Central College, Grinnell, after Cyclone, 1882

The Buildings Completed after the Cyclone (Mears not Pictured), 1900
Cover Image:

This handsome limestone Italianate structure with a commanding view of the Mississippi River from a bluff above Davenport, Iowa was the second home of Iowa College, later renamed "Grinnell" College, from 1855 until the late 1850s when the College moved to Grinnell, Iowa after years of ongoing conflicts with the city of Davenport.

Image Acknowledgments

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The *Grinnell Historical Review* is a peer-reviewed undergraduate journal of history that offers a unique opportunity for students at Grinnell and beyond to showcase their scholarly works and experience the publishing process. The *GHR* is intended to be a platform for historical discussion and debate that presents historical research from a variety of perspectives. We seek to support those actively studying history and cultivate the interests of those discovering it for the first time.
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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS
Thompson Teasdale and Sarah Millender

AFTER MEMORY: BERLIN’S MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE AS LIEU DE MÉMOIRE
Jeremy Epstein

MENDELSSOHN AND BEYOND: LEIPZIG’S MUSICAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE MAKING OF CIVIC IDENTITY, 1830-1848
Kate Perry

TO THE QUEEN’S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY: WOMEN’S CRIMINAL PETITIONS TO QUEEN ANNE OF ENGLAND
Emily Rhodes
We are incredibly pleased to present the inaugural edition of the *Grinnell Historical Review*. This journal has been a long-standing dream for both of us and we are excited to share our vision with you. During the process of making this dream a reality, we were asked to explain why our journal was necessary, why Grinnell College needed a history journal, and we feel addressing these questions is an apt way to begin this edition. Granted, as history majors we cannot claim to be unbiased, but to us the *Grinnell Historical Review* is beneficial because history is unique as a truly interdisciplinary subject. History serves as a vital component not only to the humanities but to a wide variety of subjects by providing the context necessary to understand how these subjects developed and evolved over time. One cannot study philosophy, political science, English, sociology, anthropology, or even economics without understanding how the theories underpinning these subjects developed within a certain historical context.

We do not wish to publish works written by undergraduate historians alone, but instead want the *Grinnell Historical Review* to serve as both an example and a celebration of history’s interdisciplinary nature, featuring undergraduate work from a range of subjects and disciplines. It is our firm belief that history provides a unique platform for scholars from across the humanities and other disciplines to conduct integrative debates and discussions, and we sincerely hope that the *Grinnell Historical Review* will serve as one such platform.

With this lofty goal in mind, we are proud to present three thoughtful and engaging pieces of historical research from Grinnell undergraduates. We were privileged to receive a number of outstanding submissions for our inaugural edition. The three papers appearing in this edition were each chosen for their nuanced and persuasive arguments, clear, articulate, and elegant prose, and exemplary research. We are confident that they represent the highest level of scholarship the Grinnell History department can offer. The articles examine a variety of time periods and social identities, spanning from lower and middling-class women in 18th century England to German politicians in Berlin during reunification. We are immensely grateful to all three authors for their hard work and fantastic final products.

Before we move on to briefly preview each of this inaugural edition’s articles, we want to briefly touch on the serious issue of Eurocentrism. We believe the *Grinnell Historical Review* best serves as a platform for historical discussion and debate when its articles represent a variety of different perspectives while also showcasing the finest scholarship Grinnell College offers. As the *Grinnell Historical Review* grows and receives greater numbers of submissions we will always strive to recognize outstanding examples of vital scholarship challenging the western historical paradigm. Nonetheless, this year’s articles not only represent the best of Grinnell’s History department, but highlight the wealth of historical resources and opportunities available to Grinnellians, including the College’s extensive collection of primary source documents and close relationship with Queen Mary University in London. We are very pleased with the quality of this year’s articles and their valuable challenges to established narratives and theories.
We begin the very first edition of the *Grinnell Historical Review* with a short article by Jeremy Epstein ’19 examining Berlin’s Holocaust memorial as a *lieu de mémoire* (“site of memory”). Epstein’s study utilizes the concept of a *lieu de mémoire* to provide a nuanced narrative of the tension between history, memory, nationalism, and atrocities, ultimately posing the difficult questions: what will people remember when the meaning behind the memorial is lost? and further, does it matter?

Moving back in time, Kate Perry ’20 explores how famous German musician Felix Mendelssohn and his contemporaries created a civic identity in Leipzig through their written works about music and their involvement in the city’s concert hall. By examining Mendelssohn’s role in the creation of this civic identity, Perry’s article illustrates how the connection between musical culture and Leipzig allowed its citizens to contrast their community with other major German cities. Perry’s argument not only challenges the common belief that Mendelssohn was most important as a composer but also the prevalent theory that German cultural identity in the 19th century was increasingly unified by a sense of nationalism.

We end with Emily Rhodes’s exploration of a previously untapped primary source: the state papers of Queen Anne. Her examination of letters dictated by women from a variety of social classes and identities petitioning their sovereign for criminal pardons explores the agency of lower-class women and the power wielded by Queen Anne. Rhodes’s article challenges conceptions of Queen Anne as weak and lower-class women in late Stuart England as completely constrained by society, transforming once-forgotten letters into powerful examples of the indispensable role of women in history.

Once again, we would like to express our thankfulness to the authors of these fantastic works. Without their hard work and support we would not have been able to make the *Grinnell Historical Review* a reality. This maiden edition represents a semester’s worth of preparation and planning, none of which would have been possible without the dedicated support of the Grinnell College History department. We are deeply indebted in particular to History department chair Sarah Purcell who assisted us at every turn and connected us with the faculty who now make up our advisory board. This board has been an invaluable asset and we are extremely grateful for the assistance of each of its members: Kelly Maynard, department chair of European history, Catherine Chou, assistant professor of early modern European history, and Edward Cohn, assistant professor of Russian history. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the crucial assistance Grinnell’s Student Publication and Radio Committee (SPARC) offered us, providing both the funding necessary to make our dream a reality and the guidance we inevitably needed along the way.

We earnestly hope you enjoy the *Grinnell Historical Review*’s maiden edition as much as we enjoyed seeing it come to fruition.

Sincerely,

Thompson Teasdale  
Founder | Editor-in-Chief | Class of 2020

Sarah Millender  
Founder | Editor-in-Chief | Class of 2020
After Memory:
Berlin’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as *Lieu de Mémoire*

French historian Pierre Nora developed the term *lieux de mémoire* (“sites of memory”) to understand how certain mythologized events, objects, and ideas came to define the French nation. One important category of *lieux* is the memorial. As retrospective constructions, memorials shape our attitudes toward and relationships with the past. Taking Nora’s concept across the border to Germany, Jeremy Epstein ’19 considers the Berlin Holocaust Memorial as a *lieu de mémoire*. He argues that doing so is helpful to understanding the tensions between history and memory, not only in the design and experience of the site, but also in the process that led to its construction. In building the Berlin memorial, Germany redefined itself through its treatment of an especially infamous past.

By: Jeremy Epstein ’19
Written For: History: Approaches, Methods, and Challenges at Queen Mary University (London, England)
The Grinnell Historical Review

After Memory: Berlin’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as *Lieu de Mémoire*

Jeremy Epstein

This essay will reconsider Berlin’s Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe by situating it as a *lieu de mémoire*, most often translated as ‘site of memory.’ French historian Pierre Nora developed the concept in the introduction to his massive, multi-volume project *Realms of Memory*, first published in English in 1996, in which he argues that *lieux de mémoire*, certain mythologized ‘places, sites, [and] causes’ from the past provide the foundations of French national identity.¹ For example, he considers war monuments, the observance of a commemorative silence, and even the idea of a historical generation all to be *lieux* of one sort or another.² Memory, Nora claimed, dissipates from the landscape of human experience as visceral, personal understandings of the past are progressively replaced by constructed, collective, ‘historical’ understandings. Society in turn creates *lieux de mémoire*, public representations of those lost memories: ‘moments of history are plucked out of the flow of history, then returned to it.’³

What does a framework developed for the purpose of understanding the origins of the French nation have to do with Holocaust remembrance in Germany? Michael Rothberg has noted that, ‘Although emerging from a commitment to the exceptionality of France’s relationship to its national past, the approach pioneered in *Les lieux de mémoire* has proven highly exportable as a model for the consideration of diverse memory cultures.’⁴ Considering the Berlin Holocaust memorial as a *lieu de mémoire* rather than a simple ‘memorial,’ as it is literally named, will allow for a more nuanced understanding of the political relationship between history and memory. The politics of memory which necessarily form the context for *lieux de mémoire* as sites of nationalism also animated the discourse about the Berlin Holocaust memorial, which was fundamentally conceived in terms of nation-building. And, the tension Nora observed between history and memory as distinct entities clearly manifested in the debate about how the site ought to be designed. In reading the Berlin Holocaust Memorial as a *lieu de mémoire*, I hope to not only further our understanding of the site, but additionally to illuminate something novel about the ever-changing nature of *lieux de mémoire* generally.

The Berlin Holocaust memorial’s embattled history is a product and a reflection of the politics of reunification that gripped the country in the aftermath of the Soviet Union’s collapse. In the years leading up to the demise of the GDR and the subsequent reunification of Germany, journalist Lea Rosh began advocating for a memorial to the Nazis’ Jewish victims in the centre of Berlin. She has cited broadly humanistic motives for pursuing the goal, saying that it was essential that Germany remembered its victims and that ‘they are honoured.’⁵ In 1989, she co-founded the group ‘Perspektive Berlin’ to advocate for its creation and in 1999 the parliament officially

² Nora and Kritzman, 14.
³ Nora and Kritzman, 7.
decided to build American architect Peter Eisenman’s design. That decade saw massive changes in German politics that significantly complicated the calculus of building a memorial beyond the humanistic motives Rosh stated. In 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and in 1990 the process of reunification began, ultimately culminating with the return of the official capital to Berlin in 1999 for the first time since the Nazi era. Thus the period over which the questions were negotiated of whether there should be a national Holocaust memorial, and if so, what form it should take, coincided neatly with debates about the politics of reunification.

The total failure to prevent Germany from instigating another mass conflict in the aftermath of World War I made many both inside and outside of Germany weary at the prospect of reunification. The chance to build a national memorial to the Jews in Berlin was an opportunity for the emergent national government to demonstrate its trustworthiness as a state on the international stage. In their essay, ‘The Politics of Memory as Image Politics. The Kohl Government and the Holocaust Memorial,’ Volker Wild and Jan Ferdinand contend that, ‘The cautionary undertone of the references to reunification and the Holocaust was unmistakable. Evidently, fears outside Germany of a resurgence of German power were linked to the question of whether the nation had learned the lessons of history and was ready to accept responsibility for its own past.’

Karen Till argued that together with the other sites in Berlin’s nascent ‘Memory District,’ the new memorial would help Germany to ‘be recognized by other nations as belonging to a Western global moral order... (it) materializes Schröder’s cultural political agenda of normalization by representing Germany as a cosmopolitan, moral, and open society.’ The policy of normalization, or Normalität, is what Daniel Reynolds has described as ‘the notion that a unified Germany has atoned for its Nazi past through forty years of postwar division and, having paid its dues, can again embrace practices other western nations take for granted.’ While Germany has arguably succeeded in ‘normalizing’ itself, many have opposed this particular treatment of the historic crimes. One government minister, Michael Naumann, compared the proposed memorial design to the works of Albert Speer, Hitler’s favorite architect. The comment, which proved so inflammatory that the memorial design became an issue in the election campaign, should not be dismissed out of hand. Rather, it points to an interesting, if uncomfortable parallel; under both the Nazis and the reunification government, monumental architecture was the language by which the state loudly proclaimed its character. Just as the French nation, Nora claimed, constructed itself through a constellation of sites, ideas, and events that epitomized what it meant to be French, so too did Germany begin to define itself through its treatment of its most infamous past.

The German writer Martin Walser famously opposed the memorial in a 1998 speech. He resented the political opportunism, writing that the turn toward public memorials did not exist for the stated purposes of ‘keeping alive the memory, or the impermissibility of forgetting, but rather the exploiting of our disgrace for present purposes.’ But what Walser objected to most of all was the manufacture of German memory into symbols; he was against lieux de mémoire: ‘Nothing is more alien to conscience than symbolism... This “thorough-going withdrawal into one’s self” cannot be represented. It must remain

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“inward solitude.” For Walser, completely individual reflection was the only genuine way to contemplate the Nazis’ crimes.

Walser’s speech ignited a public debate that would come to have a profound role in influencing the development of the memorial. The president of the Central Jewish Council of Germany, Ignatz Bubis, called Walser’s speech ‘spiritual arson.’ The memorial became a major issue in the country’s electoral politics. Chancellor Kohl supported the project, while his election rival and eventual successor, Gerhard Schröder, did not. Ironically, it was Walser’s critique which in some way pushed the memorial to completion, since the widespread contention that his critique was anti-Semitic created a political situation where even a victorious Schröder had to go ahead with the project to avoid the appearance of siding with an alleged anti-Semite. The memorial would prove not only that the Germans were repentant for their past but that they were a tolerant, even philo-Semitic group in the present.

(Rosh had changed her name to sound more Jewish, reflecting that she ‘felt Jewish,’ and was insistent that the memorial be dedicated to the Jewish victims exclusively despite calls from many to honor all the Nazis’ victims.)

The historical and political tensions which led to the debate around the memorial all point to its status as a lieu de mémoire par excellence per Nora’s definition. Rosh’s motivation to ‘preserve memory’ is indicative of the society Nora describes, where there is ‘fear that everything is on the verge of disappearing.’ The political reasons for building it point to his observation that these sites encompass ‘anxiety about the precise significance of the present and uncertainty about the future.’ Walser’s feeling that the memorial replaces memory itself is an essential part of Nora’s argument: ‘The less memory is experienced from within, the greater its need for external props and tangible reminders of that which no longer exists except qua memory.’ Every aspect of the process seems to correspond with Nora’s description of a society inventing itself through the transformation of memory into history.

Berlin’s Holocaust memorial evokes Nora’s descriptions of lieux de mémoire not only through the motives and process by which it was built, though, but additionally in its design, which also navigates the tension between history and memory. The full German name of the site, Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas, which literally translates as ‘Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe,’ clearly marks it as a space of memory. The command to remember is present in the very word, memorial. Consider the alternative term ‘historial,’ little used in English but perhaps more common in French, for instance in the case of the Historial de la Grande Guerre near Paris. The word clearly advertises that the museum is a place foremost to learn history, rather than engaging in the act of memory. In the case of that site, according to Jay Winter, the designer Gérard Rougeron wanted the visitor to do both: ‘(Rougeron) chose the word “Historial” as a midpoint between history and memorial, between the academy and public commemoration, or (according to Halbwachs) between cold, dispassionate, precise history and warm, evocative, messy memory.’ In a sense, the Berlin project, despite being a memorial, was likewise intended to nudge visitors toward both history and memory.

Eisenman was intent that the space should be purely a memorial; any element of historial would take away from its power to prompt visitors to a unique emotional experience, but the decision makers were reluctant to grant this. Some feared that without any sort of signage or information centre describing the purpose for the site, it would only be a matter of time before people had forgotten completely what the site was for. The compromise they reached was to create an underground exhibit, the Ort der

12 Walser, “Experiences While Composing a Sunday Speech.”
14 ‘Haunted Still,’ The Guardian.
15 Nora and Kritzman, Realms of Memory, 8.
16 Nora and Kritzman, 8.
17 Nora and Kritzman, 8.
19 Peter Eisenman: Building Germany’s Holocaust Memorial, dir. Michael Blackwood.
Information or ‘Place of Information,’ where names of the victims would accompany information about the memorial. Thus in creating such a prominent public memorial and in insisting on the historic element, the German state proved Nora’s argument twice over. He wrote: ‘If we still dwelled among our memories, there would be no need to consecrate sites embodying them.’

Not only did the state feel the need to ‘embody’ these lost memories in a centralized site; it worried that even this emblem would be subject to historical amnesia. The solution? A sort of meta-lieu in the form of the underground information centre, a guide to the guide to memory.

Another important dimension to the site’s name is the decision to use the word Denkmal, rather than Mahnmal. Both translate to ‘memorial’ in English but hold distinct connotations in German. Where Denkmal comes from the verb denken, ‘to think’ or ‘to believe,’ Mahnmal comes from the verb mahnen, which can be translated as ‘to urge,’ ‘to exhort,’ ‘to warn, or ‘to admonish.’

The latter clearly carries a much more severe connotation, especially where the remembrance of tragedy is concerned. As an alternative title, Mahnmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas practically screams ‘Never Again.’ The decision to use the word Denkmal instead could be interpreted as a choice to craft a memorial so focused on the Jewish genocide as to take it as a truly singular entity. Even suggesting that such a thing could happen again, or that the Jewish Holocaust might be ‘used’ to prevent future atrocities would be at best to minimize it by comparison and at worst to instrumentalize it to some other ends. It is a question people have grappled with since the events happened: must the Jewish Holocaust be considered absolutely unique or may it be compared to other historic crimes against humanity? In the case of the Berlin Holocaust memorial, this debate was between those who believed the memorial ought to be dedicated specifically to the Jews, and those who would wanted to create a more universal memorial.

Lea Rosh’s group Perspektive Berlin advocated that the memorial specifically treat the memory of Jewish victims and this position ultimately won out.

Proponents do not deny the importance of memorializing other victim groups such as the Roma and Sinti, but insist on maintaining separateness in doing so. No doubt many who felt thus agreed with Paul Spiegel, former leader of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, when he said, ‘I emphatically support the proposition by other victim groups to have (separate) public sites of remembrance.’

It is somewhat ironic then, that the design which the government finally embraced was rather universal, with the main site above ground absent of any specific reference to or symbols of the victims’ Judaism. Only the information centre below ground, and the name of the site itself, mark it as a place dedicated to Jews.

This choice to make the memorial abstract was both deliberate and the result of a long process of discovering that more symbolic models were unsatisfactory. The competition Eisenman won to become the memorial’s designer was preceded by a previous one, in which the government went so far as to pick a winner, only to realize that the design was deeply unpopular with Jewish community leaders and the public. James Young, who later joined the committee that would choose which design to build, wrote that the winning design’s ‘literal-minded(ness) and misguided symbolism’ created a maelstrom of critical feedback. It was ‘too big, too heavy-handed, too divisive, and finally just too German.’ These critiques bring to mind a distinction Nora makes about memorials: ‘If history – time and change – did not intervene, we would be dealing not with lieux de mémoire but with simple memorials. The lieux of which I speak are hybrid places, mutants in a sense, compounded of life and death, of the temporal and the eternal. In its heavy-handedness, its bald symbolism, that first design ossified itself, made itself incompatible with the ‘mutant quality’ which Nora finds in the interplay between life and death and the
passage of time. In effect, the committee and the public wanted not a ‘simple memorial,’ but a lieu de mémoire.

Eisenman’s final design tends toward the universal by managing to remain completely devoid of any specific symbols. Gone are the Jewish stars that featured in the other design proposals, the symbolic placement of stones atop graves (a Jewish tradition), and the ruptured, zig-zagging lines, a favourite motif of the architect Daniel Libeskind (see Berlin’s Jewish museum). In their stead is a field of undulating stelae, massive concrete slabs ranging from a few centimeters in height to nearly five meters. Underneath the stelae, the ground plane of cobblestones curves up and down subtly so that, almost without realizing it, the meandering visitor finds herself having descended considerably below the street level. This descent, paired with the stelae’s progressive growth upwards as one moves toward the centre, leads the visitor to become lost, enveloped in the monument.

Theories about what the memorial is meant to represent abound. The stelae are like trees and to wander them conjures the experience of a Jew fleeing through the forest. They are tombstones, with the site as a whole evoking the Jewish cemetery in Prague. Yet Eisenman is resolute: the memorial is abstract, without symbolism (he claims he has never even seen the Prague cemetery). Although Eisenman has repeatedly denied that there might be any symbolism in the design, professing always that his abstract forms are meant to provoke any sort of emotional reaction, neither can he resist the temptation to read certain images into his design in interviews. Speaking to a crew for the documentary film about the process of designing and building the memorial, he muses while walking through the finished site that ‘just like the Nazis took away the ground under which Jews stood, the memorial takes away your stability and makes you off balance.’

Eisenman does not contradict himself in professing that the memorial lacks symbolism and then reading symbols into it. Rather, the point is that the memorial is meant to lack an assigned set of symbols; it is up to the visitor to decide which symbols she feels are present. You cannot facilitate authentic moments of emotion without giving visitors space to make sense of their experience on their own terms. He writes:

When entering the field, one experiences something – a prima facie experience of difference from whatever else the city is. As one walks into the field, there is a sense that the pillars are too close together for two people to walk, compelling the individual to walk by him or herself... This compression together with the absence of symbolism and the absence of orientation, of any prescribed route, or any goal of arrival, creates a sense of dislocation from the ordinary time of the city... (it) becomes a text, which does not answer, but instead questions.

Eisenman’s notion of what the visitor will experience is vague. He has created basic parameters: the visitor will ‘leave’ the city, will walk alone, will meander, but beyond these fundamentals, the memorial is not fine-tuned to elicit any sort of specific impression. And in allowing for individuals to have truly individual experiences, he answers Walser’s complaint that the ‘“thorough-going withdrawal into one’s self” cannot be represented.’ Rather than try to represent it, he provides a space for it to happen organically. Walser even said he was pleasantly surprised with the way the memorial turned out.

Though considering the Berlin memorial as a lieu de mémoire helps us to understand the tensions between memory and history which it contains, in giving visitors the freedom to have their own experiences unburdened by assigned symbols, the site departs from the model of lieux de mémoire. It is not that lieux de mémoire are necessarily laden with heavy-handed symbols that privilege one narrative and conclusion above all other interpretations,
although some do. But they do all seek to preserve certain ‘memory’ that has escaped society’s daily life. Life de mémoire are sites, Nora writes, ‘in which a residual sense of continuity remains.’ Today Germany faces the prospect that in the not so distant future, the original context for Eisenman’s abstraction of a memorial will be unknown to many who interact with it as awareness of the Holocaust fades with each passing generation. No ‘continuity’ will remain, but they will still come and wander the stelae, and they will still encounter Eisenman’s ‘prima facie experience of difference,’ of ‘questioning.’ What will they remember then? 

Eisenman does not seem particularly concerned what visitors think about when visiting: ‘It’s a wonderful expression of the German people to place something in the middle of their city that reminds them—could remind them—of the past.’ Most likely they will remember things from their own lived pasts. Maybe not. Does it matter? He confides to an interviewer: ‘I think what’s wonderful is to see so many people being happy here, and I think the fact (is) that being happy is something that will open up the Germans to relaxing their anxiety about the guilt.’ Will visitors think about the events commemorated there at all once the country has moved beyond its guilt?

The bottled up little remnants of history found in Nora’s lieux are ultimately impermanent, as susceptible to obsolescence as the long dead memory which was their charge to preserve. While today the Berlin Holocaust Memorial may preserve some notion of the Holocaust, in the future, it will usher in new experiences that may have nothing to do with the fate of the Jews during the Second World War. It is at once both a lieu de mémoire and its negation: a milieu de mémoire, a place where ‘memory is a real part of everyday experience.’ Not the memory of the Holocaust, of course, but perhaps of the new experiences people have in and around the monument. Rather than recall memory, people will live it again.

29 Nora and Kritzman mention the ubiquitous memorials to the dead of WWI which one finds in French villages all over the countryside. This sort of ‘Mort pour la France’ emblem plays so obviously into nationalist narratives of military heroics it is difficult to imagine how it could leave any meaningful room for individual interpretation.
30 Nora and Kritzman, Realms of Memory, 1.
32 Peter Eisenman: Building Germanys Holocaust Memorial, dir. Michael Blackwood.
Bibliography


*TITLE IMAGE*

Mendelssohn and Beyond: Leipzig’s Musical Institutions and the Making of Civic Identity, 1830-1848

Historians have long discussed the legacy and life of German composer Felix Mendelssohn, but their studies of him have largely focused on his work as a composer. Kate Perry ’20 not only challenges this scholarly trend but challenges the theory that cultural identity in 19th century Germany was dominated by a sense of nationalism. Instead, Perry argues Mendelssohn’s work as a prolific writer and champion of Leipzig’s musical institutions reveal his instrumental role in the creation of a unique civic identity in Leipzig that associated public service with involvement in musical culture and allowed Leipzigers to differentiate their community from other German cities. By showing how cities like Leipzig competed for political and cultural preeminence by touting their city’s connection to music, Perry demonstrates the importance of examining the development and defining of unique local cultures and identities, even when studying a time period often believed to be dominated by a unifying element like the growth of nationalism.

By: Kate Perry ’20
Written For: The European Metropolis
The morning in April of 1843, the burghers of Leipzig, in Saxony, Germany, gathered inside the Gewandhaus concert hall for a rather unusual performance. Felix Mendelssohn, the director of the Gewandhaus concert series and himself a renowned composer and pianist, was performing the last in a series of subscription concerts organized to raise money for a monument to the great eighteenth century composer and Leipzig Thomaskantor Johann Sebastian Bach. The monument was to be the first of its kind in Germany—a testament both to Bach’s importance to the city and to the Bach revival that Mendelssohn was already carrying out on a national scale. Dozens of Leipzig’s first citizens—including the railroad magnates August Olearius and Carl Lampe, the bank director Gustav Moritz-Clauss, and the music publisher Hermann Härtel—signed Mendelssohn’s handwritten subscription list and presumably attended the performance.

After the concert was over, the attendees walked to the St. Thomas School, where the monument was unveiled and a short speech was given by representatives of the city council.

This episode illustrates how what we normally think of as a national phenomenon—the Bach revival in the German speaking lands in the early nineteenth century—unfolded at a very local level. Dozens of Leipzig’s first citizens—including the railroad magnates August Olearius and Carl Lampe, the bank director Gustav Moritz-Clauss, and the music publisher Hermann Härtel—signed Mendelssohn’s handwritten subscription list and presumably attended the performance.

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A wealth of musicological and historical research already exists on Felix Mendelssohn. Several biographies of the composer have been published, most recently Larry Todd’s nuanced and comprehensive Mendelssohn: A Life in Music (2005). Attention has been paid to his Jewish heritage, his influence in establishing a tradition of musical classicism at the Leipzig Conservatory, and his compositional habits, although Mendelssohn scholars note that a considerable number of his thousands of letters remain unpublished. But Mendelssohn has primarily been analyzed in isolation, as a composer, not as a writer whose prose contributed directly to the fashioning of Leipzig’s civic culture. Mendelssohn, along with a tight-knit circle of the city’s elite, constructed a new identity for Leipzig that drew its power from the town’s musical institutions and history.

Only one scholar has written what one might call a cultural history of Leipzig in Mendelssohn’s time. Antje Pieper, in her book Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture: A Comparative History of Nineteenth Century Leipzig and Birmingham, analyzes “the ways and means by which the middle class [in these two towns] fashioned a cultural ideal as well as the institutions through which this ideal could be visibly and audibly expressed.” Pieper focuses on the Gewandhaus orchestra in Leipzig, arguing that it represented the “religious,

33 Wm. A. Little, Mendelssohn and the Organ (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 415-428. This book contains a number of very useful appendices, one of which includes a facsimile of the handwritten subscription list to Mendelssohn’s 1840 organ recital, along with a transcription by Little of the names on the list.


philosophical and aesthetic foundations of cultural practices” in Germany. 36 Like other scholars such as Carl Schorske, who has analyzed the architecture of Vienna’s Ringstrasse as an expression of the values of the city’s liberal elite, Pieper attributes the cultural engagement of the Leipzig burghers to a desire to develop a distinct class identity. 37

Pieper’s analysis is quite insightful, yet it falls short in two ways: while acknowledging the active participation of Leipzig’s elite in the musical life of the city, it lays much of the impetus for cultural development on impersonal philosophical forces, and, in attempting a transnational comparison that takes Leipzig and Birmingham as models, sometimes renders ‘Leipzig’ synonymous with ‘Germany’ and ‘Birmingham’ with ‘Britain.’ In contrast to Pieper, I focus not on philosophical texts or musical journals but on the letters, memoirs, and newspapers written by Mendelssohn and other Leipzig citizens, and I dwell precisely on the way they used language to distinguish Leipzig from other German cities.

This study explores how musical culture, and particularly the Gewandhaus orchestra, contributed to Leipzig’s civic identity in the Vormärz period (1830 - 1848), which roughly coincides with the period of Mendelssohn’s tenure at the Gewandhaus (1835 - 1847).

The relationship between music and German national identity has already been mapped by Celia Applegate and Pamela Potter, who argue that “the links between music and German identity can more often than not be traced to writers, thinkers, statesmen, educators, impresarios, demagogues, and audiences, but only occasionally to composers.” 38

The recognition that non-composers play a crucial role in shaping musical identity is an important insight that I will address here, but I want to expand Applegate and Potter’s analysis to focus on regional and local identities as well. No prior study has done this: Pieper, although she argues that the Gewandhaus, as an apolitical instrument of musical classicism, did not contribute to any incipient sense of German national identity, implies that it and other musical institutions like it contributed to a bourgeois class identity that was national in scope.

I argue that the identity Mendelssohn and his fellows created through writing about music was primarily not a national or class identity but a civic one—it was defined in terms of public service to the city, and its contours were explicitly bounded by the distinctions between Leipzig and other German towns. To prove this I show, first, how serving on the Gewandhaus Board of Directors became a kind of public duty for Leipzig’s elite and, second, how Mendelssohn strengthened this connection by constructing the orchestra itself as a civic service in his letters to the city council. Finally, I take a step back to analyze how Mendelssohn and others differentiated Leipzig from its neighbors Dresden and Berlin, and to show how Leipzig’s musical culture became a key part of this differentiation.

**Portrait of a Town**

In 1830, Leipzig was a town of about 41,000 inhabitants. 39 Situated at an ancient crossroads, it had long been a hub of regional trade, and had a large merchant class. The town also possessed a university, a flourishing book and music publishing industry, and a staunchly Lutheran church. Unlike the nearby Saxon capital of Dresden, Leipzig had never been a court town. Its roots were almost entirely bourgeois, and this was reflected in the character of its cultural institutions: the forerunner of the Gewandhaus had been founded by a group of twelve merchants in 1743, and took its name from the textile hall in which it had once been housed. 40 Its management consisted of a Board of Directors, drawn mainly from among the city’s merchants and lawyers.

Revolution convulsed Leipzig, along with the rest of Saxony and Europe, in 1830. The inciting event was the Catholic monarchy in Dresden’s attempt to curtail celebrations of the three hundredth

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anniversary of the Augsburg Confession, but the underlying causes included the falling economic status of artisans and day laborers, and the lack of political representation for newer up-and-coming merchants. After a year of protests and negotiations, the Dresden government agreed to a new constitution, ratified in September of 1831. In Leipzig, the old conservative Magistrat (city council) was replaced with a new Stadtrat consisting of nine salaried members who served for life, and twelve unsalaried temporary members. While the new government still offered fairly limited representation, it did open the door to a younger generation of wealthy merchants and book dealers, many of them fairly recent immigrants to the city.

The decade after 1830 witnessed the birth of many new cultural and civic institutions, most of them founded by the up-and-coming politicians who had gained ascendency in the Stadtrat. In 1834, a group of local businessmen and entrepreneurs, among them Gustav Harkort, Carl Lampe, and August Olearius, founded the Leipzig-Dresdner Eisenbahn Compagnie, which built the first long-distance railroad in Germany between Leipzig and Dresden. In 1836, Lampe and Hermann Härtel, a Leipzig publisher, founded the Leipziger Kunstverein, an organization that would ultimately sponsor Leipzig’s chief art museum. Leipzig’s first illustrated newspaper, the Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung, and the Leipziger Bank also date to this period. Social historian Susanne Schötz, in her edited volume on the history of Leipzig, suggests that, in the absence of official political parties (which were forbidden in the German Confederation at this time), these new institutions provided the elites of Leipzig with a setting in which to exchange ideas and build political allegiances. Antje Pieper, similarly, describes Leipzig’s voluntary associations as providing platforms for the formation of bourgeois public opinion and cultural taste. In both cases, cultural institutions become convenient sites for the creation of a common identity, one which held additional political and social significance that stretched far beyond the institution’s official scope. Nowhere was this additional significance more evident than in the composition of the Gewandhaus orchestra’s board of directors.

The Gewandhaus Board: Seat of Leipzig’s Commercial and Political Elite

As Pieper has already noted, the Gewandhaus Board members were part of a tightly knit group of elites who were remarkably active in many areas of Leipzig’s cultural, commercial, and political life. Hermann Härtel, the co-founder of the Leipziger Kunstverein, also served on the Gewandhaus Board and commissioned an extravagant villa filled with Italian artwork on his family property. Many of the Gewandhaus Board members were prosperous merchants in the silk and music publishing industries, and ran some of the largest businesses in the city. Others were well-known lawyers. Yet the single most obvious pattern that emerges is the close ties almost all board members held to the city and state government.

It will be useful to begin with some statistics. In the twelve-year period of Mendelssohn’s tenure at the Gewandhaus, nineteen people served on its board of directors. Of these, nine served on the Leipzig City Council either before or after 1830, and thirteen were involved in state or local politics in some capacity. The majority of the Gewandhaus Board members, then, were also active contributors to city politics. Particularly interesting in this regard is the fact that both of Leipzig’s mayors during the Vormärz, Christian Adolf Deut and Johann Carl Groß, were board members. No prior mayor of the city had been

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41 Schötz, Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, 114.
42 Schötz, 124.
44 Schötz, Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, 135.
45 Pieper, Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture, 3.
46 Pieper, 5-7.
47 Schötz, Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, 395-397.
48 Alfred Dörffel, Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte zu Leipzig vom 25. November 1781 bis 25. November 1881 (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1884), 230-234. Dörffel provides a complete list of all members of the Gewandhaus Board from its founding in the 1700s up to 1881. The list includes the dates each member served, as well as their occupation and any other contributions they made to the life of the city.
a member of the Board, but all the mayors after this period, from 1848 through the 1880s, were also board members. This suggests that serving on the Gewandhaus Board became a kind of civic duty for the mayor of Leipzig, and moreover, that it became a civic duty during the period of Mendelssohn’s tenure at the Gewandhaus.

Since most of the members of the Gewandhaus Board served for life, many of them were inevitably involved in both the direction of the Gewandhaus concerts and the government of the city at the same time. This was the case for Moritz Seeburg, a permanent (and therefore paid) member of the city council from 1831 and a member of the Gewandhaus Board from June 10, 1840 until his death in 1851.50 In a series of letters to Seeburg dated one month after the latter’s election to the Gewandhaus Board, Mendelssohn treats him as an intermediary between himself and the city council, offering his opinions on whether and how the city should take over control of the orchestra’s financing as an official Stadtorchester, or city orchestra.51 Seeburg’s roles as a board member and as a city councilor here are scarcely separable—even before the Gewandhaus became an official civic institution, its affairs were being run almost entirely by public officials.

Several of the Gewandhaus Board members served not only in the city government but in the state government headquartered in Dresden as well. Johann Paul von Falkenstein, a member of the Board of Directors from 1839-1844, is a prime example.52 Falkenstein was not a Leipzig native, but had moved there at the age of fifteen to study at the University.53 He quickly became involved in state politics, occupying the post of Kreisdirektor, or regional governor, in Leipzig for some years before moving to Dresden. Throughout his life, however, he maintained close ties to Leipzig, and later in life, as Minister of Culture for the Saxon crown, he greatly increased the status of the university. Falkenstein was a key mediator between the Saxon crown and the Leipzig city council on several occasions, for example during the building of the railroad between the two cities. He also played an important role in the founding of the Leipzig Conservatory, petitioning the king of Saxony to allow Mendelssohn to use state funds for the establishment of the school in Leipzig rather than in Dresden. Falkenstein is particularly important to this study because he was a state official with strong local loyalties. In his life story it is possible to see how a politician who valued Leipzig’s standing compared to other cities found it vital to support the city’s musical institutions.

The members of the Gewandhaus Board were not the only prominent Leipzigers who were interested in the orchestra’s concerts. The names on Mendelssohn’s Bach concert subscription list include many of the most important figures in Leipzig’s public life. In addition to the Gewandhaus Board members Limburger, Keil, Gruner, Härtel, Moritz-Clauss, Dörrien, Seeburg, Röchlitz, and Gaudlitz, the list names people who had no official connection to music, including the railroad magnate August Olearius, merchant and art collector Adolf Heinrich Schletter, and book publisher Heinrich Brockhaus. Carl Lampe, Johann Jakob Weber, the publisher of the Leipziger Illustrirte Zeitung, and the railroad magnate Gustav Harkort may also have added their names to the list.54 The fact that so many of Leipzig’s commercial and political elite felt inclined to contribute to a concert reviving Bach’s works suggests that music in the city had taken on another meaning beyond the purely artistic. Railroad magnates, merchants, and even the mayors of Leipzig were not beginning to take an interest in the city orchestra because all of them were lovers of music

49 Dörffel, Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte, 230-234.
50 Schötz, Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, 127; Dörffel, Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte, 233.
51 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Briefe aus Leipziger Archiven, ed. Hans-Joachim Rothe and Reinhard Szeskus (Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1972), 101-106. Interestingly, Mendelssohn does not mention the fact that Seeburg was also a member of the Gewandhaus Board—it is not clear whether he was not yet aware of this fact, or whether Seeburg had not yet assumed his duties.
52 Dörffel, Geschichte der Gewandhausconcerte, 233.
54 Little, Mendelssohn and the Organ, 416-428. Little interprets one of the messier signatures as reading “C. Campe,” but I think it more probable that this was Carl Lampe. Three Webers and one Harkort signed the list, but without including their first names or initials, and these two names were common enough in Leipzig that it is difficult to identify them with any certainty.
(although no doubt many of them were). Rather, the Gewandhaus was one of a number of cultural and commercial institutions being used by a politically powerful and tightly interconnected elite within the city to construct a common identity. This identity was, as Pieper has noted, bourgeois, but it was also particularly tightly connected to the city government and hence to the city itself.

Mendelssohn and the Gewandhaus as Civic Service

Although the elites of the city played a role in linking the Gewandhaus to Leipzig’s civic identity, it was Mendelssohn himself who was most important in effecting this transformation, as we can see by looking at the letters he wrote to the city council during his time as music director. Given Mendelssohn’s zeal in organizing and performing the subscription concerts for the Bach memorial, it is surprising to learn that he considered its establishment only a secondary goal. In an 1839 letter to his friend and mentor Ignaz Moscheles, Mendelssohn wrote:

If in Halle for Handel, in Frankfurt for Mozart, in Salzburg for Mozart, in Bonn for Beethoven they want to develop a proper orchestra, that can properly play and understand these works, then I’m all for it—but I’m not for their stone monuments, where the orchestras themselves play like stones (noch ärgere Steine sind), and not for their conservatories, where there is nothing to conserve. My hobbyhorse is now our poor orchestra and its improvement; I have just worked out, after untold running about, paperwork, and torment, a raise of 500 Thalers for them, and before I go away from here, they must have more than double that; if the city does this, then she can also put up a monument to Sebastian Bach in front of the St. Thomas School. But first the raise.  

Mendelssohn cared deeply about the orchestra as a living monument to Leipzig’s musical past, and he was prepared to go to considerable trouble to demonstrate its civic importance to the city’s leaders. Mendelssohn conducted two campaigns to secure the status of the orchestra. The first, which occurred over the course of 1839-1840, concerned the 500 Thaler raise mentioned above; the second, conducted in 1843, came in response to the new contract negotiated between the orchestra and Carl Christian Schmidt, the director of the Leipzig Theater. Both campaigns reveal Mendelssohn’s skill in portraying the orchestra as a vital civic body.

Mendelssohn proposed in his letters that the Gewandhaus members be treated not as private artists but as civic employees. Already in 1839, when Mendelssohn secured the 500 Thaler raise mentioned above, the question of municipalizing the orchestra was being discussed. The city council had evidently proposed that, along with providing the raise, the city should also give the orchestra the official name of Stadtorchester, and take over management of the orchestra’s pension fund, into which surplus wages were placed by the musicians to provide for the needs of elderly and infirm players. In a letter to Moritz Seeburg (see section 1), Mendelssohn argued that, although the creation of a city orchestra would be very desirable…it seems to me indispensably necessary, that the city also truly hire the orchestra, that is, first choose them…then pension them…in a word, regard them as public officials, and this can only happen if the city secures the orchestra as surely against any possible shortfall of their wages from the theater and the concert hall as up until now only the wages from the church have been secured. 

Mendelssohn wanted the city not only to recognize the orchestra officially, but to supply its funding as well. He petitioned to make the orchestra financially independent of possible fluctuations in public interest, and he asked that its members be paid as public officials, that is, as workers who provided a vital public service to the city. Mendelssohn’s request was not heeded. On September 26th, 1840, the Gewandhaus was given the honorary title of

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56 Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 101.
57 Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 101 (translation by the author).
Stadtorchester, but the city council did not guarantee perpetual funding for the orchestra. Yet Mendelssohn’s advocacy on behalf of the orchestra continued, and he continued to argue that its members deserved higher pay because they provided an important service to the city.

In 1843, Mendelssohn once again jumped to the orchestra’s aid, this time in response to a new contract negotiated between the musicians and Carl Christian Schmidt, director of the Leipzig Theater. Schmidt had offered the orchestra a 300 Thaler raise rather than the 1955 Thaler one they had requested, and threatened to negotiate with the city council to hire a new Theater orchestra if he could not reach favorable terms. Once again, Mendelssohn’s response highlighted the orchestra’s right to steady wages from the city itself. In a letter to the city council on October 3rd, he wrote:

in days like the present, when so much is said about intellectual qualifications, there is one thing absolutely certain, that it is possible for justice and injustice, fairness and unfairness, to exist in the remuneration of intellectual services; that this does not depend upon the goodwill, more or less, or on the favour of those who pay, but that a positive right exists, which he has the privilege of claiming who devotes his life to an intellectual vocation, and can therefore legitimately demand that his life should be sustained, if he carries out his calling well and blamelessly.

The language of justice, fairness, and rights that Mendelssohn employed here, was, as he himself noted, a symptom of the times. It was the language of the liberal bourgeoisie that had first come to the fore in 1830, and that continued to champion constitutionalism and civil liberties for the remainder of the century. In imperial Vienna it was only in the 1860s that these values found expression in the public agenda of the ruling class, but in Leipzig, with its bourgeois roots, they manifested themselves much earlier. Mendelssohn took this language, which was originally political in nature, and extended it to the musical realm. Just as men’s political freedoms were no longer to depend on the goodwill or the favor of the ruler, so the payment of an orchestra should no longer depend on the approbation of its audience. Instead, the innate value of music, like the natural rights of man, deserved consistent recognition.

However, Mendelssohn was not simply arguing that music had a beneficial effect on the public; he was demanding direct civic support for it. In requesting public funding for the orchestra, he was equating it not merely with other inherently valuable intellectual professions but with those occupations that directly benefit the welfare of a city—with bricklayers, street sweepers, or even paid city council members. In short, Mendelssohn was ascribing a civic function to the orchestra.

Mendelssohn offered two explanations for what this civic function might be. The first, which is only stated implicitly in the letters, supports Pieper’s analysis. In his letter of October 3rd, Mendelssohn mentioned in passing that music provided an “intellectual benefit” to the people of Leipzig. In another letter to the city council dated two days earlier, on October 1st, he also referred more than once to Leipzig’s Musikwesen, a rather untranslatable German word which we might render as “musical culture,” but which might also mean “musical essence” or “musical being.” According to Pieper, instrumental music, particularly music that fit into the category of musical classicism, was viewed by nineteenth century Germans as ennobling, educational—it both required an educated audience to be fully appreciated, and helped to further enlighten that audience. Musical education, like education in the other arts and sciences, was a form of Bildung—the German word that means “education” but also a

59 Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, 113.
63 Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Briefe aus Leipziger Archiven, 112.
64 Pieper, Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture, 66-69.
deeper and more fundamental form of personal cultivation and development. Thus music could play a direct role in promoting Leipzig’s intellectual and spiritual life. The famous motto carved above the stage of the Gewandhaus supports this notion: res severa est verum gaudium—true joy is a serious matter. The orchestra, although a form of entertainment, had a vital public function as the bearer of refinement and culture.

But this was not Mendelssohn’s primary argument in his letters to the city council. Instead of focusing on music’s spiritual benefits, he asserted outright that the orchestra increased the city’s prestige. In his campaign of 1843, Mendelssohn wrote that “the favourable and wide-spread musical reputation which Leipzig enjoys throughout the whole of Germany, it owes entirely and solely to this orchestra.” Nor were the effects of this reputation felt exclusively in musical circles. Mendelssohn demanded to know how the Gewandhaus musicians could remain underpaid “while the whole community thrives by their merits, and the city itself derives honour and profit from them?” The primary argument that Mendelssohn put forward in support of the orchestra in his letters to the city council did not concern the value of music to educated people in general; it concerned music’s practical value to the city of Leipzig in particular. The Gewandhaus orchestra provided a public service to the city not only in an abstract, intellectual sense, as a bearer of culture, but also in a very concrete one, as an institution that helped to distinguish and set apart Leipzig as a town. It was because of this latter function, primarily, that Mendelssohn argued the orchestra should receive regular wages from the city.

Mendelssohn further strengthened this argument by comparing Leipzig to other German cities. In the October 3rd letter, Mendelssohn noted that “the pay which the orchestra in Frankfort-on-the-Maine receives from the theatre alone, is not only higher than it would be here…but it is almost without exception higher than it is here for the theatre, concert, and church music combined.” In another letter dated a few days earlier he appended a table, which included the wages paid for various functions to each section of the orchestra in Leipzig, Dresden, and Frankfurt. Mendelssohn pointed out explicitly that the meager wages of Leipzig’s orchestra could reflect poorly on the city’s prestige: “may not a refusal on [Schmidt’s] part, lead to the inference that this city considers its own musicians inferior to those of other towns of a similar class?” If Leipzig did not treat its orchestra well, it would expose itself to ridicule from other cities, because in some sense the status of the orchestra represented the status of the city itself.

Mendelssohn himself undoubtedly cared about music’s spiritual benefits to Leipzig’s burghers. Indeed, his letter to Moscheles shows that he cared far more about the quality of the orchestra itself than about the external trappings, like monuments to long-dead composers, that might bring Leipzig recognition as a center of musical learning. However, he was not above stooping to a more pragmatic level in order to convince Leipzig’s city council members to provide the orchestra with funds. Rather than emphasizing the general spiritual and intellectual benefit of music, Mendelssohn worked carefully in his letters to tie the well-being and status of the orchestra to that of the city itself. The language he used, though it did occasionally reflect the philosophical ideas of music’s universal and transcendent power that Pieper highlights in her analysis, relied much more on a vision of the orchestra as a public institution unique to Leipzig. The view of Leipzig as a Musikstadt, a city of music, may well originate here, in Mendelssohn’s written appeals to the city council.

Leipzig, Dresden, and Berlin

The struggle over the orchestra’s wages was not the only time when Leipzig’s status was defined in relation to other cities. In fact, Leipzig was repeatedly understood not as a member of some larger German entity, either national or regional, but as a place with its own distinct identity and culture. The career of Johann Paul von Falkenstein, the Gewandhaus Board
member who occupied several important positions in the Dresden court, illustrates this point. Falkenstein’s memoirs, which were published after his death in 1882, provide insight into the uneasy relations between Leipzig and Dresden in the Vormärz period.70

Falkenstein frequently painted himself as the intermediary between two rival cities. He described how members of the Leipzig city council disliked reporting to the new regional governing body imposed by Dresden after the revolution of 1830: the Kreisdirektion. According to Falkenstein, only his own good personal relationship with the Leipzig mayor (who was, incidentally, also a member of the Gewandhaus Board) saved the situation.71 Of course, Falkenstein may have exaggerated his personal influence over the Leipzig city council. But it is clear that the tensions between Leipzig and Dresden that had ignited in 1830 (when the suppression of Lutheran festivities triggered the revolution in Leipzig) continued throughout the Vormärz period.

Falkenstein also dwells specifically on the differences between the two cities’ self-constructed identities. In 1844, when he left Leipzig to assume the post of Secretary of the Interior for the Saxony crown, he was sent off in style by the members of the Leipzig-Dresdner Eisenbahn Compagnie, who accompanied him on a specially commissioned train to Dresden.72 According to Falkenstein, “this unusual arrival as well as the generally evident distinction afforded me did in fact provoke, in certain Dresden circles…some resentment—for people held Leipzig to be very liberal, and, since I had achieved such great distinction in this liberal city, of course [held] me [to be] as well.”73 Dresden was supposedly conservative, Leipzig liberal; Dresden was the court capital, Leipzig the bourgeois university town. In their political orientations and social milieus, the two cities were already defining themselves against one another, rather than as part of some larger Saxon or German entity.

Against this existing backdrop of rivalry, Leipzig’s musical culture played a particularly important role in the differentiation between Leipzig and Dresden, and in a way that directly involved Falkenstein. In 1840, Mendelssohn wrote to Falkenstein, at this point still a Gewandhaus Board member and Kreisdirektor, with a request. The previous year, Heinrich Blümner, an old member of the Gewandhaus Board and a politician in the pre-1830 city council, had died, leaving 20,000 Thaler to the Saxon crown for the establishment of “an institution of art and science” somewhere in Saxony.74 Mendelssohn petitioned that this money be used to found a conservatory of music in Leipzig, the city Blümner had served for so much of his life. In the decision of where to establish the new conservatory, the tensions between capital and university town came to a head: whichever town received the grant would become the de facto center of Saxon musical culture.

In order to make the case for Leipzig, Mendelssohn pointed to several features that he claimed distinguished the musical culture of his adoptive city from that of its neighbors. First, while in other German cities “public amusements dissipate the mind, and exercise an injurious influence over the young…here…most of these amusements are more or less connected with music, or consist wholly of it.”75 While it is difficult to imagine what “dissipated amusements” students elsewhere got up to that students in Leipzig did not, Mendelssohn’s assertion does suggest that he considered music not only to be a part of Leipzig’s official identity, but also to be deeply embedded in the local culture. Interestingly, Falkenstein echoed Mendelssohn’s view in his autobiography, claiming that his love of music protected him from falling prey to the excesses of Greek life at university.76 Therefore, both

71 Falkenstein, 48.
72 Falkenstein, 54.
73 Falkenstein, 66-67 (translation by the author).
74 Letters of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1833-1847, 203.
75 Letters of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1833-1847, 206.
76 Falkenstein, Sein Leben und Wirken, 21. Falkenstein, a conservative politician, may have felt the need to distance himself in his memoirs from the radical University of Leipzig fraternities, which were disbanded after the revolution of 1848 (Pieper p. 74).
Mendelssohn and other residents of Leipzig constructed the town’s musical culture as more pervasive and more morally beneficial than that of other towns.

Mendelssohn also argued that Leipzig was especially rich in “that especial branch of art which must always remain the chief basis of musical studies—the more elevated class of instrumental and sacred compositions.” It was not only that Leipzig possessed a more deeply ingrained musical culture than other cities; it was also that the kinds of music available in Leipzig were of a more exalted type. Early nineteenth century German philosophers viewed instrumental music as having greater transcendent and spiritual potential than vocal music, because it might express what words could not.

Therefore, by defining Leipzig’s musical culture as primarily instrumental, Mendelssohn was carving out a place of additional prominence for his adoptive city, and distinguishing it from cities like Dresden, which were better known for opera. Mendelssohn’s claim did also ground Leipzig in an emerging national tradition—if the majority of German intellectuals valued the forms of music practiced in Leipzig above all others, then Leipzig might be said to have a particular claim to musical “Germanness.” However, this claim was being used not to tie Leipzig to other German cities but to raise it above them.

Although the Saxon king attempted to convince Mendelssohn to found the conservatory in Dresden instead, Mendelssohn’s petition was ultimately successful. In April of 1843, the Leipzig Conservatory opened its doors. Among its founders were nearly all of the Gewandhaus Board members—Moritz Seeburg, Heinrich Conrad Schleinitz, an attorney and amateur music, the publisher Kistner, the banker and politician Johann Georg Keil, and Falkenstein himself. The founding of the conservatory, more than any prior effort, cemented Leipzig’s image as a center of musical culture, in part by bringing this image to a wider audience. Unlike Mendelssohn’s earlier campaign to secure the orchestra’s wages, the conservatory project became widely recognized throughout Europe, was clearly successful, and received support not just from Mendelssohn but from many of Leipzig’s leading citizens.

Mendelssohn’s campaign and language spread to others who continued to develop the image of Leipzig’s unique musical culture both before and after his death. A prime example is the struggle for cultural primacy between Leipzig and Berlin, in which the resource being fought over was Mendelssohn himself. In November of 1840, Mendelssohn received an invitation from the new Prussian king, Frederick William IV, to establish himself in Berlin, where his parents and siblings lived. He was to receive a large salary of 3,000 Thalers, direct occasional royal performances, and become the head of a new proposed music academy. In 1841, despite misgivings about the vagueness of his new post, Mendelssohn accepted the offer and moved from Leipzig to the Prussian capital. His duties, however, remained ill-defined, and bureaucratic impediments initially prevented the establishment of the proposed Berlin Conservatory.

For the last seven years of his life, Mendelssohn travelled frequently between Leipzig and Berlin, continuing to direct many of the Gewandhaus concerts but deputizing others to the composers Ferdinand Hiller and Niels Gade. He died of a stroke in 1847 in Leipzig, after returning to the city earlier that year to conduct his oratorio Paulus.

In its obituary for Mendelssohn, the Leipziger Illustrirte highlighted the long rivalry between the two cities for the composer’s time. Its explanation of Mendelssohn’s eventual decision to return to Leipzig was simple: “Mendelssohn found in Berlin, however graciously the King behaved toward him, nevertheless no real sphere of influence adequate to

77 Letters of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy 1833-1847, 206.
78 Pieper, Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture, 40-41.
79 Schötz, Geschichte der Stadt Leipzig, 369.
80 Strangely, although Falkenstein, as the intermediary through whom Mendelssohn had negotiated with the Saxon crown, must have played a fairly important role in the establishment of the Conservatory, he made no mention of it in his autobiography. However, in the obituaries which have been appended to the autobiography by the editor, the mayor of Leipzig mentioned Falkenstein’s service to the Conservatory (115).
82 Todd, 443-444.
his powers and wishes. Only his activity as a composer was repeatedly stimulated.\textsuperscript{83} The musical life of Berlin had not been multifaceted enough for Mendelssohn; moreover, the Berliners had valued him primarily as a composer, not as an organizer, conductor, and interpreter. There is an implicit contrast drawn here with Leipzig, the city where Mendelssohn had served as director of an orchestra, immersed himself completely in the musical activities of the town, participated in chamber music concerts, and performed on the piano. Even after his death, the inter-city distinctions Mendelssohn himself had articulated remained a part of public discourse, animating debates about the nature of his own legacy.

**Conclusion**

The *Leipziger Illustrirte Zeitung* article announcing the unveiling of Mendelssohn’s Bach monument featured a page-long biography of Bach, ending with his death and funeral in Leipzig in 1750. “His earthy remains were interred in the earth on July 30th,” the author wrote, “but when one asks today after the grave of the great Johann Sebastian Bach, no person in Leipzig is able, as every person should be able with pride, to point to his place of rest and say: look, there lies our Bach!”\textsuperscript{84} Yet there would have been few Leipzigers in the late 1840s who would not have known if not the location of Bach’s grave at least the location of his monument. The *Leipziger Tageblatt*, on the day of the monument’s unveiling, advertised portraits of Bach for 1 1/3 Thaler, available in every bookshop in the city.\textsuperscript{85} Leipzigers were embracing Bach, and they were embracing him as a local figure whose legacy belonged specifically to them.

The precondition for this transformation in Leipzig’s civic identity was the remarkable engagement of many of the town’s most powerful citizens in its musical life. Even before Mendelssohn arrived in Leipzig, many of the politicians on the city council were also Gewandhaus Board members, and throughout the 1840s Leipzig’s foremost businessmen contributed to the Gewandhaus concerts and Bach memorial. These men were not all musical, but they used Leipzig’s musical institutions as platforms for the creation of political allegiances and common identity. Their patronage and funding strengthened the town’s musical reputation and enabled its growth.

It was Mendelssohn himself, however, not solely as a composer but as a writer, who cemented Leipzig’s identity as a *Musikstadt*. In his ceaseless flurries of letters to the city council and the *Kreisdirektion*, he hammered home Leipzig’s musical uniqueness and the critical importance of the city’s musical institutions to its public life. Mendelssohn articulated a function for Leipzig’s orchestra that was peculiarly local in character. As a public service funded by the city government, the Gewandhaus would educate Leipzig’s citizens and bring recognition to the city through its first-class performances. This view left little room for the kind of national bourgeois cultural ideal that Pieper highlights in her analysis--Mendelssohn was too concerned with distinguishing Leipzig’s burghers and their music from those of other cities to dwell on a wider class identity.

The focus on local identity in this analysis also challenges the notion that German cultural identity in the early nineteenth century was oriented exclusively towards a national imagined community. Music was, and would continue to be, a potent force in the shaping of German national consciousness, but it was equally effective as a marker of regional and local difference. Indeed, successful realization of a particular “national” ideal could easily become a currency with which cities competed for cultural and political prominence. Mendelssohn, by showing that Leipzig was preeminent in the particularly “German” areas of instrumental and sacred music, was able to ensure that the first Saxon conservatory of music was founded in his own city rather than in Dresden. Similarly, Leipzig’s connection to Bach, a nationally renowned composer and arguably the founding father of “German” music, became a source of local

\textsuperscript{83}“Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’s Todtenfeier,” *Leipziger Illustrirte Zeitung*, Band 9, No. 229, November 20, 1847: 321-322 (translation by the author).

\textsuperscript{84}“Todtenfeier,” 26.

distinction. In the absence of a unified German state, attempts to define a national cultural agenda were necessarily carried out at a local level, and so the distinction between national and local identities quickly became muddled. Although Mendelssohn and other Leipzigers of his time may have contributed to the establishment of a national ideal in music, it was Leipzig, as the city where this ideal found its best expression, that they championed.
Bibliography


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To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty: Women’s Criminal Petitions to Queen Anne of England

The British State Papers contain dozens of previously unstudied early eighteenth-century letters written by lower and middling class Englishwomen to their sovereign, Queen Anne (1665-1714). These women were petitioning to secure pardons on behalf of their convict husbands, sons, and brothers and they all used the same rhetorical techniques. But how did these women know how to capture the attention of the Queen? In this paper, Emily Rhodes ’19 argues that these petitions are evidence of a set of cultural practices and beliefs shared between people from a wide variety of classes and social standings. She shows that these petitions are proof of the vital role of royal pardoning in the judicial system and wider society in late Stuart England. Ultimately, her research reveals both the agency and experiences of lower-class women largely overlooked by previous scholars and the political authority wielded by a Queen frequently considered powerless.

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Written For: The Politics of Food in Early Modern England
To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty:  
Women’s Criminal Petitions to Queen Anne of England  
Emily Rhodes

In 1702, Anne Bonner, of Flitton, Bedfordshire, a servant, wrote a petition to the mighty Anne, Queen of England (1665-1714). Mrs. Bonner expressed “Intollerable Concern for her poor unfortunate Husband,” Henry Bonner, who “at the last assizes before these last at Bedford, was Condemned upon bare Circumstances without any other Kind of Evidence, for Killing a man.” She enumerated her husband’s virtues, for example that “he was always honestly painful and Industrious to maintain his poor wife & thre Children.” She also included the testimony of twenty-eight citizens of Flitton, including the church warden, which stated that they “certifie that we never knew Henry Bonner Guilty of any Crime or doing of any Mischief to any but that he was a man willing to work and to take care of his family.” Anne concludes by asking for “your Sacred Majesties mercifull Pardon for her poor husband,” lamenting her “Excessiv e sorrow…almost to distraction” and reminding the Queen that “his poor wife & thre children, who under this his misfortune are inevitably ruin’d, unless your Majesty pleaseth to be mercifull.”

Mrs. Bonner’s petitioning did not stop there. A later petition sent to Secretary of State William Legge, Lord Dartmouth (1672-1750) “a fortnight Since” she had “delivered a Petition to Her Majesty on Datchett Bridge” used a more desperate tone. Here, she declared that “Your Petitioner is fully assured of his Innocency” and states that “her Majesty was pleased to give Your Lordship with Directions of Her Majesty’s Pleasure what should be done” but that “to Your Petitioner’s great surprise there is no reprieve come.” Interestingly, Anne Bonner discloses that she works for a Lady Frecheville before reminding Lord Dartmouth that her husband is to be executed on the upcoming Tuesday. This document is followed by a note from Sir Charles Hedges, Attorney General (1649/50-1714) to Lord Godolphin, Lord Treasurer (1645-1712), asking the latter to consider her petition “and report his opinion in what manner it may be best done.” After that, there are no further documents related to the Bonner case found in the State Papers.

The Bonners were probably not a wealthy family accustomed to communicating with the nobility and monarchy. Anne Bonner worked—likely as a servant—for a Lady Frecheville. Furthermore, Bonner’s petitions are written in two different hands, suggesting they were written by scribes rather than Anne herself. On the surface, these documents appear to be mere footnotes in the State Papers archive. However, Queen Anne’s State Papers, include dozens of petitions written by women—wives, mothers and sisters—on behalf of themselves or their convicted relatives that have been untouched by scholarship. These petitions flow with emotion. Declarations such as “Yo[r]: Pet[r]: and her several Infant Children will be Reduced to the Extremest necessity by the Untimely End of her husband” are common throughout. Moreover, many documents composed by the Queen’s advisors and secretaries asking for

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86 All documents relating to the Bonner case can be found in Testimony signed several hands, , undated, The National Archives (TNA), Her Majesty’s Public Records Office [London] (PRO), State Papers (SP) 34/32 f.127; Petition to the queen from Anne Bonner, , undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/32 f.128; Letter from Sir Charles Hedges, , 4 Jan. 1702/3, TNA, PRO, SP 34/32 f.129; and Petition to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State, from Anne Bonner, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/32 f.131.

87 Petition of Mary Brenan to queen, 7 Feb. 1713/14, TNA, PRO SP 34/23 f.30.
presiding judges’ opinions on the cases also exist. Consequently, Anne Bonner’s case was not an isolated occurrence, but rather an example of an active system of monarchical petitioning and pardoning.

These petitions reveal more than the fact that women of all classes felt comfortable petitioning and that the Queen was responding to their pleas. They give historians insight into gender, class, criminal, social, legal, monarchical, political, and cultural history at the turn of the eighteenth century. Upon examination, these petitions suggest that in late Stuart England, inklings of shared cultural practices and beliefs existed amongst people of a wide variety of classes and social standings. The women’s petitions all employ similar rhetorical practices as those seen in early seventeenth century upper class women’s petitions. Furthermore, both the letters and the monarchy’s response to them testify to a unified understanding of the figure of the “worthy criminal,” and the traits of pardonable men. Finally, these petitions echoed the same maternal rhetoric image used in publications such as poems and proclamations to glorify Queen Anne and portray her as relatable, demonstrating that the propaganda developed by the Crown and its supporters worked as intended. The petitions written by women to Queen Anne provide a case study proving that a shared culture existed at this time. However, this is not to say that these unified cultural understandings developed during Anne’s reign. To make a judgement on this point is outside of the confines of this paper. However, this rich set of sources, which is accompanied by the royal reactions to them, display that a shared culture was emerging or had emerged.

Simultaneously, these petitions can help historians understand the continued importance of the monarch in a time when the role was becoming increasingly institutionalized. Instead of exemplifying a post-Glorious Revolution constitutionalized crown, the petitions display the vital role of royal pardoning in the judicial system and wider society in late Stuart England. Queen Anne personally and fiercely protected her royal prerogative, exercising her remaining powers as frequently as possible. She understood popular politics and used them to keep her place in government essential. Even as the power of Parliament grew, Queen Anne ensured that the monarch’s role remained vital to the continuing function of the country. Further, these petitions demonstrate that it is time to take a deeper look at the royal prerogative of the early eighteenth century, and at the reign of a queen historians have consistently forgotten and underestimated.

Shared Understandings of the Duty of Women to Petition

While work has been done on the history of upper-class women’s petitioning, the petitions of lower class women have been overlooked. An exploration of the previous scholarship can show the commonalities between the two groups of women. Historians including James Daybell and Alison Thorne have written extensively on the style, form and history of noble women’s petitionary letters in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their scholarship has proven that in the late Tudor and early Stuart period, society expected noble or rich women to use epistolary skills to protect and promote their families. This role was considered “an extension of female roles within the household,” and one of the few instances where women could work outside the domestic sphere. As shown, wealthy women were not only expected to petition on behalf of their family members in prison, it was expected of their gender. Although Daybell and Thorne only consider upper

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88 Petition to the queen from Robert Husher, 8 Aug. 1712, TNA, PRO, SP 34/32 f.40. Signatures found on these documents include Lord Dartmouth, Bolingbroke and H. Boyle.
89 Edward Gregg, Queen Anne (London: Routledge, 1980), 134-36.
90 Gregg, 150.
93 Thorne, 24.
class women in their work, lower class women would also be expected to perform the same practice.

These petitions followed a strict physical and rhetorical script. Angel Day and Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) authored guidebooks on how to write all genres of letters, including petitionary ones. Day—whose parameters closely mirrored Erasmus’—instructed that letters should begin by exalting the addressee; stress the reasons for granting the request; make sure the request is fair and grantable by the addressee; explain how the request might be carried out; and finally express gratitude and humiliation. Letters also utilized appropriate spacing, with sufficient room left between the name of the addressee, the petition and the signature in the bottommost corner in order to display due deference.

These rhetorical strategies are evident in early seventeenth century noblewomen’s petitions. In a petition on behalf of her son accused of treason, Mary Wriothesley, the Countess Dowager of Southampton (1552-1607) declares that she could not “hold steddy in my hart how to wryt” and could only “pray mercy to my miserable sonne…let the bytter passion of a perplexed mother move you to plead for her only sonne.” This statement is emotional and highlights her weaknesses as a woman. In her petition on behalf of her husband, Lady Elizabeth Ralegh (1565-c.1647) refers to herself as “a unfortunat woman” and asks her addressee to “let my sorros cum before you—which if you trwly knew, I asur my selfe you wold pitti me.” As shown, these women understood that emphasizing their helplessness would help their petition succeed.

It was customary for petitions to the monarch to be written by a scribe, as writing oneself was deemed impertinent. Identifying these scribes or determining what percentage of petitions were penned by scribes is probably impossible. Nothing is known about the presumed men who would have acted as scribes. However, the fact that the letters were scribal does not mean that the women had no say in their content. The letters do not follow a strict script. Many use a variety of rhetorical strategies, emphasize different factors, and can be quite creative. Furthermore, in many instances, two or more petitions come from the same woman in a different hand, which proves they were scribed by different people. While the handwriting is different, the wording can be almost identical, showing that the women have likely dictated the content. Although the women may not have been able to pen the letters, they certainly had a say in their matter. Therefore, the stylistic variations and similarities between the petitions demonstrate that women petitioners must have had some direct input in what was written.

The content of women’s petitionary letters was also highly scripted. As Daybell points out, women’s letters of “humility and entreaty” followed a strict “social script,” and were “marked by tropes of deference and self-deprecation.” As a result, in these letters, women stressed their gender differences and concentrated on their gender identity or familial status. Women emphasized their defenseless image, wrote emotionally charged pleas, and were “clearly exploiting received assumptions about the physiological and intellectual inferiority of their sex as the readiest means of inducing sympathy for their plight.” Therefore, women highlighted gendered perceptions of themselves in order to exert their agency when writing letters in times of crisis. As a result, poor women, somewhat ironically, exerted some real political power by reinforcing their overall helplessness and weakness.

While it remains unclear how these gender expectations disseminated through the classes, it is evident that they did, as lower class women petitioning Queen Anne at the beginning of the

95 Daybell, The Material Letter, 70.
100 Daybell, 70.
102 Thorne, 27-29.
eighteenth century utilized the same rhetorical techniques. In some instances, the petitions read as if written by the same authoresses. Many petitioners stress their own suffering when writing to the monarch. Jane Dyer, a woman “under the terrible sentence of Death for a bare felony” brands herself “yo[r]: Majesty[s] poor unfortunate and perishing petecioner.”\textsuperscript{103} Another, Anne Avery, whose bricklayer husband is under sentence of death for robbery, states that she is “your poor afflicted almost disharted petitioner.”\textsuperscript{104} These women stress their sorrow and weakness in these times of trouble, much like the women of the early seventeenth century.

Other women focus on the harm they will suffer if their male relative dies. One woman proclaims that the she, “having two young Children to suport by the absence of her husband, is exposed to great Difficulties” while another declares that “your Pet[ioneer] and her several Infant Children will be Reduced to the Extremest necessity by the Untimely End of her husband.”\textsuperscript{105} Another states that the transportation of her husband to the colonies will make her family “destitute of all Subsistence and left to the utmost misery.”\textsuperscript{106} The husband of Anne Prichet, condemned to die as a rapist, pronounced that “if [her husband] die [sic] both she and her Children will be brought to Ruin in this World.”\textsuperscript{107} Children were frequently mentioned, with Ann Worrall stating that only the Queen could “prevent the utter ruine of Your poor Pet[r]; and her three small Children.”\textsuperscript{108} Some women even declare that the execution of their husband will lead to the death of innocent people. In her petition on behalf of her horse-thieving husband, Joane Evance states that she has “a small Infant att her breast who most Inevitably perish [sic] if her said husband be executed.”\textsuperscript{109} The mother of felon John Jubbs even declares that if her son is executed, “it would also bring your Petitioner with Sorrow to the Grave.”\textsuperscript{110} These examples display that when petitioning, women emphasized that without a man in their lives, they would suffer and perhaps even perish. They also highlight their physical distress, stressing the harm they and their children would suffer on the loss of their husband or son. The petitionary letters of the eighteenth century women match those of women in the seventeenth century in emphasizing their emotional distress and womanly weakness, and also their need for male support.

The eighteenth century letters of supplication also are written with humility, similar to those of the seventeenth century. Throughout the petitions, the authoresses show due deference to their monarch. Almost all petitions open with “To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty,” and are titled “The Humble Petition.” They are proper spaced, with a large gap between the address and the petition, showing that these women understand the need to physically separate themselves from their monarch. This humility continues in the body of the petitions. Begging to spare her husband’s life, Mary Swift of Southwark wrote that “Your Pet[r]: therefore prostrates her Selfe at Your Royall Foot and beggs Mercy for her said husband.”\textsuperscript{111} Bowing before the Queen is a popular image, with Isabell Watson declaring that she “therefore most humbly throws herself at Your Maj[esties] feet for Mercy to her Said husband.”\textsuperscript{112} Another petitioner, Mary Brenan, states her humility outright: “Yo[r]: Pet[r]: therefore throws herself at Yo[r]: most Gracious Maj[ties]: Feet, and in the most Humble manner hopes and prays that Yo[r]: Majesty will be graciously Pleased to take the premises into Yo[r]: Royal Consideracon.”\textsuperscript{113} Many petitioners also reference the monarch’s “unlimited Grace and mercy.”\textsuperscript{114} In her petition,

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\textsuperscript{103} Petition of Jane Dyer, about 28 April 1705, TNA, PRO, SP 34/6 f.13.
\textsuperscript{104} Petition to the queen from Anne Avery…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/34 f.198.
\textsuperscript{105} Petition to the queen from Mary Caillaud…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/31 f.174 and Petition of Mary Brenan to queen…, 7 Feb. 1713/14, SP 34/32 f.30.
\textsuperscript{106} Petition to the queen from Elizabeth Leigh…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/29 f.69.
\textsuperscript{107} Petition to the queen from Anne Prichet…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/34 f.30.
\textsuperscript{108} Petition of Ann Worrall for the pardon of her husband…, 2 June 1709, TNA, PRO, Privy Council (PC) 1/2 f.167.
\textsuperscript{109} Petition of Joane Evance, wife of Robert Evance, to queen…, 24 Apr. 1709, TNA, PRO, SP 34/10 f.233.
\textsuperscript{110} Petition to the queen from Margaret Jubbs…, 7 Aug. 1710, TNA, PRO, SP 34/29 f.84.
\textsuperscript{111} Petition of Mary Smith to queen…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/35 f.92.
\textsuperscript{112} Petition of Isabella Watson to queen…, 30 Sept. 1713, TNA, PRO, SP 34/22 f.26.
\textsuperscript{113} Petition of Mary Brenan to queen, 7 Feb. 1713/14, SP 34/23 f.30.
\textsuperscript{114} Petition to the queen from Mary Caillaud…, 29 Feb. 1711/12, TNA, PRO, SP 34/33 f.31.
Elizabeth Leigh asserts that the Queen’s “Goodness disdains not the Addresses of the meanest of your Subjects,” highlighting her low status but also flattering the monarch by suggesting that she could never leave a subject in need. Anne Avery praises Queen Anne’s intelligence, stating that “your great wisdom goodnesse” will help her husband receive a reprieve. Thus, the women position themselves as physically below the monarch, both metaphorically on the paper and with their imagery of being at the Queen’s feet. They also praise her virtues such as wisdom, grace and mercy. These petitioners understand the need to show humility and self-deprecation in order to obtain a reprieve, and therefore belittle and weaken themselves while placing the Queen on her literal throne. These women use precisely the same rhetorical strategies used by wealthy women a century earlier and found in the letter writing guidebooks written during the Renaissance.

When writing petitions in the late Tudor and early Stuart eras, wealthy women followed strict rhetorical guidelines in manuals in order to achieve their goals. They focused on feminine weakness and underlined their emotional distress and supplicant position. More than a hundred years later, women of a much lower social standing used the same techniques to beg for mercy for their husbands, fathers and brothers. This role was not only something women did to save their families, it was an intellectual role as vital and expected as keeping the house and raising children. Examples ranging from the wife of a bricklayer to a wife of a captain in the Navy display that women from a variety of social classes of the early eighteenth century understood the steps necessary to fulfill their expected female role of helping their close male relation in a time of need.

How these rhetorical techniques spread throughout the classes is unknown. Certainly, some of the strategies, such as image of prostrating oneself before the monarch is common knowledge throughout classes and does not need to be learned from a guidebook. Potentially, women could have learned the skills needed for petitioning not from wealthy women, but from wide-reaching and accessible sources such as the Book of Common Prayer or proclamations, which dictated proper behavior. Despite not knowing how these practices became common knowledge, the fact that these letters all utilize the same rhetorical techniques shows that women of all classes in early modern England understood the same social performances necessary to produce a successful or sympathetic petition. Even greater than that perhaps, however, these petitions show that women of all classes in early modern England did have some small form of political agency, which they shrewdly understood how to exert through stressing their own stereotypical weakness and inferiority.

Shared Understandings of “Worthy Criminals”

In the years after the Glorious Revolution, the number of offenses deemed capital increased. The English Parliament during this time authorized a bloody system of criminal law based on terror. According to historian Douglas Hay, post-Glorious Revolution England “established the freedom not of men, but of men of property.” As a result of this new emphasis, Parliament approved numerous acts to contemporize capital punishment and protect property from theft or damage. By the dawn of the eighteenth century, crimes such as forgery and counterfeiting currency were added to list of capital offenses already including robbery, burglary, rape, murder and infanticide.

Although the number of capital offenses steadily rose after the Glorious Revolution, J. M. Beattie notes that the number of actual executions performed in England each year did not. This disconnect is explained by the increasing importance of the pardon in early modern England. Pardons could be obtained at two points in the judicial process: first, a judge

115 Petition to the queen from Anne Avery, undated, SP 34/34 f.198.
117 Hay et al., 18.
118 Hay et al., 22.
could reprieve any convicted criminal and send their name to the monarch for a pardon—a request that was never refused. Second, if a judge declined to pardon a criminal, the accused could petition the monarch directly, usually through the Secretary of State, using a carefully worded petition.\textsuperscript{120} If the petition caught the monarch’s interest, their secretaries would request a recommendation from the presiding judge, and, in most cases, a reason would be given to justify the king’s mercy for the criminal.\textsuperscript{121} As Beattie explains,

Most reprieves were…to allow the king to show mercy if he chose to. This was seen principally as a means of regulating the level of capital punishment so that an acceptable number of offenders would be sent to the gallows. At the same time, it was hoped that the sentence of death, the solemnity of its pronunciation, and the judge’s condemnation would frighten the prisoner into obeying the law in the future. The reprieved prisoner would most often be held in jail and returned to court at a later session to plead to the pardon when it had been issued under the Great Seal.\textsuperscript{122}

Therefore, pardons played a tremendously important role in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and are an example of a crucial royal prerogative that was unaltered by the Glorious Revolution. Anne wanted to exert her prerogative in ways that would ingratiate her with her people, and the royal pardon was a perfect means to do so.\textsuperscript{123} The increased number of capital offenses came at the perfect time for Anne, as it created the opportunity to expand one function of the royal prerogative, while some of its other powers were being transferred to Parliament. As a result, during Queen Anne’s reign, the parliamentary, judicial and monarchical branches created a criminal system that instilled fear and order in the public, while also keeping them contented with their queen.

How did the monarchs and their secretaries deem which offenders were “worthy” candidates for a reprieve? According to Beattie, remitted criminals shared common traits and their characters—in terms of their reputations and their dispositions—often decided their fates.\textsuperscript{124} Pardoned criminals were usually young, from a respectable family, had a place in their community and had been drawn in by another to commit the crime. They were honest and hardworking first-time offenders with families to support and who were willing to serve their country. Additionally, women, especially those who “pleaded the belly,” were overwhelmingly pardoned.\textsuperscript{125} Judges and the monarch therefore knew which characteristics to seek when deciding which criminals to pardon.

The women’s petitions to Queen Anne clearly display that subjects also understood which characteristics would maximize the chance for reprieve. In their petitions, the wives, sisters and mothers stress their convicted relative’s “worthy” traits. Take for example to petition of Ann Worrall, whose husband George was “confined in Irons and under Sentence of Death” aboard the HMS Bedford for mutiny after going ashore without permission. Mrs. Worrall’s petition stresses that her husband only left the ship as he “was unhappily prevailed with by some of [the other sailors],” and that the men had only wanted to leave the ship “to see their wives and families.” She also states:

He had not any intention to promote or Encourage any Mutiny or Disturbance; And that he was always known to be a Man of a Quiet and Peaceable Temper and Carriage: And during his 20 Years constant Service in the Royall Navy, hath behaved himself with the utmost Diligence and fidelity in the discharge of his Duty; and was never so much as accused, of any Crime before.

In the conclusion of her petition, Ann reiterates that this is her husband’s first offense, and reminds Queen Anne that the death of her husband will ruin of her

\textsuperscript{120} Beattie, “The Royal Pardon,” 13–14.
\textsuperscript{122} Beattie, Crime and the Courts, 431.
\textsuperscript{123} Gregg, Queen Anne, 155.
\textsuperscript{124} Gregg, 440.
\textsuperscript{125} Gregg, 440; Beattie, “The Royal Pardon,” 15.
life and that of her children. Mrs. Worrall notes many of her husband’s “worthy” traits, including his dedication to his family, his hardworking and honest nature, his crimeless history, and that others influenced him to commit the crime. These references show that Ann Worrall clearly knew what to emphasize when petitioning the Queen.

A further example of this common understanding of the worthy qualities of a reprieve is Anne Avery’s petition on behalf of her husband Jacob, who was facing execution for robbery. Mrs. Avery states that her husband has always “carried himself very affectionately towards your Petitioner and his Children, and always acted very industriously and honestly for the maintenance of his family.” Anne further explains that her husband “was reduced to extreme straits and having the Misfortune to become acquainted with ill company was seduced and prevailed upon much against his inclination and contrary to his former course of living to attempt the Robbery for which he now justly lies under Condemnation.” Mrs. Avery also worries that she and her family will fall into poverty and points out that this incident was “the first time he ever was accused of Guilty of such a Crime or anything that deserved Censure.” Finally, she emphasizes the low impact of the crime, as “the persons injured [received] noe greater damage than the losse of 7s. 6d.” Anne Avery understands what she needs to say about her husband and family to obtain a pardon. She focuses on his virtuous history, that he has committed no other crimes, stole to protect his family, was taken in by others and the family’s reliance on him for support.

Margaret Jubbs, mother of burglar John Jubbs of Norwich, provides a final example of a petitioner emphasizing reprieve-worthy qualities. Margaret first tells the Queen that her son “hath his Wife & three small Children to maintain” before mentioning her own sorrow if her son should die so soon after her husband, who died a fortnight before the petition was written. Furthermore, she says that her son “is a young man. This being the First Fault & he being very pentinent, there’s great Hopes of his Amendment.” She finishes her petition by expressing her desire that her son be transported rather than executed, a sentence just emerging during Queen Anne’s reign and one that helped to modulate the impact of the increase in capital crimes. Like the other petitioners, Margaret reminds the Queen that this is her son’s first offense and that he has a family for which he must care. She also stresses his youth and his penitence—both characteristics deemed worthy of pardon. John Jubbs is one of the only convicts examined in this paper whose fate is absolutely known. In “The Last Dying Speech and Confession of John Jubbs,” a printed and circulated copy of his last confession, the convict states that he “obtained her Majesties Reprieve.” However, he misunderstood the pardon and believed it to be a “Transport Pardon to the West Indies” rather than an unconditional pardon. As a result of this misunderstanding, John Jubbs broke out of jail only to be caught, tried again and executed on April 16, 1714. John Jubbs’ initial pardon displays the effectiveness of his mother’s petition stressing his reprieve-worthy qualities.

There was a further means by which women could prove their convicted male relative was a “worthy criminal.” Beattie also argues that family members used social capital to support petitions. The petition might reference a person of influence or a higher social standing with whom the family had a connection, or include a petition signed by important and unimportant members of the prisoner’s parish community. These supplemental supporting petitions acted as a guarantee of the veracity of the main petitioner, and added weight to the petition and assurance that the felon was indeed worthy of reprieve.

In their petitions, many women referenced important people with whom they had connections. After petitioning to Anne for a pardon for a counterfeiting charge, Martha Elton sent a petition to Secretary Hedges reminding him that “you[r]

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126 Petition of Ann Worrall…, June 2 1709, PC 1/2 f.167.
127 Petition to the queen from Anne Avery…, undated, SP 34/34 f.198.
128 Petition to the queen from Margaret Jubbs…, 7 August 1710, SP 34/29 f.84.
129 John Jubbs, The Last Dying Speech and CONFESSION, of John Jubbs, who was Executed at Chelmsford on Fryday the 16th, of April 1714 (Norwich: Tbo. Goddard, 1714), 1.
130 Beattie, Crime and the Courts, 444-45.
petition[s] was a Manuall Serv[t] to yo[r] Hon[r]” and asks him to “Interceede w[th] her most Sacred Maj[ty] to admit yo[r] Peticon[er] to be Inserted into the next Generall free Pardon.”

Additionally, Margaret Jubbs’ petition on behalf of her son seems to cram in between widely spaced lines that her late husband “serv’d in y[e] Millitia in y[e] Reigns of King Charles y[e] 2[d] King James & King Will[m] as Lieutenant & under yo[r] Maj[ty] as Captain.”

Douglas Hay shows that pardons were often granted to those with connections as “mercy was part of the currency of patronage.” These women cited their connections not because they expected any favoritism from their illustrious connection, but because they hoped to activate their paternalism. The fact that women referenced their relationships to these powerful people—no matter how tenuous—displays that they understood how to profit from social capital.

Many of the petitions under study included supplemental petitions. One of the most substantial supported the already-explored Henry Bonner and contained twenty-eight community members, including the church warden and overseers. The supplement stated that the “Inhabitants of Flitton...certifie that we never knew Henry Bonner Guilty of any Crime or doing of any Mischief to any but that he was a man willing to work and to take care of his family therefore we humbly desire to have him Restored to his wife and Children again.”

Isabella Watson’s petition on behalf of her husband George who had been condemned for pickpocketing, obtained a certificate “by the minister churchwarden, and others of St Andrew Holborn, Middlesex” signed by seventeen hands total, stating they had known him for six years and that “George Watson has lived in good Credit and reputation allways behaving himselfe honestly Religiously & fairly amongst his Neighbours to the best of our knowledge or informacon.” These women knew how to gather testimony to support their husbands which proves not only a shared social understanding of how to advocate for their husbands, but also that they could accumulate and expend social capital.

However, supplementary petitions could also be used against a petitioner. In 1713, William Matthews, convicted of highway robbery, had his sister Mary Warner, who had risen in social status, write on his behalf to the Queen. Upon receiving his command from the monarch for more information about the case, the presiding judge, Littleton Powys (1647-1732), was so determined to prevent the release of Matthews—who he considered not only a repeat offender but also a murderer and a bigamist—that he enclosed a petition from the town of Lichfield, where the inhabitants were furious that Matthews had only been found guilty of manslaughter in a recent murder case. This town held that Matthews “ought to have been found Guilty of Murder. The murder having been plainly and fully proved and that the same was Barbarously Committed & without any provocacon.” Whether Matthews was pardoned is unknown; there are no later documents related to his case in the State Papers. However, what is apparent from this and other supplementary petitions is that the opinions of others were considered when deciding who should be pardoned, and that citizens of all classes understood this. Thus, the lower classes of England of the early eighteenth century understood the pardonable characteristics and the sort of supporting evidence necessary to secure or prevent a pardon.

All classes in early eighteenth century England shared common beliefs about who should be considered a worthy criminal. Letters written by Queen Anne’s secretary James Vernon (1646-1727) to various judges and mayors soliciting opinions on

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131 Petition of Martha Elton to Secretary Hedges…, 1702-1706, TNA, PRO, SP, 34/36 f.197.
132 Nottingham’s Letters: To the Recorder [of London], 17 July 1702, TNA, PRO, SP, 44/104 f.83.
133 Petition to the queen from Margaret Jubbs…, 7 August 1710, SP 34/29 f.84.
134 Petition of Frances Lowen to queen…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP, 34/36 f.60.
135 Hay, Albion’s Fatal Tree, 45-47.
136 Testimony signed by several hands…, undated, SP 34/32 f.127.
137 Certificate by the minister churchwarden and others…, 30 September 1713, TNA, PRO, SP, 34/22 f. 27.
138 Certificate from Richard Wakefield, Town Clerk of Lichfield…, 8 April 1713, TNA, PRO, SP, 34/34 f.169.
petitions or delaying executions are found in the State Papers. In those letters, Vernon sums up the petitions in a few lines, and often only cites the points which show that the petitioner or the convict for whom the petitioner is writing is a worthy criminal. While providing an account of the petition of John Banfie to Baron Tracy, Vernon jots down that the convict was tried “upon very Slender Evidence” and states that “he is a Young man, have [sic] a Wife and sev[el] small Children who must Unvariably perish” and that “he is anxious to list himself in the service of the Queen by sea or land. This is his first offence.”

In another, written by Vernon to Baron Hatsell (1641-1714) on behalf of Philip Devon, he notes that the petitioner “was not yet 17 years old” and that the petition also contained “a Certificate from the Minister, Church Wardens & other Inhabitants of St Martin Vintry London, that the pet[or] had faithfully served his master…and that this was his first crime.” Lastly, Vernon writes a very brief note to Lord Chief Justice Trevor (1658-1730) in which he sums up William Mapledoram’s mother’s petition to have his sentence of felony and burglary remitted. Of this petition, Vernon simply notes: “Good character. First conviction. Prays for pardon. Is young and willing to serve anywhere.”

Queen Anne also expressed a shared understanding of these cultural values. In a of report of a meeting between the Queen and the Lord Chief Justice, Sir John Holt (1642-1710), the latter remarks that the Queen “hath been pleased to extend her mercy” to a Thomas Lyford, “in consideration of his youth.” In another letter to Hedges, Anne expressed her desire to pardon a convict because “having a wife and six children,” it “makes me think it a case of compassion” to grant him a reprieve. These instances suggest that the queen genuinely was affected and moved by these petitions. Women as low as bricklayers wives and as high as the queen shared the same attitudes towards “worthy” criminals.

This sampling of petitions from Queen Anne’s reign proves that the both the nobility and the working class understood the traits and characteristics of pardonable convicts. The women displayed their shared cultural understanding by emphasizing these characteristics in their petitions, and they were considered most important to the monarchy when deciding who to pardon. While Queen Anne exercised her royal prerogative of pardoning throughout her reign, she only pardoned criminals considered worthy, and the women writing to save their male relatives understood this. Anne could have vetoed the capital offense laws, but chose instead to use her royal prerogative in a selective manner that allowed her to cement her relationship and shared culture with those near and far from the throne. Therefore, in the early eighteenth century, there existed a shared cultural understanding of which criminals were pardonable.

Shared Understandings of Broadcasted Images

When Queen Anne ascended the throne of England on March 8, 1702, she and her royal advisors had to decide how to portray her monarchy to the nation. Anne quickly decided to follow the path of many previous monarchs—including the other childless female monarch, Elizabeth I (1533-1603)—and become the mother of the nation. Scholar Toni Bowers states that “Anne Stuart encouraged her subjects to imagine her as the perfect embodiment of two ideals: virtuous mother and powerful ruler.” Anne wanted to exert her royal authority while simultaneously accentuating the traits she shared with her subjects. She achieved these ends by emphasizing her image as a mother. One of the likely reasons she chose this self-representation was her own motherless state, having lost seventeen children. Anne therefore used maternal images to recast her lack of an heir as a maternal dedication to her country. Anne also wanted to “present herself in terms

139 Vernon’s Letters: To Baron Tracy, 7 April 1702, TNA, PRO, SP, 44/102 f.351 v.
140 Vernon’s Letters: To Baron Hatsell, 7 April 1702, TNA, PRO, SP, 44/102 f.351 v.
141 Vernon’s Letters: To Lord Chief Justice Trevor, 13 April 1702, TNA, PRO, SP 44/102 f.359 v.
142 HMC Portland, IV, 334: Holt to Robert Harley, 30 September 1706, in Gregg, Queen Anne, 144.
144 Bowers, 42.
145 Bowers, 44.
attractive and accessible to the majority of her people…[investing] herself with the trappings of equality with commoners, effacing her royal difference to a significant extent.”\textsuperscript{147} This was also done as Anne “understood the new power of the people and embraced the new politics of elections and the public sphere.”\textsuperscript{148} By depicting herself as a mother of her people, Anne was able to remain accessible to her people during these political and societal transformations.

Anne began cultivating this matronly image as early as her coronation. During the ceremony, John Sharp, Archbishop of York (1645-1714) preached on Isaiah 49: 23: “Kings shall be thy nursing fathers and their queens thy nursing mothers.” This sermon immediately established Anne’s maternal self-representation, and an account of the coronation circulated throughout the kingdom, so that all could understand this metaphor.\textsuperscript{149} Anne also issued many proclamations that “assisted in representing her as a nursing mother to her people.”\textsuperscript{150} In them, she frequently spoke of her affection and “tender care for our people.”\textsuperscript{151} Her proclamations against sin, vice and profanity also served to further this nurturing and guiding image.\textsuperscript{152} As they were spread throughout the realm, the proclamations were accessible to all her subjects. Thus, the working women who petitioned their monarch likely were influenced by these propagandistic images.

Like proclamations, works by poets and authors glorifying the Queen also served to spread crown propaganda across the country. Maternal images of Queen Anne were perhaps most prevalent in work done as Anne “understood the new power of the people in honour of the Acts of Union 1707, which formally merged the kingdoms of England and Scotland. According to historian Kevin Sharpe, “to underscore the queen’s dominant role and to personalize the achievement of union, poets deployed gendered language and metaphors of birth that also figured the (now) childless Anne as the mother of a truly vigorous offspring.”\textsuperscript{153} This metaphor is especially significant in “Union: A Poem Humbly Dedicated to the Queen,” by Charles Darby (c. 1635-1709). In this poem, “Darby describes the joining of Anne’s kingdoms as a substitute for the child she could not have,”\textsuperscript{154} declaring that “May You to many happy Years arrive/ To see your Britain by this UNION thrive/ And if an Off-spring Heav’n should You deny/ Be this your Child, and Royal Progeny.”\textsuperscript{155} In Elkanah Settle (1648-1724)’s poem, “Carmen Irenicum: The Union of the Imperial Crowns of Great Britain: An Heroick Poem,” the author declares that the queen’s “glorious labour” and “vast Maternal Raptures” led to the Union, which he terms “her Filial Charge.”\textsuperscript{156} Finally, the writer Lewis Theobald (1688-1744) hails the Union’s “Christ’ning Day!” deeming it the “ovely, long expected Child!/ On whom our English Queen has smil’d.”\textsuperscript{157} These odes portray the Queen as the mother of the nation, who brings peace and prosperity to her people. The existence of these works not only highlights the acceptance of crown propaganda by authors not
directly associated with the monarchy, but also illuminates another way which this propaganda was popularized and broadcasted to the masses.

Many historians deem Anne’s matronly image as the “official court myth of the queen” and believe that it was ineffective.\(^{158}\) According to Bowers, “representations of Anne as national mother backfired,” and “throughout her reign, the queen’s efforts to exercise explicitly maternal authority would enjoy much more success in the spiritual realm than in the world of practical politics.”\(^{159}\) This is not entirely true. Certainly, politicians in Parliament may not have believed this self-representation of the monarch. However, as shown above, subjects throughout the kingdom—such as the poets who wrote odes to her—accepted her widely broadcasted maternal metaphor. And, like the middle to upper class poets, the lower class women who petitioned Queen Anne reflected an understanding of these maternal images in their letters.

In their petitions, the women heavily emphasize their families, detailing the exact number of children and how they would suffer if they or their husband were executed. In her petition to Anne, Anne Pritchet states that she “hath had 8 children” by her husband, and that his death would cause their ruin.\(^{160}\) Sarah White, under sentence of death at Newgate Prison in London for stealing silk, mentions her children many times throughout her petition, saying her “Extravagant Husband” has “left her with three Children” and that additionally “she being now Quit with Child of another” implores for a pardon “for the sake of her poors [sic] Children.”\(^{161}\) Perhaps most dramatically and obviously, in her petition to the Queen, Mary Swift, wife of robber Stephen Swift cites in a bigger script than the rest of the petition that she is “Enceint”—the French word for pregnant—and “past her reckoning.” She further hopes that “her Innocent Children are become [sic] objects of Your Ma[ties] Compassion.”\(^{162}\)

Describing how the execution would affect the children is a common theme throughout the petitions. The wife of the convicted highwayman Robert Husher, Elizabeth, tells the queen that she has many children “whose whole Subsisance Relyes on him for Maintainence.”\(^{163}\) Anne Avery seems to try to relate to the Queen’s loss of children by pointing out that she “hath been married to the said Jacob Avery for the space of 15 years by whom she hath had 8 children—3 of which are now living.” She further states that his “Condemnation” would lead to “the utter ruin of your distracted petitioner and her Children.”\(^{164}\) Counterfeiter Jane Houston also pleads for her life on behalf of her “four small children in a sad Deplorable condicon which must… inevitably perish.” She later once more asks for the pardon only for “the sake of her poore disatisfied children.”\(^{165}\) Yet the most dramatic of all pleas on behalf of her children is that of felon Margaret Green, who declares that her execution is “rendered a thousand times more terrible, by leaving her innocent Babes.”\(^{166}\) These pleas show that these women focused attention on their families in their petitions and how their death or the death of their male relative would impact the children. As Queen Anne so frequently was depicted as the nurturing and protecting mother of the nation, the women likely stressed their children in order to gain sympathy.

Mentioning children when petitioning monarchs or court officials certainly was not unique to Queen Anne’s reign. In letters of petition to previous monarchs, especially King William III of England (1650-1702), women did sometimes mention their children. Furthermore, some letters to the secretaries of Queen Anne bring up their children as well. The difference lies in the frequency and extent to which children are utilized in petitions as a sympathy-gaining technique. For example, a group of condemned women in Newgate Prison wrote a petition to Secretary Hedges, asking him to intercede

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\(^{158}\) Anderson Winn, *Queen Anne*, xix.


\(^{160}\) Petition to the queen from Anne Prichet, …, undated, SP 34/34 f.30.

\(^{161}\) Petition of Sarah White a convict in Newgate, May 1706, TNA, PRO, SP 34/7 f.131.

\(^{162}\) Petition of Mary Smith to queen, …, undated, SP 34/35 f.92.

\(^{163}\) Petition to the queen from Elizabeth Husher, …, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/32 f.13.

\(^{164}\) Petition to the queen from Anne Avery, …, undated, SP 34/34 f.198.

\(^{165}\) Petition to the queen from Jane Houston, …, March 1711/12, TNA, PRO, SP 34/33 f.51.

\(^{166}\) Petition of Margaret Green, prisoner in Newgate to queen, …, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/35 f.54.
to the Queen on their behalf in order to receive a pardon, or at least have their sentences commuted to transportation. Somewhat surprisingly, none of these women mentions children as a reason for a reprieve.167 Furthermore, felon Martha Rogers, condemned for shoplifting, petitioned both the Queen and Secretary Hedges. In her petition to the Queen, Martha quickly mentions that she has “six small Children living” and that fact rendering “life…much more Enjoyable than Death, and Repentance than the Grave.” 168 However, in her petition to Hedges, Martha merely mentions that she has “a great family of Children,” with no mention of the number or how her death would affect them. Thus, while petitions written by women to people other than Queen Anne did mention children, the emphasis on the relationship between parent and child is not as strong.

Furthermore, Queen Anne’s public image may be the reason why so many women’s petitions exist in the State Papers. Throughout her reign, Anne “worked hard to maintain the most fervent and continuous public support enjoyed by any monarch since Elizabeth.”169 She cultivated this support by portraying herself as a mother, but also as an “ideal of domestic womanhood” who was “defining, representing, and deploying the interests and values of her…subjects.”170 Thus, she did not want to simply declare herself mother of the nation, but also to be a mother to whom her subjects could relate. She also felt or at least publicized great compassion for her people, shown through her public acts such as reinstating the tradition of touching for scrofula, during which she would “heal” as many as four hundred suffers a week.171 These events were obviously extremely popular. Another way that Queen Anne could demonstrate her compassion while simultaneously performing a vital political act, was through granting reprieves. When all these factors are taken together, it is unsurprising that so many women’s petitions are found in the State Papers. Women likely felt comfortable writing to a Queen who portrayed herself as relatable. While women previously had written petitions to monarchs, the prevalence of petitions from women of all backgrounds in the State Papers likely stems from the fact that Anne considered her royal prerogative of pardoning essential, personally reading hundreds of petitions submitted by subjects.172 There are a voluminous number of petitions in the State Papers because Queen Anne, in defending one of her last important prerogatives, took them seriously.

The most convincing evidence of the acceptance of Queen Anne’s broadcasted image as a mother is found in the petition of Martha Elton. In prison for counterfeiting with her husband, Alexander Reynolds, Martha relates the fairly familiar tale of “an Ignorant Countrymaid being forced in Compliance by her Husband” in the big, dangerous city. However, when addressing the Queen at the beginning of her petition, Martha styles herself “your [Maj[ties] Petitioner’s Daughter.”173 This statement clearly displays that Martha Elton, a lowly country girl, has correctly interpreted Queen Anne’s broadcasted image as a mother, understands how to use this to her advantage, and accordingly positions herself as the Queen’s daughter in need of her mother’s help.

This simple declaration, along with the extensive references to children in order to plea for pardons, proves that Anne’s maternal image was embraced by her subject. Women across the country and across different social classes understood the metaphor and used to flatter the Queen and their attempt to pardon. It is possible that they believed the propaganda and considered themselves children of England and their monarch. This perceived personal relationship with their monarch could certainly explain why Anne became one of the most popular early modern English monarchs. At the very least, these petitions suggest that women of all classes across England shared an understanding of monarchical representations and how to interpret those images. This shared cultural

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167 Petition of certain condemned women in Newgate to Secretary Hedges, 1702-1706, TNA, PRO, SP 34/36 f.324.
168 Petition of Martha Rogers, prisoner in Newgate, to queen…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/36 f.147.
169 Gregg, *Queen Anne*, 150.
172 Gregg, *Queen Anne*, 144.
173 Petition of Martha Elton to queen…, undated, TNA, PRO, SP 34/36 f.198.
knowledge of the Queen’s self-representation shows that the propaganda worked.

**Conclusion**

In his book, *Inventing and Resisting Britain: Cultural Identities in Britain and Ireland, 1685-1789*, historian Murray Pittock argues that an English shared society did not emerge until the 1760s, when religious divisions amongst the English finally became unimportant. However, the petitions of women from all classes show that shared cultural understandings existed in Britain as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. As the petitions written by women to Queen Anne display, even if many of the English disagreed with one another, they shared understandings about cultural practices, beliefs and images. Women of all social classes understood the necessary steps and rhetoric to utilize when facing their own or a relative’s incarceration. Petitioners and royalty alike shared a common understanding of the traits of a worthy criminal. Finally, propaganda broadcasted by the court and its supporters reached far and wide, was embraced by subjects of all backgrounds, and could be affirmed by petitioners in order to flatter and gain the sympathy of Queen Anne. Thus, although these petitions only represent a small segment of shared cultural practices and beliefs, they do suggest that by the reign of Queen Anne, the concept of “the English,” rather than “the Protestants” or “the Catholics” or “the Rich” or “the Poor” had emerged.

These petitions also reveal the ongoing importance of the role of the monarch in post-Glorious Revolution England, challenging those who considered the crown constitutionalized by the reign of Queen Anne. However, the sheer number of the petitions prove that Anne actively used her closely guarded royal prerogative of the pardon. Not only was it a power that the Queen wanted to employ, but it was vital to the continued stability of the nation, especially as the list of criminal offenses grew. The judicial and parliamentary systems relied on this royal pardon to ensure that the number of executions would not climb too high and instigate public protest. Therefore, rather than the monarch being cast aside politically after the Glorious Revolution, the monarch’s role as head of the judicial system, at the very least, was as important as ever.

These pardon petitions written by women to Queen Anne remained untouched and abandoned in the State Papers for centuries. Not one has been cited in other historical work, yet they reveal a plethora of information about gender, class, crime, morals, propaganda, politics and monarchy. The fact that these petitions were mostly submitted by poor, illiterate women, does not mean they should be ignored or discounted. This study shows that historians must continue to study the role of the monarchy post-Glorious Revolution and continue to dig through the State Papers to find new evidence and stories to tell. In particular, Queen Anne has largely been brushed aside by scholars and treated as a woman molded by advisers and only remembered for her maternal failure. However, these petitions shed light on the greater complexities of her reign, and her vital role in her kingdom. Perhaps most of all, these petitions prove that women should never be forgotten or overlooked in the historical narrative.

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