *Ibid*.

62. Edward Blyden. Quoted in Origins of West African Nationalism by Henry Wilson (Glasgow: The University Press, 1969), 236.

63. *Ibid*, 249-50.

64. *Ibid*, 254.

65. *Gold Coast Leader*, 24 February, 1912.

66. Attah S.R.B. Ahuma. The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1911), 8.

67. Langley treats the movement in detail in Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945.

68. J. Ayodele Langley. Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 51, 56.

69. *Ibid*, 46.

70. *Ibid*, 54.

71. Morel, reprinted in *Gold Coast Leader*, 17 February, 1912.

72. *Gold Coast Leader*, 16 March, 1912.

73. Kimble, 88.

74. *Ibid*, 89.

75. *Ibid*, 90.

76. Langley, 38.

77. *Ibid*, 39.

78. Casely Hayford, 164.

79. *Ibid*, 165, 173.

80. *Gold Coast Leader*, 27 April, 1912.

81. *Ibid*, 8 August, 1914

82. *Ibid*, 19 September, 1914.

83. *The Nation*, 15 October 1914.

84. *Gold Coast Leader*, 14 November 1914.

85. *Ibid*, 10 October, 1914.

86. *Ibid*, 5 December 1914.

87. *Ibid*.

88. Kimble, 375.

89. Gocking, 136.

90. Wight, Martin. The Gold Coast Legislative Council (London: Faber &

- Faber Ltd., 1947), 26.
91. Ibid.
92. Gold Coast Leader, 13 May 1916.
93. Ibid, 24 August, 1918.
94. Kimble, 378.
95. Gold Coast Leader, 5-12 October 1918.
96. Langley, 107.
97. National Congress of British West Africa. Petition for the reconstitution of the several legislative councils and the constitution of houses of assembly and other reforms (London: Electric Law Press, 1920), 6.
98. Ibid, 5.
99. Kimble, 380.
10. National Congress of British West Africa. Petition for the reconstitution of the several legislative councils and the constitution of houses of assembly and other reforms (London: Electric Law Press, 1920), 5.
101. National Congress of British West Africa, London Committee. Report of the proceedings of a meeting held in London between the League of Nations Union and the delegates of the National Congress of British West Africa (London: Electric Law Press, 1920), 12.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid, 13.
104. Kimble, 387.
105. Ibid, 389.
106. Ibid, 389.
107. Metcalf, 586.
108. Ibid.
109. Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society. Petition for amendment of the Gold `Coast (Colony) (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925 (London: Ashurst, Morris, Crisp, Solicitors, 1926), 5.
110. Ibid, 4.
111. Ibid, 3.
112. Thomas Spear. "Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa." *Journal of African History* 44 (2003): 5.
113. Sara Berry. No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 41.

JEWISH HISTORIANS REMEMBER MEDIEVAL AL-ANDALUSIA:
HISTORICAL ANALYSIS AS EMBODIMENT OF
CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL AGENDAS

SARAH KLEINMAN

Spain in the Middle Ages is frequently used as a case study for analyzing religious conflict and integration, as the three dominant monotheistic groups—Christians, Muslims, and Jews—converged on the Iberian Peninsula and lived amidst each other in the 9th through 15th centuries. Scholars of this period refer to the diverse nature of medieval Spanish society as *convivencia* (literally “coexistence”). According to Brian Catlos, this word “has been embraced and dismissed with more passion than any other historiographic term coined in reference to medieval Iberia.”¹ During this period, Christians, Muslims, and Jews drank and gambled together, fought common foes in battle, lived in the same neighborhoods and homes, and engaged in trade and business ventures together as partners and competitors.² Regardless of their perspectives, historians agree that this period is critical to understanding the development of the relations between religious groups.

This period ushered in massive shifts in power and demography throughout what is now Spain; therefore, scholars look to the political and legal status of various ethno-religious groups as they moved from dominant to minority, from foreigner to ruler, from governed to governing. Over the course of half a millennium in Spain, Visigothic Christians rose and fell from power, Muslims conquered and governed, and Christians returned to political and social dominance. Meanwhile, each ruling group established and maintained a set of guidelines to define and deal with minority populations, including the Jews who were never more than a small percentage of the total population. Though far from static, the somewhat consistent status of Jews during this period has led many scholars to study the Jews of the Middle Ages to understand more broadly the foundations of historic and contemporary religious communities. Although historians agree on the importance of these few centuries to religious and historical scholarship, they interpret the meaning of intergroup interactions of this time in entirely dissimilar ways. Scholarship concerning the treatment of Jews in Muslim-dominated Al-Andalusia in the 10th and 11th centuries serves as a prime example of how historians use information to create and interpret—rather than simply reiterate—historical “realities.” While some scholars perceive this period as the epitome of inter-religious tolerance and integration, others understand the same period as embodying the first clear indications of anti-Jewish hatred that would ultimately lead to the

attempted destruction of the Jewish people in the 20th century.

Given the persistence of anti-Semitism over the last seven centuries and the murderous events of the past few decades, the interpretation of Jewish life under Islamic rule in medieval Iberia by modern Jewish historians is of particular interest in the discussion of historiographic considerations. Whereas most Jewish historians before the 20th century conceptualized this era as a time of flourishing culture, political mobility, and religious freedom, scholars in recent decades have concluded that 10th and 11th century Spain was the first indication of the forthcoming increase in persecution against the Jewish people. How can scholars of the same period, using similar if not identical historical documents, come to such different conclusions about Jewish existence at the time? What factors influence these scholars, and how do they interpret evidence in the context of contemporary religious interactions and conflicts? How do historians incorporate their contemporary perspectives into their historical study, thus contributing to political discussions but potentially misrepresenting historical events? To begin answering these complex historiographic questions, an analysis of the ways in which three Jewish historians of the modern era remember the 10th and 11th centuries in Al-Andalusia will shed light on how interpretations of the past can reflect contemporary social situations and motivations more than historical truths.

The Social and Legal Status of Jews in Al-Andalusia

Before endeavoring to understand the contemporary forces that influence and shape historical analysis of this time period, it is essential to offer a brief contextual discussion of the social, political, and legal status of the Jewish people in Muslim Spain. It is generally accepted in the scholarly community that Jews experienced increased liberty and improved social mobility under Muslim rulers, starting with Abd al-Rahman III in 912 A.D, in contrast to the relative persecution and social limitations experienced under Christian rule in the previous centuries.³ Especially during the 10th and 11th centuries, Jews engaged in activities that improved both their own socioeconomic status and that of their Muslim rulers. In trading silk and slaves, generating new knowledge in the sciences, translating works to and from Arabic and other languages, participating in the government bureaucracy, and administering commercial and industrial processes, the Jews of Al-Andalusia contributed significantly to the cultural and economic vitality of the Caliphate in Cordoba. Their multilingualism helped Jews of this period situate themselves at the center of trade activities; “[Jewish] traders used Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Greek as well as ‘the language of Franks, Andalusians, and Slavs,’” so that had an advantage in this field over the Muslim and Christian cohabitants.⁴ As Cordoba, the capital of Islamic

governance in the region at this time, became a thriving economic center, it also became an intellectual hub for Jewish scholars, developing a “magnetic appeal to Andalusian Jewry.”⁷⁵ Thus, this period in Jewish history seems to set a historical precedent for social and religious freedom as well as cultural expression.

In the context of this heightened Jewish wealth and social status beginning in the 10th century in Al-Andalusia, the dominant Muslims redefined the legal status of other *ahl al-Kitab* (“people of the book,” or monotheistic groups) in Spain and throughout the Muslim world, instituting the *dhimma* law. The *ahl ed-dhimma* (or “protected peoples”) were, as the title suggests, protected in certain regards by this system of law; however, they were also constantly reminded of their inferior status and were to remain comprehensively subject to Muslims. Thus, despite their limited social mobility and civic autonomy, the law makes codifies the Jews’ perpetual inferiority: “The protected communities must recognize the primacy of Islam...and must accept certain fiscal disabilities and social limitations, in token of their submission.”⁷⁶ Though Jews and Christians were, for the most part, exempt from forced conversion, exile, and execution under Muslim rule in Spain, they were forced to acknowledge their second-class status by paying a minority tax, called the *jizyah*, and engaging in other civic activities that symbolically reasserted their inferiority.

The vague and complex socio-civic definition of Jews under the *dhimma* law led to significant fluctuation and variation in the status and treatment of Jews in medieval Spain; it is precisely this inconsistency that lays the foundation for contemporary historiographic debates within the Jewish scholarly community. Sources indicate that there were both unprecedented benefits and grave disadvantages for Jews living in Al-Andalusia in the 10th and 11th centuries. In some respects, this period produced a remarkably stable and wealthy Jewish community in which Jews occupied public offices, contributed to trade and commerce, and were accepted in various inter-ethnic social circles. Many Jews even acquired significant control over their Muslim counterparts, despite the explicit restrictions against *dhimmi* dominance over Muslims; these included such historic figures as Hasdai ibn Shaprut, a royal physician and statesman, and Samuel ibn Nagrela, a scholar, poet, scribe, statesman, and commander of the Granadan troops. Ben Sasson argues that the legal situation of Jews in Muslim Spain was generally better than that under Christian rule because “in the former, Jews were not the sole ‘infidels,’” and in comparison to the Christians, “Jews were less dangerous and more loyal to the Muslim regime.”⁷⁷ Jews during this time period were “less potentially dangerous or subversive,” so they were perceived as being more useful as officials “whose loyalties might be relied on.”⁷⁸ For these and other reasons—including their perceived skill in financial affairs, their perpetually marginalized and unthreatening position,

and their knowledge of multiple languages—Jews were afforded significant political opportunities at this time.

Some evidence suggests that these benefits were limited to a small group of elite Jews, and Muslim attitudes toward them was far from sympathetic. Antoine Fattal, a mid-20th century French scholar of this period, wrote: “He [the *dhimmi*] is marked out for social inequality and belongs to a despised caste; unequal in regard to individual rights; unequal as regards taxes; unequal in the Law Courts.”⁹ Wasserstein observes that “a hardening of Muslim attitudes toward Jews and Jewish participation in the politics of Islamic states” is progressively noticeable over the course of the 11th century.¹⁰ In the realm of cultural expression and what is perceived by some as a literary Renaissance in the Jewish community of this period, a few historians argue that the extensive poetry generated at this time was actually an expression of unilateral assimilation at best, and a form of resistance against Muslim oppression at worst.¹¹ Gerber challenges the notion that this was a time and place of cultural exchange and bilateral integration, saying that Jewish culture was actually “of no consequence from the point of view of the dominant Muslim majority.”¹² Despite his status as a renowned poet and philosopher of this period, Moses Maimonides reveals an even more negative perception of the treatment of Jews in medieval Muslim Spain: “...No nation stood against Israel more hostile then they (meaning the Muslims), that no nation did evil to perfection in order to weaken us and belittle us and degrade us like them.”¹³ The incident that most clearly illuminates the violent anti-Jewish tendencies of Muslim Andalusians alluded to by Maimonides occurred in 1066 when a Muslim mob murdered nearly the entire Jewish population of Granada.¹⁴

The convergence of both socio-political autonomy and anti-Jewish policies and behaviors in Muslim Spain has perplexed historians of this period and led to vastly different conclusions about how this period has informed contemporary Muslim, Jewish, and Spanish societies. Gerber describes this ethnically dynamic environment as “a creative union which was accompanied by frequent political and ethnic tension”¹⁵ while others use more loaded terminology, referring to this time as a Jewish “Golden Age” or “cultural renaissance.” Most see this period as central to the global Jewish experience—whether as the beginning of the precipitous persecution of Spanish Jewry leading to mass conversions and the Inquisition, or in a romanticized sense as a sociological model that contemporary societies should try to recreate. Given the diverse sources and analyses of this period, a critical question arises: Was this period truly a paragon of religious integration and coexistence? In order to understand the historiographic issues at stake when historians analyze this period, a comparative analysis of three prominent Jewish scholars—Heinrich Graetz, Eliyahu Ashtor, and Bat Ye’or—will be informative as it will shed light on how historians

approach and interpret their content. Based on the life and works of these scholars, it is clear that most historical analyses are influenced as much by historians' contemporary social perspectives as they are by historical documents.

*Heinrich Graetz and the Quest for Equal Rights
in 19th Century Western Europe*

Born in 1817, this historian is widely accredited as being one of the first Jewish scholars to write a comprehensive history of the Jewish people. An Orthodox Jew raised in Książ-Wielkopolski, Germany (now in Poland), Graetz was a well-educated immigrant who became a history professor at the University of Breslau. During a period in European history when Orthodox Jews felt threatened by the burgeoning Reform Jewish movement, Graetz was a champion of the conservative perspective. Although he was not given due credit for his work within Germany at the time, Graetz became famous throughout Western Europe for his scholarship of Jewish history.

While Graetz's was developing as a young scholar, many European nations were beginning to recognize the equal status and rights of all religious communities. The Austrian emperor Joseph II formalized civic equality for his Jewish subjects in 1782, and Prussia granted equal citizenship to its Jewish population in 1812. However, even as late as 1815, the German federal edicts had only posed the idea of civic equality; the goals of equal rights and protection under the law for all religious groups were not reached in what was to become Germany for more than fifty years. Only in 1870 were all remaining restrictions that had been imposed upon different religious groups abolished throughout the provinces of the German empire. In this context, Graetz was a well-educated German Jew who, despite his accomplishments and knowledge, did not have the same civic freedoms and social rights as his Christian German counterparts. When coupled with the burgeoning "liberal" rhetoric of progress, equality, and universal rights of the 18th century Age of Enlightenment, it is no surprise that Graetz and other "enlightened" Western European Jews desired to expose the hypocrisy of continued oppression of European Jewry.

Consequently, embedded in his six-volume, comprehensive survey of Jewish history is an explicit message about unparalleled Jewish prosperity under Muslim rule in the Spanish Middle Ages and how it relates to modern (late-19th Century, in this case) European politics. Graetz writes, "The height of culture which the nations of modern times are striving to attain—to be imbued with knowledge, conviction, and moral strength—was reached by the Jews of Spain in their most flourishing period."¹⁶ One of the first Jewish scholars to proliferate the idea of Jewish prosperity during

this time, Graetz believed life under Muslim dominance to be far more free and thriving than it was under Christian dominance:

...Fatigued by the constant sight of fanatical oppression in Christendom, the eyes of the observer rest with gladness upon their situation in the Arabian Peninsula. Here the sons of Judah were free to raise their heads, and did not need to look about them with fear and humiliation ... to show their manly courage, to compete for the gifts of fame, and... to measure swords with their antagonists."¹⁷

According to Graetz, the middle half of the 10th century¹⁸ was the "Golden Age of Jewish Science," but it was during the first half of the 11th century when Jewish-Spanish culture truly emerged and flourished.¹⁹ To illustrate the height of Jewish culture in Spain in the early 11th century, Graetz discusses the rank and accomplishments of Samuel ibn Nagrela extensively, saying that this Jew "held the reigns of government" even under Muslim dominance.²⁰ Furthermore, Graetz concludes: "In no country of the world did they enjoy so complete an equality as in the city of Granada. It was a ray of sunshine after days of gloom."²¹ He neglects to mention the massacre of a few thousand Granadan Jews in 1066. Even as late as the mid-12th Century, "before all the nations of Christian Europe excelled...in barbarity towards the Jews," Graetz writes that "Jewish Spain still held the highest rank, as the intellect had here reached its fullest development."²²

Graetz's treatment of this period as conclusively utopian and his unilateral use of evidence to support his claim that 10th and 11th century Spain exemplified interfaith cooperation and sharing illustrates his use of historical analysis to, at least in part, achieve his contemporary political ends. His pivotal *History of the Jews* seems to have three central goals pertaining to the status and life of German and European Jews at the time when Graetz was writing. First, Graetz's analysis challenges the supposedly liberal Christian Europe to end its hypocrisy and institutionalize its rhetoric about political, professional, and cultural equality, suggesting that if medieval Muslim rulers could accomplish this level of freedom and social acceptance, there is no reason why 19th century Christians could not. Secondly, in exposing the relative comfort of life under Muslim leadership in Spain compared to the earlier brutal persecution of the Jewish people under Christian dominance, Graetz may be implying that contemporary Christian society must "compensate for its history of cruelty toward the Jews."²³ Thirdly, in delineating all the ways in which Jews contributed to the Muslim administration in Al-Andalusia, Graetz implicitly suggests that Jews, if given unfettered access to political, economic, and social opportunities, could contribute substantially to the success of 19th Century Christian-

dominated institutions in Europe. More generally, Graetz epitomizes a historiographic movement of the mid- to late-19th century among Jewish scholars that reflects their frustration with the painfully slow process of acculturation and integration into their own supposedly liberal and “enlightened” European societies. Thus, Graetz and his contemporaries sought “a historical precedent for a more tolerant attitude toward Jews”²⁴ and found it in medieval Muslim Spain.

Eliyahu Ashtor and the Quest for Palestinian-Israeli Coexistence

A century after Graetz wrote his *History of the Jews*, a European-born Israeli scholar began to publish works on medieval Muslim Spain using different evidence to suggest the same conclusion: that Jews experienced unparalleled religious, social, and economic freedom in this 10th and 11th century “Golden Age.” Born Eliyahu Strauss in Vienna in 1914, Ashtor adopted this Hebrew name only after moving to Palestine in 1938. His educational training gave him a foundation in both Islamic studies and in traditional Jewish learning, and he became a professor of Islamic Middle Eastern history at the Hebrew University. A self-proclaimed Zionist, Ashtor was deeply involved in the formation of the Jewish State in Palestine throughout the 1940s, and his belief in the virtue and necessity of the Jewish state is clear in his writing. In his introduction to Ashtor’s *The Jews of Moslem Spain*, David Wasserstein indicates that Ashtor’s scholarship is inseparably related to his devotion to the Zionist movement:

*His move to Palestine in the late 1930s and his deep concern thereafter with the history of the Jews in the Islamic environment during the middle ages are revelatory of something beyond the mere interest in the other, beyond the mere fascination with the past that typifies so many scholars in Europe and elsewhere throughout time.*²⁵

In other words, Ashtor’s writing reflected his search for the meaning of the contemporary—post-Holocaust and post-State of Israel—Jewish existence in the Middle East. In the introduction, Wasserstein explicitly states that the purpose of Ashtor’s work is to provide a contextual analysis of Jewish interaction with Islamic society in order to understand the situation in the latter half of the 20th Century: “Without some awareness of the...Jewish past...any explanation of the reasons for the particular shapes it had taken would necessarily be lacking in explanatory power or persuasive force.”²⁶

Given Ashtor’s physical and emotional placement at the center of the Israel/Palestine question, it is clear that his writing was at least influenced and probably driven by his desire to see the Jewish people return to a state

of cultural and social prosperity, living harmoniously among Muslims in the Islamic world. Ashtor's characterization of 10th and 11th century Spain as being a "Golden Age" of tolerance and social mobility is not subtle; Ashtor's depiction "glorifies the Golden Age to the point of romance."²⁷ Though he acknowledges the inferior status of minority groups under Islam associated with the *dhimmi* laws, he argues that Jewish life under Muslim rule in Spain was far better than it had been under Christian leaders before the 9th century, and Jews would only experience greater restrictions in the coming centuries:

*Economically, the Jews had enjoyed equality with their neighbors; culturally they had produced some of their most important work ...; socially and legally, they were not greatly oppressed.... Second-class citizens the Jews may have been in medieval Islam, but second-class status was a good deal better than the experience of many Jews under Christian rule in Europe in the nineteenth century or the experience of other Jews under Christian rule in Europe during the Middle Ages.*²⁸

He argues that the Jews established themselves in every sector of the economy, "exactly like the Arabs, Berbers, and Mozarabs,"²⁹ and they experienced two centuries of cultural and social flourishing and integration into Muslim society. He sees the middle of the 10th century as the time during which the Jews of Muslim Spain "emerged from their cultural seclusion" and began to actively participate in "the flourishing culture of the Omayyad kingdom in Spain."³⁰

Ashtor's works indicate that he views Judaism in Spain during this period as being its most prosperous in history. Furthermore, like Graetz, Ashtor propagates the notion that Jewish life under Islamic rule was far more successful and even enjoyable than it had been—and would later be—under Christian dominance. Wasserstein makes note of the fact that Ashtor repeatedly insists on the "need for research on Jewish historical topics to take account of the fact that the Jews of Islam had always lived as full members of their societies," even if they were technically classified as second-class under *dhimma* law.³¹ His particular emphasis on Jews living amidst Muslims reflects his desire to understand the potential for harmonious coexistence between newly emigrated Jews to Israel and Arabs who had been living in Palestine before and during the Zionist movement and creation of the Jewish State. His analysis reflects a quest to understand how Muslims and Jews were able to communicate and share social space so well in the Jewish "Golden Age" so that the same principles could be applied to contemporary Middle Eastern society.

Ashtor's perspective also reflects another common driving

factor inherent to the theory of Islamic-Jewish interfaith utopia as it was perpetuated through the mid-20th century: “The search for the roots of twentieth-century European anti-Semitism.”³² Ashtor’s analysis of this critical period in Jewish history resembles a 20th century version of Graetz’s 19th century goals: to show an oppressive or discriminatory dominant group—Christian Europeans and Middle Eastern Muslims, respectively—that there had been genuine harmony and coexistence between Jews and Muslims in this 10th-11th century “Golden Age” in Al-Andalusia, so there is no reason why the same level of tolerance, equality, and community could not be established in the “modern” era. Ashtor’s conclusions about the unprecedented quality of interactions between Muslims and Jews at this time in history are exaggerated and presented unilaterally in order to illustrate the necessity and potential benefits of tolerance and mutual respect between the two ethno-religious groups interacting in Palestine, the Middle East, and elsewhere.

Bat Ye’or and the Quest to Debase Arab Historiographic “Propaganda”

While Ashtor’s pro-Israeli, Jewish-nationalist attitude led him to perpetuate an idealized version of Jewish life in Al-Andalusia, Bat Ye’or, another Zionist scholar of the late-20th century, reached an entirely contradictory conclusion about the treatment of Jews during what she and her colleagues refer to as a “mythical” Golden Age. Born to Jewish parents in Cairo, Egypt, Bat Ye’or had her citizenship revoked by the Egyptian government after Israel’s attack on American-, British-, and Egyptian-owned targets in Operation Suzannah (or the Lavon Affair, as it came to be called). Seeking retribution against Israel, Egypt responded to these events by persecuting its own Jewish residents. Consequently, Ye’or and her parents fled from Egypt to London in 1957, becoming stateless refugees in Europe. Ye’or was educated in London, attained British citizenship through marriage, and pursued further studies at the University of Geneva, though she never graduated. Ye’or attributes the subject of her scholarly inquiry to her own experience of hardship, exile, and statelessness, indicating that her desire to understand the Jewish past is rooted in her acknowledgment of the shared experiences of the one million Jews living in Arab countries.

Ye’or and other Jewish scholars of the post-Zionist era began researching the past treatment of Jews under Islamic rule in reaction to Arab historiographic trends of the 1950s and 60s. For at least a century, since the writings of Heinrich Graetz in the late 19th century, Jewish historians remembered the 10th and 11th century Spanish-Jewish experience as being a “Golden Age” of interfaith tolerance and coexistence to which modern societies should aspire. However, after the perceived “invasion” of Zionists into Palestine in the first half of the 20th century, this romanticized

portrayal of Al-Andalusia was perpetuated by Arab-nationalist and pro-Palestinian scholars and used as a weapon against Zionism. Mark Cohen describes this historiographic movement, suggesting that it is directly related to the plight of Arab Palestinians: "Modern antipathy toward Israel began only when the Jews destroyed the old harmony [of the "Golden Age"] by pressing the Zionist claim against Muslim-Arab rights to Palestine."³³ These scholars claimed that if Zionists abandoned their push for the foundation of a Jewish State, then the old harmony and order would be restored. According to Cohen, Arab and Arabist writers of the mid-20th century developed a "slavish devotion to the axiom of Islamic tolerance (*tasumuh*) and to the myth of an interfaith utopia."³⁴

In reaction to this historiographic trend and what was perceived as a manipulation of historic evidence for the sake of a contemporary anti-Israeli propaganda campaign, Ye'or and other pro-Israeli scholars began to generate historical works that pointed to the terrible treatment of Jews under Islam. Littman and Ye'or's self-proclaimed goal in writing "Protected peoples under Islam" in the mid-1970s was to help the student or observer "better understand the real aims behind some of the present-day slogans of Arab propagandists—e.g. the PLO's [Palestinian Liberation Organization] *secular* Arab-Palestine state which is to replace Israel."³⁵ In her historical analyses of Al-Andalusia in the 10th and 11th centuries, Ye'or and her colleagues describe a time in which *dhimmi* status afforded Jews and Christians some religious freedom and limited social mobility; however, her focus is on the continual persecution and suffering of the Jewish people under Islamic rule. "The initial administrative tolerance of the conquerors [Muslims] was dictated by expediency and *realpolitik*," not religious open-mindedness or inclusiveness, and "as Arab colonization took root, the social and economic condition of the local, colonized populations [Jews and other non-Muslims] worsened."³⁶ While some scholars interpret the *dhimma* as a liberal legal policy of the time, affording other monotheistic groups more freedoms than would have been the norm in medieval society, Ye'or focuses her research on the societal conditions that repressed Jewish expression and freedom, describing *dhimmi* status as "an inferior condition of subjugation and humiliation difficult to comprehend today."³⁷ According to a scholarly review of Ye'or's *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam*, "Her analysis is for the most part a profoundly depressing account of discrimination, oppression and massacre."³⁸

Ye'or's selection of primary sources reflects her political perspective, as she highlights documents that reveal an underlying hatred toward the Jews or sources written by victims themselves.³⁹ For instance, to show the extent of hatred of the Jewish peoples in 11th century Spain, Ye'or includes a section from a bitter anti-Jewish ode written by Abu Nisfaq, a well-known 11th century Arab jurist and poet, against Samuel ibn Nagrela:

“Put them back where they belong and reduce them to the lowest of the low....Do not consider it a breach of faith to kill them....”⁴⁰ The author immediately proceeds from this quotation with information about the slaughter of an estimated four thousand Jews in Granada in 1066, which, she adds, is “more than the number of Jews reported to have been killed by the pillaging Crusaders throughout the Rhineland...at the time of the First Crusade.”⁴¹ Even the secondary source references that Ye’or includes are heavily biased in favor of her theory about Jewish persecution under Islamic rule in Al-Andalusia.⁴²

Critics have responded to Ye’or’s historical analysis of the Jewish experience, arguing that her scholarship is dominated by a politicized contemporary debate. A *New York Times* journalist referred to her as one of the “most extreme voices on the new Jewish right,”⁴³ and a British journalist likened Ye’or’s views to “a 21st century *Protocols of the Elders of Mecca*.”⁴⁴ In a review of *The Dhimmi*, Kochan writes that Ye’or “has no difficulty in presenting Yassir Arafat within the same framework that includes the Mufti of Jerusalem,”⁴⁵ which illustrates both her condemnation of Arab leaders and how they approach relations with Jews and her intention to use historical analysis to inform modern sociopolitical situations. Although Ye’or’s works are well-researched and illustrate an extensive use of primary source documents from medieval Spain, it is clear that Ye’or’s political perspective influenced her understanding and presentation of the Jewish past. At the end of her analysis of *dhimmi* status under Islam, Ye’or draws a conclusion about modern Arab-Jewish relations: “Nothing can change the fact that the fate of Palestine and its Jewish population was determined by the law of *jihad* and its ulterior consequences.”⁴⁶ The author’s incorporation of contemporary Arab-Jewish tensions—especially as related to the Arab-Israeli conflict—into her historical discussion implies that her primary concerns involve tracing the roots of contemporary Arab hatred towards Jews and debasing the Arab historians’ use of medieval Muslim Spain as a historical precedent for harmonious relations that was corrupted by Zionism.

Social Location and Historical Analysis

Understanding the ways in which various peoples interacted in medieval Spanish society—a time and place that represents a complex social environment in which different ethno-religious groups vied for politico-economic power and cultural influence—has become critical to the study of modern religious coexistence. While medieval Muslim Spain is often used as a case study of a particular sociological phenomenon—how religious groups compete and coexist in shared societies—it can also be used as a case study of a type of historiographic phenomenon—namely, how

historians shape their readers' understanding of past and present events by manipulating historical truth in order to support their contemporary socio-political agendas.

Heinrich Graetz, Eliyahu Ashtor, and Bat Ye'or each epitomize a particular historiographic movement analyzing the same period in history. Yet, although each author approached the subject with at least eight hundred years of hindsight and relied on the same relatively limited body of primary source documents, they reached entirely different and at times utterly contradictory conclusions about this period in Jewish history. Graetz decides that this "Golden Age" in Jewish cultural history represents an ideal society in which Jews are afforded social and political freedoms like their Muslim counterparts. A century later, Ashtor reaches a similar conclusion, showing that this was a period of "interfaith utopia" between Muslim rulers and Jewish citizens. In the same era, however, Ye'or and her colleagues reach the opposite conclusion, arguing that Ashtor and Graetz's conceptualization is no more than a myth, and Jews actually suffered greatly and were constantly discriminated against and humiliated by the dominant Muslims.

Though this inconsistency seems inexplicable, especially since all three of these scholars are Jews with ethno-nationalistic or pro-Zionist agendas, a careful analysis of their personal backgrounds and ideological frameworks illuminates the fact that their historical analyses are shaped by their contemporary political perspectives. It is likely that Graetz intended to use his analysis of this period to change the socio-political climate of 19th century Europe. He hoped that in showing how much freedom and prosperity the Jews experienced in Al-Andalusia under Muslim rule, he could convince contemporary "liberal" Christian leaders of their own hypocrisy, which would lead them to realize that treating the Jews as equals would be possible and mutually-beneficial. Similarly, Ashtor used his analysis of the "Golden Age" to prove that Jews and Muslims could coexist peacefully in the Middle East. As a steadfast Zionist and Jewish resident of Palestine, Ashtor used Muslim Spain as a historic precedent toward which the residents of Palestine, or a Jewish State, could aspire. Ye'or, another pro-Israeli Jewish scholar who wrote in the late 20th century, also used her analysis of this critical historical period to further the Zionist agenda; however, she concluded that Jews were severely persecuted under Muslim rule to counter the Arab historiographic trend of portraying Zionism as the sole impediment to Muslim-Jewish social and political harmony.

While all scholars are influenced, to some degree, by their personal biases and social locations, these three credible historians present arguments that are guided by historical fact but significantly altered by contemporary social and political ideologies. Gerber illustrates the inherent hazard of approaching a historical study of this period with a pre-formulated

conclusion or specific intention:

...It is necessary to avoid the temptation to create myths about medieval pluralism, mutual tolerance, and false paradigms of Golden Ages. Although such myths give hope for those seeking solutions to seemingly intractable contemporary problems, they do not help us understand the past.⁴⁷

Though her statement is specifically in reference to historians who distort events from 10th and 11th century Al-Andalusia, her warning can be generalized to encapsulate any historical study. While it is incumbent upon historians to contextualize their content and show how historical topics are relevant to contemporary society, scholars must avoid the temptation to allow modern socio-political circumstances to drive historical analyses to the point of distortion or misrepresentation. If the study of history is to remain analytically useful, it is important to make rational connections between historical events and modern society without allowing personal perspectives to overtly influence historical analyses.

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Notes:

1. Brian Catlos. The Victors and the Vanquished. Christians and Muslims of Catalonia and Aragon, 1050-1300. (Cambridge, 2004), 295.
2. David Nirenberg. Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages. (Princeton, 1996), 157.
3. Of the approximately twenty historians of this period whose work I consulted for research, only one or two challenged this general statement. While some scholars' agendas shape their understanding of the period and force different interpretations of the same set of instances, most qualified historians of this period still agree that—at least in the political and legal arenas—Jews were afforded more flexibility, autonomy, and liberty under Muslim rule than under the Christian Visigoths or those driving the Reconquista.
4. Jane S. Gerber. The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience. (New York: Macmillan, Inc., 1992), 36.
5. Ibid, 38.

6. Bernard Lewis. Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East. (Chicago: Open Court, 1993), 173.
7. H. H. Ben Sasson, Peraqim be-toledot ha.yehudim b-mei ha-beinayim [On Jewish History in the Middle Ages] (Tel Aviv, 1969), trans. Mark Cohen. Cited in Cohen, Under Cross and Crescent. 36.
8. David Wasserstein. The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain 1002-1086. (Princeton, 1985), 200.
9. Littman, D. and Ye'or, Bat. Protected Peoples Under Islam. (Geneve, Suisse: Centre d'Information et de Documentation sur le Moyen Orient, 1976), 3.
10. Wasserstein, The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings, 215.
11. Most notably Jane Gerber in "Muslim-Jewish Relations in Medieval Andalusia: Cultural Contacts and Their Ambiguities," Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies 1 (1999).
12. Gerber, "Muslim-Jewish Relations," 73.
13. Maimonides' writing may have been extreme as a result of his own family's history of expulsion from Cordoba after the conquest of the Almohades in 1148, but the sentiment of continued persecution and second-class status remains: The perceived economic utility of the Jews and their political roles did not ameliorate their dhimmi status. Gustave von Grunebaum, Eastern Jewry under Islam (reflections on Mediaeval Anti-Judaism), in VIATOR, Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies, University of California, vol. II, 1971. Cited in Littman and Ye'or's Protected Peoples, 4.
14. On December 30th, 1066, a Muslim mob stormed the royal palace in Granada, crucified Jewish vizier Samuel ibn Nagrela, and massacred nearly every Jew in the city. According to Richard Gottheil, author of a historical text called Granada, "More than 1,500 Jewish families, numbering 4,000 persons, fell in one day." From Richard Gottheil. Meyer Kayserling, 1906 ed. Bernard Lewis and other scholars stipulate that the massacre was a result of frustration within the Muslim community in reaction to the "powerful and ostentatious Jewish vizier," though there is significant scholarly debate over the cause of the uprising. From The Jews of Islam. (Princeton University Press, 1984), 54.
15. Gerber, "Muslim-Jewish Relations," 62.
16. Heinrich Graetz. History of the Jews. (Jewish Publication Society of America: 1898). Vol. 3, 236.
17. *Ibid.*, 53.
18. More specifically, he calls the period from 928 – 970 CE a "new period of Jewish history, which we may confidently call the scientific epoch," but he later refers to this era of explosion in learning and culture by the name above. *Ibid.*, 187.
19. *Ibid.*, 231.

20. Ibid., 261.
21. Clarification: the “days of gloom” refer to Jewish life under the Christian rulers of Spain in the previous century. Ibid., 261.
22. Ibid., 383.
23. Cohen, Under Cross and Crescent, 4-5.
24. Ibid., 4.
25. David Wasserstein, “Introduction.” Eliyahu Astor, Qorot he-yehudim be-sefarad ha-muslimit, 2 vols. Jerusalem, 1960-66) English trans., The Jews of Moslem Spain, trans. Aaron Klein and Jenny Machlowitz Klein. 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America.) 1973-1984.
26. Ibid, xi.
27. Cohen, Under Cross and Crescent, 5.
28. Wasserstein, “Introduction,” xiii-xiv.
29. Ashtor, The Jews of Moslem Spain, 265.
30. Ibid., 241.
31. Wasserstein, “Introduction,” x.
32. Cohen, Under Cross and Crescent, 5.
33. Ibid., 6.
34. Ibid., 8.
35. D Littman, and Bat Ye’or. Protected Peoples, 7.
36. Ibid., 1.
37. Ibid., 1.
38. Lionel Kochan. “Review,” The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians under Islam. Bat Ye’or, David Meisel, Paul Fenton. International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 62, No. 3. (Summer, 1986), 549.
39. Abdelaziz Sachedina, a religious studies professor at the University of Virginia, points out that Bat Ye’or used “highly polemic sources written by the victims of dhimmitude.” Duin, Julia. “State of ‘dhimmitude’ seen as threat to Christians, Jews.” Washington Times, Oct. 30th, 2002.
40. Littman and Ye’or, Protected peoples, 2.
41. Ibid, 2-3.
42. In Protected peoples under Islam, Ye’or and Littman reference Antoine Fattal, Leon Godard, Louis Gardet, Bernard Lewis, and other scholars of this period, but they only include textual references to the inferior status of dhimmis or their relentless persecution. For instance, although Lewis writes general statements about the relative prosperity of Jews under Islam (e.g. “All in all there was far greater social mobility in Islam than was permitted...in Christian Europe.” From Islam in History, p8), Ye’or only includes statements that support her ideas (e.g. “The golden age of equal rights was a myth, and belief in it was a result, more than a cause, of Jewish sympathy for Islam.” From Protected peoples, 4).

43. Craig S. Smith. "The World; Europe's Jews Seek Solace on the Right." New York Times, Feb. 20th, 2005. Final, Section 4, 3.
44. Johann, The Independent, August 21, 2006.
45. Kochan, "Review," 549.
46. Bat Ye'or and David Maisel. The Dhimmi: Jews & Christians Under Islam. (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1985), 149.
47. Gerber, "Muslim-Jewish Relations," 74.