RED COATS AND WILD BIRDS:
MILITARY CULTURE AND ORNITHOLOGY ACROSS THE
NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH EMPIRE

BY

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ABSTRACT

“Red coats and wild birds: military culture and ornithology across the nineteenth-century British Empire” investigates the intersections between British military culture and the practices and ideas of ornithology, with a particular focus on the British Mediterranean. Considering that British officers often occupied several imperial sites over the course of their military careers, to what extent did their movements shape their ornithological knowledge and identities at “home” and abroad? How did British military naturalists perceive different local cultures (with different attitudes to hunting, birds, field science, etc.) and different local natures (different sets of birds and environments)? How can trans-imperial careers be written using not only textual sources (for example, biographies and personal correspondence) but also traces of material culture? In answering these questions, I centre my work on the Mediterranean region as a “colonial sea” in the production of hybrid identities and cultural practices, and the mingling of people, ideas, commodities, and migratory birds. I focus on the life geographies of four military officers: Thomas Wright Blakiston, Andrew Leith Adams, L. Howard Lloyd Irby, and Philip Savile Grey Reid. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Mediterranean region emerged as a crucial site for the security of the British “empire route” to India and South Asia, especially with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Military stations served as trans-imperial sites, connecting Britain to India through the flow of military manpower, commodities, information, and bodily experiences across the empire. By using a “critical historical geopolitics of empire” to examine the material remnants of the “avian imperial archive,” I demonstrate how the practices and performances of British military field ornithology helped to: materialize the British Mediterranean as a moral “semi-tropical” place for the physical and cultural acclimatization of British officers en route to and from India; reinforce imperial presence in the region; and make “visible in new ways” the connectivity of North Africa to Europe through the geographical distribution of birds. I also highlight the ways in which the production of ornithological knowledge by army officers was entwined with forms of temperate martial masculinity.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

A strange enchantment creeps over the traveller — more especially should he possess an inquisitive mind—when, transplanted to a new country, he finds himself surrounded by a diversity of natural objects; some perfect strangers, others similar, or so closely allied to what he had seen before, that they at once recall associations of far-distant countries.¹

1.1 British Military, Imperial Science, and Avian Lives

“Who does not feel a thrill of pleasure as he views, for the first time, a strange bird, or recognizes an old acquaintance in some well-known bird of his own dear island, amidst scenery which few—and certainly no naturalist—can contemplate without wonder and awe,” wrote Captain Charles W. Watkins when reflecting on his military life in Halifax and Gibraltar in The Zoologist in 1856.² Watkins, who first served with the 38th and then with 48th Regiments of Foot, published an article “On the ornithology of Andalusia” based on his experiences at the colonial site of Gibraltar.³ For Watkins, the Spanish countryside of Andalusia offered an escape from garrison life, “rich in birds, from its proximity to Africa,” and “wild and beautiful” for “the pleasure of the Ornithologist.”⁴ His avifaunal list included “a few of the birds observed in the province,” many of which he obtained for his collections of avian specimens from Canada, Gibraltar, and Ireland.

The military and ornithological experiences of British military officers such as Watkins illustrate some of the ways in which imperial expansion and territorial maintenance provided

¹ Andrew Leith Adams, Field and Forest Rambles, with Notes and Observations on The Natural History of Eastern Canada (London, H. S. King & Co, 1873), 11.

² Captain C.W. Watkins, “The ornithology of Andalusia,” The Zoologist 14 (1856): 5312. Charles W. Watkins collected birds from several military stations in Canada, Ireland, and Gibraltar. He was “much interested in Natural History,” and amassed “a goodly collection of birds, British and European, as also some five-and-twenty cases of American birds, obtained during three years' service” in Nova Scotia.” Watkins was first commissioned to the 38th Regiment, and then with the 48th Regiment of Foot, where he served with Thomas Powys (later known as Lord Lilford), President of the British Ornithological Union. T. L. Powys, “Occurrence of Buonaparte's Gull (Larus Buonapartii) on the Irish Coast,” The Zoologist 13 (1855): 4762.


⁴ Ibid.
opportunities to pursue science in formal and informal parts of empire. British military officers collected birds as part of ordnance surveys, boundary commissions, and formal expeditions, and as rational recreation to prevent idleness when serving in colonial stations. Britain’s leading naturalists, such as Richard Bowdler Sharpe (1847-1909) of the British Museum, urged the War Office to encourage and reward those officers who took advantage of “their opportunities for increasing scientific knowledge.” The collecting practices of British military officers were integral to the establishment of many natural history and ethnographic collections in the British Isles and in the colonies: numerous birds were named after them in the discourse of discovery.

As Barbara and Richard Mearns have observed in their popular account, The Bird Collectors, the British armed forces comprised the largest group of bird collectors in the British Empire in their zeal for “sporting zoology.” Many military officers were members of the Zoological Society of London (est. 1826) and the British Ornithological Union (est. 1858), maintaining military, scientific, and friendship networks across the empire. What Mearns and Mearns neglect, however, is how field ornithology was pursued alongside other scientific practices of cartography, ethnography, sketching, and photography in the formulation of colonial

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6 Richard Bowdler Sharpe, “Ornithology at South Kensington,” The English Illustrated Magazine 5 (1888): 166-175; 175. Sharpe joined the British Museum as a Senior Assistant in the Department of Zoology in 1872, overseeing the Department’s bird collection.


knowledge, conquest, and imperial domination. The accumulation of geographical information was essential to military campaigning, war, and the quest for power in colonial sites.⁹

Similarly, recent studies of the history of British ornithology have often overlooked the contributions of British military officers to the field and their direct associations with the expanding empire and colonizing projects.¹⁰ The rich and exciting work on the geographies of science has also neglected the role of birds in the accumulation of geographical knowledge and empire-building.¹¹ Viewed as a non-instrumental science with little economic value, field ornithology has remained in the background of critical studies of empire and science.¹² Birds circulated across imperial networks as gifts in the slave trade; as part of the discourse of discovery and exploration; as songsters in aviaries in gardens; as objects at world fairs; as illustrations in print portfolios; and as scientific specimens in museums.¹³ According to Thomas

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¹¹ The scientific study of birds was essential in the conceptualizing of the zoogeographical boundaries of the globe. David N. Livingstone discusses the history of zoogeography but does not mention birds in Putting Science in its Place (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 161-162. See also: D. N. Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition: Episodes in the History of a Contested Enterprise (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992); Driver, Militant Geography.


Richards, lists of birds formed part of the imperial archive by which the British attempted to 
organize and classify knowledge into one great system of comprehensive and universal 
knowledge that constructed the “fantasy of empire.”

Furthermore, ideas about bird migration emerged through the observations and 
collections of colonial administrators, naturalists, and military officers in Britain’s colonies 
abroad. It was at Gibraltar where English naturalist Mark Catesby’s (1682-1749) military 
brother collected birds when stationed there in the 1740s and sent specimens to British naturalist 
George Edwards, who wrote about bird migration. Through their collecting practices and field 
ornithology in different regions of the empire, British military officers also helped to contribute to 
the development of zoogeography – a branch of biogeography concerned with the distribution of 
animal species across the globe – through their collecting practices in different regions of the 
British Empire. As Janet Browne has discussed, theories of zoogeographical distributions were 
“equally grounded in geopolitical concerns” and these “too reflected the ethos of empire.”

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16 The Catesby specimens were sketched and published in the 1843 version of William Yarell’s A History of British Birds. Mark Catesby travelled to British North America and the West Indies and published his Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands (1731-1743). Gibraltar was also where John White, rector of the garrison in the 1770s, suggested ideas about British bird migration from Africa to Europe based on his collections and observations. These ideas, which were published by his brother Reverend Gilbert White in his bestselling Natural History of Selborne (1788-89), highlight the ways in which avian landscapes connected imperial territories and national identities. However, ideas about bird migration circulated even earlier than this account. See: Adair Stuart Mason, George Edwards: the Bedell and his Birds (London: Royal College of Physicians, 1992), 29; Paul Foster, “The Gibraltar collections: Gilbert White (1720-1793) and John White (1727-1780), and the naturalist and author Giovanni Antonio Scopoli (1723-1788),” Archives of Natural History. 34, 1 (2007): 30-46.

This research focuses on a particular transient and mobile figure in the shaping of ornithology, the British military officer. The positionalities of officers in different colonial places, and their encounters with local Indigenous peoples, settlers, and migratory birds, provide an excellent opportunity for interrogating how ideas, places, practices, and performances of ornithology emerged “trans-imperially” as officers moved from one imperial site to the next.18 Similarly, their natural history collections, as well as the birds commemorated with their names, present historical and cultural meanings intricately linked to identity, colonialism, and empire.19 As geographers David Lambert and Alan Lester note, “[m]ilitary figures are one category that would benefit from future critical research.”20 Of critical interest for them are the ways in which imperial careering shaped trans-imperial martial identities and ornithological ideas and practices, but also their roles as agents in territorial control with guns and military force.

In this thesis, I address the following questions: why and how did British military officers engage in natural history pursuits – in particular ornithology – during their military and imperial careers in the nineteenth century?; what types of networks (formal, informal), sites, places, and practices of ornithological knowledge production and consumption were associated with British imperial military careers?; what were the relationships between raced, classed, and gendered military imperial identities and ornithological practices and ideas across (and beyond) the multiple sites of the nineteenth-century British Empire?; how, in the course of their military


careers, did imperial ornithologists encounter different local cultures (with different attitudes to hunting, birds, and field science) and different local natures (with different avian populations and environments)?; and how can trans-imperial careers be written using not only textual sources (e.g. biographies and personal correspondence) but also traces and artifacts of material culture, specifically avian specimens as part of the “avian imperial archive”?

1.2 Towards a Critical Historical Geopolitics of Empire

In order to answer my questions, I have centred my work on the British Mediterranean region as a “colonial sea” in the production of hybrid identities and cultural practices, and in the mingling of the peoples, ideas, commodities, and migratory birds. As Philip Howell has stated, the British Mediterranean has often been left out of the histories of the British Empire and “deserves greater notice.” Drawing from postcolonial geography, feminist historical geography, critical and feminist geopolitics, historical geographies of science, and historical geographies of nature, I conceptualize a critical historical geopolitics of empire to understand the ways in which British military ornithology contributed to the wider field of geography, overlapped with imperial state power, and revealed nature-society relations within the context of the nineteenth-century British Mediterranean. By paying attention to imperial geopolitics, situated knowledges, and nature-society relations in shaping territoriality, embodiments, and avian encounters, I aim to provide historical-geographical specificity to the production of the British Mediterranean as a

21 The idea of the Mediterranean as a “colonial sea” was been proposed by Manuel Borutta and Athanasios (Sakis) Gekas at the 10th Mediterranean Research Meeting “A colonial sea: the Mediterranean, 1798-1956,” Florence and Montecatini Terme 25-28 March 2009.

trans-imperial, militarized, and zoological site integral to the maintenance of the British Empire. In so doing, I also explore how imperial science and the spatial configuration of the globe’s zoogeographic regions were constitutive of state or political rationality.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Mediterranean emerged as a crucial location for the security of British trade routes to India and South Asia, especially with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The conquest and maintenance of British territory depended on the efficiency and presence of military manpower stationed at key sites in the Mediterranean region such as Gibraltar and Malta. Known as the “empire route” and “artery of empire” to an emerging “world modern system,” the “material chain” of military stations in the Mediterranean provided “the shortest route to India” and formed “the spine of prosperity and security” of the British Empire by the 1880s.23 The strategic position also facilitated increased access of Britain’s army to different parts of the empire, as Britain’s involvement in the “small wars” in India and Africa, and its imperial interests in China increased the demand for troops.24 British imperial policy with regard to the Mediterranean therefore reflected the role of this strategic route to India from Britain.25

The term “geopolitics,” or the politicization of geography, has tended to refer to the spatial arrangement of territories (e.g. oceans, continents, national resources) for the benefit of the state and involves the analysis of the practices in representing the world. Based on a sociological praxis, the study of geopolitics focuses specifically on the ideologies and assumptions of a “taken-for-granted” world by questioning the production of geographical knowledge in conquest

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and expansion. According to John Agnew, the modern geopolitical imagination depended on the ability of nation states to conceptualize the world as a whole, and to create territorial differences between places.26

As Britain expanded its political boundaries, imperial science served as a tool of empire in ordering the globe by establishing political boundaries based on taxonomies, climatic regions, racial differences, and bioregional connectivity for colonial control, resource extraction, and colonization. Here, as Neil Smith and Anne Godlewska have argued, “empire was quintessentially a geographical project.”27 British military officers, in particular, were instrumental in the accumulation of geographical knowledge and produced a military landscape perspective that rendered nature visible in the form of maps, sketches, photographs, and natural history specimens.28 According to Bruce Braun, the flows of geographical knowledge often gained momentum and power when state intervention defined ways of seeing, documenting, and collecting specimens to expand territory and exploit resources.29

The idea of the Mediterranean as a geographic entity can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, when the “region” became significant as a tool for control and management of


29 Ibid.
territories and populations.\textsuperscript{30} Many European empires vied for geopolitical control throughout the nineteenth century. Rather than viewing the Mediterranean as a “single geographic unit”\textsuperscript{31} or a fixed “culture area,” I conceptualize the British Mediterranean as part of the “circuit” of the British Empire, which became increasingly viewed as an “organic whole,” dependent on a network of military bases and mainland trading stations to circulate capital, labour, and commodities, and to disperse knowledge, ideas, practices, and material culture across the British Empire.\textsuperscript{32} As Lucien Febvre once noted, the Mediterranean has been created by the “movements of men, the relationships they imply, and the routes they follow.”\textsuperscript{33} Such an approach moves away from “binary geographies” or dualisms between metropole/colony, Orient/Occident, and Europe/Africa, and focuses on the hybridity of cultural encounters, knowledge production, and


identity formation. However, the process of acculturation was not always equal. Power differentials often shifted in particular contexts (formal and informal empire) or when colonial governments produced “difference” as a rationale for justifying inequalities.

Britain’s imperial presence in the Mediterranean region was contingent on other competing empires (i.e. French, Spanish, Ottoman, Russian), and to local forms of resistance. The nineteenth-century Mediterranean engendered its own unique politics and practices between Protestant Britons, European Catholics, and North African Muslims, which reflected in part both the limits to British imperial power and the importance of informal empire in the region. Britain relied on the Islamic regimes and informal empire of North Africa for basic sustenance at its garrisons, especially at Gibraltar, where Morocco was the main supplier of fresh meat during a time when British military reforms included a change in diet from salt meat to fresh meat.

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Moreover, both Britain and France attempted to preserve the independence of non-European states prior to the division of Africa in the 1880s. The Ottoman Empire was too strong to invade, and its collapse was believed to destabilize European geopolitics.39

For my analysis, I adapt Gearóid Ó Tuathail’s Foucauldian notion of “geopower” to capture “an ensemble of technologies or power concerned with the governmental production and management of territorial space” and the optimization of “man and things” in the production of the Mediterranean region.40 In this sense, the art of government or governmentality helped to create order through the management of people (i.e. British military manpower, soldier-scientists) and the arrangement of “things” (i.e. geographical knowledge, avian scientific specimens, zoogeographic regions) for the benefit of the state.41 In extending the analysis of “geopower,” I centre my study on the visual and material remnants of the “avian imperial archive”42 (stuffed birds, eggs, maps, periodicals, fieldnotes, sketches) and the embodied practices and performances of field ornithology in order to understand the ways in which territoriality was codified in the bodies of dead and live birds in the (re)production of the British Mediterranean.


42 This term is inspired by Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive*. See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion on my methodology.
At the forefront of a critical historical geopolitics of empire is “[t]hinking spatially” about the production, circulation, and consumption of geographical knowledge in region-making. Drawing from works in historical geographies of science, such an approach seeks to deconstruct the ways in which “the geographical sciences” reflected and enabled imperial state power. As David Livingstone has argued: “Place matters in the way scientific claims come to [be] regarded as true, in how theories are established and justified, in the means by which science exercises the power that it does in the world.” This means paying attention to the geographies of fieldwork, identity formation, networks of trust, cultural encounters, nature-society relations, as well as the importance of networks in the circulation and currency of scientific theories.

Central to a critical historical geopolitics of empire is the issue of situated knowledges. The relationship between British military men and the accumulation of colonial knowledge was a product of a particular kind of subjectivity in the spatialization of the Mediterranean region. As Karen Morin has stated: “Authority or credibility gained by being an embodied producer of knowledge, ‘on the spot’ and otherwise, depends on what kind of body is on that spot, and it certainly does not apply to all bodies in the same way.” Here, I draw on works in historical feminist geographies and critical science studies that examine the gendered, classed, and


44 David Livingstone and Charles Withers have been at the forefront of a historical geography of science. For an overview of their works, see: Richard C. Powell, “Geographies of science: histories, localities, practices, futures,” Progress in Human Geography 31, 3 (2007): 309-329; 320-322.

45 Powell, “Geographies of science,” 321.

46 Livingstone, Putting Science in it Place, 14.


racialized geographies of British military subject positions in different sites and time periods of the British Empire, and the ways in which “gender,” “class,” “race” or any structured inequality have been built into the practice and objects of science and territoriality. They would have shifted as British military officers moved from one imperial site to the next, reflecting the fluidity of embodiments and performances of whiteness, masculinity, and Britishness, which governed the way credibility and authority were negotiated in the field. As scholars of empire have shown, imperial agents struggled with feelings of anxiety, vulnerability, and insecurity in terms of ideas about racial degeneration, hybridization, whiteness, and emasculation.

While most work on geopolitics has emphasized the importance of human actors in shaping territoriality, a critical historical geopolitics of empire recognizes the materialities of “place” and the affective relationships between people, things, and the “more-than-human” world. The Mediterranean region, in particular, was considered a major site for the migration of birds to and from Europe and Africa. It was at Gibraltar where “modern” ideas about bird migration emerged from the collections made at the military garrison. Thus, the flow of wild birds to and from Europe and Africa. It was at Gibraltar where “modern” ideas about bird migration emerged from the collections made at the military garrison.

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50 Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ann Laura Stoler, Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); David Lambert, White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity during the Age of Abolition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).


52 The Catesby specimens were sketched and published in the 1843 version of William Yarell’s A History of British Birds, vol. II (n.l.; Read Books, 2008), 206. See: Mason, George Edwards, 29; Paul Foster, "The Gibraltar collections: Gilbert White (1720-1793) and John White (1727-1780), and the naturalist and author Giovanni Antonio Scopoli (1723-1788)," Archives of Natural History 34, 1 (2007): 30-46.
birds therefore provided a tangible link from Britain to its colonies in the Mediterranean, Africa, and Asia.

Of particular importance to my study, then, are Hugh Raffles’s conception of “fluvial intimacies”53 and Tim Ingold’s “weather-world, earth and sky.”54 Together, these capture the “mingling”55 of humans, birds, water, winds, and things in what Doreen Massey has called the “event of place.”56 This notion of “place” suggests a meeting point of “mobile lives” and narratives as encounters, forming convergences and configurations of trajectories, each with their own temporalities.57 But these encounters also imply the “non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions,” which all contribute to the formulation of “place.”58

Inspired by Raffles's discussion of a “lived relationship between humans and nature,”59 I use the concept of “avian fluvial intimacies” as an analytical tool to capture the symbolic and affective relationships between humans and “mobile avian lives,” and the spatial politics of imperial place-making in the formulation of the British Mediterranean. Many authors have romanticized people’s passion for birds, “a state of being close to rapture. It is an ecstasy that is said to accompany the writing of poetry.”60 However, as Timothy W. Luke has stated, notions of

53 Raffles, In Amazonia, 181.


55 Ibid.

56 Doreen Massey, For Space (London: Sage, 2005), 139. Massey’s notion of the “event of place” is discussed in her chapter on “the elusiveness of place.” She provides examples on the ways in which mobile lives, such as migrating Swifts, contribute to this notion of place.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid, 130.


60 Graeme Gibson, The Bedside Book of Birds: An Avian Miscellany (Toronto: Doubleday, 2005), xii.
nature — and I would add “mobile nature”\(^{61}\) — also have been imbued with “boundaries, identities, narratives, and politics.”\(^{62}\) Migratory birds in particular have been “loaded with symbolic effect,”\(^{63}\) which bind people to or exclude them from particular places and times.\(^{64}\)

Such an approach also allows for a closer examination of cultural entanglements in different contexts and locations. Military encounters were constitutive of locations, and reflected a multitude of human and non-human actants. By including the lives of birds in the trans-imperial networks, I animate the avian lives mobilized in these networks as actants in the places they helped to fashion.\(^{65}\) However, rather than looking at the “limitless number of actors and networks, all of which are somehow of equal significance and power,” as Timothy Mitchell has critiqued, my main use of actor-network-theory is to make the “issue of power and agency a question, instead of an answer known in advance.”\(^{66}\) As Noel Castree has stated, social and natural agents are co-constitutive but are often “not in equal measure, since it is the ‘social’ relations that are often disproportionately directive.”\(^{67}\)

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61 Robert M. Wilson discusses the emergence of the term “flyway” as a scientific management tool to understand avian migration for wildlife management strategies in the twentieth century. He uses the term “mobile nature” to describe the ways in which bird migration intersects with the “grid.” Robert M. Wilson, *Seeking Refuge: Birds and Landscapes of the Pacific Flyway* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2010), 6, 16.


1.3 Situating the Chapters

This work traces the life geographies and avian collections of British military officers who produced ornithological knowledge and collections of birds, and whose transient lives intersected with the Mediterranean region. By focusing on the British military officer as a transient figure involved in “imperial careering” and networks of empire, I capture, as David Lambert and Alan Lester have stated, “a sense of volition, agency and self-advancement, but also accident, chance encounter and the impact of factors beyond control of the individual.” The individual officers that I focus upon include Thomas Wright Blakiston (Royal Artillery), Andrew Leith Adams (64th and 22nd Regiments), L. Howard Irby (90th and 74th Regiments), and Philip Savile Grey Reid (Royal Engineers). Most of these officers purchased their commissions, a common practice that privileged the wealthy prior to reforms in the army in 1871.

This study is set during a period when Britain was experiencing significant changes at home and throughout the empire in ideas about governance, religion, morality, science, and military affairs. While this project focuses on the British Empire during the nineteenth century, it pays particular attention to the second half of the nineteenth century (1850-ca.1880) when geopolitical circumstances (i.e. the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War, the “Scramble for Africa”) altered natural and national boundary-lines and spatial orderings. Britain also experienced anxieties over the “dismemberment” of empire, stemming from the “Indian Mutiny” in 1857-58, the Jamaican rebellion in 1865, and the establishment of the white dominions of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Some believed Britain’s decline in military authority was imaginative geographies and material orderings of the central Canadian Arctic,” in A. Baldwin, L. Cameron, and A. Kobayashi (eds.) Rethinking the Great White North (Vancouver: UBC Press, forthcoming 2011), 169-190.

as a result of a regimental system that promoted “a culture of gentlemanly amateurism,” sparking changes in the British Army with the Cardwell-Childers Reforms (1870-1881) and the Royal Commission on the Defence of British Possessions and Commerce Abroad (1879-1882).

At home, Britain witnessed rapid industrialization, urbanization, mechanization, and changes in the rural landscape, creating class tensions and changing the ways in which people interacted with urban and rural landscapes. According to Ronald Thomas, new technologies of travel and communication (i.e. the railway, the telegraph, the steamship) helped to shift perceptions of time and space, creating a “crisis in identity” that resulted in a devotion to more localized memories of place, nation, and region. The perceived degenerative effects of progress from industry, capitalism, and social mobility also resulted in the dismantling of “fixed hierarchies, places, and temporal trajectories,” creating anxieties over the loss of “our [British] world.” These transformations resulted in the rise of national heritage preservation movements in Britain, which advocated for preservation based on “cultural value,” and the idea of the countryside as a repository of a way of life that required protection.

Furthermore, the scientific accumulation of unknown species and changing ideas of geologic time (Charles Lyell) and the origins of life (Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace) began to alter the ways in which people viewed the natural world. As Janet Browne has stated, a


72 Ibid.

“new breed of distributional naturalist”\textsuperscript{74} emerged, one who focused on “patterns and processes” and “the geographical arrangement of life.”\textsuperscript{75} The field of “zoological geography” or zoogeography thus emphasized the importance of “locality” in collecting practices, a development signalling a shift from “[t]he heroic age of scientific classification.”\textsuperscript{76} This occurred during a time when the natural sciences, such as botany, geology, and ornithology, were in the process of professionalizing and redefining ways of conducting fieldwork and establishing scientific authority in Britain. These factors suggest a unique opportunity to study the changing ideas and practices of ornithology by British military officers during this time period.

Some of the literature that informs this study is presented within each chapter, in both text and notes. However, in order to situate my work more broadly, Chapter 2 provides an overview of three bodies of literature that have informed my doctoral research: imperial subjects, imperial networks, and transient lives; nineteenth-century military geographies; and colonial ornithologies and avian historical geographies.

Chapter 3 conceptualizes the “avian imperial archive” and provides a material-cultural methodological approach to writing the life geographies of military men and the production of the Mediterranean region. The contributions of military officers to the development of field ornithology are found in the traces and material remnants of their bird collections and specimens housed in museums across the British Empire. This chapter pieces together the imperial avian archive (correspondence, published and unpublished, field journals, sketchbooks, study skins, eggs, nests) through multiple source materials and archival holdings. It concentrates on the published and unpublished journals, diaries, and avian specimens (birds, eggs, nests) of the British military officers who pursued ornithology while on active service with the regular army,


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.

and the scientific practices of collecting, documenting, and travel-writing in the production of zoogeography.

In Chapter 4, emphasis is placed on the Crimean War (1853-1856) as an important event in securing Britain’s ascendancy over Russian aspirations in the Mediterranean region, and in the emergence of the military scientific military hero. It also highlights the military scientific hero as a product of conducting fieldwork in the Crimean theatre of war and collecting specimens as scientific trophies of war for a British audience at home. Here, I focus on Ordnance officer Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston, Royal Artillery, who collected numerous birds while serving with his regiments, published works in *The Zoologist*, and sent specimens to British museums, including the Museum of the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich.

Set in Malta, Chapter 5 follows the military medical career of Andrew Leith Adams, military surgeon with the 22nd Regiment of Foot, whose military and scientific networks and travels to northern India, Malta, Egypt, and New Brunswick, British North America, helped him to conceive ideas of tropicality, semi-tropicality, and the temperate. To Adams, temperate martial masculinity was both a physical and mental state and a climatic zone important in the maintenance of a British military career across the British Empire. His ornithological investigations also allowed him to contemplate the zoological connectivity between Europe and North Africa.

Chapter 6 analyzes the ways in which ideas, practices, and performances of ornithology helped to sustain territorial maintenance and British imperial place-making in the Straits of Gibraltar by focusing on the work of Lieutenant Colonel L. Howard Irby (90th and 74th Regiments). Located in the Mediterranean, the island-like territory of Gibraltar emerged as a strategic geopolitical position in the preservation of the British Empire and served as part of the “artery of empire” that linked Britain to India. It was also an important landmark in the British imagination as a result of the Great Siege (1783) and its resonance for Horatio Nelson in the Napoleonic Wars. This chapter demonstrates how narratives of wild birds and scientific
performances surrounding the British military officer attempted to legitimize Gibraltar as an imperial, noble, and masculine pillar of empire, and to extend imperial interests into Morocco and Tangier.

Back “home” in Britain, Chapter 7 investigates how British military officers’ production of ornithological knowledge in the British Mediterranean helped reformulate notions of nation and “British birds,” especially as officers often returned to Britain after tours of duty or retirement. Informed by works on “homeland,” “home,” and landscape and identities, this chapter centres on the career of Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, to examine the various domestic spaces, including the military base at Aldershot, where British military officers engaged with ideas and practices of ornithology. Many officers who served in Gibraltar and Malta contributed to the development of British ornithology by publishing books or assisting with the arrangement of British birds at museums. For example, Irby prepared a Key List of British Birds (1888) and assisted in the formation of the life groups of British birds in the British Museum (Natural History), while Reid obtained birds for the nesting-groups of British birds series in the galleries at the British Museum. Their published works, exhibitions, and lectures helped to shape ideas about domestic birds for an audience interested in birds and bird protection at the end of the nineteenth century.

In Chapter 8, I reflect on conducting fieldwork in the archives, in natural history museums, and in landscapes of the past and on how I have become part of the avian imperial archive. In so doing, I trace the colonial avian afterlives of the production of military ornithological knowledge in the British Mediterranean, with specific attention to the bird hunting issue in Malta, which is still a contested practice in European geopolitics. Here, I stress the importance of pursuing a critical historical geopolitics of empire as a means to deconstructing colonial cultures of nature. Such a focus can provide historical-cultural contexts to some current and pressing environmental issues.
Lastly, I concentrate on the contributions of my research by assessing the life-geographies approach to British military men and avian specimens. By applying notions of geopower, my findings highlight the ways in which the collection of birds by British military officers contributed to the field of zoogeography and the mapping of the Mediterranean subregion. In developing a historical geopolitics of empire, I also draw attention to situated knowledges, temperate martial masculinities, and other heterogeneous subjectivities that emerged as I traced the lives of transient officers in different parts of the British Empire.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

“…birds are a pervasive presence in various geographies.”1

In order to investigate the intersection of British military culture and ideas and practices of ornithology within a trans-imperialism framework, I draw upon works in three key areas: geographies of imperial subjects, imperial networks, and transient lives; nineteenth-century military geographies; and colonial ornithologies and avian historical geographies. As military and avian lives held significance for British culture and identities in the nineteenth century, studies in these three distinctive areas help to locate my subject matter within these broader fields of geography.

2.1 Imperial Subjects, Imperial Networks, and Transient Lives

Geographers have paid particular attention to the ways in which empire has shaped imperial identities, as colonial officials, settlers, explorers, naturalists, missionaries, and merchants travelled to different parts of the British Empire. A number of studies have highlighted the impact of empire on the production of scientific knowledge and identities in colonial places, especially as explorers and field naturalists gained authority “on the spot” in the field versus armchair naturalists whose knowledge was based on the comparison of specimens in museums.

Gerry Kearns’s work on imperial and gendered subjectivities in fieldwork has revealed the strategies employed by British explorers to assert their own superiority in colonial places such as Africa. Using Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of “anti-conquest,” Kearns examines how notions

1 Michael Steinberg in a special issue on avian geography in the Geographical Review 100, 2 (April 2010): iii.
of masculinity and femininity played out in the mountain-climbing narratives of Halford Mackinder and Mary Kingsley in western Africa. For Kearns, place is central to these subjectivities, illustrating the ways in which identity formation is often complex, contradictory, and particular. Mackinder and Kingsley both participated in anti-conquest rhetoric of science, enjoying the pleasures of being imperial subjects in Africa, and creating empty landscapes in their narratives to marginalize Indigenous peoples and their histories. However, as Kearns notes, Mackinder was more secure with his imperial superiority as the “man-on-the-spot” based on his elite and male status versus Kingsley’s female and working class position.2

The “field” in scientific exploration has been described as a masculine space that often excluded women in colonial knowledge production. As explorers and naturalists personified the adventurous masculine hero in pursuit of scientific novelties, fieldwork helped shape masculine identities through feminization of the field “as a seductive but wild place that must be observed, penetrated, and mastered by the geographer [or naturalist].”3 Discovery of nature could therefore be a metaphor for sexual conquest, control, and the reaffirmation of masculine identities.

Felix Driver’s work on British cultures of exploration illustrates the ways in which naturalists and explorers conducted fieldwork and produced geographical knowledge of the empire. By focusing on the Royal Geographical Society in London, he demonstrates how the RGS emerged as an authoritative site for the production and exchange of geographical knowledge during the nineteenth century. His study also explores issues of credibility and approaches to field observation by highlighting the Society’s *Hints to Travellers* as a means to define how and what to study for a British travelling audience. Driver’s analysis of cultures of exploration

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reveals a crusade of field observers in search of geographical knowledge to subdue colonial landscapes and make them productive. Scientific exploration also made scientific heroes and martyrs, imaginaries that circulated back home in Britain. However, although military men were active members of the RGS, Driver does not focus solely on military cultures in the production of geographical knowledge.4

Clive Barnett’s understanding of the Royal Geographical Society and its role in producing and circulating geographical information reveals an often disembodied and unmarked author or reader, positionalities which Barnett terms “white writing.” The racially discursive production of whiteness in the discourse of Africa posits the “field” as a space where Indigenous peoples produced devalued and degraded knowledge and where European white authorities portrayed themselves as the singular sources of meaning despite their reliance on multiple sources. Barnett’s study therefore raises questions of power and knowledge concerning cultural encounters and fieldwork in nineteenth-century science.5 As Hugh Raffles has noted, cultural encounters are constitutive of locations and reflect a multitude of human and non-human actors, which require a careful analysis into the nature of power relations, tensions, and entanglements.6

Fostering a geographical imagination of empire was equally important in the formation of imperial subjectivities. As Richard Phillips has argued, exploration narratives helped shape geographical imperial imaginations at home in Britain, and facilitated the re-enactment of imperial, masculine, class, and religious identities. By deconstructing adventure stories such as Robinson Crusoe, Phillips claimed that readers constructed “a middle class, Christian, British man’s utopia” that placed Britain at the imperial centre and colonies in the periphery, and created

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4 Driver, Geography Militant.


6 Raffles, In Amazonia.
distinctions between Crusoe as a white, male, Christian, educated, free man in relation to non-white, unchristian, and illiterate Indigenous peoples.\(^7\)

The entanglement of whiteness and empire is, therefore, a dimension that requires further analysis. David Lambert has stressed the importance of understanding the articulation of whiteness by focusing on its construction in the wider imperial world. Based on his work on white Creole culture in Barbados, Lambert analyzes the different forms of whiteness and illustrates on how plantation owners viewed themselves as a higher status in Barbados but were in turn viewed as inferior back home in Britain. He also suggests the need to study the ways in which the production of white subjectivity was perceived by non-whites and how it was appropriated, acculturated, and rejected in particular historical and cultural contexts.\(^8\)

As geographers S. Robert Aiken, Judith Kenny, and James Duncan have revealed, imperial, white anxieties about racial degeneration involved the multiple ways British and European colonial officials, settlers, and East India Company officers created hill stations in southern Asia to sustain imperial, racial identities and to seek refuge, safety, and nostalgia in the cooler climates of higher elevations during the summer months of colonial life.\(^9\) Hill station construction involved the clearing of jungle, the establishment of bungalows, hunting lodges, and gardens, and the introduction of native species and architectural styles from Britain as a means to create “landscapes of home” in foreign stations. They also served to separate European communities from colonial society, as official permission was required to visit the hill station for

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health or leisure. These practices helped to ensure the maintenance of European, racial identities in colonial settings such as Malaysia and India, and sustained a moral, middle class masculinity in the plantation communities such as in Ceylon. As E.M. Collingham has demonstrated, the English, imperial male body in mid-nineteenth-century India required separation from the environment rather than the openness to influence and acculturation that was widespread in the earlier periods of British rule.¹⁰

Of particular interest to this study is Elizabeth Buettner’s work on Anglo-Indian families and their transient lives. Families maintained continual contact with “home” (Britain) in order to sustain their white, British identities in India, and to delimit possible association of mixed ancestry. Practices included sending children to England for education, which resulted in lengthy family separations. However, while their connections and movements back to Britain sustained a sense of inclusion within the nation and higher status in India, Buettner argues that their imperial lifestyles, outlooks, and practices also created instability in identity formation, which emphasized their “cultural hybridity” within British society.¹¹

Recent works by scholars of empire have conceptualized the British Empire as a network of multiple sites rather than as a two-way model of metropole (e.g. Britain) and periphery (colony) originally proposed by John Robinson and Ronald Gallagher with their notion of “the imperialism of free trade” and by Peter Cain and Tony Hopkins’s “gentlemanly capitalism.”¹² In these ways, researchers have attempted to understand how peoples’ “transnational itineraries and circuits of knowledge production through movements of global breadth” shaped their


subjectivities. According to geographer Alan Lester, a British colonial place such as South Africa embodied one site in the imperial network where ideas, people, and commodities circulated from numerous sites or, as Thomas Metcalfe terms them, “nodes.”

The collection of works in David Lambert and Allan Lester’s Colonial Lives also provides an alternative approach to examining the traditional metropole and core or colony and periphery model of the British Empire. Lambert and Lester focus on the circuitry of empire that connected different places and intersects diverse peoples in (and beyond) the British Empire. Using Doreen Massey’s notion of place, they concentrate on the changes of subjectivity wrought by dwelling in, and actively experiencing multiple colonial places, by highlighting the biographical sketches of transient lives. With this approach, they demonstrate the “movement of networks of knowledge, power, commodities, emotion and culture that connected the multiple sites of the empire to each other, to the imperial metropole and to extra-imperial spaces beyond.” However, as Lambert and Lester have noted, limited work has been conducted on the lives of transient British military soldiers and their bodily engagements with trans-imperial places.

2.2 Nineteenth-Century Military Geographies

Soldier biographies reveal a long tradition of British military involvement in scientific exploits in different parts of the British Empire. The Royal Geographical Society regularly published obituaries in Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of


14 Lester, Imperial Networks. Lester’s understanding of empire has been influenced by the work of Catherine Hall, who examined the connectivity between the core (Britain) and periphery (Jamaica). See: Catherine Hall, Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867 (Oxford: Polity, 2002). See also: Thomas R. Metcalf, Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Geography of soldier-geographers who contributed to the RGS as members of the society, starting in the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{16} Obituaries included place of birth, family lineage, professional endeavours, and scientific activities of many British military officers, such as Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston. James Marshall-Cornwall’s 1965 article in the Geographical Journal examined the intersection between the British military, science, and biography through biographical essays on, respectively, William Martin Leake (1777-1860), Edward Sabine (1788-1883), and Francis Rawdon Chesney (1789-1872), all educated at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, England.\textsuperscript{17} Marshall-Cornwall revealed that British military officers were equally involved in the enterprise of exploration. Brian Hudson has argued that Prussian military officers gained strategic advantage when trained in geography. Hudson attributes these successes to geographer Carl Ritter (1779-1859) who taught at the military academy in Berlin in the 1870s.\textsuperscript{18} However, while these works provide descriptive information about military-geographers in the history of science, they do not explore the ways in which empire, gender, class, and ethnicity influenced these men’s scientific practices and ideas.

The emergence of Marxism, social theory, and post-structuralism gave rise to critical examinations of the role of the military in relation to empire-building, conquest, capitalism, and territorial maintenance within historical and post-colonial geographies. Historical geographers have considered the military’s involvement in map-making, surveying, and place-naming. Fuelled by the work of Michel Foucault and J.B. Harley, these studies treat representations (maps, sketches, photographs) as texts to be deconstructed, and as a reflection of the growth of modern states and forms of surveillance, order, and discipline. Anne Godlewska’s work on “Napoleon’s


geographers” has demonstrated the involvement of military-scientists in mapping during the Napoleon’s French Expedition of Egypt (1798-1801). She also points out that French military officers were at the forefront of modern science through mapping, which was influenced by nationalistic sentiments that advocated scientific rationalism as an instrument of liberation and peace. According to Godlewska, cartography, as a practice imbued with power, strove to unify different parts of France’s empire into a “universal measurement-based culture.”¹⁹ In Geography Unbound, Godlewska emphasizes the importance of the accumulation of geographical knowledge by military geographers as integral to imperial political power. Military geography was essential in war, but also in the exploitation of natural and human resources and population control.²⁰

Within a British imperial context, Matthew Edney’s work on cartography has focused on maps as an important means of territorial expansion into India, which he attributes to the training of military men as soldier scientists and purveyors of geographical knowledge. Using Foucauldian terms, he describes the ideologies and practices of map-making as part of the “panopticist survey” that constructed a military landscape perspective.²¹ The military’s use of visual techniques to document the geographies of imperial sites extended to paintings, sketches, and photography.

James Ryan uses post-colonial theory informed by Edward Said to study military photography and imperialism at the Abyssinian Campaign in 1868. These military photographers documented the aftermath of “small wars” as a form of imperial conquest and civilizing mission.

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²⁰ Godlewska, Geography Unbound.

Ryan pays particular attention to the Royal Engineers as soldier scientists and their use of photography for garnering accurate geographical knowledge for campaigning, but also as representatives of “theatres of war” in distant places for a home audience in Britain. British military officers were trained in the practices of photography and sketching views, and encouraged to collect photographs of their different stations as “trophies.”

Similarly, in Kathleen Stewart Howe’s work on the Royal Engineers and the Ordnance Surveys (1864 and 1868) of the Holy Land, Howe demonstrates that photography helped to capture the moment at which Indigenous people lost the Sinai and the British appropriated it. Although these studies highlight the representational strategies of British military officers in colonial settings, they tend to create binaries between the colonizer (i.e. Europeans) and the colonized (i.e. the “Other”), and often essentialize power relations in these places.

More recently, Alain Parent highlights the ways in which imperial geopolitics informed the spatial and visual practices involved in the relationship between the metropole and the colony. Through an examination of sketches and paintings of Quebec City by British military officers, Parent highlights how these representations reflected imperial power back home in Britain. However, although these images illustrated the appropriation of British North American landscape, he concludes that the surroundings depicted in them suggest tensions in empire and a movement towards nation-building in colonial Quebec.

Geographers have paid particular attention to the formation of the “military body” in the mid-nineteenth century. Miles Ogborn and Chris Philo examine the “moral locational discourse” in nineteenth-century Portsmouth, a military and naval town in southern England. Using

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Foucault’s notion of discipline, they trace how the army and the navy developed techniques and spatial practices of “discipline” to shape the moral behaviours of their employees. This was done by enforcing discipline in the name of national morality and martial strength, which sought to extend control over all aspects of the lives of their officers and recruits. The army and navy also developed the arts of logistics and administration that governed the movements of people, money, knowledge, and things. As Ken Hendrikson has revealed, some of these ideas originated in Gibraltar and extended to Aldershot, which emerged as the “home” of the British army.25

Likewise, Philip Howell centres his work on the moral locations of military discourse and the regulation of sexual activity within the context of prostitution in British Gibraltar. Gibraltar’s strategic position in the Mediterranean and its role in the military and imperial network created pressure on the British government to combat the problem of venereal disease. The establishment of the Contagious Diseases (CD) Acts (1864–9) enabled state control over military sexuality by focusing on the maintenance of prostitutes rather than the military men who frequented them. In Gibraltar, the segregation of brothels in urban areas, and the regulation of activities of mostly Spanish prostitutes, helped state officials survey and manage women and the venereal disease problem that plagued the military fitness of British troops.26

Cultural historian Graham Dawson’s influential work on the British solider hero demonstrates a movement away from the domestic, moral sphere by 1880s. After the Crimean War, martial masculinity included a vision of the domestic, at home with children requiring protection, therefore reinforcing the nation and empire as a gendered entity. These ideas were brought home with the “Indian Mutiny” in 1857-58 that resulted in the massacre of British troops.


women and children by Indian “rebels.” By the end of the nineteenth century, military men omitted notions of domesticity and home from their adventure narratives in order to emphasize the true man in the desert or wilderness, or a new form of muscular masculinity.27

Within the context of India, Peter Stanley provides an understanding of the ways in which class shaped military cultures in particular colonial sites. Stanley’s study explores the tensions between military cultures of the East India Company and the Queen’s Army in India following the “Indian Mutiny.” By focusing on martial spaces of barrack-rooms, messes, and the columns of mofussil (up-country) newspapers, he demonstrates how the Queen’s army experienced inferior conditions in India, principally in securing promotion and commands. Although both served together at war, the Queen’s army belonged to the “old nation,” while the Company’s belonged to the new. These tensions amounted to jealousies and resentments between the two cultures, which resulted in amalgamation of the East India Company army into the regular army.28

Similarly, Roger Buckley examines the military culture of the British West Indian army, revealing how the West Indian garrison played a critical role in the protection of the region’s profitable plantation-slave economies at the end of the eighteenth century. Viewed as a backwater garrison in the Atlantic, cadets who passed lowest out of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst were often sent to the West Indies. British military cultures in the West Indies reflected an inferior status within the hierarchical structure of the British imperial army. The garrison was a product of the interaction between British society on the one hand and the colonial British West Indian plantation societies (i.e. white Creole society) on the other, as well as the


army’s ability to adapt to the ecological, social, cultural, and economic conditions of the region. Together, these works demonstrate the variety of British military cultures and spaces in different parts of the British Empire.29

2.3 Colonial Ornithologies and Avian Historical Geographies

Research on the history of ornithology has centred on the development of the field as a scientific pursuit, on the practices of ornithology, and the biographies of individuals who contributed significantly to it in Europe and North America.30 These studies have indicated that European ornithology remained largely a colonial affair dependent on a metropolitan imperial core for scientific traditions, networks, and practices active in the colonies.31 However, as Sujit Sivasundaram has stated, Britain “was not unique in its ability to control the economy of nature,” often acquiring and adapting colonial knowledge in places such as India.32 This “trading” or “hybridization” of natural knowledge was initially crucial to both the imperial project and Britain’s success in the colonies.

Research on the history of ornithology as a military practice has emphasized the ways ornithological fieldwork and military cultures have helped to facilitate territorial conquest and

29 Roger Norman Buckley, The British Army in the West Indies: Society and the Military in the Revolutionary Age (Florida: University of Florida & The Press University of the West Indies, 1998).


31 Marianne G. Ainley, From Natural History to Avian Biology Ph.D. Dissertation (Montreal: McGill University, 1985). Her work was based on George Basalla’s linear model of the spread of western science into non-scientific nations or societies.

maintenance in empire and nation-building projects. Edgar Hume’s *Ornithologists of the United States Medical Army Corps* discusses the numerous military officers of the United States Medical Corps who surveyed, collected, and observed wild birds during American expansion and settlement in the western United States in the nineteenth century. As a form of nation-building, these officers pursued ornithology largely in association with the Smithsonian Institution, which housed the collections of stuffed birds and ornithological data collected by members of the Medical Corps.

Roy McLeod demonstrates how ornithology sustained American imperial and territorial interests as a form of empire-building in the Pacific Ocean during the Cold War. Knowledge of Pacific birds became a national and military interest in order to produce a comprehensive environmental understanding of the area through the Smithsonian’s Pacific Ocean Biological Survey Program. Military ways of observing birds also extended to civilian practices, as shown in Helen MacDonald’s work on the British military and civilian amateur scientists who observed birds to help monitor Britain’s coast during World War II. Amateurs were trained not only to look for birds but for enemy planes approaching the British coastline. According to MacDonald: “Birds were more than just birds: they were loaded with symbolic effect increasingly derived from versions of national identity.” These works provide important links to the ways military and ornithological practices have helped shape and maintain territorial boundaries.

The participation of local Indigenous peoples was central to the emergence and success of ornithological knowledge production in colonial sites. Within the context of nineteenth-century North America, Marianne Ainley highlights the importance of First Nations and Métis

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35 MacDonald, “What makes you a scientist,” 58.
people in the collection and documentation of avifauna in the Hudson’s Bay Company territory. Ainley documents how some Métis women married HBC officers and contributed significantly to the ornithology of the region through collecting and taxidermy. In Malaysia, Jane Camerini examines the fieldwork of naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace and his interactions with local leaders, servants, and assistants in the Malay Archipelago, which afforded him access to places uninhabited by Europeans to collect birds of paradise. Similarly, Nancy Jacobs demonstrates how European naturalists tapped into networks of local African informants but also mediated personal relationships through notions of European racial superiority. These works shed light on the importance of focusing on the multiple human interactions in the field in order to understand the emergence of ornithology in the colonies, which in turn shaped practices at home in Britain. They also reveal, however, how power and scientific authority worked together, often excluding “Others,” including Indigenous peoples and women, from the professional sphere of science. As Judith Johnson, Debra Lindsay, and Barbara Gates have demonstrated, women’s authority in ornithology tended to be dependent on male support and was established through family and friendship networks with leading men of science.

Geography has informed the ways in which birds shape particular identities. Robin Doughty’s work embeds wild birds in landscapes and explores people’s ideas about birds in


specific times and places. Doughty’s major work includes deconstructing attitudes towards the English sparrow in the American landscape during the nineteenth century. Ideas about non-native species were strongly influenced by increasing urbanization and immigration, as sparrow haters were quick to link the bird to immigrants and urban life. Experts and middle class urban elites therefore personified the bird with anti-foreigner and xenophobic sentiments, which devalued immigrant groups and helped protect an elitist national identity. Geographer Matthew Evenden revealed similar findings in his work on nineteenth-century American economic ornithology, while Kirsten Greer and Laura Cameron have demonstrated how Anglo-Canadian middle class identities were shaped by related historical and cultural contexts in the eastern provinces of Canada.

Historian Harriet Ritvo’s seminal works on the categorization of animals illuminates “the history not only of the relations between people and other species, but also of relations among human groups.” Ritvo was one of the first to draw attention to the accumulation of colonial animals in zoos (e.g. Zoological Gardens at Regent’s Park, London) as a form of imperialistic control for a metropolitan audience at home, as well as the often competing and differing classification systems that circulated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The rapidly expanding field of animal geographies continues to provide novel and critical understandings of human relationships to animals. Based on post-modern and post-structural

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43 See the special issue in Society and Space 13, 4 (1995) on “bring(ing) the animals back in” to human geography. Through a critical scrutiny of social theory (actor-network theory), post-structuralism and post-
thought, Kay Anderson has written about animals in the metropolitan zoo and links her research
to a critical examination of colonial mastery over the animal world. Anderson framed zoo-
making as a cultural practice that promotes Cartesian human/animal dualisms and organizes
animal exhibits according to Linnaean taxonomy and specimen types, which privileged a
masculine approach to nature. Animals, such as birds, were extracted from their natural
environments and re-classified in the zoo for human consumption in a colonial setting in late-
nineteenth-century Australia.\textsuperscript{44}

David Matless et al. move beyond social constructivism to consider wild birds as part of
the landscape using elements of actor-network-theory and animal geographies in an attempt to
bridge the binaries between culture and nature. Their work examines human identity in relation
to ideas of a “quarry’s character” (i.e. game bird species), illustrating the places where these ideas
are contested, and discussing moral disputes around human conduct. Matless also applies these
ideas to his concept of soundscapes and boundary-making in the Norfolk Broads. Those who
claimed authority over the Broads defined particular ways of hearing through their distinctions
between appropriate sounds (i.e. birdsong) and disruptive noise (i.e. radios, Cockney accents).
These works raise important considerations when conceptualizing the ways in which avian
landscapes shape and are shaped by particular groups of people.\textsuperscript{45}

Recent attempts to study the migratory movements of avian lives include Robert
Wilson’s work on the practices of migratory bird protection at the continental, regional, and local
scales. By focusing on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s wildlife refuges, Wilson follows the

\textsuperscript{44} Kay Anderson, “Culture and nature at the Adelaide Zoo: at the frontier of human geography,”

\textsuperscript{45} David Matless, Paul Merchant, and Charles Watkins, “Animal landscapes: otters and wildfowl in
Pacific Flyway (a migratory route) through disputed and changing human geographies of North America, assortments of disgruntled farmers, and enthusiastic sportsmen. Wilson recognizes space as dynamic in histories of environmental change, and attends to the relationship between scales rather than focusing solely on the local, regional, or national. He also illustrates how the Pacific Flyway connected a series of landscapes from the Arctic, to the Canadian prairies, to California, and to western Mexico. As nothing comparable exists for the Mediterranean region, I draw from these works to situate my doctoral research.

CHAPTER 3:
GEOGRAPHIES OF THE AVIAN IMPERIAL ARCHIVE

Birds appear in the British “imperial archive”\(^2\) in interesting and unexpected ways. Dead birds circulated across imperial networks as gifts in the slave trade; as part of the discourse of discovery and exploration; as songsters in aviaries in gardens; as treasures in private museums; as colonial objects at world fairs; and as scientific specimens in the emergence of the field of ornithology – the scientific study of birds.\(^3\) The collections and documentation of avian specimens bear witness to the circuitry of empire that extended across formal and informal parts of empire, including missionary work in the South Pacific, coffee plantations in Latin America, fur trade in British North America, timber commerce in Atlantic Canada, and British military culture in the British Mediterranean.\(^4\)

Within the context of the British Army, imperial expansion provided opportunities for many British military officers to pursue natural history in colonies abroad; in fact, the British armed forces was comprised of the most numerous bird collectors in the British Empire. Commissioned officers emerged as ideal observers and collectors in Britain’s formal and informal empire, as they documented, listed, classified, and narrated their presence in the field. As evident in many British museums, the collecting practices of British military officers were integral to the

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\(^2\) Richards, *The Imperial Archive*.


\(^4\) For a general overview of the different kinds of bird collectors, see: Mearns and Mearns, *The Bird Collectors*. 
establishment of many collections in Britain, and contributed significantly to ornithological knowledge of different regions of the globe. Considering how the contributions of military officers to the development of field ornithology and zoogeographical knowledge of birds can be found in the documented traces and material remnants of their bird collections housed in Britain and its former colonies, how does one use them in tracing the lives of avian specimens and British military men?

Works in the history of science are shedding light on the cultural biographies of natural history collections and their collectors. With a focus on the specimen as a scientific object, these studies reveal complex networks, biographies, and institutional histories as objects circulated through colonial, imperial, and private and public spheres. Henry McGhie’s work, in particular, shows the importance of considering the contextual circumstances surrounding the acquisition of objects within a postcolonial museum. McGhie highlights the biography of nineteenth-century ornithologist Henry Dresser to help trace his complex business and scientific networks in his accumulation of ornithological knowledge, and the history of the collections at the Manchester Museum, within the context of both empire and colonialism.

Recent technological advances at the molecular level have revealed the misidentification of species and fraudulent collecting practices of some of the original collectors such as British military officer Richard Meinertzhagen (1878-1967), who was considered one of the last of the great British bird collectors of the early twentieth century. Meinertzhagen, who amassed a

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6 Henry A. McGhie, “Contextual research and the postcolonial museum: the example of Henry Dresser,” in *Annalen des Naturhistorischen Museums Wien* (Proceedings of the Fifth International Conference of European Bird Curators); Henry A. McGhie (in prep), *Bird, Books and Business: The Life of Victorian Ornithologist Henry Dresser*. For an interesting interview on the use of avian specimens and biography, see You Tube: Jill Malusky and Henry McGhie (Head of Natural Sciences and Curator of Zoology) discuss the Manchester Museum's bird collection, its origins and relationship to the Revealing Histories project (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qre1UaM-roE).
collection of over 20,000 bird specimens, stole many specimens from museum collections, falsified their documentation, and relabeled them with different localities.7

While these studies help trace the trajectories of scientific objects and their collectors, they seldom focus on the ways in which objects create emotional affect beyond the realms of science. Geographers, such as Laura Cameron, Caitlin de Silvey, Merle Patchett, and Hayden Lorimer, have devised creative ways in which to interpret the various “fragments” of the archives that often lie beyond the traditional sources of the historical record and in this context, the scientific record.8 These interventions help to conceive the stuffed bird specimens in my study as not “discrete entities” but material forms “bound into continual cycles of articulation and disarticulation” that have the potential to reveal other histories, which include the “lived culture” of the animals in question.9 Lorimer, in particular, animates the archives with moving animals and songs from the past. “To accumulate this sort of geographical information,” he writes, “is to privilege multivalent encounters with people and animals, and so unearth from an elemental terrain of slopes, woods, streams, boulder fields, and lochans a vital landscape of interconnected phenomena, processes, and presence.”10 Lorimer’s insights provide a unique way of thinking of the textures of the archives in historical geography research.


8 Laura Cameron, “Oral history in the Freud Archives: incidents, ethics and relations,” Historical Geography 29 (Spring 2001): 38–44.


This chapter examines the ways in which trans-imperial careers can be written not only with textual sources (e.g. journals, personal correspondence, published works) but also traces and artifacts of material culture, specifically avian specimens as part of the “avian imperial archive” (Figure 1). My work therefore brings a material-cultural methodological approach to bear on the

Figure 1: The “Avian Imperial Archive:” top left, Hoopoe specimen, the World Liverpool Museum, Liverpool, photo by Kirsten Greer; top right, postcard addressed to Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, Aldershot, reproduced with permission from David Reid and Andrew Reid; bottom left, “Tangier, Morocco,” from the watercolour sketchbook of Captain Reid, Royal Engineers, reproduced with permission from David and Andrew Reid; bottom right, “Interior of cavern with nest of Bonelli’s Eagle,” Irby, *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (1895), after page 176
life geographies of British military officers, who accumulated a variety of material culture, artifacts, experiences, and ideas from their trans-imperial travels, all of which made up the “avian imperial archive.” 

In employing this term, inspired by Thomas Richards, I insert military ornithological sketchbooks, diaries, albums, and avian specimens into “the imperial archive.”

Like “the imperial archive” of which it is part, the “avian imperial archive” acted as “an ideological construction for projecting the epistemological extension of Britain into and beyond its empire.” As Emyr Evans has demonstrated, the material culture of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers in Ireland consisted of material reports, maps, diaries, and books, which Evans termed “the temple of facts bequeathed by the bureaucracy of empire.”

To his list we need to add natural history specimens, as the accumulation of avian geographical knowledge by British military officers also reflected the “service of state and Empire.” As Joan Schwartz and James Ryan put it, the “issue of authorship and authority, authenticity and audience” becomes key. The provenance of such sources requires critical inquiry.

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12 Richards, The Imperial Archive. Richards includes lists of birds as part of “the imperial archive” but does not mention natural history specimens or photographs.

13 Ibid, 15. For the distinction between the “archive” as a metaphorical construction and archives as real institutions, see: Joan M. Schwartz, “Reading Robin Kelsey’s Archive Style across the archival divide,” Journal of Archival Organization 6, 3 (2008): 201-210.


15 Evans, Ireland and the Atlantic Heritage, 6.

16 Joan Schwartz and James Ryan have been at the forefront of introducing photographs as integral to the production, circulation, and dissemination of geographical knowledge. Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan (eds.), Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination (London: I.B. Taurus, 2003), 10-11.
3.1 Materialities, Life Geographies, and the Circuitry of Empire

The “bodies of animals” have been, and continue to be, sites of political struggle over the construction of cultural difference, the maintenance of dominant ideologies, and the drawing of boundary lines. They have been used to order, racialize, dehumanize, and maintain power in several ways. As tangible “things” from the past, the bodies of birds can be used as sites of an analysis of the intersection between British military culture and ideas and practices of ornithology, reflecting the ideological and collecting practices of a network of “servants of empire” dedicated to the scientific study of avian lives. According to Rachel Poliquin: “taxidermied animals can be reinterpreted as not just something to look at, but something to think with.”

By focusing on the “lives of specimens,” I seek to show how stuffed birds reveal networks of different actants (human and non-human) in the formulation of ornithological knowledge and zoological practices, including the trans-imperial movements of British military officers in different environments and cultures, and their connections to colonial officials, patrons, local assistants, and those who opposed them. By tracing the lives of military men through their bird collections, this approach takes into account the “life geographies” of soldier-naturalists. It also draws attention to the need for examining the different sites which scientists occupy during their careers, and how these “places” influence scientific knowledge-making.

This research focuses primarily on the process of making science, and such aspects as social

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context (structure) and personal creativity (agency); it concentrates on “lives lived” and not merely on the final results of the scientist.\textsuperscript{20}

As an approach, life geography need not ignore the birds themselves, their own movements and relations with other creatures – and their mysteries. Instead, this approach may attend to interactions with avian species as a means to include the lives of birds (live and dead) as actants in trans-imperial networks, and as living beings in their wider biogeographies connecting sites beyond borders and boundaries. As Adrienne Rich has articulated: “the Great Blue Heron is not a symbol… it is a bird, \textit{Ardea herodias}, whose form, dimensions, and habits have been described by ornithologists, yet whose intangible ways of being and knowing remain beyond my – or anyone’s – reach.”\textsuperscript{21}

In addition to reading the avian specimens solely as texts or representations, I focus on the material practices that helped produce their meaning and epistemic authority as scientific facts in the production and circulation of ornithological knowledge.\textsuperscript{22} This requires familiarity with the various field ornithology practices — collecting, stuffing, labelling, travel-writing — in order to understand the ways in which a network of British military officers and naturalists helped to translate avian specimens into scientific facts.\textsuperscript{23} British military officers not only came into contact with distinct local cultures and natures, but they also occupied successively different postings, involving them in translocal activities, networks, and military cultures. Here were the “embodied interactions that create[d] embodied subjectivities \textit{and} standardized facts” in the


\textsuperscript{22} Geographer J.B. Harley has been instrumental in using material culture as primary sources in historical geography, and viewing maps as “texts” or cultural constructs rather than “a mirror of reality.” See: J.B. Harley, “Historical geography and the cartographic illusion,” \textit{Journal of Historical Geography} 15, 1 (January 1989): 80-91.

production of colonial knowledge. As the avian imperial archive illustrates, the “traffic in objects” involved patrons, collectors, local informants, taxidermists, poulterers, agents, and museum officials, revealing networks of exchange, coercion, and the hybridity of knowledge creation. A special attention to biography and practice therefore helps to discern the uses of avian specimens in fieldwork, “with all the complications and translations entailed.”

With increasing emphasis on “technologies of inscription” (writing, documenting, mapping, photographing, taxidermy), we can recast ornithological knowledge and objects which circulated as “immutable mobiles” through a “circuit” or “web” of networks that shaped and reshaped places across the nineteenth-century British Empire. The mobility of geographical knowledge currency required “centres of calculation” to standardize collecting practices, coordinate flows of information, and manage networks of communication in order for information to be useful for further explorations. Within the British imperial context, such centres included the British Museum in London, which served as a “nerve center of all possible knowledge” under the supervision of the state.


28 Ibid.

29 Richards, The Imperial Archive, 11.
3.2 Avian Specimens, Military Men, and Zoological Region-Making

The accumulation of avian “immutable mobiles” (e.g. skins, eggs, nests, field-journals, sketchbooks) by British military officers stationed in the Mediterranean helped to provide evidence for the process of abstraction and the production of zoogeography – a branch of biogeography concerned with the distribution of animal species across the globe.30  By the mid-nineteenth century, the study of the geographic distributions of passerine birds allowed for the conceptualization of the six zoogeographic regions of the globe by British naturalists, which contributed to the mapping of “the most natural division of the earth's surface into primary kingdoms or provinces,”31 including their “secondary divisions”32 or subregions.

In 1858, Dr. Philip L. Sclater figured verbally and diagrammatically the six zoogeographic regions using the distribution of birds, which included the boundary-line between European and African zoologies in the Mediterranean region (Figure 2). According to Sclater, the Palearctic region encompassed Europe, Northern Asia, and “Africa, north of the Atlas, along the southern shores of the Mediterranean,” which appeared “to belong to Europe zoologically, and not to the continent to which it is physically joined.”33 For Sclater, North Africa appeared to be a place where some bird species seemed to be “slightly modified representatives” of the European ones.34  British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace extended Sclater’s region to “all

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32 Ibid, 137.

33 Ibid, 135.

34 Ibid.
Africa north of the great Desert, for I think none of the peculiar forms of Tropical Africa are found there.”35 Wallace described the Sahara desert as a boundary between the Palearctic and Ethiopian regions, and “should be given to neither,” as it is “certainly quite as unproductive of animal life as the sea, perhaps more so.”36 Although Sclater’s zoogeographic boundaries were based on the idea of multiple centres of creation, his emphasis on regions helped Charles Darwin and Wallace to conceptualize evolutionary theories of a single origin.37

In order to map empirically the limits of the world’s zoological provinces, Sclater appealed to field collectors such as British military officers to engage in the accumulation of accurate “information concerning the families, genera, and species of created beings — their exact

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localities, and the geographical areas over which they extend” in order to map accurately the “ontological divisions of the globe” including in the Mediterranean subregion.\(^{38}\) Sclater, through his involvement with many leading scientific societies such as the Zoological Society of London, the British Ornithological Union (BOU), and as founder and editor of the BOU’s *The Ibis* (est. 1859), emerged as a “centre of calculation” through a network of colonial officials, travellers, and British military officers, who contributed to the mapping of “the most natural division of the earth's surface into primary kingdoms or provinces.”\(^{39}\) *The Ibis*, in particular, concentrated primarily on ornithological writings from the “Mediterranean lands”\(^{40}\) in its first few decades.

British naturalists knew the value in enlisting the services of army officers stationed in the Mediterranean for information on birdlife and avian migrations. As early as the 1740s, naturalist George Edwards encouraged military Englishmen in Gibraltar “who reside there” to document bird migrations, a tradition that continued well into the mid-nineteenth century, when trained officers such as E.F. Becher, Royal Artillery, traced “the connection of the rock [Gibraltar] with Africa” through the study of birds.\(^{41}\) As the link between the British Army and scientific patronage became an “elaboration of identity,”\(^{42}\) close associations with leading scientific societies such as the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Society, and the British Association for the Advancement of Science fostered an emphasis on the accumulation of geographical knowledge and accurate information-gathering for military intelligence,


\(^{42}\) Raffles, “The uses of butterflies,” 524.
campaigning, and territorial expansion, illustrating how military connections often overlapped with and fostered scientific networks. British military geographers thus cultivated a military avian landscape perspective through “nature’s intelligibility” in the form of maps, sketches, photographs, and natural history specimens influenced by their imperial martial subjectivities.

The military surveillance of colonial and avian landscapes through bird collections, travel-writing, and sketches in the Mediterranean created a network of “panoptic power” that facilitated the mapping of the zoogeographies of the Mediterranean, extending the European or Palearctic zoogeographic boundary-line into North Africa, often overlapping with British geopolitical interests in the region (see Chapters 5 and 6). In the nineteenth century, Britain strove to figure the Mediterranean Sea as an “English Lake,” a domestic region to ensure its role as a Great Power in continental Europe, to maintain supremacy over the trade route to India and East Asia, and to retain political influence in North Africa.

British military officers stationed in Gibraltar and Malta thus helped to bridge the continents of Europe and Africa through the collection, comparison, and classification of avian observations, lists, specimens, and publications in formal and informal empire. Once an “immutable mobile,” imperial bird skins circulated to private and public museums for authentication and entered into “cycles of accumulation” for demarcating precisely the boundary lines between regions “contradicting, affirming and refining the boundaries of Sclater’s regions

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46 Edney, Mapping an Empire, 325-236.

and the subregions within them." Lieutenant Colonel Irby’s collection of birds from Gibraltar and Southern Spain, for instance, was presented to the British Museum in several separate donations throughout the 1870s and 1880s. Irby also corresponded personally to Sclater, sending him specimens from the Mediterranean.

In order for ornithological knowledge to become useful, British military officers established techniques of trust as the first step in gathering the world. British naturalists emphasized the accumulation of species lists in specific geographical locales by appealing to “a sizable network of observers.” These lists followed the naming conventions laid out by the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1842, which ordered the avian class with Linnaean nomenclature and created a “grid” that took into account which bird species belonged to which zoogeographical region; in this way avifaunal regions were presented as “bounded, determinate, and therefore – in principle – countable.” The Linnaean classification system provided a medium to convert natural history into the “visible,” as language and natural

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50 L. Howard Irby to Philip L. Sclater, 16 October 1869, Library of the Zoological Society of London, London, UK. There are some existing letters by Philip P. Sclater at a few archives. For the most part, however, the location of Sclater’s materials (diaries, notebooks, and personal letters) is still unknown.

51 Livingstone, _Putting Science in its Place_, 171.

52 Richards, _The Imperial Archive_, 3; David E. Allen, _The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History_ (London: A. Lane, 1976), 215.

53 Known as the “Strickland code,” the rules drawn up by the BAAS committee became a standard on zoological classification and nomenclature, replacing all other classification systems of the time period. The “code” was based on the twelfth edition of _System Naturae_. See: Bircham, _A History of Ornithology_, 213-216.

phenomena became one, and the universal standardized vernacular knowledge. As Matt Hannah has argued, these “grids of specification” produced “coordinate systems on which to locate the objects of a discursive formation and their features,” reflecting the standardization of knowledge and the establishment of categories in the nineteenth century.

The “field” allowed British military officers to make important contributions through their “on-the-spot” observations and collections in different colonial locales. From the time of Linnaeus, travelling naturalists could gain the “increasing prestige and authority of internationalized expertise,” spurring debates between closet/armchair and field naturalists over who held the most authoritative perspective on science and nature. Field naturalists believed in viewing specimens in the “wild” and in their natural habitats while museum naturalists drew from knowledge “not from passage but from immobility,” thus relying on a vast collection of specimens for comparison. Travelling-naturalists, on the other hand, endeavoured to emulate the fieldwork of Alexander von Humboldt, who attempted to move beyond “the classification

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systems of the ‘miserable archivists of Nature’”61 by travelling to distant lands and using his body as an instrument of science in documenting empirical knowledge.

The practice of taxidermy helped materialize “the natural order” of things, where “natural form tended most easily to assume the form of logic” through the arrangement of single specimens or “type specimens.”62 As representatives of “the organisms (and taxa) from which they derived,” the boundaries of species could change with new discoveries and classification schemes, but their names could not.63 Type specimens safeguarded “the permanence of the name,”64 and in turn the imperial legacies of British military officers named in their honour.65 As early as the 1770s, Thomas Davies (1737-1812), Royal Artillery, described for the president of the Royal Society, the “modes for preserving such things,” with instructions on the type of “shot” and how to stuff a bird properly.66 He appealed to the “officers in the Majesty’s Army and Navy, who had the advantage of “in general of most People (by means of their profession) of visiting

61 Anne Marie Claire Godlewska, “Humboldt's visual thinking: from Enlightenment vision to modern science" in David Livingstone and Charles Withers (eds.) Geography and Enlightenment (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 236-279; 266.


63 Ibid.


65 By the 1830s, naturalists commonly used arsenic soap as a preservative on bird skins to protect specimens from insect infestation and decomposition. Many of these type-specimens are still in existence unlike some of the earlier specimens that were preserved by pickling or drying them. Johnson, “Type-specimens of birds,” 174. For a history of taxidermy techniques, see: Paul L. Farber, “The development of taxidermy and the history of ornithology,” Isis 68 (1977): 350-566.

different parts of the world,” to form a collection of birds.\textsuperscript{67} Within the context of ornithology, an impressive bird collection with rarities was a recognized form of capital in the appropriate circuit, with significant exchange value and an indispensable prestige function that could advance its owner into the ranks of the professional sciences.\textsuperscript{68}

Alfred Russel Wallace urged the “modern naturalist” to amass a “geographical collection” of specimens, and to focus on the relations between animals and the environment rather than on anatomy or classification.\textsuperscript{69} Influenced by von Humboldt, spatial groupings of natural phenomena were translated into numerical terms similar to population surveys involved in “enumerating political states.”\textsuperscript{70} The number of species and genera were counted, and simple correlations and proportions were calculated in specific regions in order to assess the number of individuals in different groups. Great emphasis was placed on the “locality” of the avian observation and collection as a key component in justifying knowledge claims. The emergence of the “type locality” — the specific geographical location where the collector obtained the type-specimen — inevitably took on significance in the mapping of zoogeographical regions and the preparation of specimens collected in the field.\textsuperscript{71}

In his “Hints for preparing and transmitting ornithological specimens from foreign countries,” Sir William Jardine (1800-1874) emphasized how collectors should include a label with “a number, the locality, the date, and the sex” of each bird collected, with a number that “should refer to a memorandum book, where, when possible, all extended remarks that can be

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{68} Hugh Raffles, “The uses of butterflies,” \textit{American Ethnologist} 28, 3 (August 2001): 513–548; 525.

\textsuperscript{69} Alfred R. Wallace, \textit{The Geographical Distribution of Animals} (London: MacMillan, 1876), 552-553.

\textsuperscript{70} Browne, “A science of empire,” 468. See also: Zeller, “Classical codes,” 22.

\textsuperscript{71} Johnson, “Type-specimens of birds,” 181.
collected should be inserted,” which included vernacular names. Jardine stated that “[a] collection, accompanied by such memoranda, would be worth, in the market, double, if not triple to that of one indiscriminately made, even though the specimens were in finer preservation.” The collection of birds thus became “allied to travel narratives” as travelling and collecting became systematizing activities, especially as many British military officers were members of the Royal Geographical Society, an organization that published works on “hints to travellers” for the accumulation of accurate geographical information.

The recording of “on-the-spot” observations was made possible through portable field journals, sketchbooks, scrapbooks, and albums, now often separated from the specimens and housed in the archives. Journals were essential in recounting fieldwork experiences especially when publishing travel narratives. Andrew Leith Adams used his India journal to preserve “the objects in the order they appeared to me, and attempted to describe the scenes and circumstances with which I was brought in contact as minutely as the incidents of travel would allow, and in a belief that my jottings by the way would add zest to the drier descriptions of animals.” In some cases, notebooks and collections were lost in transit as British military officers moved frequently to different colonial stations. Lieutenant Colonel L. Howard Irby lost all of his Crimean notes when ship-wrecked with the 90th Regiment (Perthshire Volunteers) on HMS Transit in the Strait of Banca, “so all the information is from memory only.” Sketching and photography also helped to

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73 Ibid.

74 Raffles, In Amazonia, 133; Stagl, A History of Curiosity, 113.

75 Driver, Geography Militant, 49-67.

76 Andrew Leith Adams, Notes of a Naturalist in the Nile Valley and Malta (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1870), 1.

77 Charles Robert Bree, A History of the Birds of Europe, Not observed in the British Isles Volume 1 (London: Groombridge, 1859), 86. When volunteering in the Crimean War, Andrew Leith Adams
justify locality in the “the craft of empirical representation”\textsuperscript{78} in the field. Officers, especially those with the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers, were trained in watercolours and topographical sketching (see Chapter 6).\textsuperscript{79} Photography was a new mode of encountering the world in the nineteenth century and its power was harnessed in a number of ways: to establish imperial control, to extend imperial authority, and to show presence at a particular site. Collections of British military albums therefore represented sites where “facts” could be visually stored, classified, reinterpreted, and disseminated, creating an imperial geographical imagination of colonial stations.\textsuperscript{80}

Furthermore, the collection of avian geographical knowledge extended to the accumulation of birds’ eggs and nests, which reflected changes in what counted for evidence of nesting habits or nidification. Oology, the scientific study of eggs, and nidification, the scientific study of nesting, emerged as sub-disciplines in ornithology. As Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston of the Royal Artillery counselled, “[t]he careful identification of an egg is too of the utmost importance,”\textsuperscript{81} and bird specimens without their eggs “are of no value whatever scientifically.”\textsuperscript{82} Officers were encouraged to shoot the “female” bird “from the nest – and to

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{78} Ó Cadhla, Civilizing Ireland, 106.
\textsuperscript{81} Thomas Blakiston to Alfred Newton, from B.A. Exploring Expedition, Saskatchewan River, BNA, 5 January 1858, Alfred Newton Fonds, CUL MS Add.9839/1B/700, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
preserve her skin – making the eggs to correspond with it.”\textsuperscript{83} Once the eggs were collected, they were to be blown out “at the side from a single hook or if from two,” and notes should be written on them.\textsuperscript{84} Blakiston concluded: “The scientific value of eggs thus carefully collected and written upon is not to be overrated. Their identity is thus secured for all future time.”\textsuperscript{85}

By the 1880s, avian specimens and their associated documentation (e.g. notebooks, published lists, eggs) in \textit{The Ibis}, at the British Museum, and other museums across Britain, helped naturalists such as Sclater to revise their zoological divisions of the world and map more accurately the geographical boundaries of the Mediterranean subregion, which reaffirmed and extended the European zoological boundaries into North Africa. As Jane Camerini has stated, “maps of faunal regions” such as Sclater’s “served as instruments both of thought and of persuasion,”\textsuperscript{86} illustrating visually how Britain could encounter a southern European avifauna in Morocco, Tunis, and Egypt. Such zoogeographic knowledge circulated in the reproduction of Sclater’s regions in popular zoology manuals, including Cambridge Professor Alfred Newton’s \textit{Manual of Zoology} published for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1874. Robert Brown included the map on the frontispiece of \textit{Our Earth and its Story: A Popular Treatise on Physical Geography} (1889). In 1898, Sclater and his son, William, revised the map to extend the Palearctic boundary line further south into North Africa. The map appeared in J.G. Bartholomew’s \textit{Atlas of Zoogeography} in 1911 — a project funded by the Royal Geographical Society, firmly establishing zoogeography as part of the geographical tradition (see Figure 3).\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{86} Camerini, “Evolution, biogeography, and maps,” 701.

\textsuperscript{87} Bartholomew, \textit{Bartholomew’s Physical Atlas}. The Atlas is “a series of maps illustrating the distribution of over seven hundred families, genera and species of existing animals, prepared by J.G. Bartholomew, W. Eagle Clarke and Percy H. Grimshaw; under the patronage of the Royal Geographical Society.”
3.3 Negotiating “Grids” and Fieldwork “In Situ”

The challenge of conducting research on the avian imperial archive in the mid to late nineteenth century involves piecing together the material traces of the British military officers and avian lives, which once made up a system of knowledge. Avian specimens, mounts, nests, and eggs of scientific value are held in separate storage systems at natural history museums, while paper records, correspondence, sketchbooks, and photographs are stored in different archival collections. Many private collections of bird mounts and private letters are still in the hands of the families of British military officers. Other materials are circulating in private auction or have been destroyed, never making it to archives or museums collections. As David Lambert and Alan Lester have stated, “research on the sort of peripatetic figures addressed… may be hindered by the
organisation of archives along national lines, which makes the investigation of cross-imperial connections more difficult.\textsuperscript{88}

Gillian Rose indicates that geographers need to pay particular attention to the various sites of the archives and how they in turn affect the researcher’s interpretation of the materials.\textsuperscript{89} The various archival and museum collection “grids,” which are the systems established to classify, describe, and organize archival materials with numerical numbers, linguistic descriptions, and storage details, in turn serve to order, discipline, and transform the original record or object. According to Rose:

the power of this grid is such that the researcher too has little choice but to be inserted in it, unable to see what the archive has transformed and erased; they suggest that the researcher as well as the photographs are disciplined there. In these accounts, the textual apparatus of the archive has an effect on both the researcher and the photographs, and on the relationship between them.\textsuperscript{90}

Rose’s insight is especially relevant when researching the bird specimens at some of the natural history museums. Birds and their collectors often are tracked down by using an online catalogue system that includes the museum catalogue number, the species’ scientific names, and their provenance, if the details are available. The “power of the grid,” therefore, further erases the sentient lives of these birds into “virtual bodies” present in the museum records management databases, divorcing the birds from their natural habitats, relationships with other organisms, and migratory natures prior to their death in the Mediterranean.\textsuperscript{91} The avian remnants in museum


\textsuperscript{89} Gillian Rose cautions that “full self-knowledge is impossible, both because the self is articulated in part through unconscious drives and desires and because the self is always relational.” Gillian Rose, “Practising photography: an archive, a study, some photographs and a researcher,” \textit{Journal of Historical Geography}, 26, 4 (October 2000): 555-571; 556.


collections “will forever be in abstraction from the life context,” and information about the environment, in the form of notes, is often isolated from specimens although they remain referentially linked through an elaborate system of labelling and indexing. Likewise, the museum grid delimits the subjective experiences of the British military officers as they collected these birds in colonies abroad.

When viewing the actual specimens, one uncovers the various naming and documenting practices used by the different collectors throughout the object’s “life.” For example, Andrew Leith Adams’s collection of birds at the World Liverpool Museum indicates labels with his own personal numbering practices, which he used to organize his private collections in Malta. Another label includes Sir William Jardine’s numbering practices, and then Canon Tristram’s. What is revealed is how natural history museums themselves are developing their own unique storage organizations according to practicality, as well as taxonomy. While natural history museums use particular taxonomic schemes to organize their respective bird collections (e.g. Moroney, Bock, and Farrand; Peters; Sibley and Monroe), many collections cater to the needs of the museum and their curators. For instance, one curator stated that type, endangered, and extinct specimens are stored separately from the other birds in order to keep an eye on them. Many extinct specimens, such as the Great Auk, are worth thousands of dollars in today’s market.

The labels themselves must be linked to the military officers’ field diaries, published articles, travel books, sketches, photographs, and correspondence. A key component in justifying


93 Natural history museums use different taxonomic systems when organizing their collections. In Reference List of the Birds of the World (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1975), J.J. Moroney, W.J. Bock, and J. Farrand divide the Class Aves into 2045 genera, 36 tribes, 115 subfamilies; with 6-digit numbers identifying each species: the first two digits indicate the key order. A more recent taxonomy is Charles Sibley and Burt Monroe, Distribution and Taxonomy of Birds of the World (London: Yale University Press, 1990), who devised 23 orders (and 32 sub-orders) and 133 families out of 9672 species. Their work was based on their earlier classification developed by Sibley, Monroe, and Jon Ahlquist. Henry McGhie helped me to decipher the various taxonomic systems used in natural history museums.

knowledge claims in this time period was the narrating of presence in the field, where “nature could be encountered in the raw.” Donna Haraway has stated that this type of “process required a base of ‘personal experience’,,” especially “at the site of the animal’s life and death.”

Ornithological collecting in the field, therefore, involved a “visceral connection to objects,” with the handling, dissecting, exchanging, and collecting in different physical environments. As “sensible objects,” their capture entailed multiple forms of sensory perception and their effect on people and their memories. For the celebrated sports writer and military officer Edward Napier (1808-1870), these objects recalled “many a feat performed by field and flood, in foreign and far-distant lands,” such in India, Spain, and Gibraltar.

Traces of the lives of specimens can also be found in museum donation books and popular books on birds. For example, Reverend Charles Bree, who published A History of the Birds of Europe Not observed in the British Isles (1859-1875), figured a specimen of “Irby’s Long-Tailed Titmouse” (Acredula Irbii), a bird sent by Lieutenant Colonel Irby and named “after its discoverer… who is a zealous and hard-working naturalist” (Figure 4). Bree, who established a network of army officials to collect for him in Gibraltar and Malta, described the species’ appearance, habits, and young, as well as its eggs that Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, sent to him from Gibraltar. As collections in “miniature,” illustrated bird books

95 Livingstone, Putting Science in its Place, 41.
100 Charles Robert Bree, A History of the Birds of Europe: Not observed in the British Isles, Volume 3 (London: George Bell and Sons, 1875), 84-85; 84.
could exist “‘all at once’” in various settings and, in particular, “the field” where birds could be observed in “the wild.”

Figure 4: Irby’s Long-Tailed Titmouse (Acredula Irbii) from Bree’s *A History of the Birds of Europe* (1875), after page 84

Furthermore, the analysis of the avian imperial archive must pay attention to the ways in which the production of British military ornithological knowledge and collections in the Mediterranean region emerged as “a negotiation of local knowledges of conjunctural context” in both southern Europe and North Africa (see Chapters 5 and 6). As field ornithology relied strongly on the contributions of local assistants, translators, and agents in the accumulation and knowledge of avian specimens, the participation of Gibraltarian, Spanish, Maltese, and North African informants, often erased in published accounts, was central to the emergence of ornithological knowledge production in region. “By pushing us to focus on bodies, labors, and knowledges (of the habits and ecology of butterflies),” Hugh Raffles has stated, “relationships of

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102 Raffles, “The uses of butterflies,” 532.
this type throw questions of authorship into sharp relief.”103 Such considerations relate as well to the examination of the avian imperial archive.

Lastly, historical-geographical fieldwork of the avian imperial archive also involves visiting the sites of where the birds were collected in the first place. As George Lovell has claimed: “For a historical geographer, archival research is fieldwork,” but it also involves reading the landscape as a “text” to see traces of past lives, practices, and the productions of a particular culture in time.104 Here, Lovell draws from geographer Carl O. Sauer, who stated: “Let no one consider that historical geography can be content with what is found in archive and library. It calls, in addition, for exacting field work.”105 Researchers are therefore encouraged to physically visit the sites in their study in order to enrich their understanding of the diversity of environments and the possibility of finding material evidence of past activities. As Ferdinand Braudel once wrote: “How could I move from one set of archives to another in search of some revealing document without having my eyes opened to [the Mediterranean’s] rich and active life?”106

This approach is supplemented by readings of a variety of “texts” (maps, photographs, books) to deconstruct representations of imperial and avian landscapes to reveal the cultural practices of place-making and identity formation. Remnants of the British Mediterranean are still present in Gibraltar and Malta, reflecting continuities and tensions with the British imperial past. British military heritage is celebrated in Gibraltar with the tunnels dedicated to the Great Siege of

103 Raffles, “The uses of butterflies,” 532.


Gibraltar, the various statues of military heroes, and the presence of the Gibraltar Garrison Library. The upper reaches of the “Rock,” where many British military officers conducted ornithological fieldwork, still overlooks the Mediterranean Sea and continues to be a shelter for a number of birds of prey and their nests. Similarly, Malta has preserved the lower and upper Barrack Gardens, the Royal Navy Dockyards, and other military sites.107

Hayden Lorimer further defines “the field” as “at once epistemological (the creative and continuous circulation of knowledge-producing relations) and physical (enacted amid the materialities of landscape, people and objects).”108 By adopting Ingold’s notion of “taskscapes,” Lorimer attempts to capture the intricacies of conducting fieldwork as an embodied and sensuous realm of agency and intersubjectivity amongst a set of relations between humans, animals, plants and objects. Where Lorimer differs, however, is with regard to the importance of considering the historical and cultural contexts in “the field’s” production. Lorimer wants “to read ‘the field’” but he also wants to “sense it too: archived, in situ and in-between.” His desire is to incorporate “text, context and embodied practice.”109 While it is impossible to recreate how the officers in this study felt or how they experienced place, such an approach recognizes historical subjects as emotional beings. Furthermore, fieldwork can provide opportunities for synergies and serendipities unforeseen in the project planning. These insights are described further in Chapter 8.


109 Ibid.
Conclusion: A Methodology

This chapter stresses the importance of including the scientific avian specimens in the imperial archive as a means to tease out the intersection between British military culture and nature and society relationships in different parts of the British Empire. The avian imperial archive is not based in one specific institution, but is dispersed widely and though it has always partial and incomplete — a fantasy of mastery — it has acted as an ideological construction of the British epistemological worldview of order, rationality, and facts that helped to sustain the networks of empire. The collection of avian specimens by British military officers can therefore be read as multiple and overlapping systems of knowledge – through labels, lists, fieldnotes, visual culture, and travel-writing. There is work to be done to reconnect material specimens to biographies of living birds, people, and places. This chapter acknowledges and outlines this labour and its methods.
CHAPTER 4:
THOMAS WRIGHT BLAKISTON: CRIMEAN SCIENTIFIC WAR HERO¹

Is there any pleasure in for the first time observing a species new to you? Surely you have a peculiar feeling within you, - you eagerly wish for a specimen…

Suppose that you are a field ornithologist, you take the first opportunity, and although the weather is cold and windy, with snow covering the ground, you trudge off with your fowling piece to where you observed the birds.²

In 1857, the Royal Artillery officer Thomas Wright Blakiston (1832-1891) published a series of articles on the “Birds of the Crimea” in The Zoologist for a British audience interested in the natural history of distant places.³ Written from Camp Woolwich, England, Captain Blakiston narrated his Crimean experiences (1855-1856) of “living in a single bell-tent in very hot weather, ever expecting to be on the move, and in the winter with plenty of other work, and few conveniences or books of reference.”⁴ Blakiston exemplified the ideal observer in the field as an officer of the Ordnance Department; officers of the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers contributed significantly to British colonial science as they documented, listed, and classified natural history knowledge in formal and informal parts of empire. Considering that British military officers were integral to the accumulation of geographical information, natural history, and ethnographic collections in Britain and in the colonies, what role did the collection of birds from the Crimean region play in the wider cultures of the military and science in mid-nineteenth-century Britain?


³ I am grateful to Paul Evans, Librarian, at the Royal Artillery Museum, Firepower, at Woolwich, for his generous feedback on an earlier version of this chapter.

This chapter investigates how the production and accumulation of scientific knowledge during the Crimean War (1853-1856), a campaign waged to protect British interests in the Mediterranean from Russia, contributed to the making of a British military scientific hero in the mid-nineteenth century. By focusing on the production of the “theatre of war” in the Crimea for fieldwork and travel writing, I illustrate how the natural history practices of army officials helped shape a specific heroic imaginary that embodied a rational, steadfast officer who engaged simultaneously in the natural sciences. To the general public, the war symbolized an immense human cost, with thousands of deaths suffered from neglect and disease. Blakiston’s published works and collection of birds were therefore scientific trophies of war integral to the re-fashioning of its memory.

What follows is an analysis of what Graham Dawson terms soldier “hero-making and hagiography” and the “narrative imagining of masculinities” through the travel narratives and collecting practices of Thomas Wright Blakiston. British military culture, in particular, involved a “plurality of forms” tied to national identity and an expanding empire. I begin this chapter by contextualizing the Crimean War in the British imperial imagination and the making of the modern military scientific hero. As an institution of the state, the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, espoused the moral benefits of the natural sciences to the esprit de corps. Second, I follow the military trajectory of Blakiston starting with his childhood experiences at Lymington, Hampshire, and his first commission overseas to Halifax, Nova Scotia. I then examine his published accounts of the “Birds of the Crimea” in The Zoologist, a monthly natural history journal founded in 1843 by the publisher Edward Newman, to uncover the gendered, class-based, and racialized representations of the European “theatre of war,” and the important distinction between “field” and “home.” Lastly, I trace Blakiston’s avian specimens to the museum of the Royal Artillery Institution and their meanings in terms of this site.

5 Dawson, Soldier Heroes, 9.
6 Ibid.
4.1 The Crimean Campaign: Modern British Military Scientific Heroes

The Crimean War was the first campaign to involve the European powers on European soil since the Napoleonic Wars. Largely fought in the Crimean peninsula, Britain and France declared war on Russia to preserve the security of the Ottoman Empire and, in turn, prevent Russia from becoming a Mediterranean power and gaining access to the overland route to India.\(^7\) Despite Britain’s victory in the campaign, the experiences of the Crimean War proved detrimental to national and military morale, as British “troops were neglected and demoralized,”\(^8\) and suffered casualties from scurvy, cholera, harsh weather, drunkenness, and “ennui attendant of inactivity.”\(^9\) Many accounts of incompetence and pointless deaths, including the disastrous charge of the Light Brigade, travelled quickly to Britain by media correspondents, telegraph, and photography, bringing the war zone “into the realm of technologised spectacle,”\(^10\) affecting national sentiment at home.\(^11\) Such negative motifs of the campaign undercut heroism with reports of failure and suffering and highlighted the weaknesses and strategic errors of the British Army, all of which threatened to bring down the Government and erode support for the army.\(^12\)

Colonel Arthur Hay, 9th Marquess of Tweeddale (1824–1878), expressed this alarm: “what cerebral want is in the intellectual cranium of the English which makes them so anxious to


destroy all that there is of good remaining in their institutions.” Colonel Hay, who was part of the aristocracy, served at Sebastopol with the Grenadier Guards, and would become President of the Zoological Society of London in 1868, contributing significantly to the development of ornithology.

In order to quell public anger, military and royal officials devised strategies to shift focus onto the positive outcomes of the campaign to reshape public opinion. In 1855, Prince Albert commissioned Roger Fenton (1819-1869) to produce “sanitized” views of the battlefields, which were exhibited at the Royal Photographic Society’s first public exhibition. Photography and art exhibitions served as important tools in the recording of the war as an historical event. Queen Victoria herself commissioned the photographic firm of Joseph Cundall and Robert Howlett to photograph returning victorious soldiers to garner sympathy from the home audience. One of the images from their series, “Crimean Heroes and Trophies,” graced the cover of the *Illustrated London News* 12 April 1856, showing British military heroes at Woolwich carrying Byzantine paintings looted from a church in Sebastopol (Figure 5).

Earlier that year, the *Illustrated London News* published an image of the collection of captured Russian guns and mortars brought home as trophies of war at Woolwich, demonstrating

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16 Anon, “Crimean heroes and trophies,” *Illustrated London News* (12 April 1856): 369. The Royal Collection, London, UK, houses several photographs from the Cundall and Howlett series, including a photograph of three officers of the Coldstream Guards “Joseph Numa, John Potter and James Deal, Coldstream Guards, Summer 1856,” Albumen print, 23.4 x 18.7 cm (RCIN 2500203). Queen Victoria “gave specific instructions as to how the groups were to be photographed. Regimental group photographs, showing three or four of the most distinguished and handsome men, were to be taken as soon as possible, as the Queen was afraid that they would shave or otherwise change their war-like appearance.” See: [http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/egallery/object.asp?searchText=Cundall&object=2500203&row=3&detail=about](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/egallery/object.asp?searchText=Cundall&object=2500203&row=3&detail=about) (accessed 23 July 2011).
the importance of material culture and display in shaping public opinion back home in Britain. These attempts overlapped with similar presentations of heroic feats in British exploration, science, and travel at the time. Dr. David Livingstone (1813-1873), for example, had returned from Zambesi, Central Africa in 1856 laden with trophies and narratives of exploration, shaping an imperial imagination of the scientific explorer-hero abroad.

Figure 5: “Crimean Heroes and Trophies” at Woolwich, from the Illustrated London News (12 April 1856), 369

In order to portray a positive image at home, the mid-nineteenth-century British military adventurer embodied “the rational, prudent and calculating,” and often overcame challenges with

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17 Anon, “Russian guns and bells from Sebastopol, just received at Woolwich Arsenal,” Illustrated London News (23 February 1856): 209.

guns, compasses, diaries, and classification techniques to create order and value out of “wilderness.”

According to Martin Burgess Green, British Protestants “became more worldly than anyone else,” stressing the importance of going “abroad” where actions took place away from home. The emergence of a temperate martial masculinity emphasized rational restraint, moral values, and “useful work” to control the “baser animal passions” of drunkenness, slothfulness, and luxury, and to secure British imperial interests abroad through war and peace.

As Major General Sir. H.C. Rawlinson stated: “War, when honourably directed, being but the legitimate means of securing peace… is the most honourable distinction of the soldier; but to achieve that, he must be able to support the prestige of his own reputation by the possession of real and absolute force.” The British military scientific hero was not only “heroic” in battle, but also during times of peace.

Many ideas about military reform and scientific pursuits emerged from the temperance movements of the 1830s at home. As one writer commented in a letter to the periodical the *United Service Magazine* in 1830, the “qualities of mind necessarily evolved and fostered in the collection of materials, are, I humbly conceive, greatly to benefit the younger branches of the service. Habits of manly thought and patient investigation will be formed, producing mental enjoyment.”

The United Service Institution (later known as the Royal United Service Institution), a temperance society for the army and navy, established a museum “for depositing models, minerals, weapons, and specimens of Natural History, with other interesting and

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20 Ibid, 22-23, 58.


delightful objects, which we are daily receiving from all quarters of the globe,”\textsuperscript{24} including Royal Navy Commander Henry Downes’s “forty cases of stuffed birds and animals” after five to six years service in Africa.\textsuperscript{25} The building up of a collection therefore became the focal point not only for the field ornithologist, but also for the moral and physical training of the military body.

While earlier reformers encouraged natural history as rational recreation, the Crimean War provided army officials with an opportunity to promote the military scientific hero as an exemplar for future officers. In April 1859, Major General Joseph Ellison Portlock (1794–1864), Royal Engineers officer and military professor at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, expressed his ideologies to an audience of the United Service Institution. According to Portlock, “a nation, having resolved on a war, cannot expect to realize great events, unless by concentrating upon the object in view all its energies – physical, moral, and intellectual, or, in other words, its whole vital force.”\textsuperscript{26} Portlock espoused to his military audience the importance of the natural sciences in attending to “both the mind and to the body,” and in sustaining “the efforts of the body politic, or of the body military.”\textsuperscript{27}

The field, in particular, provided an ideal venue to pursue “zoology and health,” where military men could expose themselves to the physical exertions of the hunt and “the song of


\textsuperscript{25} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{26} Born in Gosport, Hampshire, he attended the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant, Royal Engineers, serving in Canada and Ireland with the Ordnance Survey. In 1851 Portlock was appointed inspector of studies at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He was an ardent advocate of education in the army, especially in the scientific corps, and he instituted many valuable reforms in the system at Woolwich. His reforms were extended to the Military College, Sandhurst. Major General Joseph Ellison Portlock, “On the advantage of cultivating the natural and experimental sciences, as promoting social comfort and practical utility of military men,” \textit{Royal United Service Institution} (1860): 290-306; 291; R. H. Vetch, “Portlock, Joseph Ellison (1794–1864),” rev. Elizabeth Baigent, \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

\textsuperscript{27} Portlock, “On the advantage of cultivating the natural and experimental sciences,” 291.
birds,” exercising both mind and body. When reflecting on the Crimean War, Portlock concluded: “Had the number of collectors and observers been greater” in the Crimea, “the amount of happiness would have been greater also, and that without inducing any diminution of the military zeal or efficiency of the officers themselves.”

British army officials looked to the fostering of scientific exploration as part of military reform and a liberal education. Official bodies endorsed the intersection between travel, commerce, and public service, encouraging the pursuit of science and natural history with overlapping duties. Such organizations included the War Office, the Ordnance Survey, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. British military officers were active members of the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society (RGS), and the Geography Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS). Many officers of the Royal Artillery contributed significantly to and served as Presidents of the Royal Society, including Sir Charles Blagden and Sir Edward Sabine, both of whom maintained personal interests in (and collections of) birds.

Central to the maintenance of a temperate martial masculinity in the 1850s was a domesticated manliness, sustained by a Christian imaginative geography and an emphasis on “home,” domesticity, and British women. Queen Victoria, herself, served as a nurturing sovereign for returning “Crimean heroes,” when she stood “face to face with them” at the parade.

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32 Greer, “Placing colonial ornithology,” 85–112.

of the Horse Guards in London on 18 May 1855. Her concern for wounded soldiers “brought home to the heart of the least sympathetic the ravages of war,” and influenced public support for the British Army in the metropolis.34

The establishment of rational recreation through libraries, reading rooms, and sermons also helped to promote the image of moral, temperate soldiers on the frontline, and during times of peace. Alicia Blackwood described a lecture on birds in Scutari delivered by Reverend Mr. Connors as “very interesting and exceedingly well sustained, and ended with a remarkably graceful allusion to a certain sweet songster, ‘whose notes were not confined to England's woods and forests, but were the solace of the sick chamber, the soother of the sorrowful, the harbinger of ease to the wounded, and the notes of a friend to the soldier.’”35 Blackwood reiterated Connor’s own words: “‘I need not name that bird,’ said Mr. Connors, whereupon the building seemed ready to fall from the burst of applause and cheering, as every voice vociferated, ‘The Nightingale, the Nightingale’.”36

4.2 The Royal Artillery Tradition

From an early age, Thomas Wright Blakiston was exposed to a naval, military, and scientific life (Figure 6). In 1832, Blakiston was born in Lymington, Hampshire, where his family had already been involved in military campaigning in the Peninsular Wars and in Asia. His father, Major John Blakiston, the second son of Sir Matthew Blakiston (1761-1806), served with the Madras Engineers (East India Company) and the 27th Regiment of Foot (Enniskillens).


35 Alicia Blackwood, A Narrative of Personal Experiences & Impressions during my Sojourn in the East Throughout the Crimean War (London: Hatchard, 1881), 179-180.

36 Ibid. Blackwood was most likely alluding to Florence Nightingale, who used the old Barrack Hospital at Scutari as her nursing base during the Crimean War. For works on women in the Crimea, see: Alison A. Fletcher, “‘Mother Seacole’: Victorian domesticity on the battlefields of the Crimean War,” Minerva Journal of Women and War 1, 2 (Fall 2007): 7-21.
He decided to settle in Lymington with fellow military and naval officers from the Napoleonic Wars. Lymington was known for servicing ships during times of war and as a port of embarkation.37

The town’s location along the Solent Coast, with its expansive marshes and a rich avifauna, made it an ideal spot for sporting naturalists. In 1830, Colonel Peter Hawker memorialized the region in his *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in All that Relates to Guns and Shooting*.38

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37 The Blakiston family held an important position in the community of Lymington, with its family banner displayed prominently in the St Thomas and All Saints Church. Jude James, *Lymington: An Illustrated History* (Dorset: The Dovecote Press, 2007), 80-84; St Thomas and All Saints, *St Thomas and All Saints: Lymington* (Lymington: St Thomas and All Saints, n.d.), 10-13.

38 Colonel Peter Hawker, *Instructions to Young Sportsmen in All that Relates to Guns and Shooting* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1830).
Thomas would have been cognizant of his father’s East India Company service, an account of which was published anonymously in *Twelve Years of Military Adventures in Three-Quarters of the Globe* in 1820, and in *Twenty Years in Retirement* in 1835. John Blakiston discussed his strong conviction of being an Englishman while serving in India, believing that “an indulgence in field-sports for want of other manly occupation”³⁹ was necessary in preventing “the noble blood of England from suffering, in the same degree, as that of the high born of other countries, either from excessive refinement, or from effeminate habits.”⁴⁰ Clearly his Englishness had been challenged, as he wrote, “(e)very man has his weak side; and one of my weak points was a dislike to be taken for an Indian.”⁴¹

At Southsea, near Portsmouth, Thomas Blakiston attended a preparatory school. He would have seen the comings and goings of ships of the Royal Navy, army and naval personnel, and perhaps the accumulation of natural history materials from across the globe. In nearby Gosport, naval surgeon and explorer Sir John Richardson (1787–1865) housed his natural history collection at the Haslar Hospital during his seventeen years there.⁴² Richardson established a library and a museum, and amassed a large collection of plant and animal specimens well known to naval personnel and also to civilian naturalists, including Darwin, Hooker the elder, John Edward Gray, and Charles Lyell, as well as the younger Hooker and Thomas Henry Huxley who trained there.⁴³ Thomas Blakiston would, in later years, consult with Richardson prior to his expedition to the interior of British North America in the late 1850s.

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³⁹ John Blakiston, *Twenty Years in Retirement* (London: James Cochrane, 1835), 129.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, 159. John Blakiston was involved in the “Friends of the Reform” in the 1830s. Blakiston was born in the same year of the 1832 Reform Act, an issue that his family supported. James, *Lymington*, 86-87.


⁴³ R. E. Johnson, “Sir John Richardson,” *Dictionary of Canadian 1861-1870* (Volume IX), 2000 University of Toronto/Université Laval; Robert E. Johnson and Margaret H. Johnson, ‘Richardson, Sir John (1787–
Thomas Blakiston followed his father’s footsteps to the Ordnance Corps as a cadet at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. The Royal Military Academy (founded in 1741) trained gentleman cadets in surveying, cartography, mathematics, water-colours, history, and geography, all useful skills for an aspiring soldier-geographer. Until 1806, cadets of the Honourable East India Company's artillery or engineers, such as John Blakiston, were educated alongside the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers at Woolwich. When Thomas Blakiston attended the Academy, the institution competed with other European military schools including the military academy in Berlin where geographer Carl Ritter (1779-1859) trained officers in the natural sciences for thirty years. The Royal Military Academy taught Humboldtian science and the tracing of distributions patterns of natural phenomenon across the globe as part of “truth-oriented” liberal education. This involved Euclidian geometry, which guided cartographic and mapping practices. By the 1860s, the Royal Military Academy included taxidermy as part of formal training of cadets in the accumulation of geographical knowledge of colonial stations. It was “hoped that their labours” would “result in the donation to the Institution of specimens of


44 Thomas W. Blakiston attended the second Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, situated on Woolwich Common (1806-1939).


46 John Blakiston attended the original Royal Military Academy (1741-1806), Woolwich, within the walls of the Royal Arsenal. John Blakiston, Twelve Years' Military Adventure in Three Quarters of the Globe, Volume 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1829), 11.

47 Carl Ritter was influenced by Immanuel Kant and moved away from dry facts, attempting to envision a more holistic view of the land by focusing on the living environments, and their impact on humans. See: Livingstone, The Geographical Tradition, 139-142.

their own preserving when opportunity is afforded them of turning their acquirement to account.  

After his commission into the Royal Regiment of Artillery (usually termed the “Royal Artillery”) in December 1851, and brief service in England and Ireland, Blakiston proceeded to Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1852. There, Blakiston encountered many British military officers who collected birds at the maritime station located on the Atlantic Ocean, driving home to him the importance of building up a collection of birds as part of a British military career. When he was stationed in Halifax, John Walter Wedderburn (1824-79) of the 42nd (Royal Highland) Regiment of Foot, for example, collected many avian species including one of the soon-to-be-extinct Labrador Ducks. The British colony of Nova Scotia was considered “wild, rugged country, covered with primeval forest and dotted with small lakes,” and an ideal location for a sportsman-naturalist. It was there that Blakiston established a list of the birds of Halifax with Royal Engineers officer, Edward Loftus Bland, and a collection of birds from the neighbouring colony of New Brunswick. Blakiston also networked with colonist Andrew Downs, who established an aviary and zoological garden in Halifax in 1847, and became one of his correspondents.


51 George Rankin, *Canada and the Crimea, or, Sketches of a Soldier's Life: from the Journals and Correspondence of the Late Major Ranken, R.E.* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), 4.


53 Blakiston met Downs in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and continued to correspond with him, especially when he returned to British North America as part of the Palliser Expedition. Thomas Blakiston to Alfred Newton, 5 January 1858, from B.A. Exploring Expedition, Saskatchewan River, BNA, Newton Fonds, University of
Blakiston’s British North American experiences helped him to establish some scientific credibility through his collection of avian specimens, which provided the basis for his later Crimean investigations.

4.3 The Field: “Zoology from the Seat of War”

Thomas Blakiston’s first significant contribution to British ornithology involved his work during the Crimean War. As a Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, Blakiston arrived after the disastrous charge of the Light Brigade and served with allied forces from France, Sardinia, and the Ottoman Empire at the Siege of Sebastopol in 1855 to 1856. Sebastopol was an important and strategic Russian naval port in the Crimean region, which the British secured for the maintenance of the Dardanelles in the Mediterranean and Red Sea, and the security of its trade route to India. The British military network not only connected Crimea to Britain, but to other parts of the British Empire especially the Mediterranean, with troops stationed in Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Malta. The Crimean War affected other sites across the British Empire through the mobilization of military manpower. The Bosphorus and Black Sea also comprised a major migratory route for numerous birds of passage, which played an active role in shaping officers’ experiences of the region.

Thomas Blakiston presented a masculine, naturalist hero in the field to a British audience in *The Zoologist*, a periodical dedicated to “a popular miscellany of Natural History.” He used his travel narratives to create the Crimean “theatre of war” as a site for his military and ornithological feats during his twelve months in the region.54 When back home in England, he

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was able to reflect, polish, and order the “temporal succession”55 of sites and avian species that completed his spatial journey in the Crimea. As Graham Dawson has noted, the pleasure of maintaining simultaneously uncertainty and familiarity required a “narrative movement that both produces excitement and suspense, and guarantees its pleasurable release and resolution.”56

Blakiston’s descriptions of “The Birds of the Crimea” in 1857 heightened ideas of British, upper middle class, masculinity involved in military prowess and codes of honour.57 Certainly, his ornithological pursuits, like his military performances, involved continually being on the “qui vive,” a condition of heightened watchfulness or preparedness for action.58 At camp in Sebastopol, Blakiston’s attentiveness to sights and sounds prompted him to observe over his head “a flight of about fifty-six cranes steering east, but as soon as they were fairly over the camp they commenced to wheel and got gradually higher and higher till nearly lost to sight, when they bore away in about the same direction they were previously going.”59 To demonstrate his courage, he often collected birds inside the Russian Lines; such escapades included “a long chase” with a Red-backed Shrike that he carried “for about twelve miles in a small saddle-bag, and skinned [it] the next day.”60 During the Siege of Sebastopol, Blakiston managed to obtain a species of owl of which “many were observed in the trenches,” thus illustrating his gallant military service while simultaneously practising science.61 Narrating presence and movement in

56 Dawson, Soldier Heroes, 55.
59 Ibid, 5674.
60 Ibid, 5421.
61 Ibid, 5352-53.
the field as a heroic naturalist provided, as Livingstone argues, “warrant… for the scientific stories they had to tell.”

Blakiston faced adversity and vulnerability in the war zone, as he suffered from “a severe fever” for two months at Scutari, which resulted in the “scantiness of notes, during summer, autumn, and the beginning of the winter.” Grenadier Guards officer Arthur Hay described life in the trenches as “a curious existence” in which “men suffering from every description of wounds, some dying, some just operated upon, some being dressed,” and others groaning from cholera, could hear a French band “playing a polka or a waltz,” as well as guns firing in the distance. Similar sentiments were expressed by Royal Engineers officer George Ranken who claimed that “disease and death are rife around me,” and that “[n]othing makes a man feel the extreme uncertainty of life, and his entire dependence on the will of God, as much as war.

To overcome hardship, Blakiston evoked the familiar through his attachment to migratory birds commonly seen in Britain, creating a vision that served to domesticate the landscape and connect Crimea to the British Empire. He encouraged naturalists to focus on the Crimea which, suggested that their observations, “if well worked up, would throw much light on the range of British birds.” After receiving a copy of William Yarrell's *History of British Birds* (1843, 1856), he exclaimed, “here was my chart and compass; I could without difficulty recognize lands which were well known, and had ideas as to where to look for others.” He delighted in the sight of the

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62 Livingstone, *Putting Science in its Place*, 41.
65 Rankin, *Canada and the Crimea*, 197.
“native” Robin Redbreast, which he described as a “lively little songster” that “our minds always associate with England,” and “on seeing him in a distant land, wander towards that island off the coast of Europe.”68 His first meeting with the homeland bird occurred “during the armistice previous to peace,” right “below the hermit's house, under the Monastery of St. George.”69 These encounters with what were perceived as British migratory birds elicited feelings of nostalgia, familiarity, and comforts of “home” in a place where many officers, including his brother, died in 1855.70

Blakiston used Yarrell's History of British Birds to order his travel and ornithological narratives in the Crimean War. Following the classification scheme of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, he divided his work into five principal avian orders, starting with “raptore[sic]” or birds of prey. Blakiston reiterated the words of Gilbert White: “‘Without a system the field of Nature would be a pathless wilderness’.”71 According to Mary Louise Pratt, such classification schemes helped to make European naturalists “feel part of a planetary project; a key instrument… in creating the ‘domestic subject’ of empire.”72

While he practised fieldwork “on a wing,”73 Blakiston established authority in the field by advising “any one who would make full and accurate notes (for truth is the greatest point in Natural History).”74 The collecting of specimens ensured accuracy and the production of scientific facts that could be circulated for authentication. As some contemporary critics warned:

68 Ibid, 5503.
69 Ibid.
70 Thomas Blakiston’s youngest brother, Lawrence, died at the age of twenty at the Battle of the Redan on 8 September 1855.
74 Ibid, 5511.
“We heartily approve of Naturalists using both their own eyes and those of their neighbours as much and as often as they please, but we as heartily disapprove of their furnishing us with long lists of critical species which they, long-sighted creatures, fancy they had seen.”75 Blakiston told his readers, when in a new country, to collect even the most common species, “for before you know where you are they may be gone never to be seen” again.76

The Crimean “theatre of war” provided opportunities for many individuals to amass, present, and exchange natural history specimens. Blakiston relied mostly on a network of fellow British military officers interested in the birds of the Crimea, including Dr. William Carte, an Irish army medical officer, who amassed a significant collection of birds from the Crimea which he presented to the Royal Dublin Society (see below).77 When in the Crimea, Carte housed his collection at the Castle Hospital in Balaklava and received several visitors such as Sir James Alexander of the 14th Regiment of Foot. Alexander, who shared an interest in birds, noted that Carte “was assisted by Lieutenant Blakiston.”78

The European war zone revealed a variety of colonial entanglements between British and Russian, French, and Indigenous peoples from the Crimean region. On the warfront, the Russians maintained an interest in birds, which caused Blakiston to comment on the Russian soldiers who had constructed a number of small boxes on poles to house the House Sparrow, “which may be seen everywhere in England, from the crowded streets of cities to the most remote


77 Ibid, 5349.

78 William Carte’s birds of the Crimea are now housed at the Natural History Museum of Dublin. Sir James Alexander maintained an interest in birds throughout his military career and travels. He was also a Royal Geographical Society Fellow and was sponsored by the Colonial Office and the Royal Geographical Society to explore southern Africa. James E. Alexander, Passages in the Life of a Soldier, Or, Military Service in the East and West (London: Hurst and Blacket, 1857), 278. Zoe Laidlaw, Colonial Connections, 1815-1845: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 33.
While Blakiston did not interact with Russian soldiers in his narratives, Lieutenant Colonel Irby, 90th Regiment of Foot Light Infantry (The Perthshire Volunteers), consulted with a Russian officer on the “Great White Heron (Ardea egretta),” who told him it “was uncommon.” Such an exchange illustrates how a shared interest in science superseded enemy lines during the Crimean campaign but also how military field ornithology might have served as a form of surveillance and espionage.

Britain’s uneasy partnership with France forced the military to work with the French Army on the warfront. Blakiston probably mingled with French officers in his ornithological endeavours, as he noted looking over the contents of a French soldier’s haversack, which included numerous bird species, including buntings, an owl, a cuckoo, a quail, and a “the little bittern (Ardea minuta).” George Cavendish Taylor of the 95th (Derbyshire) Regiment of Foot met a French soldier, on his return to camp, carrying a number of grebes, which he had shot in the Tchernaya with a Russian musket. Taylor, a future member of the British Ornithological Union, doubted they were good eating, but the French soldier stated that he was mistaken: “they were poules d’eau and bien estimés.” Taylor also saw two other French soldiers with similar species on their way back from Sebastopol, “intended for ragout.” Lieutenant Colonel Irby remarked on the abundance of “Purple Heron (A. purpurea)” in the Crimea, and on how the “Frenchmen” harassed them continually so “that they had no chance of resting.” Many wildfowl species were

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81 See: Jim Burant, Friendly Spies on the Northern Tour, 1815-1837 (Ottawa: Ministry of Supply and Services, Canada, 1981).


83 George Cavendish Taylor, “Ornithological observations in the Crimea, Turkey, Sea of Azov, and Crete, during the years 1854-55,” The Ibis 14, 3 (1872): 224-237; 234.

84 Ibid.

85 Irby, “Lists of birds observed in the Crimea,” 5360.
found at the “French canteen” such as the “Redbreasted Merganser (M. serrator)” and the “Eared Grebe (P. auritus).” In such commentaries, British military officers such as Taylor and Irby attempted to represent themselves as more enlightened than their French counterparts who preferred pothunting to ornithology. However, many officer-naturalists such as Blakiston contradicted themselves and killed a few birds “for the sake of being certain,” but also for food (e.g. buntings) to “make a change from ration-beef and salt-pork.” As Ritvo has noted, in British travelling-naturalist culture, the “protective mantle of zoological investigation guaranteed that there was no danger in going native” when eating non-traditional game or exotic birds.

Indigenous Tartars also were represented with similar moral rhetoric concerning birds. Crimean Tartars, especially those living around Sebastopol, had already experienced persecution from Russian authorities because of their allegiance to Istanbul rather than St. Petersburg. They were reviled for their presence on white, European lands, and blamed for the “bodies of thousands of Russian soldiers who lay buried in the rubble of the ruined port of Sebastopol.” Mrs. Andrew Neilson, a resident near Alma, commented on the rather “curious” ways in which Crimean Tartars killed the numerous quails in the region. According to Neilson, the Tartars


88 Ibid, 5511.

89 Ritvo, The Platypus and the Mermaid, 207.

90 In 1787, St. Petersburg ordered Russian troops to occupy the Crimean Peninsula, and the Crimean Tartar state was added to the Russian Empire in 1783 after Russian violated the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774) with the Ottoman Empire. Nicholas L. Chirovsky, An Introduction to Russian History (London, Vision P., 1967), 33, 44, 85.

91 The Russian empire engaged in active efforts to annihilate the Crimean Tartar population commencing from the day of the "annexing" of the Crimea in 1783. Brian Glyn Williams, The Crimean Tatars: The Diaspora Experience and the Forging of a Nation (Leiden; Boston: BRILL, 2001), 151.
“make use of a thick stick, on which the twigs are left, six or eight inches long; this they throw at the quail, giving it a circular motion, so that the bird seldom escapes being struck down either by the stick or by the twigs attached to it.”92 Lieutenant Colonel Irby noted similar practices in his list of Crimean birds, describing a Tartar who killed a Numidian Crane for his collection “with a stick.”93 Neilson’s and Irby’s references to the inhumane way of killing birds portrayed the Tartar people as uncivilized for a British audience back home. In the Crimean “theatre of war,” British military officers enacted, in relation to “uncivilized” others, courage and rational restraint in both battle and in scientific fieldwork.

4.4 Avian scientific trophies of “the Russian war”

British military officers such as Blakiston collected a wide variety of natural objects from the Crimean war. These specimens, destined for display at home, served as “trophies of war” and symbols of military conquest over Russian lands.94 When HMS Sidon returned to Portsmouth from the Crimea in 1856, Reverend William Henry Hawker visited the “living contents” of the cabin of naval surgeon, Mr. Courtenay. Hawker observed “a magnificent eagle-owl,” which served as the captain’s pet, as well as some nightingales and a hobby (a small falcon). The surgeon had also pinned “a few insects too about his cabin.”95

92 Neilson also noticed: “The feathered tribe is numerous, comprising the crane, the heron, the blue crow, the bee-eater, the hoopoo [sic], the starling, the oriol, the nightingale, and all the smaller birds we have in England: and the bright-coloured plumage of the hoopoo, the oriol [sic], and the bee-eater, as they sit perched on the trees or flying in the sunshine, is really beautiful.” Mrs. Andrew Neilson, Crimea: Its Towns, Inhabitants, and Social Customs (London: Partridge, Oakey, and Co., 1855), 132, 135.

93 Irby, “Lists of birds observed in the Crimea,” 5360.


Many living bird species from the region were sent to the Zoological Gardens at Regent’s Park in London including “two fine birds, presented by the Commandant of Balaclava,” which had been “taken near the Monastery of St George.” Colonel Harding presented a Griffon Vulture from the Crimea in September 1855, signifying an avian trophy of the Crimean War. By 1846, the Zoological Gardens had opened to anyone willing to pay an admission fee, and emphasized the improvement of the more “vulgar” aspects of English society by defining appropriate ways of viewing nature. Its location at Regent’s Park reflected Britain’s metropolitan enterprise and associated zoological riches with human privilege.

As mentioned earlier, Blakiston’s fellow Crimean officer, Dr. William Carte, displayed his collection of birds at the Museum of the Royal Society of Dublin. The museum emerged as both a “home” and colonial museum in Ireland, for specimens donated by Anglo-Irish officers. Captain Henry of the 4th Dragoon Guards deposited bird-skins from the Crimea, including an eagle, a hobby (a falcon), a Short-eared Owl, and a Little Bittern. William Carte’s donations were described as a “large and highly interesting collection of birds from the Crimea, illustrative of the ornithology of that locality,” and gained currency in his paper on the “Natural History of the Crimea” published by the Royal Dublin Society. As Blakiston noted, Carte was recognized as having “the sole honour of bringing that rare bird, Richard's pipit (Anthus Ricardi) before the

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99 Ibid, 212, 206.


101 Ibid.
public as an inhabitant of the Crimea, a specimen of which, together with the remainder of his collection, is at the Museum of the Royal Dublin Society.” The museum used the “English name” of each species to instruct the general public, “especially the humbler classes,” illustrating a broader imperial project of anglicizing Ireland.

The majority of Blakiston’s avian specimens travelled to the Royal Artillery Institution (RAI) at Woolwich alongside other military artifacts and trophies such as “howitzers, models of fortified places, Indian arms,” and swords, fossils, and insects from the Crimean war zone.

Located on the River Thames in the County of Kent, Woolwich emerged as an important imperial site with the Royal Dockyard, the Royal Arsenal, the Royal Artillery Barracks, and most importantly, the Royal Military Academy. Visitors to the grounds would have also observed the Crimean War Memorial erected in 1860 at the Royal Artillery Barracks, which commemorated Artillerymen killed in the Crimean War (Figure 7).

104 Anon, Penny Encyclopaedia of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge 27 (1843): 558-559; Anon, “Museum and library,” Journal of the Royal Artillery 1 (1858): 441. The collection of the Royal Artillery Museum (founded in 1778) can be traced back to William Congreve, an officer of the Royal Artillery. George III, through the Board of Ordnance, requested that Congreve set up a collection for the betterment of R.A. officers. The original collection was housed at the Royal Arsenal. In 1805, the collection was moved to the New Repository alongside the Royal Artillery barracks on the edge of Woolwich Common and, in 1819, it was moved to the Rotunda building. General Sir John Lefroy (1817-1890) was instrumental in building on the collections. In later years, Lefroy joined a scientific expedition to British North America and served as Governor of Bermuda. The Rotunda collections were then transferred to the R.A.I. in 1870. Brigadier Ken Timbers (ed.), The Royal Artillery, Woolwich: A Celebration (London: Royal Artillery and Third Millennium Publishing, 2008), 120-121.
105 This information comes from a photograph of the “Crimean War Memorial at the Artillery Barracks, Woolwich, 1860s,” 182 x 233 mm, showing two soldiers standing at the base of the statue by John Bell; it is a female figure representing Liberty (or possibly Victory), 9 feet high, on a 16 foot grey granite pedestal with four bronze shields. It was erected in 1860 to commemorate Artillerymen killed in the Crimean War 1854-56. The print is stamped: 'Photo. Estab. War Dept.' The photograph is from the album: Malta, the Holy Land, etc, 1860–1869, Y3011A/23, Royal Commonwealth Society Collections, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK.
Figure 7: “Crimean War Memorial at the Artillery Barracks, Woolwich, 1860s,” reproduced with permission from the Cambridge University Library
Henry Whitely, the curator of the RAI, managed the avian collections at the Institution through “stuffing and arranging specimens of Natural History.” The RAI served officers of the regiment, especially those stationed at the garrison, and membership was restricted to commissioned officers. Blakiston invited Cambridge Professor, Alfred Newton, to visit Woolwich where he was “at liberty to look over” his collection, which “was in the hands of Mr. H. Whitely 28 Wellington Street, Woolwich.” By 1870, the RAI housed specimens collected by Royal Artillery officers such as Captain Graham, who donated birds from Australia; Lieutenant C.E. Souper, who sent specimens from Malacca and Singapore; Lieutenant Griffin, who added birds from Bermuda; and Lieutenant K. Gamble, who amassed eggs of various British birds. Many of these officers would have been contemporaries of Blakiston.

The collections reflected a long-standing tradition of Royal Artillery officers “who had gained proficiency in the art of setting up birds, as well as preserving skins,” with each case set up with the “type form” of the particular order. The collection was also arranged geographically so that visitors could compare “kindred species obtained from different parts of the globe,” reflecting biogeographical interests. Blakiston donated between sixty and seventy specimens of birds from the Crimea and Bulgaria to the RAI at Woolwich, which included the magnificent

106 Colonel E.N. Wilford, “Proceedings of a general meeting, held on Friday 20 June 1856,” Journal of the Royal Artillery 1 (1858): 363-378; 367. Henry Whitely Sr. was employed in Woolwich Arsenal, and was Curator of the Royal Artillery Institution. He had a Natural History Agency in Wellington Street, Woolwich. British Museum, The History of the Collections Contained in the Natural history Departments of the British Museum (London: Order of the Trustees of the British Museum, 1906), 510.

107 Blakiston’s acquaintance with Newton might have been through William Samuel Newton, one of Alfred Newton’s brothers, who served with the Coldstream Guards in the Crimean War from October 1854 to 8 April 1855. Blakiston mentioned the following in his letter to “[r]emember me to your brother, when you write.” Thomas Blakiston to Alfred Newton, 14 July 1859, Newton Fonds, 9839/1B/701, University of Cambridge Library, Cambridge, UK; Thomas W. Blakiston, “Interior of British North America,” Ibis 5 (1863): 141.


109 Ibid, 320.

110 Ibid.
“Tawny Eagle (Aquila tuevioides, Cuv.),”\textsuperscript{111} which, according to \textit{The Ibis}, should be considered “a trophy of the Russian war.”\textsuperscript{112}

When back home at Woolwich, Blakiston authenticated his avian collections through a network of British naturalists. The authentication process included a visit by Lieutenant Colonel Irby to see his Crimean birds, which included a Purple Heron, a Great White Heron, and a bittern shot in December 1854.\textsuperscript{113} During a visit to the British Museum, Blakiston confirmed some of his avian specimens collected in the region; when “walking through the British Museum,” he spotted a Tawny Eagle that resembled a specimen brought “fresh” to him by one of his friends in “the far-famed Valley of Baidar.”\textsuperscript{114} Blakiston found leading authorities, such as John Gould of the Zoological Society of London and George Gray of the British Museum, to verify his collections. Gould examined “some specimens of the redbacked shrike (\textit{Lanius collurio}), from the Crimea,”\textsuperscript{115} which he considered a distinct species. Both men demonstrated “great kindness… in the way in which they have given [him] much valuable information,”\textsuperscript{116} providing legitimacy to his collection of birds for an admiring scientific audience and an educated general public in Britain.

**Conclusion: British Military Scientific Hero**

While our brave soldiers have been fighting our battles in the Crimea the din and glory of war have not banished from their thoughts [on] the arts of peace… [nor] scientific

\textsuperscript{111} Thomas Blakiston to Alfred Newton, 14 July 1859, Newton Fonds, 9839/1B/701, University of Cambridge Library, Cambridge, UK.

\textsuperscript{112} Anon, “Review of Mr. Bree's ‘Birds of Europe not observed in the British Isles',” \textit{The Ibis} 1 (1859): 88.

\textsuperscript{113} Blakiston, “Birds of the Crimea,” 5674.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid}, 5350.


\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid}, 5679.
knowledge which has so suddenly been opened up to us respecting many features of the Crimea peninsula, which so long remained a terra incognita to the science of Western Europe.\textsuperscript{117}

This chapter has focused on the ways in which the production of the British military scientific hero, through travel-writing, bird collecting, and displaying, helped to highlight Britain’s scientific achievements of the Crimean War and the connectivity of the Crimean region to the British Mediterranean through the movements of military manpower in the maintenance of the British Empire. Arising from military reforms and an expanding empire, the military-scientific imaginary promoted the pursuit of the natural sciences in the accumulation of geographical knowledge and the safeguarding of British imperial trade routes overseas.

Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston of the Royal Artillery emerged as an exemplary military hero through his ornithological fieldwork in the Crimean “theatre of war,” encountering a variety of species, circumstances, and colonial entanglements in his published accounts in The Zoologist. According to Edward Newman, editor of The Zoologist, Blakiston was “an officer whose exertions in the cause of Natural History are above all praise,” especially with his “admirable papers on the birds of the Crimea.”\textsuperscript{118} Blakiston’s avian specimens, in particular, circulated back to the Royal Artillery Institution, and served as both trophies of war and as scientific specimens. While establishing the “objects’ credentials”\textsuperscript{119} in his travel narratives, Blakiston’s birds on display at Woolwich were transformed into avian scientific trophies of war, symbolizing the contributions of the modern British military scientific hero within the Ordnance tradition.

\textsuperscript{117} Anon, “Crimean Snowdrop,” Illustrated London News (5 April 1856): 359.

\textsuperscript{118} Newman was also author of Birds-nesting (1861), New Edition of Montagu’s Ornithological Dictionary (1866), Illustrated Natural History of British Moths (1869) and the Illustrated Natural History of British Butterflies (1871).

Blakiston’s role as a Royal Artillery officer also allowed him to gain opportunities in “imperial careering” in science and exploration: he was subsequently appointed in 1857, on the recommendation of Sir Edward Sabine, a member of the scientific expedition for the exploration of British North America between Canada and the Rocky Mountains, under the command of John Palliser, and later in 1859, he organized an expedition up the Yangtze River in China, making a brief visit to Yezo (Hokkaido), the northern island of Japan in 1862. In 1870, the Royal Artillery Institution membership could not “pass without notice the magnificent donation by Captain Blakiston, of the various birds collected by him during his connexion [sic] with the North American exploring expedition, the scientific value of which can hardly be overrated.”\(^\text{120}\) To the Institution, Blakiston was “a scientific collector who has done great service to ornithology.”\(^\text{121}\)


\(^{121}\) \textit{Ibid.}\)
CHAPTER 5: ANDREW LEITH ADAMS: MEDITERRANEAN SEMI-TROPICALITY

Malta is so little known to English readers, except in its qualities of a fortress and a coaling-station, and so generally considered as little more than a huge rock, that ornithology in connexion with it seems almost paradoxical. Burnt up and barren under the African sun of its summer, with the rains of winter it rises, like a phoenix, from its ashes to verdure and life.

“When I first set foot on the Maltese islands, June 22, 1860,” reflected British military surgeon Andrew Leith Adams (1827–1882) in his Notes of a Naturalist in the Nile Valley and Malta (1870), “an impression came over me that I could not have selected a more uninviting and uninteresting locality for the study of the natural sciences.” For Adams, who spent his childhood in northwest Scotland, Malta was “bare, weather-beaten, rocky, and sterile to a degree, no woods, and scarcely a tree to be seen anywhere.” He attributed the lack of verdure to the “semitropical sun and the dreaded sirocco” that dampened his “ardour in the pursuits of natural objects.” His first impressions, however, quickly disappeared once he experienced more temperate weather conditions in Malta and witnessed the migration of birds visiting the islands en route from Europe to Africa. After seven years’ residence in Malta, Adams “found ample occupation in making collections and noting the names and numerical prevalence of the various birds of passage,” and was able “to estimate the relative proportions” of each species “with considerable certainty.”

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1 A version of this chapter was presented at the Canadian Historical Association annual meeting in 2010: K. Greer, “Birds and biography: writing the ‘life geography’ of military-surgeon Andrew Leith Adams (1827-1882), 22nd Regiment of Foot,” Canadian Historical Association, Concordia University, Montreal, May 30-June 1, 2010.

2 Charles A. Wright, “List of the birds observed in the islands of Malta and Gozo,” The Ibis 3 (1864): 42-73; 44.

3 Adams, Notes of a Naturalist, 75.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 75-76.
Adams’s life as a military surgeon with the 22nd Regiment of Foot allowed him access to places off limits to the regular traveller and naturalist. His movements through different imperial sites created opportunities for comparison of birds, peoples, and landscapes, helped him build up a vast collection of bird specimens, and prompted him to publish a series of books based on his military naturalist experiences in India, Malta, Egypt, Nubia, and New Brunswick. Adams, who had a particular fondness for birds and field ornithology, extolled to his “confrères” in the Army and Navy, the virtues of “physical studies as remedies for idleness during the many leisure hours spent in often less profitable undertakings, for Nature’s field is broad and inviting.”

According to Adams, natural history fieldwork invigorated military discipline and revitalized “the mental powers,” and thus supplied “materials for the grandest ultimate truths.” He espoused ornithology as “a branch of liberal education” and a means for “mental improvement” rather than for “utility, as applied to the physical wants and material interests of mankind.”

This chapter builds on notions of a temperate martial masculinity introduced in Chapter 4 by focusing on the trans-imperial career of military surgeon Andrew Leith Adams and his contributions to the maintenance of military and racial fitness through field ornithology and the British Army Medical Tradition. The complex lineage of the term “temperate” can be traced

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9 *Ibid*, x.

10 Dr. Francis Adams and Dr. Andrew Leith Adams, *On Ornithology as a Branch of Liberal Education: containing notes of all the wild birds which have been discovered in Banchory Ternan, with remarks on such of them as have been found in India* (Aberdeen: John Smith, 1859), 29.


12 *Ibid*.

13 By the mid-nineteenth century, the British Army moved away from practices of corporeal punishment to ways of improving the efficiency of military manpower through other forms of disciplinary power. Many of these initiatives were part of the Cardwell Reforms introduced by the British Army under the Gladstone government between 1868 and 1874. Andrew Leith Adams published many articles on military fitness and recruiting, which were listed in his obituary in *The British Medical Journal* (19 August 1882): 338. These
back to Aristotelian ideas of a temperate zone. For Aristotle, this climatic zone, which encompassed Europe and the Mediterranean region, was viewed as the only region capable of fostering habitation and civilization. However, Aristotle also extended his notion to a temperate embodiment tied to good mental health and a sound mind as a means to prevent corruption from vices.\(^{14}\)

More recently, the geographer James Duncan has used the term to specify both a geographic region and a gendered and racialized embodiment or “temperate masculinity” within the imperial project of coffee plantations in mid-nineteenth-century Ceylon. Drawing from the work of David N. Livingstone on the “morality of climate,” the “temperate” involved the physical conditions of higher altitudes of Ceylon, and an imagined place for the re-enactment of a highland Europe in relation to the Sinhalese heat and jungle. Central to this understanding was the designation of “tropical nature” as an agent of disease, crop failure, and slothfulness.\(^ {15}\) A moral or temperate masculine embodiment therefore involved codes of conduct of proper behaviour or “moral hygiene” and a European masculine sense of self-control, safeguarding the survival of British middle class, white coffee planters in colonial Ceylon.\(^ {16}\)

In her discussion of British military culture, Sonya Rose has used “temperate masculinity” to analyze the connection between tempered British masculinity and nationalism.

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\(^{16}\) *Ibid*, 40.
during the Great War, 1939-1945. While set in a different time period, the formulation of the
British military hero emphasized “reason” as a quality associated with both masculinity and civic
virtue. Rose traced this form of masculinity to the early Victorian years and the manly code of
behaviour taught to young boys at public schools. A temperate masculinity focused on fair play,
tolerance, and kindliness as important attributes for the “modern” idea of “character.”

In this chapter, I extend Duncan and Rose’s notions of temperate masculinity to consider
the impact of a career in “empire” on the formation of gendered and racialized masculinity in
mid-nineteenth-century British military culture, and its relation to ornithological practice. By the
1860s, the British government was investing in health reforms dedicated to the improvement of
the army in the tropics to cut military costs. These reforms led to the prevention of lengthy
stays in tropical stations by the 1870s. The study of the effects of climate on soldiers could help
in “fixing the duration of the sojourn of foreign troops at certain stations, so as to render them
effective in war.” Reforms involved disciplinary spatial practices which attempted to control
the lives of military men in the “name of national morality and martial strength.” These
included shaping their “recreational geographies.” Adams published several articles on army
recruiting and the effects of climate on the military mind and body, and believed in “as a rule, the


20 Ogborn and Philo, “Soldiers, sailors and moral locations,” 221.

21 Ibid, 223.
possessors of a *mens sana in corpore sano*.” Following the example of the Scottish explorer-
hero David Livingstone who “weathered the storm, ‘the hardships of sun and soil’ must be overcome.”

What follows is an examination of Adams’s “temperate approach” to military life and to field ornithology. I trace the influences of the Scottish civic science and temperance movements, as well as the natural history traditions of the Medical Army Department. I then follow Adams’s military career to India where he encountered tropical and temperate zones, and consider their impact on the racial degeneration of the white, European body. To Adams, natural history fieldwork as a hygienic practice or, what David N. Livingstone has termed, “regimens of bodily management,” had the effect of preventing the harmful effects of tropicality on both the body and mind. Finally, I focus on the Mediterranean station of Malta and on how Adams helped to materialize the Mediterranean region as a “semi-tropical” zoological subregion for the physical and cultural acclimatization of white, transient, British officers to and from India. In doing so, he made “visible in new ways” the connectivity of North Africa to Europe through his contributions to ornithology and geology. These ideas became solidified as he completed his military service in New Brunswick and experienced New World wilderness and a northern climate.

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22 Adams, *Field and Forest Rambles*, 43.

23 *Ibid*.


5.1 The British Army Medical Tradition

Born in 1827, Andrew Leith Adams grew up in the small village of Banchory-Ternan in Aberdeenshire, northeast Scotland, where his father, Dr. Francis Adams (1796–1861), established a medical practice, and raised his children following the death of his wife, Elspeth Shaw (Figure 8).26 Adams’s father encouraged his sons to study the local natural history of the “beloved haunts of his nativity” along the “Banks of the Dee, and among the Grampian Mountains of Scotland.”27 Andrew and his father collected many examples of the local avifauna, and preserved them in the family “Museum of Natural Curiosities” in Banchory.28 There, Andrew encountered the “Golden Eagle in his native place, which flew across the Grampians with its legs entangled in a fox-trap”29 and the “Snowy Owl”30 in the woods near “Blackhall House.”31 As a Classical scholar, Francis Adams specialized in the works of Hippocrates, such as *Airs, Waters, Places*, which laid the foundation for studying the effects of the physical environment on living organisms over an extended period of time.32

26 The region would later be known as the Royal Deeside when Queen’s Victoria purchased Balmoral Castle.

27 Adams and Adams, *On Ornithology as a Branch of Liberal Education*, v.


31 *Ibid*.

In the 1840s, Andrew Adams attended medical school at Marischal College, University of Aberdeen, which emerged as an important site for the British military medical tradition, as well as a centre for Scottish “civic nationalism.”\(^\text{33}\) The College offered courses in geography, and many of its members were involved in the British anti-slavery movement and missionary work, as well as the military and exploration, including James Augustus Grant (1827-1892), an East India Company officer and Scottish explorer of eastern equatorial Africa.\(^\text{34}\) One of its wealthiest


patrons, Dr. Robert Wilson (1787-1871) donated his archaeological specimens collected on his
travels to the Marischal Museum (est. 1786), and offered a travelling scholarship to students
interested in exploring Asia and Africa.\textsuperscript{35}

The college was linked to the Scottish temperance movement that imagined progress
through respectable leisure activities, mental improvement, and “social control.”\textsuperscript{36} The
temperance tradition in the west of Scotland started as an anti-Catholic reaction to the Irish
immigrants who settled in Aberdeen following the 1830s potato famines in Ireland. Scottish
reformers blamed Catholic Irish immigrants for many urban social problems in Scotland,
including alcoholism.\textsuperscript{37} Reverend George Wisely, a proponent of Free Church missionary
endeavour, attended Marischal College, and would later bring his temperate reforms to Malta.\textsuperscript{38}

Marischal College also was home to William MacGillivray, a well-known Scottish
naturalist and ornithologist, who became a Professor of Natural History in 1841, and published
numerous works such as \textit{A Manual of British Ornithology} (1840 – 1842) and \textit{A History of British
Birds, indigenous and migratory, in five volumes} (1837-1852). MacGillivray gained prominence
for assisting Robert Jameson, the Regius Professor of Natural History at the University of
Edinburgh, and for acting as curator of the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of
Edinburgh. He condemned “cabinet naturalists” and taught his students the value of collecting
specimens in the field, influencing many future naturalists including Adams. More specifically,

\textsuperscript{35} Dr. Robert Wilson encouraged students to take sketching and photographic materials with them, as well
as scientific instruments and a diary to record their observations. Wilson served with the East India Civil
Service and was private secretary to the Marquis of Hastings and Governor of Malta. The Marischal
Museum houses a variety of Wilson’s travelling artifacts including his botanical microscope (ABDUA
37170), his sporting gun (ABDUA 36838), and a shrub specimen from Gozo, Malta (ABDUA 63382). Ella
Hill Burton Rodger, \textit{Aberdeen Doctors: The Narrative of Medical School} (Edinburgh; London: W.
Blackwood and Sons, 1893), 306.

\textsuperscript{36} N.D. Denny, “British temperance reformers and the Island of Malta 1815-1914,” \textit{Melita Historica} 9

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Ibid}, 335.

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ibid}, 329.
MacGillivray encouraged Adams to devote himself “to prolonged studies in natural history” when a surgeon in the army.\textsuperscript{39}

Adams entered the British Army Medical Department as Assistant-Surgeon with the 94th Regiment of Foot in 1848, a department known to promote the synergies between army surgeon life and works in natural history. In the \textit{Catalogue of the Collection of Mammalia and Birds in the Museum of the Army Medical Department at Fort Pitt, Chatham} (1838), the editor highlighted the contributions of Sir James McGrigor, Director-General of the Army Medical Service (1815-51), and encouraged medical officers in all parts of the globe to pursue natural history.\textsuperscript{40} McGrigor, another military surgeon from Marischal College, served in Egypt and the Napoleonic wars with the East India Company, and created the Royal Army Medical Corps.\textsuperscript{41} He also established the Fort Pitt Museum of Natural History at Chatham, which housed a “distinct collection” of zoology amounting to 9386 specimens by 1838, including birds from India, Bermuda, British North America, South Africa, New South Wales, and Trinidad.\textsuperscript{42} The museum was well-known to early-nineteenth-century naturalists such as John Richardson and William

\textsuperscript{39} A detailed version of MacGillivray's life was written by another William MacGillivray, whose book was published 49 years after the ornithologist MacGillvray's death. William McGillivray, \textit{A Memorial Tribute to William McGillivray} (Edinburgh: Private Circulation, 1901), 59.

\textsuperscript{40} Army Medical Department, \textit{A Catalogue of the Collection of Mammalia and Birds in the Museum of the Army Medical Department at Fort Pitt, Chatham} (Chatham: Army Medical Department, 1838), iii. John M. Mackenzie, \textit{Museums and Empire: Natural History, Human Culture and Colonial Identities} (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2009), 80.


\textsuperscript{42} The catalogue included a list of all of the species collected from across the British Empire. Army Medical Department, \textit{A Catalogue of the Collection of Mammalia and Birds}. 
Swainson who used the collection for their ornithological works.\textsuperscript{43} Adams would later choose to donate his specimens from India to this museum.\textsuperscript{44}

5.2 Tracing the Contours of Tropicality and the Temperate

Adams’s notions of tropicality and the temperate were shaped by a transient career in different climatic regions of the British Empire. As David N. Livingstone has noted, the moral discourse of climate and empire was co-constituted by and tied intricately to “white labour” in the tropics.\textsuperscript{45} In 1849, Adams set sail for India around Cape of Good Hope to serve in the Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848-1849).\textsuperscript{46} While in India, Adams traced the contours of tropicality and its effects on the British military body. Medical doctrine on acclimatization in the early nineteenth century centred on the “seasoning” of European troops as an adaptation strategy for service in the tropics.\textsuperscript{47} By 1870, however, lengthy stays in the tropics were avoided at all costs, as doctors were documenting the gradual deterioration of the European body in tropical regions.\textsuperscript{48} Such studies garnered attention since fostering military fitness among the troops was central to maintaining British imperial links to the rest of its territories, and reducing the cost of empire.

\textsuperscript{43} For example, the collection was used by Sir John Richardson and William Swainson in their \textit{Fauna Boreali-Americana, Or, The Zoology of the Northern Parts of British America} (London: John Murray, 1831), lxiii.

\textsuperscript{44} Andrew Leith Adams to John Gould, 19 January 1860, Gould Fonds, Adams A L 15, Natural History Museum Archives, London, UK.

\textsuperscript{45} Livingstone, \textit{The Geographical Tradition}, 216-259; 233-235.

\textsuperscript{46} Anon, “Obituary: Andrew Leith Adams,” \textit{The British Medical Journal} (19 August 1882): 338. The Second Anglo-Sikh War was a conflict between the British East India Company and the Sikh Empire, which resulted in the subjugation of the Sikh Empire, and the annexation of the Punjab. This territory would later become the North-West Frontier Province.

\textsuperscript{47} David N. Livingstone has stated that “seasoning,” “acclimation,” and “acclimatization” meant the same thing at this time period. See: David N. Livingstone, “Tropical climate and moral hygiene: the anatomy of a Victorian debate,” \textit{The British Journal for the History of Science} 32, 1 (March 1999): 93-110; 101.

\textsuperscript{48} Early ideas on acclimatization were based on James Johnson’s \textit{The Influence of Tropical Climates on European Constitutions} (1813). See: Alan Bewell, \textit{Romanticism and Colonial Disease} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 279-280.
British India became synonymous with what David Arnold has described as the “restless movement” of territorial boundaries and the mobilization of military personnel, as the East India Company engaged actively in territorial conquest in the first half of the nineteenth century. Adams’s mobility with his regiments, first with the 94th and then the 22nd was reflected in the ways in which he catalogued, described, and listed the birds in northern India during his postings to Dagshai, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar. In a sense, Adams’s collection of birds in India enacted an imperial performance of territorial expansion, especially in places such as the interior of Ladakh, which was unknown to Europeans. His naturalist and imperial legacy would be commemorated in the Black-winged Snowfinch (Montifringilla adamsi) at the British Museum in London, denoting territoriality defined by the Queen’s army as opposed to the East India Company. According to Peter Stanley, even though both armies served together at war, there existed many tensions between the two cultures, resulting in the incorporation of the East India Company army into the Queen’s army following the “Indian Mutiny” in 1858.

In India, Adams embodied the Enlightened European naturalist by referring to the work of Alexander van Humboldt’s Cosmos, and appreciating “authentically” the “beauties of


51 Adams collected the type specimens of the Orange Bullfinch (Pyrrhula aurantiaca) and the Black-Winged Snowfinch (Montifringilla adamsi) now housed at the British Museum. The British Museum also houses Adams’s Kashmir Martin (Chelidon cashmeriensis) and the White-breasted Asiatic Dipper (Cinclus cashmeriensis), which were donated by John Gould. The Natural History Museum of Ireland houses Adams’s Solitary Snipe (Gallinago solitaria) from the Western Himalayas. See: Andrew Leith Adams, “The birds of Cashmere and Ladakh” and “Notes on the habits, haunts, etc. of some of the birds of India “ in Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London (1858): 169–90 and 466–512; Andrew Leith Adams, Wanderings of a Naturalist in India: The Western Himalayas, and Cashmere (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1867), 97; Gaston, “Adams, Andrew Leith (1827–1882).”

52 See: Stanley, White Mutiny.
nature.” Adams believed that journeying “over the torrid zone” to experience “the luxuriance and diversity of vegetation, not only on the cultivated sea-coasts, but on the declivities of the snow-covered Andes, the Himalayas or the Nilgery mountains of Mysore” allowed him to appreciate fully the aesthetics of the natural world. In his writings, the emergence of the “torrid zone” or “tropicality” signified a place of enchantment and fecundity, which rendered distant regions such as India accessible to the British imagination; they also opened up the possibility of resource extraction for the empire. Adams’s romantic tropes also worked to domesticate foreign places: “Few Englishmen could sit on the grassy banks, and witness the rare mountain beauty of Arabel without a feeling that did Cashmere belong to England, there is no spot among all its lovely scenery better suited for a pic-nic.”

Tropicality, however, also engendered the unfamiliar and posed a threat to the white, European body. Adams included a section on the “Deterioration of Race” in his book on the natural history of Malta. “The white man may live under the equator,” he wrote “but his race will deteriorate… unless by constant infusion of fresh blood, there will, in a few generations, take place a deterioration of race so marked that time seems only requisite to bring about entire extinction.” Adams noted the effects of tropical climes on the English “race” when describing an encounter with an Anglo-Indian in India. The man “was an example of a race of Englishmen born and brought up in India without the shadow of an idea of anything beyond Hindostan and its European society, and even the smallest portion of thought on these points, for in his manners he had most in common with the native, whose language he spoke more fluently than his own.”

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54 *Ibid.* Adams most likely learned of Humboldt from William MacGillivray, who translated Humboldt’s *The Travels and Researches of Alexander von Humboldt* (1832).


57 Adams, *Notes of a Naturalist*, 52.
For Adams, the pursuit of natural history served to minimize the perceived racial and masculine degeneration of officers serving abroad in tropical climates such as in India. Adams believed that the adherence to these “simplest of hygienic rules” could negate “the so-called insalubrity of the climate,” and therefore maintain an officer’s constitution in the tropics. He viewed natural history as a “requisite for the army surgeon,” and an activity that prevented the harmful influence of military life “in all climes” and in “varying conditions.” The avian scientific specimen provided British military officers with tangible proof of rational recreation and self-improvement in overseas colonies in order to prevent the perceived degeneration of “mental culture” in tropical environments. The forming of a collection of birds helped to maintain “temperate masculinities” through respectability, rational thought, and moral recreation, which formed part of the process of disembodied rationalism of Western discourse. Ornithology therefore became one of the key strategies to limit the perceived effect of colonial environments on military bodies and, in turn, on military colonial knowledge production.

Adams connected with his Scottish temperate homeland through India’s avifauna, which he viewed as “a good many denizens of the air whose brethren he had been familiar with in his infant days, and which accordingly gave rise to the most pleasing remembrances of antecedent sights and scenes of delight.” These birds awakened in “his mind the recollection of his ‘natal

58 Adams, *Wanderings of a Naturalist in India*, 150.

59 British anxieties about hot climates have been traced back to their earliest encounters with tropical environments. See: Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Fear of hot climates in the Anglo-American colonial experience,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 41 (April 1984): 213-240.

60 Adams, *Wanderings of a Naturalist in India*, 10.


solum," from which he had been estranged in early life." In India, the woodcock, snipe, and plover “on the Ghants, or Nilgiris” helped him recall the “Woods of Blackhall, and the Loch of Leys” of Aberdeenshire, while the Heron on “the waters of the Indus, or the rivers of the Punjaub,” brought back “his infant days” on “the waters of the Feugh or the Dye.” The “Indian robin, so generally distributed over most parts of Hindostan,” differed in appearance from the European Robin or Robin Red-breast, but exhibited similar habits such as “jerking its tail as it hops along.” Adams exclaimed: “How often have associations of home been brought to mind by seeing this pretty little warbler pursuing its gambols before the door of an Eastern bungalow!” Spatially linked to “home,” and to the homely bungalow, the foreign bird’s familiar movements helped to domesticate their presence in colonial sites.

More importantly, Adams’s work on mapping the range of birdlife in India helped to demarcate the more temperate regions of India at higher elevations, especially at the different hill stations. These locations became important sites for the biological and ideological reproduction of British life or, as Dane Kennedy has stated, as “the nurseries for the ruling class.” According to James Bird, a physician with the General Bombay Army, hill stations were “suitable for the healthy residence and vigorous existence of the European race,” and more specifically “congenial to the feelings and health of Englishmen.” Adams’s literary mappings included “the pool near

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64 Latin for “the land of one’s birth.”
65 Ibid, vi.
66 Ibid.
67 Adams, Wanderings of a Naturalist in India, 137. His residence was in Poonah (now Pune).
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Kennedy, The Magic Mountains, 118.
71 James Bird, “The acclamation of European troops for service in India, and the organization there most suited to secure efficiency in the field,” Journal of the Royal United Service Institution 3 (1860): 324-336; 324. The system of hill stations in India also helped to act as “a barrier again invasion from the north.”
the village of Sehwan, which during the cold months is covered with wild-fowl; here we procured specimens of the shoveller, castaneous and tufted ducks, the Gargany teal, “and here I met for the first time the spotted-billed duck.” Adams also mentioned Kandala, where “the traveller is surrounded by a varied fauna and flora. What finer sight than that which greets him at day-dawn on some cool November morning.” These mappings served to delineate the climatic boundaries for the maintenance of British, white, racial identities in India, and influenced his ideas of semitropicality in the Mediterranean region.

5.3 Mediterranean “Half-Way House”

After a brief service in the Crimea as a volunteer, and then a short return to Britain where he rejoined his regiment at Manchester and Dublin, Adams moved on to Malta, where he spent six years “studying the ornithology of the region, more especially the migratory birds which pass and repass annually on their ways to Europe and Africa,” during his leisure time. By the 1860s, Malta had emerged as an important site in the Mediterranean for the maintenance of the British “empire route” to India, and a strategic location for the efficient rotation of troops across the empire. With increasing anxieties over military fitness and racial degeneration in tropical climates, British military officials such as Adams constructed the Mediterranean as a semitropical zone. This meant that the seasonal variations of climate, the symbolic connections with homeland, and the racialization of southern Europeans helped to maintain British military identities, and to naturalize their presence in the Mediterranean region. The production of semi-


Ibid, 30.

Adams, *Notes of a Naturalist*, 75.

Three years after Prime Minister Disreali purchased shares of the Suez Canal, he was able to bring 7,000 troops to Malta, with great speed and secrecy, at a time when he wished to make a military-diplomatic gesture in order to bring pressure to Russia. See: Garratt, *Gibraltar and the Mediterranean*, 137.
tropicality therefore helped to shape a “moral-political landscape” for the cultural acclimatization of the “homeward and outward” British military traveller to and from India.\textsuperscript{76}

Winds played an important role in the designation of the British Mediterranean as a semi-tropical place and in the “embodied performance” of enacting the semi-tropics.\textsuperscript{77} In Malta, military men encountered the Sirocco, a south east wind emanating “from the African deserts,” which reportedly “depress[e]d the energies of the mind, and produce[d] lethargy, and low spirits.”\textsuperscript{78} In a report on the “Meteorological phenomena in connexion [sic] with cholera and other diseases,” based on his recordings of daily temperatures at the Governor’s house in Malta, Adams believed the influence of the south east wind on people to be “a good deal exaggerated by writers.”\textsuperscript{79} The “disagreeable effects” were mostly experienced in September when it occasioned a feeling of lassitude and inertness, accompanied by increased perspiration, headache, and often irritable boils.\textsuperscript{80} The stifling impact of the summer months eventually gave way to more temperate conditions, when, according to Adams, “[s]tudying nature in such a climate … is certainly most delightful. The temperature, continually mild, renders exertion pleasant, and one never feels overdone by walking fast, or the necessity of doing so in order to keep up the animal heat.”\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{76} Livingstone, \textit{Science, Space and Hermeneutics}, 49.


\textsuperscript{78} T.S. Baynes, “Malta,” \textit{The Encyclopaedia Britannica} 15 (1888): 340; Dr. John Davy, \textit{Report on the Disease etc. of the Garrison of Malta, for the year ending the 20th Dec 1828}, 4, R1MSJD77, Royal Institution, London, UK. Dr. John Davy served as a military surgeon and maintained an interest in birds. In the Davy materials housed at the Royal Institution, there are lecture notes on birds “Lecture 34: Of Birds in General,” which described the migratory behaviours of birds. John Davy Notebook, 1802-1843 R1MSJD 1/2, Royal Institution, London, UK.

\textsuperscript{79} Andrew Leith Adams, “Notes on certain meteorological phenomena in connexion with cholera and other diseases,” \textit{The Medical Times and Gazette} 1 (1867): 306.

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{81} Adams, \textit{Notes of a Naturalist}, 97-98.
To help maintain temperate embodiments, the Malta Garrison Library\textsuperscript{82} in Valletta housed a large collection of books devoted to geography, travel, exploration, and natural history donated by Governor William Reid (1791-1858), who served as Governor of Malta (1851-1858).\textsuperscript{83} As a Royal Engineers officer, Reid committed himself to the natural sciences, especially meteorology.\textsuperscript{84} The formation of the library overlapped with other temperance movements by Scottish reformers on the islands, which included the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland.\textsuperscript{85} The Garrison Library held a copy of Andrew Leith Adams’s \textit{Wanderings of a Naturalist in India} (1867) and other naturalist works that included instructions on how to conduct taxidermy and amass a collection of natural history objects.\textsuperscript{86} The library, restricted to the use of the officer class, also housed natural history curiosities donated by officer gentlemen. As Douglas Peers has noted, although the culture and rhetoric of the officer class prized a middle class virtue of respectability, few officers wished to transform the other ranks through these moral reforms: “plebeian culture” suited military interests.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{82} The exact date of the establishment of the Malta Garrison Library is still uncertain. However, Giuseppe Pericciuoli Borzesi mentions the library as early as 1830 in \textit{The Historical Guide to the Island of Malta and its Dependencies} (Malta: Government Press, 1830), 40.

\textsuperscript{83} William Reid was born at Kinglassie, Fife, in Scotland, attended the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and served in the Peninsular Wars. Reid served as Governor of Bermuda (1839–1846) and the British Windward Islands (1846–1848), and contributed to meteorology and published many works including \textit{An Attempt to Develop the Law of Storms by Means of Facts} (1838; third edition, 1850) and \textit{The Progress of the Development of the Law of Storms and of the Variable Winds} (1849). Reid became a Fellow of the Royal Society in February 1839. See: Olwyn Mary Blouet, “Sir William Reid, F.R.S., 1791-1858: Governor of Bermuda, Barbados and Malta,” \textit{Notes and Records of the Royal Society} 40 (1986): 169-191.

\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Ibid}. A general library was set up in 1825 in Malta by the 80\textsuperscript{th} Regiment of Foot. See: P. H. Vickers, ‘A Gift so Graciously Bestowed: ‘ The History of the Prince Consort’s Library’ (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 1992), 10.

\textsuperscript{85} Denny, “British temperance reformers,” 329-345

\textsuperscript{86} Malta Garrison Library, \textit{Second Part of the Classified Catalogue of the Malta Garrison Library, From 1 Jan 1865 to 31 Dec 1871} (Valletta: Malta Garrison Library, 1871), 123.

\textsuperscript{87} Peers, “Privates off parade,” 839.
Britain’s proximity to the Mediterranean allowed for a regular flow of British travellers en route to Egypt and Asia, including Alfred Russel Wallace who stopped in Malta from the Malay Archipelago and purchased a hoopoe in the market in March 1862.\textsuperscript{88} Military men often quartered at Malta during their travels from India to Britain. Major General William Denison, for example, spent time at the Mediterranean station and inspected the fortifications.\textsuperscript{89} Malta had already experienced a long tradition of travel as part of the Grand Tour during the Order of Saint John or Knights of Malta (1530-1798), and briefly during French rule (1798-1800).\textsuperscript{90} British travellers visited the Mediterranean islands as part of health tourism until the 1850s.\textsuperscript{91} English writer William Makepeace Thackeray likened Malta in November to England in May.\textsuperscript{92}

More importantly, such a tradition of travel facilitated an increasing presence in the Mediterranean of British middle class women who could mediate imperial, moral masculinity and the “regulation of manhood.”\textsuperscript{93} As Linda Colley and Dane Kennedy have noted, the running of the state depended on the contributions of middle class women to men’s lives and the education of children in the homeland, but more importantly in “the colonial realm” for the maintenance of power, identity, and British values.\textsuperscript{94} The \textit{Malta Times} featured a special column that listed all of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{88} Charles Wright wrote in his notebook on 24 March 1862, “made the acquaintance of Mr. A.R. Wallace, a distinguished Naturalist.” Wallace showed him “two male Birds of Paradise from New Guinea and some rare species of parrots, he brought with him from the Malay Archipelago, where he has been collecting specimens of birds and insects for several years past.” Wallace purchased a specimen of Hoopoe in the market. In Charles Wright, \textit{Rough Notes – Birds of Malta Oct 1861 to September 1862, Vol IV}, 24 March 1862, Natural History Museum, Tring, UK.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Major General Frome, “Moncrieff’s system of artillery,” \textit{Papers on Subjects Connected with the Duties of the Corps of the Royal Engineers} 18 (1870): 33.
\item \textsuperscript{90} For a detailed history on Malta and the Grand Tour, see: Thomas Frelle, \textit{Malta and the Grand Tour} (Santa Venera: Midsea Books 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{91} By the mid nineteenth century, Britain viewed Malta as unhealthy because of the cholera epidemics. Jankovic, “The last resort,” 271-298; John Pemble, \textit{The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 150.
\item \textsuperscript{92} Thomas Frelle, \textit{Malta and the Grand Tour} (Santa Venera: Midsea Books 2009), 172.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Hannah, \textit{Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory}, 20.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Colley, \textit{Britons: Forging the Nation}, 273; Kennedy, \textit{The Magic Mountains}, 147.
\end{itemize}
the “Winter visitors” from Britain, which included Jemima Blackburn (née Wedderburn), one of Britain’s leading bird painters, who visited Malta on her way to Egypt, and illustrated “Denizens of ancient Malta” in Adams’ book. Military wives, as well, could accompany their husbands abroad. Adams’s wife, Bertha Grundy Adams, followed him to Malta and played an active role during the cholera epidemic, chronicling her husband’s regimental activities. By summer time, however, many winter visitors would make “off like rats from a sinking ship” when “the gaieties of the Malta season” were over.

British winter visitors also included “the various birds of passage which make the [Maltese] islands their half-way house.” While Andrew Leith Adams engaged in geological investigations “to inquire into the capabilities of the islands from a natural-history point of view,” birds remained central to his naturalist explorations, and especially the migratory birds that travelled annually to Europe and Africa. Adams reveled in the return of Britain’s migratory birds, “the annual migratory visitors and accidental arrivals amount to no less than 240 species.” When the hot days of summer returned, however, the “gay songsters” that crowded “every available bush and tree and field” fly back to “more northern climes” (Figure 9).

95 Charles Wright “made the acquaintance of a lady, Mrs. Blackburn, who is on her way to the Nile, and is very much interested in birds.” Wright, Rough Notes – Birds of Malta 1861 to September 1862 vol IV, 24 March 1862; Adams, Notes of a Naturalist, 228-229.

96 Andrew Leith and Bertha Adams’s first born son, Francis Adams, was born in Floriana, Malta, 27 September 1862. Meg Tasker, ‘Struggle and Storm: ’ The Life and Death of Francis Adams (Melbourne University Press, 2001), 17- 20.


98 Adams, Notes of a Naturalist, 76.

99 Ibid, 75.

100 Ibid, 97-98.

101 Ibid.
Adams claimed that “[n]owhere are the feathered tribes more persecuted than in Malta,”102 whereby “one-half of the migratory species are captured or shot, and of all days, on Sunday the greatest carnage is perpetrated, so that on the following day the poulterers' shelves are stocked with all manner of birds, great and small.”103 Local Maltese epicure included “the pretty little scops-eared owl and goat-sucker.”104 Moral assertions about the pot-hunting practices of the

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102 Adams, Notes of a Naturalist, 90.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
Maltese, which attributed “beastly alterity” to southern Europeans, fixed “a racial hierarchy and an assertion of essential differences between natives and their colonizers.”

Throughout the nineteenth century, British officials debated the racial identity of the Maltese. According to British colonist and naturalist, Charles A. Wright, “the Arab houses, language, and origin of the inhabitants indicate, despite Acts of Parliament and a European fauna, Malta’s alliance with Africa and the East.” Adams described the “kind hearted rustics of Malta” when conducting fieldwork in the countryside. He reflected: “I can picture the brown-skinned and wiry son of toil, with his nightcap-like headdress and tight fitting garments.” To Adams, they were often “half-confused” and called him “Inglese” in their “mongrel Arabic.” As Sandra Scicluna and Paul Knepper have noted, the Maltese became progressively “whiter” when Britain supported self-government for Malta in the early twentieth century.

5.4 European Zoological Connectivity with North Africa

The ambiguity of the geographic location of Malta emerged as British officials contemplated the island’s connectivity to North Africa. Many British naturalists did not know where to position Malta geographically in the Mediterranean region. According to Montgomery Martin, the island of Malta “was formerly placed by all geographers in Africa, but was declared

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106 Wright, “List of the birds,” 44.

107 Adams, Notes of a Naturalist, 88.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

to be in Europe, as regards to the service of our soldiery, by a British act of parliament.”111

Oxford University Professor Hugh Edwin Strickland wrote in 1850: “I hardly know whether the occurrence of a new or unrecorded species of bird at Malta is to be regarded as forming an addition to the European fauna, because geographers are I believe not yet agreed as to whether Malta belongs to Europe or to Africa.”112

Early French military investigations in Egypt, Algeria, and the Morea in the 1830s had already mapped the Mediterranean Sea as a transition zone for different species between the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa.113 In the 1840s, the British Admiralty commissioned a number of survey ships to produce hydrographic charts and maps of the Mediterranean Sea to make it a safer place to navigate.114 Captain Thomas Graves on board *HMS Beacon* in April 1841 observed the spring bird migration “when many species of birds which make Europe their abode only in the more genial seasons, were, after having passed the winter in Africa, crossing the Mediterranean to their summer quarters.”115

Adams recorded and collected the various migratory birds that travelled to and from Europe to Africa. He concluded: “[F]rom an ornithological point of view,” the Maltese islands served as “winter homes of European birds of passage,” which extended the European boundaries


112 Hugh E. Strickland, “On the occurrence of *Charadrius Virginiacus* (Borkh) at Malta,” *Annals and Magazine of Natural History* 2 ser. (1850): 40. Strickland examined the collection of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Maurice Drummond Hay, 42nd Regiment (Black Watch), who collected birds in the Mediterranean stations of the Ionian Islands and Malta in the late 1840s. Drummond Hay would be the first President of the British Ornithological Union.


115 William Thomson, “Notice of migratory birds which alighted on, or were seen from, *HMS Beacon*, Capt. Graves, on the passage from Malta to the Morea at the end of April 1841,” *The Annals and Magazine of Natural History* 8 (1842): 125.
into North Africa. These birds, especially the ones in Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, “although differing in physical features and, in some respects, in climate, are, strictly speaking, but an extension of Europe, for their flora and fauna are European.”\(^{116}\) Adams posited that “it is only when the traveller crosses the Sahara, with its salt lakes and moving clouds of sand, and gains the region of verdure beyond, that he enters on a new zoological and botanical province.”\(^{117}\)

Adams’s notion of zoological provinces followed a single origin of species (monogenism) rather than multiple origins (polygenism) or creation sites, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Adams’s ornithological knowledge of Malta was based on a network of British naturalists — Charles Augustus Wright, John Gould, Charles Bree, and Sir William Jardine — and the collection of avian specimens acquired in the Mediterranean region. He recited the list of Charles Wright in his book on the natural history of Malta, which could only be viewed at the Malta Garrison Library.\(^{118}\) Wright’s list built on the work of Maltese naturalist Signor Schembri in 1843, and consisted of 253 species in 1864, with about 10 to 12 species identified as resident while the rest made Malta a “resting-place” for their “periodical migrations across the Mediterranean.”\(^{119}\) In documenting these movements, Adams’s networked ornithological knowledge helped to dispel early theories on bird migration such as the idea that “certain birds spent the cold months at the bottom of lakes.”\(^{120}\)

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\(^{117}\) Adams, “Migrations of European birds,” 325.


\(^{119}\) Charles A. Wright, “List of the birds,” 42.

Adams also engaged in geological investigations of the connectivity of Europe to Africa.\(^{121}\) As Charles Wright described it, Adams pursued “a geo-ornithological voyage of discovery” around the “great fault at Naxar.”\(^{122}\) Influenced by the works of Charles Lyell and Captain Spratt, Adams described the geology of the islands and discovered fossils or remnants “of a by-gone age — the pigmy elephants, the hippopotamus, the great extinct swan and freshwater turtle, and the great dormouse.”\(^{123}\) These discoveries were published in popular works on the Mediterranean region such as Lieutenant Colonel and Consul General of Algeria, Robert Lambert Playfair’s *Handbook to the Mediterranean* (1881). According to Playfair, Malta “must be regarded as fragments upheaved of the sea-bottom which connected Europe with Africa.”\(^{124}\)

British imperial interests in North Africa centred on informal empire, which, as John Darwin has described, encompassed the links fostered by trade, investments, or diplomacy in order to draw new regions into the world-capitalist-system and, more specifically, Britain.\(^{125}\) European foreign policy in the region focused on maintaining neutrality in Morocco, Tunis, and Egypt as a means of securing a stronghold over the Mediterranean trade route to Asia, especially with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. For example, both France and Britain negotiated for the Anglo-French institution of Dual Control (1879-1882) in Egypt, which brought an end to French domination in the territory.\(^{126}\)

\(^{121}\) For details on Adams’ geological work in Malta, see: George Zammit Maempel, *Pioneers of Maltese Geology* (Malta: Mid-Med Bank, 1989).

\(^{122}\) Charles Wright, *Rough Notes – Birds of Malta 1861 to September 1862 vol IV*, 29 November 1861, Natural History Museum, Tring, UK.

\(^{123}\) Adams, *Notes of a Naturalist*, 337.


When on leave in March 1858, Adams took an excursion to Tunis from Malta on board the *H.M.S. Wanderer*. As a Protectorate in the 1850s-1870s, Tunis remained important in Britain’s informal empire in North Africa, with many Maltese living in the territory and fostering trade and commerce networks between Malta and North Africa. Britain attempted to consolidate ties with the Ottoman Empire as a means of preventing France from extending territorial interests outwards from Algeria. Britain relied heavily on Tunis for bullocks, sheep, fruit, and vegetables to be shipped to British military garrisons in the Mediterranean and, in return, Britain supplied Tunis markets with Manchester cottons, Sheffield knives, London pickles, sauces, and tinned meat.

Adams’s experiences in North Africa also extended to Egypt to study the spread of cholera. He documented many of the birds he encountered along the Nile and published a list of birds of Egypt in the British Ornithological Union’s periodical, *The Ibis*. Following French engagements in the area, Egypt emerged as an important site in Britain’s imperial expansion prior to formal British occupation in 1882. Those vested in empire choreographed “empty landscapes”

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127 Charles Wright documented his trip with Andrew Leith Adams to Tunis in his field journal on 6 April 1858. They were granted passage in H.M. Steamer *Wanderer*, and stayed in Tunis from 4 March to 14 March. Charles Wright, *Rough Notes on Birds of Malta Aug 1855 to May 1858 vol 1*, 6 April 1858.


to colonize for a British audience back home. For instance, *The Ibis* figured the ancient Egyptian bird among the pyramids and the River Nile in a land without people (Figure 10).\textsuperscript{132}

\textbf{Figure 10}: The first issue of *The Ibis* in 1859, the periodical of the British Ornithological Union, photo by Kirsten Greer

Many BOU members were at the forefront in making Egypt familiar to a British audiences. Captain George Ernest Shelley (1840-1910) described the robin redbreast as

“confined to Lower Egypt, where it is only a winter visitant. It is as tame and familiar in the sunny climate of Egypt as it is in England, and appears to welcome the stranger, as he sits in the shade of the sona tree, by hopping from bough to bough, and peering inquisitively at him, as

though it expected to recognize a friend in the traveller.” Shelley, a nephew of the English poet, immediately felt comforted by the presence of the Robin Redbreast in the North African landscape during his travels in the African continent.

Adams’s collection of Egyptian birds revealed time spent in what were becoming the most popular European tourist spots in Egypt such as Cairo, Thebes, Nubia, and the First and Second Cataracts. When in Nubia, Adams used bird song as an auditory cue to sonically map a new zoological region. In southern Egypt, where “familiar denizens of the north country disappeared,” he encountered “sounds reminding me of Indian jungles,” which he identified as the bulbul and the bush thrush. These avian “jungle” landscapes signified “a new ornithic province, the northern outpost of which is Nubia.”

While his contribution to the ornithology of Egypt was relatively minimal, his birds were accepted by the British Museum as material evidence of British imperial presence in the region, and as scientific avian trophies in competition with those of France. BOU member, Alfred Newton, could not hold back his excitement when Reverend Henry Tristram managed to collect birds in the French colony of Algeria. In a letter to Tristram, Newton exclaimed: “to have carried off such a booty under the noses of French naturalists is a much greater triumph, and the

135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
138 Henry Baker Tristram (1822-1906) served as army chaplain in Bermuda and would later become the canon of Durham Cathedral. He travelled to Malta, North Africa, Israel, Palestine, and Syria, and made a collection of birds. He was also one of the founding members of the British Ornithological Union. He published several books, including: *The Great Sahara* (1860), *The Land of Israel, a Journal of Travels with Reference to Its Physical History* (1865), and *The Natural History of the Bible* (1867). Many of his bird skins are housed at the World Liverpool Museum, Liverpool.
Algerians seem to have expiated all their past cruelties to Christian slaves by the way they have assisted you."\textsuperscript{139} Despite Britain’s dependence on France for geopolitical control in the Mediterranean, British naturalists attempted to assert their own national and scientific superiority in the region with the accumulation of avian specimens.

5.5 New World Wilderness

Adams solidified his notions of difference between tropical and temperate zones when stationed in the colony of New Brunswick, British North America. When Adams first learned of the new posting to British North America, a comrade asked him: “Where is New Brunswick?”\textsuperscript{140} Adams confessed that he had “a rather vague notion of its whereabouts,” and therefore fetched “the fine old Imperial Atlas,” and traced “out the limits of New Brunswick.”\textsuperscript{141} In 1866, Adams sailed with his regiment on board \textit{H.M.S. Simoon} and landed in Saint John “to assist in repelling” the Fenian invasions threatening British North America at the time.\textsuperscript{142} Adams first arrived at the capital in mid-April, and experienced a frigid arrival in comparison to the semi-tropical “shores of the Mediterranean.”\textsuperscript{143} Adams observed that “[t]he snow had scarcely disappeared, and the noble river, flooded by up-country thaws, was pouring its gelid waters into the Bay of Fundy.”\textsuperscript{144} From Saint John, the regiment moved on to Fredericton, where it was housed at the Fredericton Exhibition Building. Adams must have lived at the “Pavilion” on lower Regent Street, which

\textsuperscript{139} Alexander Frederick Richmond Wollaston, \textit{Life of Alfred Newton: Professor of Comparative Anatomy, Cambridge University, 1866-1907} (London: John Murray, 1921), 25.

\textsuperscript{140} Adams, \textit{Field and Forest Rambles}, 1.

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Ibid}, 12. The 1\textsuperscript{st} Battalion of the 22\textsuperscript{nd} Regiment replaced the 15\textsuperscript{th} Regiment of Foot, which served in New Brunswick for five years, and had orders to rotate to Bermuda in the third week of April. Robert L. Dallison, \textit{Turning Back the Fenians: New Brunswick’s Last Colonial Campaign} (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2006), 85.

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Ibid}.
housed the married officers such as Adams who had travelled from Malta with his wife and son.145

New Brunswick was relatively unfamiliar to the British imperial imagination in comparison to its “sister” maritime colony of Nova Scotia, where many British military officers such as Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston in Chapter 4 contributed to the knowledge of birdlife around Halifax.146 New Brunswick emerged as an important site for British investment in the timber industry, and the timber developers included the well-known British ornithologist, Henry Dresser, who managed the family mill business and shipyard at Lancaster Mills, “15 miles S. of St. John,” in Musquash during the 1850s and early 1860s.147 British colonial officials represented the region as a wilderness in the “New World.” Lieutenant Governor Sir Arthur Gordon published a chapter on “Wilderness journeys in New Brunswick,” which described New Brunswick as “one of the least known dependencies of the British Crown,” and included “a few sketches of forest life” and descriptions of “natural objects.”148

Adams’s military life in New Brunswick exemplified the typical British North American masculine wilderness experience of sportsman hunting, angling, canoeing, underscored by


146 Numerous British military officers contributed to the natural history of Nova Scotia including Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston (Royal Artillery) and Edward Loftus Bland (Royal Engineers).


encounters with First Nations peoples.\textsuperscript{149} New Brunswick provided a site for Adams to reflect on the impact of development, trade, and deforestation on the gradual extinction of certain animal species. He attributed the destruction of “wilderness” to “human agency,” but more specifically to the colonizers and their “wanton love of destruction, in many instances similar to that of the Indian, as if a spice of the old savage nature still lurked in them also.”\textsuperscript{150} The use of the “savage” trope reflected his own essentialist ideology on the degeneration of the white, British race, and its associations with maintaining “mental culture” for the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon race.\textsuperscript{151} However, Adams also encouraged study of “the natural history of its aborigines,”\textsuperscript{152} treating the Mi'kmaq and Maliseet peoples as natural history “specimens”\textsuperscript{153} and tracing their “race characteristics.”\textsuperscript{154} He concluded “the Indians of New Brunswick furnish a good illustration of a people rapidly progressing towards extinction, without having preserved any written or monumental record.”\textsuperscript{155}

Birds such as the “Great Northern or Red-throated divers” emerged as “characteristic objects on almost every New Brunswick lake during the summer months.”\textsuperscript{156} One species that seemed out of place in the “ungenial weather” was the “Ruby-Throated Hummingbird,” which


\textsuperscript{150} Adams, \textit{Field and Forest Rambles}, 3.

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{Ibid}, 38.

\textsuperscript{152} \textit{Ibid}, 21.

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Ibid}, 17.

\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{155} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid}, 193.
made its home in the “wild woods” of New Brunswick during the summer. He noted the “disappearance of the bird commonly known as the Labrador duck (*C. Labradorius*), from the Bay of Fundy and other portions of the adjoining coast,” which could not be explained.

While Adams gained knowledge of the local avifauna from colonists in New Brunswick, his ornithological expertise also developed as an accumulation of environmental knowledge from former colonial stations. Considering himself a seasoned traveller, “who has sojourned on the Continent of Europe,” Adams viewed the New Brunswick landscape as flat, declaring that it conjured memories of his disappointment “on the Nile, when, in the absence of monuments of antiquity, he … [was] continually surrounded by mud banks, and patches of cultivation, or the eternal sameness of the desert.”

After three years residence in North America, Adams could describe the various aspects of birdlife in New Brunswick, and “epitomize a few facts” on the distribution and migrations of birds from “the Old and New Worlds” based on his previous encounters in Scotland, northwest India, Malta, and Egypt. He perfected his naturalist techniques by establishing a “Naturalists’ Calendar,” which in part showed “the changes of Climate,” the arrivals and departures of each species of migratory birds to New Brunswick. Over three years, he “noted regularly the chief


159 Adams, *Field and Forest Rambles*, 121.


meteorological changes, and also the arrivals and departures of the migratory animals.”

Adams’s trans-imperial travels allowed him to comment on ideas of bird migration, which he had formulated in Malta. He observed that on the European continent, “the migratory birds lag longer on their way north in spring than they do in autumn, whereas in Canada the very reverse would seem to prevail.” In 1869, Adams and the 22nd Regiment left New Brunswick, and became the last of the many Imperial Regiments that had been stationed in the colony.

Conclusion: Temperate Martial Masculinity and Semi-Tropicality

Through examining the works and travels of surgeon-naturalist Andrew Leith Adams, this chapter elaborates ideas of a temperate martial masculinity by tracing some of its distinct origins in the Scottish, medical tradition and its circulation to India and the Mediterranean. Adams’s early years in Aberdeenshire (Banchory and Aberdeen) taught him the importance of collecting specimens in the “field,” which provided lasting impressions of his childhood home in northeast Scotland, especially when stationed in India. His formal training and naturalist traditions centred on the Scottish medical community and the Medical Army Department. Unlike Blakiston, who trained as an officer with the Ordnance Department, Adams’s notions of a temperate martial masculinity began with the Scottish temperance movement in northeast Scotland, and his liberal, medical education at Marischal College at the University of Aberdeen.

As a military surgeon, Adams concerned himself with the maintenance of the military body and military fitness in different climatic regions of the British Empire. His transient military career and encounters with differing avifaunas allowed him to trace the contours of tropicality and the temperate, which emerged “trans-imperially” as Adams moved from one

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163 Ibid.
164 Ibid, 184.
imperial site to the next.\textsuperscript{166} When stationed in India, Adams’s fieldwork as a form of bodily management took on new significance in his attempts to maintain British military and racial health, demonstrating how “place” (i.e. tropical India) incited anxieties over the degeneration of the white, British “race.” The resulting collection of birds from Himalayas reflected imperial territorial interests defined by the Queen’s Army rather than the East India Company.

When back in Europe, Adams’s experiences in Malta allowed him to conceptualize the British Mediterranean station as a moral “semi-tropical” site for the military officer \textit{en route} to and from Egypt and India. Here, he studied the effect of winds on the body, and documented the migration of hundreds of species during their seasonal migrations from Europe to Africa. For Adams, semi-tropicality engendered a transitional zone between the temperate and tropical climates of Asia and Africa, and represented a landscape in the summer as “bare, weather-beaten, rocky… and scarcely a tree to be seen anywhere,” and full of verdure and birdlife in the winter. Here too he found intermediary peoples: southern Europeans and North Africans whom he viewed as semi-civilized.\textsuperscript{167} This was also a place where Adams’s zoological, as well as his geological investigations, helped to sustain territorial interests in the Mediterranean region and extend the boundaries of informal empire into North Africa.

Adams’s climatic ideologies coalesced when he travelled to New Brunswick and experienced the British North American wilderness and northern climate in relation to his other experiences in Britain, India, and the Mediterranean. There, he could make comparisons between “Old” and “New Worlds,” and assertions about the bird distributions from the four continents where he served and travelled. Adams concluded, “he who has to fight against the climate of Canada on the one hand, and Central Africa or India on the other should be fully developed”


\textsuperscript{167} Adams, \textit{Notes of a Naturalist}, 75.
before the age of 25. Adams’s long career in the Medical Army Department, and his contributions to natural history, eventually led him to a professorship of Natural History at Trinity College, Dublin, and later Queen's College, Cork, after his retirement from army life in 1873. When Adams died in 1882 from pulmonary tuberculosis, he was memorialized as “a self-made man; his advancement and position were essentially his own making.”

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168 Adams, *Field and Forest Rambles*, 43.


170 Anon, “Obituary: Andrew Leith Adams,” 338. After reviewing his life geography, one might be apt to also credit more than a few birds.
CHAPTER 6:
L. HOWARD IRBY: BRITISH MILITARY ORNITHOLOGY ON THE “ROCK”¹

When Lieutenant Colonel Irby (1836-1905), 74th Regiment (Highlanders), published *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* in 1875 and revised it in 1895, he intended the work to assist “officers, who, like the writer, may find themselves quartered at Gibraltar.”² For it admits of little doubt,” Irby wrote, “that the study of Natural History will always help to pass away with pleasure many hours that would otherwise be weary and tedious during the time military men may have to ‘put in’ at dear, scorching old ‘Gib.’”³ Irby, a military hero of the Crimean War and the “Indian Mutiny,” gained status as an intrepid ornithologist who was “sufficiently undisturbed by war’s alarms to follow his pursuits over the steppes of the Tauric Chersonese, and again, when called not long after to India.”⁴ While stationed at Gibraltar, Irby helped to establish the Straits as an important site for studying migratory birds and established a network of military men interested in field ornithology.⁵

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By the mid-nineteenth century, hundreds of British military officers such as Irby had passed through Gibraltar. Gibraltar emerged as a trans-imperial site where flows of military bodies, commodities, images, experiences, and ideas circulated to and from other sites in the British Empire. Once known for its naval importance in the Mediterranean with the Great Sieges and the Napoleonic Wars, Gibraltar regained its imperial status with Britain’s acquisition of the Suez Canal in 1869, which increased the mobility of its army across the empire. As British military officers made significant contributions to ornithology and the imagining of the Mediterranean, how did their practices and representations of wild birds shape ideas of empire, gender, class, and race in the Straits of Gibraltar? What impact did these configurations have on maintaining the legitimacy of Britain’s strategic possession and its monument to empire in the Mediterranean region?

This chapter examines the military and ornithological works of Lieutenant Colonel L. Irby to understand the ways in which colonial ornithology facilitated territorial maintenance and British imperial place-making in the Mediterranean. In doing so, I focus again on the “body,” as in Chapter 5, but extend my analysis to investigate the ways in which the body through performance shaped fieldwork practices and the production of truthful, accurate knowledge of birds in Gibraltar. Geographers have long studied the ways in which images, myths, and symbols are key to imperial place-making. According to Anssi Paasi, special attention should be paid to the geopolitical practices and discourses through which “the narratives, symbols and institutions

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6 In Classical times, Gibraltar was known as Mons Calpe and, together with Mons Abyla on the African coast, formed the great Pillars of Briareus to the Greeks and the Pillars of Hercules to the Romans. Dutch and British interests in Gibraltar converged in 1704, when it fell to the British during the War of the Spanish Succession. Gibraltar was viewed by European powers as a strategic location for the trade of commodities to Asia. Although four thousand Spanish inhabitants fled the region, some stayed with Jewish trading groups and traders from Genoa, Malta, and Britain to settle the British “trading” outpost. Gibraltar was formally ceded to Britain by Spain in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht and was only formally declared a colony in 1830. Garratt, *Gibraltar and the Mediterranean*, 11-13; J. Skinner, “British constructions with constitutions: the formal and informal nature of 'Island' relations on Montserrat and Gibraltar,” *Social Identities* 8, 2 (June 2002): 301-320.

7 For an example, see: Schwartz and Ryan (eds.), *Picturing Place*. 
of national identity are created and how they became ‘sediments’ of every day life, the ultimate basis on which collective forms of identity and territorality are reproduced.”

While representational strategies helped shape an imperial imaginative geography of Gibraltar, colonial authority at the Mediterranean station involved the presence of British military bodies as instruments of imperial power and producers of scientific knowledge. As the British Army belonged to the monarch and the government, the British soldier represented a bodily extension of Britain, and an essential link to the maintenance of the British Empire. Michel Foucault described the soldier’s body as “a fragment of mobile space” that was trained and disciplined to react in a larger sequence of military operations and tactics or performances, which “belonged for the most part to a bodily rhetoric of honour,” and exemplified the “deadly military machine” through martial display and spectacle in military colonies. The military body, therefore, involved territorial presence as part of the “basic element of English state spectacle,” which altered “moods, social relations, bodily dispositions and states of mind” within the army and in the colonies. The scientific performances of Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers officers in Ireland, for instance, reminded local Irish farmers of British atrocities against their people in 1798, and therefore retraumatized them on their lands in the 1840s.

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Gibraltar’s connections to India as part of the Mediterranean “artery of empire” increased concerns over the effects of racial degeneration on the military body. As early as the 1800s, perceptions of the Gibraltar garrison involved “drunkenness, insubordination, and brutality,” whereby “some regiments, fresh from India, and flush of money, were led to excess by the great number of wine-shops allowed in the place.”\textsuperscript{13} The opening up of the Suez Canal and the reliance on the steam engine and later coal helped to bridge the distance between Britain and India, and bring people, commodities, and experiences back home to Britain, a popular theme in the 1840s-1850s. As a contemporary English writer, David Lester Richardson stated that steam power helped to annihilate “‘time and space’” so that “gigantic India and her proud Ruler, small-sized but mighty hearted England, are brought into closer contact and made to afford a noble exemplification of the power of science in the nineteenth century.”\textsuperscript{14} Here, “The East and West will meet – the swarthy Oriental and the white-faced European will embrace as brethren.”\textsuperscript{15} Gibraltar’s geopolitical positioning in the Mediterranean sustained Britain’s hold on its eastern empire and its moral duty to protect it.

Lieutenant Colonel Irby expressed his discontent with European men who were “blackened” from their residence in India. Reflecting on his military service in the “Indian Mutiny” he wrote: “Owing to the strong habits of deceitfulness of the natives, no reliance can be placed upon them, if sent out to get eggs. They invariably try to deceive; but their European brethren in trade are often nearly as bad; so that the Asiatic must not come in for all of the black

\textsuperscript{13} William Henry Bartlett, \textit{Gleanings on the Overland Route: Pictorial and Antiquarian} (London: Hall, Virtue \& Co., 1851), 158.

\textsuperscript{14} David Lester Richardson, \textit{The Anglo-Indian Passage, Homeward and Outward} (London: Madden and Malcolm, 1845), vi. The nineteenth-century has been described as a significant time period in altering ideas of space and time. The time-space compression is a term used in geography to describe the processes that tend to accelerate the experience of time and reduce the significance of distance during a particular historical moment. See: Jon May and Nigel Thrift, \textit{TimeSpace: Geographies of Temporarily} (New York: Routledge, 2001), 7; David Harvey, \textit{The Condition of Postmodernity} (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 240.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid.}
paint.” Irby’s commentary on the untrustworthiness of Bengali assistants and the negative effects of Asian influences on European bodies raises important matters connecting claims of authority and empirical knowledge. In order to provide trustworthy information, one had to maintain a healthy body and clear mind through physical activity, which offset the perceived damaging effects of colonial service in the British military. The imperial male military body was thus a “site where social structures are experienced, transmuted and projected back on to society.” In order to provide truthful information, officers needed to show moral restraint, which tamed “the urge to savagery in themselves” often “associated with the ‘primitive’ and the ‘exotic.’”

By focusing closely on the shaping of military embodiments through particular practices with landscapes, this chapter examines how Irby’s approach to ornithology attempted to legitimate Gibraltar as an imperial, noble, and masculine pillar of empire through the collection of wild birds of prey and fieldwork in perilous field sites on “the Rock.” However, while Irby embodied a muscular approach to these pursuits, he also demonstrated a masculinity of rational restraint, respectability, and moral considerations surrounding the military body, which eventually extended to moral concerns over the destruction of birdlife in Gibraltar. As Graham Dawson has stated, the fusion of moral and muscular masculinities fostered “a potent

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16 L. Howard Irby, “Notes of birds observed in Oudh and Kumaon,” *Ibis* 3 (1861): 217-251; 221. See: Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*. See also: Christopher A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Bayly’s work provides an examination of the ways in which relations between local informants and British officials changed with the advent of the “Indian Mutiny” in India. Hearsay knowledge was replaced with statistics and numerical data.

17 Collingham, *Imperial Bodies*, 2.


combination of Anglo-Saxon authority, superiority and martial prowess, with Protestant religious zeal and moral righteousness.”20

6.1 “The Rock”: Monument to Empire

Gibraltar occupied a sentimental and strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, overlooking Spain and Africa, and securing important trading routes to India. Descriptions, songs, and visual representations portrayed Gibraltar as a masculine protector of the British Empire. The “Rock” as a significant landscape was in itself a monument to the British Empire that was rigorously maintained to sustain ownership and power in the Mediterranean region.21 The long tradition of British military occupation in Gibraltar helped to naturalize Britain’s presence in the Mediterranean region. Gibraltar garrisoned numerous troops from the empire including “seven thousand men, engineers, artillery, and infantry” from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Canada.22 One critic exclaimed in Hogg’s Weekly Instructor, “[t]he very name of Gibraltar revives in the bosom of every Briton the spark of military ardour.”23 Geopolitical tensions with Spain required long term military presence in Gibraltar, which Britain acquired by “British valour” and “preserved” by “statesmanship” with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.24

20 Dawson, Soldier Heroes, 83.

21 The creation of the “Gibraltar tradition” was an important aspect of the mythology of the British Empire. However, a number of British statesmen critiqued British foreign policy of Gibraltar by the mid nineteenth century, which caused an increased emphasis on illustrating Gibraltar’s importance to Britain and the British Empire. Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, 127-129. See also: Lambert, “‘As solid as the Rock?’” 206-220; Stephen Constantine, “Monarchy and constructing identity in 'British' Gibraltar, c.1800 to the present,” The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History 1, 34 (2006): 23-44.

22 Charles Arkoll Boulton, Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellion (Toronto: Grip Printing Publishing, 1886), 22.


Together, the Great Siege of 1783 and Nelson’s use of Gibraltar during the Napoleonic Wars furthered Britain’s image of itself as a superior maritime and military nation.

Many officers viewed Gibraltar as “one of the pleasantest and most interesting quarters a man can have the luck to sojourn in, and service in such a spot” in comparison to the “tropical suns of India or China, the sickly swamps of Demerara, or the wild solitudes of Southern Africa.”

Despite the cooler climes of the military station, the Gibraltar summers were particularly strenuous for soldiers’ bodies, when true masculinity was tested. Summers were “sweltering” and “not so much by the sun’s rays as by their reverberation from the bare rock, which becomes almost scorching, and radiates an oven-like heat which is quite stifling.”

Mosquitoes also abounded and were viewed as “the plague of one’s life.” Soldiers experienced the Levant, the oppressive easterly wind that “precipitate[d] a clammy and unpleasant moisture” and “paralyze[d] both mind and body.”

The Levant impressed Irby’s friend, Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, (see Chapter 7) who illustrated it in one of his sketchbooks (Figure 11). Called by some the “Black Levant,” it affected “man,” but also the animals that “move[d] about uneasily,” including the birds that “cease[d] their song.” “The westerly breezes,” which blew “pure and fresh from the Atlantic,” were “cool and exhilarating, and both body and mind are invigorated.”

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25 W. T. Power, *Recollections of a Three Years’ Residence in China Including Peregrinations in Spain, Morocco, Egypt, India, Australia, and New Zealand* (London: Richard Bentley, 1865), 44.


27 Ibid.


British Gibraltar contained numerous military artifacts such as canons, barracks, and martial street names, which showcased its masculine features for visitors while at the same time reinforcing martial discipline among the troops. Four Russian guns from the Crimean War, presented to Gibraltar by the British government in 1858, still overlook the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 12). British military officers produced and purchased countless visual representations (including both sketches and photographs) that filled military scrapbooks, sketchbooks, and journals to emphasize the British military presence in maintaining the “Rock.” According to Kathleen Stewart Howe, one of the benefits of military photography involved disseminating the proper positions of military bodies in drills and parades.31

31 Howe, “Mapping a sacred geography,” 231.
Figure 12: One of Four Russian Guns from the Crimean War presented to Gibraltar by the British Government in 1858, 3 March 2008, Gibraltar. A pair of Russian guns is also found in Kingston, ON. Photo by Kirsten Greer

Animals entered into the imperial imagination of Britain’s claim to the Iberian region. Monkeys, or Barbary Apes, were often “associated with the Rock of Gibraltar.”\(^{32}\) Edward Napier (1808–1870) of the 46th Regiment of Foot described the “standing orders of the garrison” to protect the apes even though they destroyed the fruit and vegetable gardens of the Genoese “who cultivate the western acclivity of the rock.”\(^{33}\) Avian imaginaries also resonated with the Rock, harkening back to the Great Siege of 1783 when the British observed an eagle perched on the westernmost pole of Signal Station. The sighting was viewed as a favourable omen for the garrison, predicting Britain’s victory the following day. This account first appeared in Colonel John Drinkwater’s *A History of the Siege of Gibraltar* in 1786, and was reiterated in William


Henry Bartlett, *Gleanings on the Overland Route* (1851).\(^{34}\) In 1882, Royal Artillery officer Major Gilbard included the eagle in his booklet on Gibraltar and proclaimed that "[t]he eagle still builds his nest in the crags near the Signal Station."\(^{35}\)

Of course, not all visitors viewed the Rock the same way. A Canadian soldier of the 100\(^{th}\) Regiment commented that the Rock of “Gibraltar rises out of the sea like a huge beaver."\(^{36}\) American opinion tended to be quite critical. For General Ulysses S. Grant, Gibraltar represented the “finest example of red tapeism in Europe” as the English occupation of the fortress on Spanish territory adhered to strict “official formalities."\(^{37}\) One American periodical noted in August 1889: “The whole population of Gibraltar, whether civil or military, is subjected to certain stringent rules. For even a day’s sojourn the alien must obtain a pass from the town major, and if he wish to remain longer, a consul or householder must become security for his good behavior."\(^{38}\) Sentimentalism was used to avert dissension and opposition to the maintenance of Gibraltar on behalf of the British people. Robert Montgomery Martin would employ it in his *History of the British Possessions: in the Mediterranean* (1837): “May the day be far distant when treachery or dissension at home shall cause this noble fortress, the protector of our flag, honour and trade in the Mediterranean, to be neglected or contemned."\(^{39}\)

Gibraltar’s Classical image as one of the “pillars of Hercules” often excluded non-British locals who were prevented from gaining citizenship and were regularly portrayed as degenerates


and “aliens” in Gibraltar’s crowded town centre and markets. As early as 1804, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) depicted the Spaniards as a “degraded race that dishonour Christianity”, and the Moors as wretches who “dishonour human nature.” William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) described the “Main Street” as the place where “the Jews predominate, the Moors abound.” The Illustrated London News published “ Sketches of Gibraltar” in 1876 representing the different residents at Gibraltar, such as the Moors at the market, “the Jews and Jewesses,” and a “Maltese Milkman.” Scottish soldier, John Pindar, marched through town with his regiment and observed the appearance of its inhabitants remarking “the motley group reminded me of the Streets of Calcutta – Jews, Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Arabs, French, Spaniards.” His comment that all were “arrayed in all the fantastic dresses of their countries,” illustrates how ideas of racial difference depended in part on visual cues of traditional dress. To this group would be added Hindu merchants who arrived in 1870 after the opening of the Suez Canal.


41 Samuel Taylor Coleridge in M.G. Sanchez, ed., Rock of Empire: Literary Visions of Gibraltar, 1700-1900 (Gibraltar: Gibraltar Chronicle, 2001), 57.

42 William Makepeace Thackeray in M.G. Sanchez, ed., Rock of Empire: Literary Visions of Gibraltar, 1700-1900 (Gibraltar: Gibraltar Chronicle, 2001), 76.


44 When at Gibraltar, Pindar stayed aboard HMS Simoon, the same troopship that Andrew Leith Adams took from Malta to New Brunswick. John Pindar, Autobiography of a Private Soldier (Cupar Fife: Fife News, 1877), 94.


Absent from the ethnic discourses of Gibraltar was any positive discussion of local Gibraltarians. According to David Lambert, the effacement of local indigenous peoples in these narratives highlighted the Rock as “a place through which British troops pass and perform heroic deeds, rather than a place of continuing residence.”\textsuperscript{47} If mentioned, Gibraltarians were described as a “mongrel race” with no claims to British nationality based on their Spanish ways. Writers often called them “Rock Scorpions” who spoke the “most extraordinary ‘pigeon English’.”\textsuperscript{48} As M. G. Sanchez has argued, the stereotype of the “undeserving alien colonials” helped to marginalize Gibraltarians in their own territory.\textsuperscript{49}

\textbf{6.2 Muscular Military Scientific Performances}

Military bird collectors exemplified the scientific and masculine hero through tales of their dedication, reasoning, and dangerous escapades as they climbed rocks and trees to shoot birds of prey or collect their eggs. Sometimes the dead bird provided a model for a portrait of a living one in its avian landscape; see Figure 13. Indeed, representations of the military-ornithologist evoked heroic imaginaries as discussed in Chapter 4. In the popular science periodical \textit{Nature}, a reviewer proclaimed Irby, who served in the Crimean War with Thomas Wright Blakiston, as re-enacting the work of Hercules, the demi-god, by bridging the two continents of Europe and Africa through his ornithological work “perched upon the rocky heights of ‘Old Gib’.”\textsuperscript{50} Irby’s achievement was described as “the feat of our modern hero,” cultivating a British audience dedicated to empire and science.\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{47} Lambert, “‘As solid as the Rock?’,” 212.

\textsuperscript{48} M. G. Sanchez, \textit{The Prostitutes of Serruya’s Lane and Other Hidden Gibraltarian Histories} (Dewsbury: Rock Scorpion Books, 2007), 54; George Augustus Sala, \textit{From Waterloo to the Peninsula: Four Months’ Hard Labour in Belgium, Holland, Germany, and Spain}, Volume 2 (London: Tinsley Bros., 1867), 247.

\textsuperscript{49} Sanchez, \textit{The Prostitutes of Serruya’s Lane}, 45.

\textsuperscript{50} Anon, “Irby’s birds of Gibraltar,” \textit{Nature} 12 (September 1875), 364.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid}. 

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Figure 13: “Bearded Vulture” by A. Thornbury published in Irby’s *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (1895), frontispiece

Irby, as a privileged and well-trained officer from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, not only mastered cartography, gunnery, and fortification, but also scientific practices of classification, documentation, and travel writing, which all helped to sustain the romance of
warfare that was integral to British imperial culture and military masculinity through bodily experiences in the field.\textsuperscript{52} This type of embodiment involved primarily a military, gentlemanly body shaped by ideas of Englishness, imperial superiority, and military ardour in contrast to the lower-class, urban recruits in the army and to colonial peoples.

Irby’s connections to the landed gentry in Norfolk County further differentiated his status within the British Army. Steeped in the sportsman tradition, Irby collected birds with a gun as an ideal activity that refined the mind and provided the physical exertion to maintain the muscular masculinities of well-trained officers. His approach to ornithology depended on the killing of birds and the physical comparison of specimens for accuracy, similar to Blakiston’s practice described in Chapter 4. As Irby wrote, “[t]he only way to avoid… errors is never to include any bird in a list except when actually obtained and identified.”\textsuperscript{53} The bodies of dead birds presented naturalists with material evidence of their scientific discoveries and trophies of the hunt preserved through taxidermy.

The observation of birds was also understood to make better field soldiers in predicting weather patterns during active service. Sir Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913), a hero of the “Indian Mutiny,” stressed the importance of the attendance to both the mind and the body in his \textit{Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service} (1871), as “each reacts upon the other.”\textsuperscript{54} An old “chum” of Lieutenant Colonel Irby’s from India, he believed in the “old farmers’ predictions of fine or rough weather” through the observations of birds. “When swallows fly high,” he wrote, “expect fine weather” while “sea gulls flying inland or collected there in large numbers are fore-runners of bad

\textsuperscript{52} Irby might have attended the college with Lieutenant Colonel Henry Haversham Godwin-Austen (1834-1923), a British military officer with the 24\textsuperscript{th} Regiment of Foot who contributed to field ornithology in India.

\textsuperscript{53} Irby, \textit{Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar}, 5.

\textsuperscript{54} Garnet Wolseley, \textit{Soldier’s Pocket-Book for Field Service} (London: MacMillan & Co., 1871), 165.
stormy weather.” One might conjecture that Wolseley’s experiences with Irby on HMS Transit and in the “Indian Mutiny” influenced his views on observing birds for military campaigning.

Photography and sketching helped to document an officer’s masculine pursuit of birds and their eggs on cliffs and mountains, and often centred around birds of prey such as eagles, buzzards, and ospreys. Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Verner exemplified the ideal officer-photographer in the field when stationed in Gibraltar in the 1870s. “Certainly one of the greatest joys of life to the successful birdsnester,” Verner exclaimed, “is to obtain a record of the places he has visited and the haunts of the wild birds he has watched.” Verner devoted an entire chapter to “Sketching and Photography” in the field, listing the type of camera equipment and the utility of a drawing over a photograph. “My special joy,” he wrote, “was to reach some Eagle’s nest and endeavour to delineate with pencil and brush ‘what the Eagle saw’.” The resulting sketch illustrated his manly achievement of climbing heights to experience the view of one of his favourite birds of prey while the photograph provided material evidence of the nesting site of a particular species (Figures 14 and 15).

Regular routes in Gibraltar allowed officers to observe and collect birds using telescopes and guns around the Rock. Bird collecting occurred at the Neutral Grounds, “close to the Spanish guard-house on the western side”, where an officer could find a plethora of Golden Plover,

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57 Willoughby Verner spent many years at Gibraltar with the Rifle Brigade and eventually retired there. He was also professor of topography at Sandhurst Royal Military College and wrote numerous works on his activities in Africa.
Figure 14: “Descent to Nest of Bonelli’s Eagle,” a re-enactment by Willoughby Verner in Irby’s *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (1895), after page 173
Figures 15: “Cave with Griffons’ Nests” and “Young Griffon in Cavern,” in Irby’s *The Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar* (1895), 150
Redhawks, and Ringed Dotterels. In this way, the field emerged as a space for a “moral locational discourse” helping to regulate the military body in Gibraltar. The sentry spot at Signal Station was an ideal location for both non-commissioned and commissioned officers to sight the passage of birds in Gibraltar. E.F. Becher, Royal Artillery, noted that the sergeant at the Signal Station observed a decrease in the number of migrant birds passing over Gibraltar in the year 1882. The higher reaches of Upper Signal Station allowed Royal Engineers officer Captain Phillip Savile Reid to observe a specimen of *Aquila Bonelli*, a type of eagle, which “breed regularly on the eastern side of the rock of Gibraltar.” Officers often listed the arrival dates of birds of passage such as the Ring-Ouzel or *Turdus torquatus*, “the earliest dates in each year being the 8th of April 1868, 20th of March 1870, 9th of April 1871, 12th of March 1872, 28th of March 1874.” Such lists served as both a reflection of the accumulation of specimens and a medium to track the annual migration of birds for officers stationed at Gibraltar.

6.3 Moral Ornithology on Old ‘Gib’

In Gibraltar, army officials designed domestic sites for improvement of the soldier’s body, such as the Soldiers’ Institute, the Alameda Botanical Gardens, and the garrison churches to help divert military attentions away from pubs and brothels that were understood to damage military fitness. The Reverend John Coventry at the Scottish Presbyterian Church was greatly interested “in the moral and spiritual improvement of the Presbyterian soldiers to whom he

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58 See page 28 of Philip Savile Grey Reid’s *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 1871-1890*, Natural History Museum, Tring, UK.

59 Ogborn and Philo, “Soldiers, sailors and moral locations,” 221.


61 See page 3 of Reid’s *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*. See Chapter 7.

62 Irby, *Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 36

63 The popular red light district in nineteenth-century Gibraltar was called Serruya’s Lane.
officiates as chaplain.”64 John Pindar described how a “Scottish minister,” such as Coventry, could make soldiers “feel the hallowing influences of a Scottish Sabbath home,” especially in colonial sites such as in India.65

The Gibraltar Garrison Library, established in 1793, provided an exclusive haven for British military officers to read, learn, and exercise the mind on natural history subjects, and served as a model for other garrison libraries in the Mediterranean such as the one at Malta as discussed in Chapter 5. Officers paid an annual membership fee to use the facilities, which excluded local Gibraltarians. As early as 1829, the United Service Magazine proclaimed Gibraltar’s library to be the “finest institution of the kind out of Great Britain.”66 Countless natural history books filled the shelves including Gilbert White’s Natural History of Selborne (1789) and Selby’s Illustrations of British Ornithology (1821-1834).67 The Library was “[a]n invaluable resource, especially in hot weather,” and housed thousands of books, “a large and very handsome reading-room, furnished with most inviting sofas, and supplied with all the principal English and foreign newspapers and periodicals.”68

Commissioned officers attempted to assert their gentlemanly status through their class-based leisure activities in Gibraltar. Irby espoused a moral ethic of restraint towards bird collecting by not including the “exact location” of certain bird species such as the “White-tailed eagle” for “obvious reasons.”69 His “undistinguished detestation of the race of ‘collectors’ and

64 Pindar, Autobiography of a Private Soldier, 96.

65 Ibid.

66 Anon, United Service Magazine (1829): 105.


wanton destroyers of bird-life” continually pervaded his work despite his own actions in killing birds “to secure the prize.”\footnote{Willoughby Verner, “Obituary,” \textit{Ibis} 47, 3 (July 1905): 501-505; 504; Irby, \textit{Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar}, 173.} As Irby stated:

The unfortunate part of ornithology, as at present practised, is that it is chiefly confined to the slaughter of birds, whose skins, when compared and examined by table naturalists, are upon the slightest variation in plumage made into new species, without any knowledge of their habits, notes, \&c. Much more can be done by observation than by the gun, and when a bird is destroyed all chance of noticing its habits is destroyed likewise.\footnote{Irby, \textit{Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar}, 33.}

Irby paid particular attention to the widespread killing of birds for the millinery trade. In the spring of 1874, he noticed how the population of bee-eaters had declined in Gibraltar and the surrounding areas “on account of their bright plumage to put in ladies’ hats.”\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 133.} He called this practice “a vile fashion,” which implicated “no less than seven hundred skins, all shot at Tangier” for a dealer in London.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}. Interestingly, the millinery industry supplied feathers to some units of the British Army. See: R. J. Moore-Colyer, “Feathered women and persecuted birds: The struggle against the plumage trade, c. 1860–1922,” \textit{Rural History} 11 (2000): 57-73.}

Irby’s sense of Englishness was tied to Britain’s humanitarian movement, which extended to concerns for the welfare of animals. More specifically, Irby’s moral ideas on bird protection can be traced to his connections to the humanitarian network of Norwich, Norfolk County. According to John McCormick, critiques of the “wanton slaughter” and “cruelty” to animals stemmed from humanitarian threads in the anti-slavery movement.\footnote{John McCormick, \textit{Reclaiming Paradise: The Global Environmental Movement} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 4.} The Irby family, in particular, maintained strong connections with the abolitionist movement and the Quaker community in Norwich, including figures such as John Henry Gurney (1819-1890), a son of...
banker and evangelical minister of the Religious Society of Friends. Gurney developed a strong interest in ornithology and organized the “Collection of Raptorial Birds,” which featured birds from across the globe, while working as a banker and serving as a Liberal member of parliament.

Contradictory and hypocritical practice abounded. The narration of an authentic adventurous, muscular masculinity in the field was compromised by the common practice of purchasing specimens from local domestic markets at Gibraltar, Seville, and Tangier to enhance collections, especially when it proved difficult to acquire rare species. For example, Willoughby Verner visited the market in an effort to find the “Crysomitris citrinella” or “Critil Finch” for his collection, although with little success. At the same time, such British military collectors continually made negative remarks about the Spanish “natives” and their class-based pothunting practices. According to Irby, “Spaniards shoot immense numbers” of Starlings “at their roosting places” to make “a very cheap and, it may be fairly said, nasty dish in all the ventrollas in the vicinity.”

The military officers viewed the scientific approach to shooting and killing birds as more civilized than the pothunting practices of collecting birds for food. Yet, while disparaging the locals, British military-ornithologists still relied on the assistance of Spanish boys in the building

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75 Born at Boyland Hall in Morningthorpe, Norfolk County, Irby descended from a family steeped in the British Army and the Royal Navy. His father, Frederick Paul Irby (1779-1844), served on the British and North American stations, and patrolled the west coast of Africa as part of the abolitionist movement. His uncle, Charles Leonard Irby (1789-1845), spent time in the Mediterranean, Cape of Good Hope, Montevideo, Mauritius, and North America, publishing his travel experiences. Another uncle, Edward Methuen Irby (1788-1809), served with the 3rd Regiment of Foot and was killed in action during the Peninsular Wars. Irby’s father, Frederick Paul Irby (1779-1844), served with the Royal Navy and enforced anti-slavery laws when stationed on the HMS Amelia off the West African coast from 1811-1813. During his own tour of duty, Captain Irby rescued 3 child slaves, who were later baptized at St Peter Mancroft Church in Norwich in 1813.

76 Gurney attended the Friends' School at Tottenham.

77 Irby, Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar, 100; Philip Savile Grey Reid, “Winter notes from Morocco,” The Ibis 3, 11 (1885): 241-255; 245.

78 Irby, Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar, 78.
up of their collection of avian specimens. Edward Napier paid a young “muchacho” for his services in the Spanish countryside. The young assistant helped identify a pair of eagles and was “dispatched to secure the spoils” for “the promise of half-a-dollar in the event of finding the bird.” Captain Reid mentioned a Gibraltarian boy named “José,” who brought him “anest containing nine eggs… I was hardly pleased at such wholesale plunder and directed him to cease his savages among the genus ‘perdix’. By exclaiming his dissatisfaction with “José,” Reid demonstrated what Mary Louise Pratt has termed “anti-conquest” by narrating his innocence in the pillaging by asserting his English superiority in moral egg collecting in the name of science.

6.4 Informal Empire in the Straits of Gibraltar

Military officers extended the boundaries of fieldwork and masculine feats into Spain through collecting in specific foreign field sites. According to G.T. Garratt, Britain’s relations with Spain often centred on Britain’s attempts to represent Spain as an old imperial power with little political clout in order not to lose Gibraltar. The “wilds” of Andalucia provided a favourite destination for the officer-sportsman-naturalist, where “the shooting has the charm of a varied bag, and the freedom to wander where you like, as a rule.” For Irby, the best locality for an ornithologist living at Gibraltar was “the country west of an imaginary line drawn due north from Gibraltar as far as the latitude of Seville.” Captain Watkins, who served in Gibraltar after Canada remarked that the “wild and beautiful scenery of this part of Spain… adds in no small

79 Napier, Wild Sports in Europe, Asia and Africa, 52.
80 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 2.
81 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 8-9.
82 Garratt, Gibraltar and the Mediterranean, 129.
83 Irby, Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar, 26.
84 Ibid, 3.
degree to the pleasure of the Ornithologist.”85 Species lists of Spanish birds attempted to erase competing cultures of nature in the Iberian Peninsula. Irby claimed that the “Spanish lists” of local avifauna, especially Baca’s “Aves de Espanã,” were often “meagre and full of errors,” and should not be trusted.86

Some Spaniards perceived these officers, as “all mad” when collecting birds and eggs in the Spanish countryside.87 Spaniards nicknamed a particularly enthusiastic collector as “‘El loco’ – the maniac,” for his fanatical “anger in hunting for such trifles as birds-eggs.”88 Such contemporary critiques highlight what could also be understood as the “unnatural” British relation to nature exemplified by the culture of muscular adventurism. Willoughby Verner confidently confided to his readership “whilst all through my life, whenever I have attained the ‘decisive point’ in a big tree and felt sure of the nest, I have mentally ejaculated with Scud East.”89 Based on Tom Brown’s School Days, Scud East represented the English boyhood hero who delighted in finding a Kestrel’s nest.90 As Richard Phillips has written, “[t]he geography of adventure is a cultural space in which identities and geographies are constructed,” and where imperial masculinities are shaped.91

86 Irby, Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar, 31
87 Ibid, 68.
88 Reid described this particular collector, Captain Arthur Cowell Stark, during his meeting with Howard Irby at Zoological Gardens at Regent’s Park, London, 22 April 1877 in his “Stray notes on Ornithology, 1871-1890.” Stark (1846-99) was a British physician and travelling naturalist who co-authored ‘Fauna of South Africa’. He was killed during Boer War.
89 Verner, My Life Among the Wild Birds of Spain, 58-59.
91 Phillips, Mapping Men and Empire, 14.
Morocco was another destination for ornithological expeditions among officers based in Gibraltar (Figure 16). During the nineteenth century, Gibraltar was the closest and most important European port to Morocco, linking Britain to northern Africa. The British occupation of Gibraltar required continual relations with Morocco in order to guarantee the garrison’s food supplies, especially meat.92 There, British military officers could hire “one or two Moors…

**Figure 16:** “Tzelatza Valley, Morocco,” from the watercolour sketchbook of Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, reproduced with permission from David and Andrew Reid, Private Collection

to pitch tents, load and unload packing animals.”93 It was also a site where the climate was “splendid and healthy, perhaps better than that of Andalucia; and one quits it with the regret that such a fine country should in these days of civilization be, as it were, utterly wasted, a land rich

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beyond most in soil, minerals, and natural advantages of all sorts, within four days of England, remaining without any real government.”94 In North Africa, Irby could situate his own moral codes of collecting through the Moroccans’ relationship with birds.95 He understood as “superstition” local beliefs that sheltered particular birds — swallows, storks — “from molestation by the natives.”96 This approach to birds differed from the lower class pothunters of Gibraltar and Spain, and although the Moroccan’s restraint was attributed to ignorant belief, it aligned more closely to the moral practices of British field ornithologists.

A favourite site to collect birds was “the vicinity of Tangier,” a territory lost to Britain in the late seventeenth century (Figure 17).97 As early as the 1830s, British Agent and Consul-General John Drummond Hay sent specimens back to the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) in England. He described, in a letter to the President of the ZSL, his frustrations in “sending living animals to England from this place.”98 He claimed it “extremely rare that any vessel touch at Tangier on its way to England,” and “only 2 or 3 cases have occurred during the four years.”99 Drummond Hay concluded that one could not “trust the masters of merchant ships to take care of

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95 According to Cynthia J. Becker, some Amazigh groups in Morocco do not eat tame or wild birds, as they believed them to be the souls of the dead. Cynthia J. Becker, *Amazigh Arts in Morocco: Women Shaping Berber Identity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), 208.

96 Irby, *Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 208.

97 Irby, *Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar*, 6-7. According to Linda Colley, Tangier has been a reminder of “the importance of the Mediterranean as a cockpit for contending states and religions, as a place of commerce, and as a site of empire.” See: Colley, *Captives*, 33.


the animals on board.”100 His donations included a snake and a “Bonelli’s eagle (*Aquila bonelliï*).”101

![Figure 17: “Tangier, Morocco,” from the watercolour sketchbook of Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, reproduced with permission from David and Andrew Reid, Private Collection](image)

By the 1870s, Tangier continued to be a unique site for ornithologists. British military ornithologists visited French colonial officials interested in ornithology, a practice highlighting the ways in which Anglo-French relations overlapped in the production of scientific knowledge in the Mediterranean region and beyond, as seen in Chapter 5. Irby was most interested in obtaining the manuscript on “Moorish birds” of M. Favier, who died suddenly in 1867 after thirty years residence in Tangier.102 He recounted how he met the owner of the manuscript, and read it in detail with much disappointment. Irby claimed that “upon perusal, amidst a mass of bad

100 *Ibid.*


grammar, bad spelling, and worse writing, which cost many hours to decipher, did not contain much information."\textsuperscript{103}

Published accounts of travel in Morocco such as Irby’s also helped to identify sites of resistance in informal imperial zones of the Mediterranean, where areas were “forbidden ground to the European” interested in scientific exploration. Irby described fieldwork in Morocco “to be unattended with any danger near the coast, but not east of Tetuan, in the Riff county, or in the mountainous districts.”\textsuperscript{104} There, “Moors rolled large stones down the only path leading to the summit,” and prevented Irby and his colleagues from “ascending.”\textsuperscript{105} He attributed these actions to “the lawless character of the hill tribes and their Mahometan prejudices.”\textsuperscript{106} When Captain Reid travelled in the vicinity of Tangier in 1870, he described how British officers had to travel “under the protection of the Sultan” by having a “Moorish soldier” with them, especially when visiting the village of Euzala, where the “dread of robbers was prominent.”\textsuperscript{107} These incidents illustrate the precariousness of British military presence in Morocco and Tangier and the way in which ornithology could provide opportunities for military surveillance.

\textbf{Conclusion: A Strong, “United,” and Moral British Empire}

The British Empire is not like some amorphous jelly fish or invertebrate of low order of vitality that is about to shed its useless limbs… The process that is taking place is the exact opposite of anything of the kind. Adhesion, not fissure, is the law that is in action. Union, not dismemberment, is the law of democratic progress… of orderly and organic growth, ‘until the whole body politic fitly joined together and compacted by that which

\textsuperscript{103} Irby, \textit{Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar}, 2.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 7-9.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

every joint supplieth according to the working, in due measure, of each several part, maketh increase unto the building up of itself as one united realm.108

A focus on Lieutenant Colonel Irby’s embodiment in Gibraltar can help to reveal the role of “place” in the intersection between British military culture and ideas and practices of ornithology in the Mediterranean. As part of the “artery of empire,” Gibraltar, like Malta in Chapter 5, was a site for the circulation of military bodies, experiences, and ideas from different parts of the British Empire. Many officers such as Irby served in India prior to “Old Gib,” and brought their ideas of racial degeneration and whiteness to the Mediterranean. Gibraltar shared Malta’s semi-tropical environment, as officers battled the sweltering “Levanter” in the summer, and enjoyed milder conditions in the winter. Irby, as a gentlemanly officer, pursued field ornithology as a means to ward off the temptations of military life and to display rational restraint in the production of scientific knowledge production. His “ethical” approach to bird collecting also reflected his involvement with the humanitarian network in Norwich, England, which attended to the moral rights of “all God’s creatures,” or at least those of interest to Britain.

However, unlike Malta, Gibraltar’s landscape included a unique geomorphologic landmark, “the Rock,” which served as an important monument to empire in the Mediterranean region, and a sentimental icon back home in Britain. British military officers such as Irby here performed ornithological fieldwork, seeking out wild birds of prey on rocky outcrops to increase their collections and to acquire tangible proof of their domination of the region. On “the Rock,” Irby simultaneously performed muscular fieldwork and humanitarian restraint, reinforcing territorial presence in Gibraltar; his fieldwork forays also bolstered informal empire in Spain and Morocco. This type of military ornithology was produced, consumed, and circulated amongst fellow officers stationed at the Mediterranean site, in attempts to adhere vital limbs to a strong, “united,” and moral British Empire.

CHAPTER 7: PHILIP SAVILE GREY REID: RED COATS AND BRITISH BIRDS ON THE HOMEFRONT1

“It has long been the practice of our ornithologists to regard as ‘British’ any species of which one species has been found in a wild state within the limits of the United Kingdom… the fact remains that they [“the American, Asiatic, and European waifs”] are not members of our avifauna, and the young reader should clearly understand that only by a pleasing fiction are they called ‘British’. “2

By the 1880s, British imperial expansion was facilitating a new understanding of Britain’s homeland bird life through repeated observations and extensive collections of live and dead birds. With sustained military occupation in the Mediterranean region, and an increased interest in field ornithology, British naturalists had started to trace the connectivity of avian migratory routes from Africa to Europe and, in turn, define Britain’s national birds within its own borders. British military officers were instrumental in the conceptualizing of their “native ornithology,” as officers returned to the British Isles from colonial service abroad, bringing with them experiences of different bird species, environmental locales, fieldwork practices, and colonial encounters.3 Many were members of the British Ornithological Union, an exclusive society whose members defined ways of conducting fieldwork and shaped ideas of wild birds during a time of increasing anxiety over industrialism, an expanding empire, the disappearance of the English countryside, and species extinction. As British military officers returned home from service abroad, how did their transient lives and, in particular, their experiences in the British

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Mediterranean influence their practices and ideas of field ornithology and notions of British birds?

This chapter examines Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid (1845-1915), Royal Engineers, as a homeward-bound officer to Aldershot, Hampshire, to understand how ideas and practices of ornithology circulated back to Britain. Designated as “home of the British Army,” Aldershot was an integral site in the trans-imperial network of military garrisons across the British Empire, connecting England to the Mediterranean, India, British North America, South Africa, and the West Indies. The home station became an important posting for the reunion of family, friendship, military, and ornithological networks in England; its location in Hampshire allowed imperial military officers to ramble in the English countryside and to immerse themselves in, what David Matless has termed, the “moral geographies of English landscape,” fostering temperate cultures of nature through proper conduct in the collecting and documenting of British birds.4

Central to my argument in this chapter is an understanding of trans-imperial processes in the shaping of British military culture and the designation of national birds. Many works have framed British “preservationism” of rural and natural heritage as a reaction to a post-Darwinian world where population growth and industrial capitalism created a threat to the natural world, and therefore spurred an environmental awareness and concern for the protection of traditional rural landscapes and wild birds in Britain.5 Scholars of environmental history have focused on the wild bird protection movement in Britain within a national context, ranging from the anti-cruelty campaign to the rational economic benefits of certain avian species.6 As Brian Bonhomme has stated, wild bird protection in Britain at this time reflected “many things to many people.”7

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5 Marsden, et al., *Constructing the Countryside*, 75.

Others, such as literary critic Moira Ferguson, have linked national, gendered, and racial identities in the animal protection movement to broader anxieties about the effects of an expanding empire on English, domestic society. In her analysis of Sarah Trimmer’s book *Fabulous Histories* (1788), Ferguson highlighted Trimmer’s use of the Robin Redbreast as a symbol of martial, gendered and patriotic iconographies of middle class Anglican conservative culture. “Robin redcoats” defended class interests, exerted authority over rebellions, and resisted rising numbers of foreigners in the capital.

Drawing from recent works in historical geography, I concentrate on the “circuitry of empire” or “web” of networks that shaped “places” and people’s experiences across (and beyond) the British Empire.8 I approach trans-imperialism in two ways: first as a means to conceptualize Aldershot as a site intricately connected to other military sites in the British Empire; and second, as a way to imagine Captain Reid as a transient figure engaged in multiple localities overseas, especially the British Mediterranean, who influenced field ornithology at home. As Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling have stated, the spatial imaginary of Britain as homeland is a reflection of “the discourses, everyday practices and material cultures of nation and empire,” intimately tied to the politics of place, identity, and collective memory.9 These imaginaries importantly include avian homeland geographies.


7 Bonhomme, “Nested interests,” 62.


7.1 Aldershot: Imperial Home Station

Aldershot, also known as “the Camp,” was established as a garrison by the British government in 1853 to train soldiers and to save money by concentrating troops in heath and moorland rather than in more expensive cultivated areas. The War Department purchased 10,000 acres of land, and its location allowed for easy access to London, Portsmouth, Chatham, and Dover by railway. Aldershot became the first garrison in Britain dedicated solely to the large scale concentration of troops and emerged as one of the greatest military centres in the British Empire. 10 In 1874, the camp contained up to 754 officers, 15,665 men, and 4,358 horses. 11

Designated as a home station, Aldershot was an important site in the trans-imperial network that linked military garrisons across the British Empire. 12 The invention of steam power and the opening of the Suez Canal made possible the effective movement of bringing the “small-sized but mighty hearted England” closer to its colonies, especially India. 13 Homeward-bound soldiers, as English author David L. Richardson stated, would be “twice as efficient as in the olden time, when there were so many obstacles to their breathing a breath of their native air.” 14

The 100th Regiment spent nine months at Aldershot, “where camp life was on a larger and grander scale,” prior to embarking at Portsmouth for the Mediterranean station of “‘Old Gib’.” 15


13 Richardson, The Anglo-Indian Passage, viii.

14 Ibid, ix.

15 The 100th Regiment was stationed at Gibraltar from 1859 until 1863, whence it moved to Malta. Charles Arkoll Boulton, Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions: with a Record of the Raising of her Majesty’s 100th Regiment in Canada (Toronto: The Grip Printing And Publishing Co., 1886), 18-19.
British military officers included images of Aldershot in their travel albums, illustrating its importance in the network of colonial quarters.\textsuperscript{16}

As part of the British Empire, Aldershot was subject to the same scrutiny “on the climate” as other colonial garrisons. In a report to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1867, Sergeant Arnold stated that Aldershot, “in comparison with any other station, civil or military,” cleared a good “‘bill of health’” contradicting popular published statistics that deemed the site unhealthy.\textsuperscript{17} Its position within the temperate region of England contrasted with the more tropical stations of the globe, and represented “the modest, civilized and cultivated” rather than the more degenerative aspects of hot and humid environments.\textsuperscript{18} However, in Britain, popular accounts viewed Aldershot as a “wasteland” or “desert” in the “Maritime Counties,” which prompted Sir Robert Michael Laffan, Commander of the Royal Engineers (CRE) of Aldershot (1866-1872), to make many improvements in the camp, including the planting of trees and the laying of turf.\textsuperscript{19}

Influenced by military reforms in Gibraltar, the education of soldiers at Aldershot was made a priority, and many institutions, such as churches of various denominations, libraries, gymnasiums, and playgrounds, were established to better their lives. The Victoria’s Soldiers’ Library housed books that previously filled the libraries of the hospitals and recreation huts in the Crimea.\textsuperscript{20} As mentioned in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, women played a key role in the reforming of British military culture at home, as well as in colonial stations. Queen Victoria often visited

\textsuperscript{16} A mid-nineteenth-century military album located in Ottawa likely belonged to a soldier-officer in the Rifle Brigade. Images include scenes from Canada, the Crimea, Ireland, and Aldershot, England. Rifle Brigade Album, 1948-027 PIC, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Canada.

\textsuperscript{17} Sergeant Arnold, “Report of the on the climate of Aldershot Camp,” \textit{Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science} 36 (1867): 15.


\textsuperscript{19} Cole, \textit{The Story of Aldershot}, 30-32.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid}, 55-63.
Aldershot to reinforce her position as the head of the army, as well her symbolic role as domestic sovereign in nurturing British military men returning home from service abroad.\textsuperscript{21} Her tours of Aldershot were often published in the \textit{Illustrated London News} to demonstrate publicly her ongoing commitment to her Army.\textsuperscript{22} According to Charles A. Boulton, an Anglo-Canadian officer with the 100th Regiment, about thirty thousand troops were inspected “by Her Majesty the Queen” as part of a grand review under the Duke of Cambridge in 1859.\textsuperscript{23} In Victorian Britain, women were imagined as mothers of the nation while men were viewed as protectors of Britannia.\textsuperscript{24}

\section*{7.2 Trans-Imperial and Metropolitan (Re)Connections}

Born at Welwyn, Hertfordshire, Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid’s first posting as an officer of the Royal Engineers was at Aldershot in 1865, shortly after completing his training at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (Figure 18).\textsuperscript{25} Although Reid served at Aldershot

\begin{figure}
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\caption{Aldershot Camp, 1865.}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} Margaret Homans, “‘To the Queen's private apartments:’ Royal family portraiture and the construction of Victoria's sovereign obedience,” \textit{Victorian Studies} 37, 1 (Autumn, 1993): 1-41.
\item \textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid}, 46-52.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Charles Arkoll Boulton, \textit{Reminiscences of the North-West Rebellions: with a Record of the Raising of her Majesty's 100th Regiment in Canada} (Toronto: The Grip Printing And Publishing Co., 1886), 18-19.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Philip Savile Grey Reid was also known as Savile Reid in his published works. Previous to Woolwich, he was at the Burney's Naval School in Gosport, Hampshire County. Frances E. Warr, \textit{Manuscripts and Drawings in the Ornithology and Rothschild Libraries of The Natural History Museum at Tring} (Tring: Hertfordshire: British Ornithologists' Club in association with The Natural History Museum, London, 1996). Burney’s Naval School was a popular site for young boys interested in joining the Royal Navy. Charles Perry, son of Sir W. Edward Perry, attended Burney’s Naval School in the 1840s when he was twelve. His father was a Royal Navy officer and superintendent at the Haslar Hospital in Gosport. See: Edward Parry, \textit{Memorials of Charles Parry, Commander Royal Navy} (1870), 1-3.
\end{itemize}
three times (1865-69, 1876-78, and 1882-1883), it was his return from his second tour of duty which took on new significance. His frequent postings to the home station allowed him to establish and strengthen metropolitan connections with scientific, military, and family networks in England, which helped sustain his gentlemanly English identity, as well as his metropolitan ornithological knowledge and practices. For British military officers such as Reid, identities were shaped by a transient life across the British Empire, encountering different environments (i.e. climates, flora, fauna), peoples, and cultures. As Alison Blunt has stated, these spatialized, mobile identities were not only “contingent, unstable and decentred,” but also “simultaneously

Figure 18: Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, reproduced with permission from David and Andrew Reid, Private Collection
grounded, located and contextualized in materially specific ways,” exerting particular constellations of power across the British Empire, including at home in Britain.26

Aldershot’s proximity to London thus helped Reid to re-establish his metropolitan scientific networks in Britain after serving several years abroad. Aldershot’s proximity to London allowed Reid to frequent the Zoological Gardens at Regent’s Park. On 22 April 1877, he met his long-time friend Lieutenant Colonel Irby, “by appointment, in the ‘Zoo’… to have a farewell yarn with him before he goes out to Gibraltar.”27 They were much amused by the “Snowy herons… of the American ornis,” which were “catching blue-bottle flies which settled in their enclosure.”28 As discussed in Chapter 4, zoological gardens such as Regent’s Park not only served as an emblem of empire, but as a place to reconnect with past colonial lives.29 Prior to their visit, Irby had already donated living avian specimens to the zoo such as a Bonelli’s Eagle from Gibraltar and an Imperial Eagle from southern Spain.30

In London, Reid attended the meetings of the BOU to which he was elected in 1877; such “ornithological credentials”31 he viewed as “about the ‘swellest’ ornithological ‘thing’ in England.”32 As an authority on birds, the BOU promoted the scientific “progress of


27 Philip Savile Grey Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology (1871-1890), 22 April 1877.

28 Ibid.

29 Buettner, Empire Families, 214.


31 By the early 1880s, Reid was among one of many British military officers who were elected to the BOU. For a list of a sample of individuals and their election years, see: Ibis 1 (1883): 1874, H. H. Godwin-Austen, Lieut.-Col., F.E.S., F.Z.S.; 1870. Leonard Howard L. Irby, Lieut.-Col., F.Z.S.; 1880, Henry Robert Kelham, Lieut. 74th Highlanders; 1874, Alexander W. M. Clark Kennedy, F.L.S., F.R.G.S.; 1875, Paget Walter Le Strange, Lieut.-Col. Royal Artillery; 1874, John Hayes Lloyd, Major, F.Z.S.; 1873, Sir Oliver Beauchamp Coventry St. John, Colonel R.E.; 1870, G. Ernest Shelley, F.Z.S., late Captain, Grenadier Guards.

32 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 22 May 1877.
ornithological science in all parts of the globe,” and defined fieldwork and nomenclature standards through the union’s periodical, *The Ibis*, in relation to the other competing networks of European and American ornithological knowledge (as well as to emerging colonial networks in places such as India).33 Reid visited the Tenterden Street headquarters at Hanover Square to pick-up “a box” for Irby that included an egg of “the Grey-lag Goose from the Laguna de la Jauda” for himself.34 He also travelled to many British provincial museums to broaden his ornithological expertise. At the Norwich Museum, he met the curator William Reeve and viewed the “Raptores [sic], which are truly magnificent.”35 The Norwich Museum housed many avian specimens (skins, eggs) from “all parts of the world” including Irby’s avian specimens from Crimea and Gibraltar.36

As a site of convergence for trans-imperial officers with similar experiences, Aldershot allowed officers to reconnect with others who had served in different parts of the empire. Captain Reid often met with military friends who shared similar interests and experiences in the British Mediterranean (Figure 19). Irby made several trips to Aldershot to see his old Gibraltar friend. When visiting in October 1876, Irby joined a group of other “Gib” comrades on a shooting party,

33 Lieutenant Colonel L. Howard Loyd Irby, *British Birds including Irby’s British Birds: Key List* (London: R.H. Porter, 1888), i. Many of the founding members were active in the maintenance of empire such as the first president, Henry Maurice Drummond Hay, who served with the 42nd Regiment (Black Watch) in Bermuda, Nova Scotia, the Ionian Islands, and Malta. Other members included Edward Newton (1832-1897), a brother of Professor Alfred Newton and a colonial administrator, serving as Colonial Secretary in Mauritius (1859 to 1877), and Colonial Secretary and Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica. The Newton family also owned plantations in the West Indies.

34 Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 27 October 1877. BOU meetings were located at “the den” at 6 Tenterden Street, Hanover Square, which was then the headquarters of the BOU but also home to Lord Lilford, a member in London. The Tenterden Street site was shared by other members of the BOU, including Salvin and Godman, who used the house for their “museum and library” of Latin American birds. Frederick DuCane Godman and Osbert Salvin, *Biologia Centrali-Americana; or, Contributions to the knowledge of the fauna and flora of Mexico and Central America: Introductory Volume* (published privately, 1915), 7.

35 Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 30 November 1877.

which consisted of Harrison, Denison, and Reid. Reid’s friend from Gibraltar, Lieutenant H.R. Kelham of the 74th Regiment, sent him a package “containing a skin and two eggs (one slightly damaged) of the Cinereous Shearwater (Puffinus kuhlii) and a skin and one egg (smashed) of the Stormy Petrel, taken by him at Fifla” when the regiment was stationed at Malta. Reid also met other military ornithologists such as Captain Henry W. Feilden, Royal Artillery, who visited Reid at Aldershot to have “a long yarn about birds.”

Central to the maintenance of Reid’s gentlemanly English identity were his relationships with his family. When on leave, he returned to his childhood county of Hertfordshire, visiting his sister’s home at Hatfield, where he stored his collection of birds. In 31 March 1878, when Reid anticipated a chance of “being suddenly ordered away to fight the wily Muscov,” he expressed

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37 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 28 October 1876.


39 Feilden joined the Narnes Arctic expedition and would later serve with Reid at Natal in 1881. Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 18 June 1877.
Figure 19: “Scene from a Picnic at Los Barrios, near Gibraltar, 8 May 1873,” which included “Lt. Reid, R.E., Col. Laffan, Lt. Denison, R.E.,” photograph from the Phillimore Archive, 115M88/P8/62 1873, reproduced with permission from the Hampshire Records Office.
concern “to prepare for the worst as far as concerned my birds’ skins and eggs.”40 He “carried all the balance of [his] collection to his sister’s house at Hatfield… and stowed everything away snug, ready for action!”41 Reid also visited his sister-in-law, Mrs. Frank Reid, at Southampton to bid her farewell on her trip to Malta in October 1877.42 On the same ship to Gibraltar was Lord Lilford, President of the British Ornithological Union, who met Reid the same day.43 When on leave from Aldershot, Reid married Englishwoman Amy Eleonor Prime in August 1878, securing his filial ties to Britain despite living a transient life abroad.44 However, Reid once reflected that he wished to retire from the British Army, as he was “very sick of it,” and how much he wanted to “see the world, especially the world of ornithology, while [he was] still able to walk and ride and shoot a bit.”45 Reid reflected on his ambivalent to feelings about being at home while imagining new adventures in distant lands.

40 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 31 March 1878.

41 Ibid.

42 Southampton served as a “gateway to empire” with the traffic of ships to and from different parts of the empire, and as a site in the making of an imperial scientific hero, David Livingstone, who returned home from Africa in 1856, and again in 1874, when his body travelled back to London for his funeral. Miles Taylor, Southampton: Gateway to the British Empire (London: I.B Taurus, 2007); Joanna Lewis, “Southampton and the making of an imperial myth: David Livingstone’s remains,” in Miles Taylor (ed.), Southampton: Gateway to the British Empire (London: I.B Taurus, 2007), 31-46; Clare Pettitt, Dr. Livingstone, I Presume?: Missionaries, Journalists, Explorers, and Empire (London: Profile Books, 2007), 31, 124.

43 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 11 October 1877.


45 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 28 December 1877.
7.3 Hampshire Rambles and Temperate Cultures of Nature

Aldershot’s importance lay in the surrounding countryside for natural history excursions and rambling, which helped maintain Englishness and foster temperate cultures of nature. In southern England, ideal rurality often centred on familiar, domesticated landscapes, removed from urbanization and industrialization, and reflecting the role of England as “homeland” in relation to its empire. In this sense, the observing and collecting of British birds was one way to enact a sense of belonging to the English countryside through an appropriate mode of conduct in the country. As naturalist Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) stated at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1871, officers should engage in a “naturalists’ field club” rather than a “laboratory” in order to foster “sound inductive habits of mind, as well as more health, manliness, and cheerfulness, amid scenes to remember which will be a joy for ever.” More importantly, “that habit of mind” involved “‘the habit of seeing; the habit of knowing what we see; the habit of discerning differences and likeness; the habit of classifying accordingly.” They are “not merely intellectual, but also moral habits, which will stand men in practical good stead in every affair of life, and in every question, even the most awful, which many come before us as rational and social beings.”

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, in particular, trained young cadets, such as Reid, in the 1860s to conduct fieldwork and perform taxidermy


49 Ibid, 9.

50 Ibid, 3.
within the Ordnance tradition. There, Reid might have viewed the collection of birds by Thomas W. Blakiston, Royal Artillery, at the Royal Artillery Institution. Pursuing natural history in the “field,” and ordering the landscape with scientific nomenclature, disciplined both the body and mind in British military “body culture.” This was a key part of training at home in the English countryside where temperate and moral martial masculinities could be shaped.

Reid’s excursions centred on North Camp, Fleet Pond, Wolmer Forest, Pyestock Wood, and Alice Holt in Hampshire for his sportsman-naturalist outings. When on duty at Aldershot, Reid made use of North Camp on the garrison grounds, a birding area that benefited from the reforestation initiatives by Laffan. Reid often described the site as a good location for common species and their nests such as “the Long-Tailed Tit, Mistletoe Thrush, and a Tit.” Reid commented: “These North Camp Gardens, the nursery for our young trees and shrubs used in planting about the Camps, seem to be a great resort for birds, a veritable oasis in the desert.” A fellow officer and caretaker of the gardens, “a man of the 3rd Battalion 60th Rifles,” told Reid of a pair of Magpies nested in the “thick scotch fir there.”

The British Army regulated water levels on the War Department Lands, and Fleet Pond was another site for ornithological activities around the garrison grounds. Reid regularly observed “waders” or waterfowl on his regular peregrinations, publishing his findings in The Zoologist in 1877. His visit in August of that year overlapped with his duties of draining of the pond for the purpose of destroying weeds that attracted wildfowl, including “quite a respectable gathering of Sandpipers & Waders at times. Three Greenshanks, Curlews, and a Green


52 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 26 March 1878.

53 Ibid.

54 Many of the original trees planted in the 1860s are still at Aldershot (see Chapter 8). Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 26 March 1878.
Sandpiper, some Dunlins, a Tern, Ray’s and Pied Wagtails.” In September, the pond was “nearly empty,” but he managed to shoot a male Ruff. The management of War Department Lands through tree-planting and pond-drainage reflected practices of anthropogenic nature in Hampshire County, which had an impact on the avian landscapes in the region.

Aldershot’s location “wholly within Hampshire” conjured up pastoral ideals from Gilbert White’s *Natural History of Selborne* (1789), a bestseller in England for over a century. White spent many years observing and recording the seasonal cycles of the countryside, including the summer and winter “birds of passage round this neighbourhood,” and defined traditional British natural history practices of observing birds in the field. His work promoted a spiritual connection with nature through natural theology. Reid often referred to Gilbert White in his journals, and noted the locations visited by White, but refrained from claiming a similar connection to the natural world. In 1877, Reid “went on to Forked Pond Enclosure to look up the Herons’ nests” at Wolmer Forest, and stated: “Old Gilbert White does not allude to it in the “Natural History of Selborne.”

As discussed in Chapter 6, White’s understanding of the local Hampshire avifauna relied importantly on observations and collections of birds from the Mediterranean region, where

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55 On October 8, 1876, Reid stated in his journal: “Denison and I walked out to reconnoitre Fleet Pond – Our walk proved quite an ornithological success, for we saw five *Wild Ducks*, (being Sunday we had no gun) and two or three *Cial Buntings* near the pond.” See also: Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 23 August 1877 and 27 September 1877.

56 Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 27 September 1877.

57 For a discussion on anthropogenic natures, see: Laura Cameron, “Distinguished Historical Geography Lecture 2010: Digging in the dirt: unnatural histories and the ‘art of not dividing’,” *Historical Geography* 38 (2010): 5-22.


59 Between 1830 and 1900, over 100 editions were published, making it a familiar item on Victorian bookshelves. See: Susan Bruxvoort Lipscomb, “Introducing Gilbert White: an exemplary natural historian and his editors,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 35 (2007): 551-567; 552.


61 Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 6 May 1877.
White’s brother, Reverend John White, served as chaplain to the British Army at Gibraltar. In terms of its “migratory connectivity,” the “place” of Hampshire can be understood as “local at all points,’ while being definitely, unstoppably translocal.”62 The “comings and goings” of the county’s avifauna also often overlapped with the regular departures and absences associated with numerous naval and military men of Hampshire at Aldershot, Portsmouth, and Southampton.63

While in the Hampshire countryside, Reid encountered a “rural system” of English folklore names, and tensions between competing cultures of nature. At Wolmer Forest, a locality in Gilbert White’s Selborne, Reid showed his agent “old Goddard” the evasive “Dartford Warbler in the furze, telling him that a nest and eggs thereof was a ‘sine qua non’.”64 Goddard “recognized the bird as the “Black Nettlecreeper” of his rural system, but did not seem to know anything of its nesting habits,” and Reid informed him on the species.65 It was at Wolmer Forest that Reid worried about the fate of the rare Montagu Harrier and whether his “friend Roake” would use “his murderous old guns” to kill it. Reid’s comments reflected his own justifications for killing the species as a gentleman of science.66

Reid’s temperate approach to the killing of birds was legitimized through science and class, but also through “race” and his imperial experiences in the Mediterranean region. When stationed at Gibraltar in 1871, Reid commented on the arrival of the Common Quail from England in March and on “the pot-hunting natives” who “shoot them whenever they see them so

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64 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 9 April 1876.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid, 17 February 1878.
that few young ones are hatched. He also recounted his dismay when losing a live Mediterranean Gull “*Larus melanocephalus*” that he left at fellow Royal Artillery officer Henry Denison’s lodgings. According to Reid: “The door leading from Denison’s garden into the street had been left open by the servants and the bird had doubtless wandered into the road and been picked up (and probably eaten) by some brute of a ‘Scorpion’.”

The rhetoric of “wanton” destruction and cruelty to avian life was used by the British scientific community to arouse “public opinion,” promoting a more temperate nature both at home and abroad. As a member of the BOU, Reid formed part of a group of leading naturalists influencing ideas on the wild bird protection movement and notions of “the British bird.”

For Reid, homeland birds required protection at home. Revered in his trans-imperial travels, he became more attached to them after returning home from service abroad. When approaching the English coast (Scilly Isles and Cornwall), he noted, “the Petrels were replaced by *Larus fuscus* in fine plumage,” signifying that he had “landed once more on English soil” (Figure 20).

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67 See page 2 of Reid’s field journal entry for 1871. Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*.

68 Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 25 December 1873.

69 Professor Alfred Newton presented a paper on the protection of wild birds of prey and sea-fowl at the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) meeting at Norwich in 1868, in which he condemned the “wholesale slaughter of many of our birds during the breeding season” that would “result in their extinction, unless laws were passed to give them protection.” See: Wollaston, *Life of Alfred Newton*, 139-140.

70 MacDonald, “What makes you a scientist,” 55.

71 Reid returned in 1875 to England after serving in Bermuda. Reid, *MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology*, 24 June 1875.
7.4 British Homeland Birds

To facilitate the protection of Britain’s national birds, practitioners required a definition of what counted as a British bird species. The BOU, through its members, exerted authority concerning the proper documentation of the birds amidst different versions of practice circulating in the nineteenth century (other “wrong” versions might designate rare and accidental visitors as British or ignore scientific nomenclature). As Richard Sharpe, a Senior Assistant in the Department of Zoology of the British Museum, stated in his *Hand-book to the Birds of Great Britain*,

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*Figure 20: Nearing Home – Some of Our English Land Birds Settling on the Ship, Told Us We’re Nearly Home* painted by John Dalbiac Luard, WikiGallery

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72 MacDonald, “What makes you a scientist,” 58
Britain, “the story of our native birds [has been] told by a hundred authors in a hundred different ways.”

In order to determine the physical boundaries of Britain’s birds, a census of the birds of the British Isles was required. In 1861, BOU member Alfred Newton advocated for a “a general zoological census” in order to shed light on “an understanding of the geographical distribution of species,” and in particular “the distribution of British birds” that would have a “design” similar to the “human census of the British Empire.” As Newton indicated, “a census of our birds” could only be accomplished “by the co-operation of nearly all the ornithologists in the country.” English naturalist Alexander Goodman More (1830–95) devised a census scheme in *The Ibis* in 1865 to categorize the geographical distribution of British birds during their nesting season, “that being the only time when the birds can be treated as stationary.” Based on H.C. Watson’s notions of botanical districts in *Cybele Britannica*, More grouped different species into “types of distribution” or avian “districts” such as the British, English, Germanic, Atlantic,

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74 For historical context on birds and census work, see: David Allen, *The Naturalist in Britain: A Social History* (London: A. Lane, 1976), 215-200.


Scottish and Highland types.\textsuperscript{78} Naturalists stressed the importance of climatic zones in the creation of faunal regions following the zoogeographical work of Alfred Russel Wallace.\textsuperscript{79}

Popular accounts of British birds had been imagined which involved linking birds to the “temperate zone.”\textsuperscript{80} In John Gould’s \textit{An Introduction to the Birds of Great Britain} (1873), Britain’s avian landscapes embodied “a temperate climate,” with “numerous islets, its rocky promontories and extensive marshes, its natural forests and heathy expanses.”\textsuperscript{81} According to Gould, “[t]he country a bird ressorts to for the propagation of its species should be regarded as its true habitat.”\textsuperscript{82} The emergence of avian “climatic races” resulted from the perceived effects of environmental conditions or habitats on living organisms.\textsuperscript{83} As Andrew Leith Adams stated, ornithology provided the medium to determine “which species may undergo transmutation without losing its identity.”\textsuperscript{84} Adams concurred with Gould, noting that the habitat “best suited to the bird’s constitution is that in which it rears its young.”\textsuperscript{85} When Captain Reid observed his homeland birds in Gibraltar, however, he projected his colonial views of the influence of climate onto the species’ “habits” or behaviours. When riding home from the Spanish countryside, Reid saw a number of European Robins or Robin Redbreasts in the Andalucian corkwoods, which he described as utterly “unlike their brethren in England… their more civilized relations in the north.”\textsuperscript{86} In Spain, the European Robin was crude and slothful.


\textsuperscript{79} Michael Walters, \textit{A Concise History of Ornithology} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 151.

\textsuperscript{80} John Gould, \textit{An Introduction to the Birds of Great Britain} ([S.l.] : John Gould, 1873), 3.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid}, 8.

\textsuperscript{83} Camerini, “Evolution, biogeography, and maps,” 705-707.

\textsuperscript{84} Adams and Adams, \textit{On Ornithology as a Branch of Liberal Education}, 33.

\textsuperscript{85} Adams, \textit{Notes of a Naturalist}, 19.

\textsuperscript{86} See page 22 of Reid’s field journal entry for 1871. Reid, \textit{MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology}. 
In 1874, BOU members Alfred Newton and Howard Saunders defined a species as “‘British’ when a single authenticated example [was] proved to have been obtained in our islands without suspicion of artificial introduction.” They condemned the “lax method, adopted by older writers on British Ornithology, of admitting any chance straggler from distant lands to a place beside the real inhabitants of this country.” The new definition of British birds included “those which belong to that great zoo-geographical region of the Old World of which the British Islands form a portion.” By 1883, the official list, *List of British Birds* (1883), was published by the BOU, which included “376 species as the ascertained number of British birds,” divided into categories, including residents, summer and winter visitors, and occasional visitors. However, as Hampshire naturalist J.E. Kelsall stated: “To a lover of birds, the difficulty of grouping them as ‘resident,’ ‘regular winter visitor,’ &c., is considerable; such fairy creatures prefer to be independent, and seem to rebel against the hard and fast lines of our classification.”

County lists formed part of the British bird surveys, which prompted a profusion of books dedicated to Britain’s avian counties such as *The Birds of Norfolk* (1870), *Notes on the*...

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89 *Ibid*.

90 For over 100 years the British Ornithologists’ Union has maintained a list of birds that have been recorded in Britain and Ireland.


92 According to the BOU list, “residents” were those which can be “found throughout the year, and actually breed in some part of the British Islands;” “summer visitors” as species that visited the islands in the summer and “breed within these confines;” “winter visitors” as those which visited Britain in winter, but did not breed there; and “occasional visitors” as those which occurred irregularly, but were encountered in the British Isles “with more or less frequency. See: BOU, *A List of British Birds* (London: J. van Voorst, 1883).

Birds of Northamptonshire (1883), and The Birds of Oxfordshire (1889). The proliferation of county lists reflected the rise in provincial natural history societies and the ability to transform a “rural system” into scientific currency through lists and specimens. For such a scheme to be successful, a network of competent observers was required.94 Captain Reid was known as an ideal collector of “native fauna and flora,”95 but also for his expertise in noting the differences between Old and New World species from his field experiences in Bermuda, where he met Eastern Bluebirds,96 Cardinals,97 and Scarlet Tanagers.98 J.E. Kelsall in his “list of the birds of Hampshire County” acknowledged the contributions of “Capt. Savile Reid”99 among other officers such as Captain Hadfield and Lieutenant Colonel Irby, who helped him to compile a list of birds based on “experience” in the region, a county known to be “rich in birds.”100 Reid’s contributions to the birds of Hampshire centred on his collection of birds from Aldershot and Wolmer Forest. Species included the Dunlin, a winter visitor that Reid collected at Fleet Pond.101

94 Allen, The Naturalist in Britain, 218.
97 Ibid, 18.
100 Ibid, 90. Captain Henry Hadfield published several articles in the Zoologist on the birds of Kingston, Canada West, when stationed at Fort Henry.
101 Ibid, 114.
His collection also was comprised of the “Ruff,”102 “Green Sandpiper,”103 “Greenshank,”104 “Curlew,”105 and “Grey Plover.”106

In Hampshire, Reid searched for the elusive Montagu Harrier, a bird named after British military officer and ornithologist Captain George Montagu (1751-1815).107 The bird itself, a migratory species, was “at one time the most numerous species of Harrier in the fens of the Eastern Counties,”108 but, by the nineteenth century, its population had declined so greatly that some believed it “shortly to become no longer indigenous.”109 The species often was viewed in Egypt where it occurred in migration,” and was “abundant in the highlands of Abyssinia in winter and spring.”110 In the vicinity of Gibraltar, it was known vernacularly in Spanish as “Cenizo,”111 which also applied to Hen Harriers, but was often “not met with, except on passage”112 or in breeding colonies in Morocco near Lexir. Reid was ecstatic to hear about “[s]everal Buzzards (Montagu’s Harriers)... seen by officers who were shooting at Wolmer,” including one around

102 Ibid.
103 Ibid, 115.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid, 113. Lt.-Col. Henry Wemyss Feilden (1838-1921) also collected birds at Aldershot in 1878, including a specimen now housed at the Manchester Museum.
107 George Montagu served in British North American and published Ornithological Dictionary; or Alphabetical Synopsis of British Birds (1802) and Supplement (1813), and was one of the earliest members of the Linnaean Society. See Mearns and Mearns, The Bird Collectors, 188-189; M.G.W., “Montagu, George (1751-1815),” The Dictionary of National Biography, vol. XIII (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963-1964), 693-694; Mearns and Mearns, Biographies for Birdwatchers, 263-270.
108 Yarrell et al., A History of British Birds, 139-140.
109 Ibid.
110 Ibid, 141.
111 Irby, Ornithology of the Straits of Gibraltar, 167.
112 Ibid.
“the north-west side of Brimstone Enclosure,” and others “near Lynchboro Pond.” In September 1877, Reid hoped that a dead bird from a forest fire was that of the infamous Harrier. He stated in his field diary: “As far as I can judge it is undoubtedly a female Montagu Harrier. I brought home the head, sternum, other bones” in order to settle the question “in due time.”

Another species of interest from the county was the Dartford Warbler, a bird “found on many of the commons and heaths of the southern counties in England,” and “one of the most local birds.” The warbler, “commonly accredited with a mild climate,” was difficult to collect due to its nesting habits in thick furze “on heaths and commons.” Both Reid and Irby attempted to find the Dartford Warbler during their field excursions in the Hampshire countryside. Reid expressed his disappointment in not obtaining “a nest of the Dartford, in spite of all the trouble” he had “taken in showing the birds themselves and explaining their nesting habits” to his agents. Reid called one of them a “stupid oaf” for forgetting “his promise” to collect the elusive warbler.

Irby eventually found a specimen, which he donated to the Natural History Museum for the “Nesting-Series of British Birds” at South Kensington, which aimed to teach the British public about their national birdlife. The new exhibition in 1882 was based on the collection of

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113 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 17 February 1878.
114 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 30 September 1877.
115 Ibid.
116 Yarrell et al., A History of British Birds, 399.
117 Ibid.
118 Reid, MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology, 31 May 1878.
119 Ibid.
groups of birds, nests, and eggs in their natural state from England, Scotland, and Ireland, with each of 159 species displayed in separate cases in the museum’s bird galleries, demonstrating their connection to the British landscape. In most instances, the nests were “exhibited with the actual, tree, rock, turf and other support which was found with them,” as well as the details of the collector, the county, and the date. Irby’s Dartford Warbler was described as a “local resident in the south of England and more rarely met with in the valley of the Thames and in some Midland counties.” It was displayed alongside other species such as the “Robin Redbreast,” one of Britain’s “most familiar and characteristic resident species…where legendary associations and its fearless nature have combined to make it a general favourite.” Robin Redbreast also embodied imperial aspirations as one reviewer in the *Magazine of Natural History* described its song as “self-gratulation,” which might, perhaps, be interpreted using William Cowper’s words: “I am monarch of all I survey, My right [here] is none to dispute, From the centre all round to the sea, I am lord of the fowl and the brute.”

Both Reid and Irby contributed significantly to the British Museum collection of native birds for the new gallery at South Kensington (Figure 21). According to Richard Bowdler Sharpe, head of the museum’s bird collections, if it were not “for the exertions” of [Reid and Irby], the Museum might have waited a long time for such rarities as the nests of the Black-throated Diver, the Hen Harrier, and… the Wigeon.” While at Aldershot, Reid conceived of an

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121 In the preface of the *Nesting-Series of British Birds* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1909).


123 Ibid, 14.


expedition in the Scottish Isles as a means of extending his knowledge of the range of British birds. Reid hoped to visit the “extreme north of Scotland, in Caithness”\textsuperscript{126} with Irby where the

\textbf{Figure 21}: Nesting-Series of British Birds at Natural History Museum at South Kensington, London, painted by Emily Mary Bibbens Warren in 1888, 15 December 2010, Natural History Museum, London, UK, photo by Kirsten Greer

\textsuperscript{126} Reid, \textit{MSS Stray Notes on Ornithology}, 16 April 1876.
moor was “a wild swamp or ‘floe’ much frequented in the breeding season by wild fowl and gulls of sorts.”

After his retirement, this became a focal point for Reid’s “annual expeditions in summer to the north of Scotland to obtain nesting-groups of British birds for the series in the British Museum.” Reid’s work thus helped to disseminate knowledge of British birds for a general public, and advanced the scientific understanding of avian lives in different regions of the British Empire.

Conclusion: Avian Notions of Nation

This chapter has examined how the production of ornithological knowledge by British military officers such as Captain Reid helped reformulate notions of nation and “British birds” back home in Britain, especially as officers returned home to Britain after tours of duty in the British Empire. Many officers such as Reid contributed to the development of British ornithology by publishing books or assisting with the arrangement of British birds at museums, thus helping to shape ideas about domestic birds for a general and scientific audience interested in birds and bird protection at the end of the nineteenth century.

Reid’s contributions to his native ornithology included the collection of avian specimens from Hampshire County when stationed at Aldershot. The imperial home station was an integral site for the maintenance of temperate martial masculinities in the imperial network of garrisons across the British Empire. From Aldershot, transient officers such as Reid could strengthen their sense of belonging to the nation by reacquainting themselves with metropolitan scientific, military, and family networks. Hampshire County also provided space for officers to ramble in the English countryside and exercise their temperate cultures of nature, especially after service in more tropical environments.

127 Ibid.
Reid’s ornithological knowledge of Aldershot, however, importantly included experiences in other parts of the empire, especially in Gibraltar, illustrating the connectivity of the British avian landscapes to other “places.” Officers stationed in the Mediterranean had started to piece together the migratory routes of certain birds, as well as an understanding of the effects of climate on avian species such as the European Robins in the semi-tropical environment. Such contingent knowledge underlines the importance of examining the trans-imperial formulation of ornithological and environmental ideas.
CHAPTER 8:
AVIAN COLONIAL AFTERLIVES

Little brother, would I could
Make it so far, the whole globe
Curling to the quick of your wing.

You leave our minds lagging
With no word for this gallant
Fly-by-night, blind flight.

But ah, the shot: you clot
In a cloud of feathers, drop
Dead in a nest of text-books.

Now seasons migration without you
Flying south. At the gunman’s door
The sea-grapes plump and darken. ¹

8.1 Reflexivity

I sit quietly in the natural history laboratories of the World Museum Liverpool, waiting for the assistant curator to return with a tray of stuffed bird specimens that I requested from the museum’s collections database. I am here today to piece together the “avian imperial archive.” These dead birds are material remnants of the collecting practices and transient careers of some of the British military officers in my study just as they are material evidence of historical avian ecologies of past places.

The assistant curator emerges with a box filled with stuffed bird skins from the collections room, each body packaged carefully in a plastic bag to preserve the specimen.² Hidden from the general public, these scientific objects are housed in the locked storage rooms of the museum a couple of floors down for their proper conservation. I am currently focused on the birds collected by Andrew Leith Adams (see Chapter 5), during his postings in India, Ireland,


² I would like to express my appreciation to Tony Parker and Clemency Fisher for helping me with my research request at the World Museum Liverpool.
Malta, and New Brunswick (Figure 22). I am particularly interested in the birds he amassed in Malta and Egypt as a way to trace his trans-imperial movements and networks while serving in the Mediterranean region. Other specimens of interest from Malta include those collected by fellow imperial officials: Royal Navy officer, William Jardine, son of Scottish naturalist Sir William Jardine (1800-1874); Reverend Henry Baker Tristram (1822-1906); and Charles Augustus Wright (1834-1907), editor of the *Malta Times*; all of whom contributed to a zoogeographical understanding of the Mediterranean and pursued British imperial interests in the region.³

![Image of bird specimens](image-url)

**Figure 22:** Author with Andrew Leith Adams’s specimens, New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, NB, 28 May 2011, photo by Sinead Earley


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When I see Adams’s birds for the first time, I am overwhelmed with excitement to reconnect with familiar species from his travel narratives, to handle their delicate bodies and to touch their feathers, to make them real in my geographical imagination. I note the diversity of species, which range from a male Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*) to a female Red-throated Pipit (*Anthus cervinus*). I am delighted to see the Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), a bird often described by British naturalists in the Mediterranean region. Because I am not a trained ornithologist or a curator of natural history, I rely on the expertise of curators and ornithological field guides to help me identify the Old World birds and their relations to the museum. The birds in front of me are mostly passerine species, commonly known as perching or songbirds, and most of them migrate as part of their life histories. The Northern Wheatear, for example, makes one of the longest journeys of any small bird, crossing ocean, ice, and desert, from Sub-Saharan Africa in spring over a vast area of the northern hemisphere that includes northern and central Asia, Europe, Greenland, Alaska, and parts of Canada. As material traces, the bodies of dead birds remind me of my limited knowledge of their “lives lived,” their regular movements across a myriad of landscapes and ecologies.

I delicately remove the birds from the plastic coverings and place the dead bodies on the table for examination and documentation with a digital camera. The smaller birds are limp and fragile, with some cotton batten poking out of their empty eye sockets. Most of the birds smell of the chemicals used in nineteenth-century taxidermy practices such as arsenic and formaldehyde. Some of the specimens smell of dead flesh; I flinch at the stench of a migrant Squacco Heron (*Ardeola ralloides*) as I take it out of its bag.

The birds are tagged with several labels tied around their legs, illustrating their multiple “afterlives” having been collected in colonial environments (Malta), transferred to private

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5 Barnes, "Lives lived and lives told,” 409-429.
collections (those of Adams, Jardine, Tristram), and then to public institutions (Merseyside Museum, Liverpool World Museum). To my surprise, Andrew Leith Adams’s original labels, made of pieces of cut-out calling cards and notebook covers of various dimensions, remain on the birds. Old cotton string is looped through a hole on the tag and tied to a bird’s leg. I clearly see the ways in which Adams has recorded his name, species, date, and the locality of the collected bird on the paper card. These are the same labeling techniques found on his birds housed at the Zoology Museum of Cambridge University. I’m slowly piecing together the collection of bird specimens from British military officers on their tours of duty.

This chapter is, in part, a reflection on my own archival and material culture research and travels, and the agency of the objects that I have included in my study. My travels and research illustrate a set of relations between the various “sites of science,” bird specimens, dead military figures, living descendants, museum curators, field-guides, digital cameras, and avian landscapes. As Jude Hill has stated, “collected objects play active roles within systems of negotiation and are part of the mutual constitution of biographies involving associated people, place and objects.”6 In retracing and reconstituting biographies, I become part of this process.

Donna Haraway once described the process of untangling “the patterns and knots”7 of scientific knowledge as requiring “great skill… One person can build up a large repertoire of string figures on a single pair of hands,” but “figures can be passed back and forth on the hands of several players, who add new moves in the building of

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complex patterns.”  As Haraway has stated, this is all about “collective work, of one person not being able to make all the patterns alone.”

In historical geography, Laura Cameron has encouraged us to think about creative ways to engage actively with our archival research, stating that using the archives “requires a delicacy of concern, and the business of sorting out what we need to know from what we do not need to know is highly contextual; such creative historical geography, shaped by curiosity and sensitivities to place, has no explicit guidelines. Being reflexive about our pleasures in research; why we do what we do and how, is importantly linked to that project.” I address this challenge by considering my own fieldwork experiences, the people who have helped me along the way, and the ways in which I have become part of the avian imperial archives (see Chapter 3).

8.2 Untangling “the Patterns and Knots”

My research encounters with the “British Mediterranean” have resulted in “some serious surprises” as I traced the trajectories of British military men and avian lives. When visiting Gibraltar, I found the British overseas territory small and confining but was struck by the physical presence of the “Rock” overlooking the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea in the Straits of Gibraltar. The Gibraltar landscape is replete with numerous British military material artifacts and monuments devoted to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Empire, including the original garrison walls, the tunnels from the Great Siege, the Anglican and Presbyterian garrison churches, and the Gibraltar Garrison Library. The visibility of British military culture through heritage artifacts,

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Cameron, “Oral history in the Freud archives,” 43.

plaques, and institutions as “landscapes of power”\textsuperscript{12} can be viewed as a political act to preserve Gibraltar’s historical connection to Britain in relation to the overseas territory’s ongoing struggles with Spain and its own independence.\textsuperscript{13}

When at the Library, I encountered Lorna Swift, the Honorary Librarian, who showed me the original copies of William Yarrell’s book on British birds to which British military officers would have referred when stationed at Gibraltar. I sat outside and smelled the lemon trees and touched the ancient dragon tree, trees that were present during the time of my British military officers at Gibraltar. Using my digital camera, I recorded these experiences, which I relive when I view the images from my fieldwork of my fieldwork in the Mediterranean. In so doing, I often recall the words of British military officer R. Lambert Playfair, who wrote: “What more instructive and captivating subject could be wished than the Mediterranean, Physical and Historical?”\textsuperscript{14}

Thanks to the staff of the Gibraltar Natural History Society, I had an opportunity to lodge at Bruce’s Farm on the Upper Rock of the Gibraltar Nature Reserve, which overlooked the Mediterranean Sea and the North African Coast. I met Damian Holmes, an employee of the Gibraltar Nature Reserve, who generously took me around the Rock, the caves and the site of the Great Siege, even the sites off limits to the general public such as the RAF outpost on the highest point of the territory. When I returned to Canada, I had the occasion to correspond with Mark G. Sanchez, a Gibraltarian author who generously shared his work with me, and helped me to understand the colonial term, “Rock Scorpion,” a derogatory descriptor used by British officials


\textsuperscript{13} After my visit to Gibraltar, I met a colleague in the Department of Geography at Cambridge University who is a direct descendant of Governor of Gibraltar and Royal Engineer officer General George Eliott, one of the heroes of the Great Siege of Gibraltar. I then revisited my Gibraltar photographs and found images of the memorial to Eliott.

\textsuperscript{14} R. Lambert Playfair, “Section E. Geography: opening address by Lieutenant Colonel Sir R. Lambret Playfair, K.C.M.G., H.M. Consul General in Algeria, President of the Section,” \textit{Nature} 42 (11 September 1890): 480-485; 480.
to denote a Gibraltarian of mixed British and Spanish descent. Akin to Sarah Whatmore’s experience in a different research context, data emerged here “not as nuggets of the ‘real world,’ or as so many ‘discursive constructs,’ but rather as intermediaries or ‘third parties’ between researchers and researched that are as material as they are meaningful.”

In Britain, I visited a number of nineteenth-century military and naval sites at Aldershot, Woolwich, Portsmouth, and Gosport. When touring Aldershot, “home of the British army,” I understood why officers perceived the military site as a “desert” in Hampshire (see Chapter 7). To my surprise I found the original trees planted by Royal Engineers officer Laffan in the North Camp. These trees were the same ones that provided cover for many bird species observed by some of my British military officers when stationed at Aldershot. I decided to collect oak, elm, and linden-tree leaves, as well as cones from a Douglas fir tree, which I use as “travelling objects,” much in the same way as my British military officers used their bird specimens as a means to “reassemble memories, practices, and even landscapes” of their overseas travels.

My natural history museum and archival visits allowed me to form a network of knowledgeable curators and archivists who helped me to negotiate the various “grids” during my research travels (see Chapter 3). Each museum and archives had its own set of procedures and ways in which to find specimens: from tracing the collections to the original donation books to the online catalogue systems of the museums. I would not have been able to conduct my research without their guidance and expertise.

One of the most memorable experiences of my research was my stay with a family descended from one of my officers. When I visited the family near Norwich, they asked me if I would be interested in seeing some of their ancestor’s old hunting journals from Gibraltar and


Morocco, which included sketches and photographs of his travels. I was shown a curiosity cabinet of family “souvenirs,” which displayed the officer’s cricket balls and possibly his old compass. There were also in his honeymoon travels, his fox hunting journals, and a diary listing his cricket matches with his regiment. I was ecstatic to see original correspondence with British and North American naturalists from different colonial postings. I spent the evening photographing the materials in the private study of the family’s home. I was also provided with a detailed family tree and photographs of the family members, which I saved onto my memory stick.

This intimate opportunity forced me to consider the ethics of writing the officer’s biography in relation to my developing relationship with his family. In particular, the hunting journal included several excerpts describing his racist perceptions of the Jews of Morocco. I immediately felt uncomfortable and began to worry about the family’s potential response to a critical reading of his writings. After much discussion, it was agreed upon that the officer’s views reflected a different time and place in British imperial history, and they would allow me to interpret his works as I saw fit. As Cameron argues, understanding archival research as a “fluid community process that recognizes power relations between researcher and researched as well as scholarly responsibilities to living, vulnerable people opens the archive to both risks and gains in reworking and explicitly addressing the social life of stories.”\textsuperscript{17} Such ethical considerations have helped me write the “life geographies” of the officers in my study and underline the need to acknowledge all of those who have helped me in my research.

These chance encounters also involved avian lives. I could, in part, understand my officers’ longing for home and family in foreign lands. Like some of my officers, I sought comfort in encounters with my “home” birds from North America in the collections of the natural history museums. I even rejoiced in meeting up with the locally much-reviled Canada Goose at

\textsuperscript{17} Cameron, “Oral history in the Freud archives,” 38.
Regent’s Park in London, at Trinity College, Cambridge, and at Lymington, Hampshire, each of which made me long for “home.” These affective relations with people, places, objects, and birds speak to the multiple actants involved in the formation of my historical-cultural geographical analysis of the intersection between nineteenth-century British military culture and ideas and practices of ornithology. They also reflect my own situated embodiments and institutional affiliations in the production of geographical knowledge.

8.3 Avian Colonial Continuities

One unexpected outcome of my research has been new insight regarding the impact of colonial cultures of nature on more contemporary issues of bird migration protection in the Mediterranean region, which would not have occurred had I not visited Malta.¹⁸ Bird hunting is still a hotly contested issue, as evident in the lead-up to the June 2009 EU elections when I was there in May. The southern European countries of Malta and Italy continue to be portrayed as a region where migratory birds are deemed “a harvest, and only one fate would await these birds: the pot.”¹⁹ The only refuge for these creatures, according to British writer Michael McCarthy, is in Britain’s overseas territory of Gibraltar, reiterating once again the moral righteousness of British cultures of nature in the Mediterranean.²⁰

Some have claimed that the European Union (EU) is another form of imperialism now imposed on the Maltese. Malta joined the EU in 2004 and in 2008 the EU declared a ban on the killing of migratory birds during the spring season. Under the EU Birds Directive, as well as its


amending acts, EU countries must seek to protect, manage, and regulate all bird species naturally living in the wild within the European territory of the Member States; the Directive includes the eggs of these birds, their nests and their habitats; and the regulation of the exploitation of these species. The Member States must also conserve, maintain, or restore the biotopes and habitats of these birds by: creating protection zones; maintaining the habitats; restoring destroyed biotopes; and creating biotopes.\(^2\) Although the Maltese government continued to sanction the hunting of the Common Quail and Turtle Doves, the government reversed its decision after BirdLife International and BirdLife Malta lodged a formal complaint with the EU Commission about the failure to ban the spring hunt completely.

BirdLife Malta has been instrumental in establishing bird sanctuaries, scientific monitoring, and public outreach to educate the Maltese on the importance of bird protection. These conservation efforts have proved fruitful with a resulting increase in bird populations and the diversity of species. For example, BirdLife Malta has documented the first confirmed breeding bird of prey in fifteen years. Following this year's spring hunting ban, a pair of Common Kestrels successfully bred and raised at least three chicks in the Maltese islands. Furthermore, the host family with whom I was staying for my research described their excitement in seeing Hoopoes in Malta, a sight they had not experienced in years. They also described the European Robin that visited their mother's birdfeeder on a regular basis.

Not surprisingly, the ban on the spring hunt has caused outrage among Maltese bird hunters and trappers who claim that it is their traditional and legal right to pursue spring hunting, which they have done since “time memorial.” Although the Federation of Hunting and Conservation Malta advocates for sustainable hunting practices, there remains great resistance to the restrictions imposed on their hunting practices during the spring season (Figure 23). The bird

sanctuaries set up to protect migratory birds are often trespassed by bird hunters who kill the protected species as a form of protest. Most alarming are the actions taken by the more resistant group of bird hunters who have uttered death threats, slashed tires, and torched the cars of some of the bird protection advocates. The Federation of Hunting and Conservation Malta has even issued a news release entitled “BirdLife Malta Infiltrates Education Department,” which lambasted the organization for its "gradual 'brain-washing' of our children through the supply of misinterpreted and misrepresented material facts, thus depriving them of a fair and unbiased platform about what the environment and conservation should be all about." For those involved with BirdLife Malta, these types of statements must be extremely frustrating.

As I observed during my short stay on the islands, the Maltese are ambivalent about Britain's involvement in Malta. Malta only gained independence from Britain in 1964, and formally cut ties in 1979 with the removal of British forces by then Prime Minister of Malta Dom Mintoff. Restrictions on Malta's cultural traditions (e.g. the use of fireworks at local village

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feasts) are often seen as interference from the EU. While there remains a significant British expatriate community living in Malta, I spoke with older Maltese residents about their feelings towards the British: they commented how Malta was never their own during British occupation yet they had good jobs and good pay. Nationalist sentiments can be traced back to the 1880s as many viewed Malta as an extension of Italy rather than as a British colony. These views intensified after the British expelled numerous nationalists to Uganda for fear of treason during the Second World War. As Jon Mitchell uncovered in his fieldwork, it is “commonly believed that the British deliberately kept the Maltese poor and ignorant because it served their interests.”

I could understand the Maltese resentment towards the British colonial experience because of similar sentiments expressed by nationalists/separatists in my own home province of Québec in Canada.

Animosity towards the British was evident during my field research, as many of the nineteenth-century British military heritage sites are now harder to find, taken over by Maltese institutions, or destroyed for housing developments. The cemetery Ta’ Braxia, the resting place of the nineteenth-century British colonial elite, now lies overgrown with weeds and filled with broken tombstones (Figure 24). Even Queen Elizabeth's former residence, where she lived for several years after her wedding to Prince Philip in 1947, is barely noticeable in a run-down part of town. Ashish Chadha suggests that this “discard, decay and abandonment of colonial memorial

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23 I gained much insight on these issues from Charles Farrugia, National Archivist of Malta, 18 May 2009.


26 I was fortunate to meet John Borg, Curator of the National Museum of Natural History Malta, and Charles Farrugia, both of whom helped me in my researches.
monuments in the postcolonial landscape stems from the ambivalent meanings that such a heritage site generates.”

Today, hundreds of British birders visit Malta on a yearly basis to observe the migration of birds but also to deter local bird hunters from killing them. Since the late 1990s, BirdLife Malta has organized a 'Raptor Camp' during the annual autumn raptor migration for both local and international volunteers to curtail illegal hunting activity. As BirdLife Malta states:

“This is no bird watching holiday, but a serious conservation effort (Figure 25)!” Here, the “modern geopolitical imagination” of the nineteenth-century British Mediterranean has retained

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some “elements of continuity” in the construction of the Maltese pot hunter. As Homi Bhabha has argued, the discursive strategy of colonial discourse is a “form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place,’ already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated.” As a result, it ensures the stereotype’s “repeatability” and circulation in changing historical contexts.

Figure 25: Author holding BirdLife Malta poster of a European Robin with the caption “Free, Alive, and Beautiful,” Kingston, ON, 25 May 2011, photo by Jeff Borisko


31 The European Robin or Robin Redbreast figures prominently in the anti-hunting campaigns organized by BirdLife Malta. As illustrated in my own research, the Robin has regularly elicited feelings of the “homeland” and Britishness. The species was among the first species protected in 1911 when the Maltese government established bird protection laws. More recently, it has been dubbed “UK's favourite bird - with its bright red breast it is familiar throughout the year and especially at Christmas! … Robins sing nearly all
Derek Gregory has suggested that in order to overcome this type of “colonial amnesia,” we must be made aware of colonial historical geographies. In October 2009, the President of the Royal Geographical Society Michael Palin urged Britons to “stop apologising for their colonial past and be proud of our Empire's achievements.” Set within the context of previous apologies for the nineteenth-century Irish potato famine and Britain's involvement in the slave trade by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Palin encouraged his audience to move forward from any perceived crimes of the past as a result of British imperialism. He emphasized the benefits accrued because of empire and concluded that: “We still have links with other countries — culturally, politically and socially — that, perhaps, we shouldn't forget.” While the subject of birds might seem benign in the more overt acts of violence of slavery and famine, a self-awareness and sensitivity of one’s position in the world as a result of the institutions, practices, and identities that emerged from the British Empire, is still needed in order to deconstruct and challenge the “colonial amnesia” of cultures of nature in particular places, such as in Malta. The annual presence of British “moral” birdwatchers as a means to combat the “savage” Maltese pot-hunter will not resolve the migratory bird hunting issue in Malta — it only repeats a stereotype and enlivens old tensions within a British colonial culture of nature that marginalized lower class Maltese in the nineteenth century.

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year round and despite their cute appearance, they are aggressively territorial and are quick to drive away intruders.” [http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/r/robin/index.aspx](http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/name/r/robin/index.aspx) (accessed 14 June 2011).


33 Michael Palin “Britons should stop apologising for their colonial past and be proud of our Empire's achievements,” see: Neil Sears, *Daily Mail* online, 2nd October 2009.

Conclusion: The Importance of Historical and Cultural Geography

This chapter was inspired in part by my own reflections on my doctoral project and my field research experiences, as I considered how I might account for myself in these networks of relations, past and present. It speaks to the agency of the archives — from private journals to dead bird specimens — but also considers the ethical relations between archives and researchers. My research strongly suggests that historical and cultural geographers must recognize the influence of varying field sites — from the formal archives to the private homes of descendants — and of curators, archivists, nature reserve employees, and families of the historical subjects in shaping different interpretations of the primary source materials. I also acknowledge the agency of the non-human world in these relations, and the birds (dead and alive) that followed their own life-paths mostly unbeknownst to humans. The success of my research at the archives and museums could not have been possible without the assistance of the archivists, curators, and colleagues, who have helped me along the way.

My experiences have also strengthened my conviction that a critical historical geopolitics of empire is important for understanding contemporary environmental issues in the Mediterranean. As I have demonstrated in my research findings, the stereotype of the colonial Maltese pothunter continues to circulate in Europe. A critical historical geopolitics of empire can help to trace the genealogies of colonial cultures of nature and to contextualize tensions among different actants in conservation efforts dedicated to migratory birds.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS
MILITARY ORNITHOLOGY IN PLACE: TERRITORIALITY, SITUATED KNOWLEDGES, AND HETEROGENEITIES

As regiments secured colonies and trade routes overseas, the British military embodied national and imperial power following the successes of the Napoleonic Wars and colonial expansion in Asia, North America, Africa, and the South Pacific. With unique flora and fauna new to science, British military sites provided ample opportunities for naturalist activities in the warzones, colonies, and informal sites of empire. The privileged and well-trained officer not only mastered cartography, gunnery, and fortification, but also scientific practices of classification, documentation, and travel-writing, which all helped to sustain the romance of warfare integral to British imperial culture. In the imperial imagination, officer-naturalists figured as transient men, circulating with their regiments “in a large orbit… in moving from post to post, from province to province, round the belt of the British possessions which encircles the globe” (Figure 26)¹

Historical and cultural geographical research has offered a rich body of literature to unravel the textures and complexities of mobile lives and trans-imperial movements. In this thesis, I have explored the intersection between British military culture and ideas and practices of field ornithology in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. I centred my project on the British Mediterranean as a site of convergence for transient British military field ornithologists and for migratory birds, tracing the “life geographies” of British military officers who pursued field ornithology, and analyzing the “avian imperial archive” (from military travel accounts to avian specimens). Using what I called a “critical historical geopolitics of empire,” which paid attention to situated knowledges and “place” in the production of geographical knowledge, I attempted to uncover the ways in which British military ornithology produced the British Mediterranean as a militarized, moral, and zoological region for the benefit of the state. The

¹ William Notman thus described the life of Lieutenant Colonel William Rhodes, a British military officer who settled in Quebec and maintained an interest in birds. William Notman, Portraits of British Americans (Montreal: William Notman, 1968), 74.
Figure 26: Some known routes of four British military officer-ornithologists and their formal postings in empire, ca. 1850-1880, cartography by Kirby Calvert
British Mediterranean was not just a “single geographic unit” or a two-way movement between metropole and periphery, but a series of networks (human and non-human) connecting people, birds, and places across (and beyond) the British Empire.

Concentrating on British military encounters with wild birds, I traced the spatiality of the production and accumulation of imperial environmental knowledge in different geographic locations. Live and dead birds were conceptualized as actants in the formation of officer-naturalists’ life-geographies, and their material presence illustrates how British military officers negotiated their identities and ornithological knowledge in relation to the various species they encountered and collected. The bodies of birds helped to materialize “diverse intersecting social worlds,” revealing the relational flows of people, birds, and places in the shaping of trans-imperial military geographies in the Mediterranean region.

9.1 Territoriality: Mediterranean Subregion

A key and unexpected finding of my doctoral research has been the contributions of British military officers to the emergence of zoogeography as a branch of biogeography concerned with the distribution of animal species across the globe, and a natural science and that was co-constituted in imperial geopolities. According to Nancy Jacobs, colonial ornithology was considered a “non-instrumental science,” which “yielded only small stakes in terms of extraction or governmentality” in the grand scheme of empire. When applying notions of “geopower,” however, my research revealed how avian zoogeography helped to sustain military fitness during war and times of peace. The acquisition and maintenance of the “empire route” to India depended on the efficiency of military manpower stationed at key sites in the Mediterranean,

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including Gibraltar and Malta. The disciplining of the military body through natural history fieldwork was one way to ensure the territorial presence in the region.

Territoriality was also expressed in the bodies of dead and live birds as British military officers collected “type localities” as a means to demonstrate imperial and moral presence, and to claim British migratory birds as their national possessions in the Mediterranean. In so doing, the network of British military ornithologists stationed at Gibraltar and Malta helped leading British naturalists to determine the zoological boundaries of the Mediterranean subregion. The emphasis on “locality” required the production of “on-the-spot” field knowledge, which was intimately tied to imperial place-making. The new ways of viewing the Mediterranean through the geographical mapping of type localities made visible the avian landscapes that linked zoologically North Africa to Europe. Such mappings also helped to produce an imperial imagination of the Mediterranean as a moral “semi-tropical” subregion for the “habitability” or cultural acclimatization of temperate British officers in transit to and from India.

The management and organization of “men and things” also extended to “British” migratory birds as important cultural resources in the maintenance of British military embodiments. As I uncovered in my research, the observation of British migratory birds in the Mediterranean region emerged as another way to connect with avian “landscapes of home” when on active duty overseas. Avian bodies provided a site for British military officers to essentialize ideas of “Britishness” and demonize other cultures of nature which, for example, saw nothing wrong with eating migratory songbirds in the British Mediterranean. These sentiments were often solidified and gained influence when British military officers returned “home” to Britain, and published works on British birds and assisted in their exhibition at British museums, which, in turn, helped to shape ideas of British national birds. As my thesis has demonstrated, avian imaginations were entwined with racist, nationalistic, and gendered ideas about particular places.
9.2 Situated Knowledges: Temperate Martial Masculinities

By focusing on the life geographies of four officer-ornithologists, my research findings revealed the various forms of temperate martial masculinities in British military culture in specific “places.” The production of the British military scientific hero in the Crimea served as an important national symbol in attempts to gain public support for military expenditure abroad, particularly in the aftermath of the Crimean War, a campaign waged to secure British geopolitical interests in the Mediterranean. As a member of the Ordnance Corps, Captain Thomas Wright Blakiston, Royal Artillery, emerged as an ideal exemplar of the dual role of military life and scientific endeavours in imperial careering. Blakiston’s achievements would be memorialized in his published accounts in *The Zoologist* and in his collection of birds of the Crimea at the Royal Artillery Institution, the prestige of which helped to provide him with opportunities to join scientific expeditions to British North America, China, and Japan. The British military scientific hero demonstrated composure in the “theatre of war,” asserted authority in the “field,” and amassed scientific trophies of war for a British audience at home.

The British Army Medical Department promoted natural history fieldwork as a necessary pursuit in a trans-imperial career. Scottish army surgeon, Andrew Leith Adams, 22nd Regiment, endorsed ornithology as part of a liberal education to help officers maintain a temperate military fitness in colonial stations in different climes. Key to Adams’s temperate martial masculinity was the notion of rational restraint and morality, which also extended to a specific climatic zone that shaped an officer’s “character.” The idea of a “temperate” comportment emerged from his trans-imperial travels to different geographical regions of the globe, and as a by-product of his anxieties over the degeneration of British physical and mental culture in tropical regions. In the British Mediterranean, “semi-tropicality” involved aspects of both tropical and temperate climatic conditions, the presence of British middle and upper class women, and the seasonal migrations of “British” birds, all of which helped to regulate temperate martial embodiments and the naturalization of Britain’s imperial presence in the region.
Notions of a temperate martial masculinity also were enacted in Gibraltar, where Lieutenant Colonel Irby, 74th Regiment, embodied both a moral and muscular masculinity in his scientific fieldwork. Influenced by a humanitarian network in Norwich, England, and his experiences in the “Indian Mutiny” in India, Irby advocated an ethical approach to bird collecting as a way to mediate the “savage” within himself and to ensure the production of objective knowledge of birds. However, Irby also engaged in heroic feats in his pursuit of birds, eggs, and nests on “the Rock,” reinforcing imperial territorial presence in the Straits of Gibraltar. Here, martial masculinity was explored in connection with a particular landscape in the Mediterranean, revealing how embodiments could be both mobile and place-specific.

By focusing on the military site of Aldershot, I tried to demonstrate how British military field ornithology in Hampshire helped to conceptualize the designation of British, national migratory birds as important cultural resources in maintaining temperate cultures of nature, which, in turn, helped to shape ideas of bird protection and conservation in Britain. Captain Philip Savile Grey Reid, Royal Engineers, contributed significantly to the ornithology of Hampshire and ideas of “native birds,” providing a moral basis for ideas of bird protection in the British Isles when stationed at the imperial home station. Reconnecting to metropolitan scientific, military, and family networks, as well as conducting fieldwork in the Hampshire countryside, helped to sustain Reid’s English gentlemanly identity and his temperate martial masculinity.

9.3 Revealing Heterogeneities: Military Life Geographies

A life geography approach in this work was intended not simply to reconstruct the lives of British military officers but rather to investigate the very different ways in which they “negotiated (and [were] negotiated by)”\(^4\) the various colonial settings in which they were

stationed and did ornithological fieldwork. Accordingly, I paid particular attention to their mobile embodiments and the impact of different locales, peoples, and natural habitats on their production of environmental knowledge at each colonial site within the wider British imperial network. The positionality of British military officers in different colonial sites, and their encounters with local Indigenous peoples, colonists, and migratory birds, provided an excellent opportunity for interrogating how ideas, identities, practices, and performances of field ornithology emerged “trans-imperially” as officers moved from one imperial site to the next.

Certainly many aspects of their lives overlapped: however, this methodology also permitted a closer examination of the heterogeneity of experiences, networks, and cultural encounters. For example, officers had different regimental cultures and educational backgrounds, and these, in turn, influenced their military identities, fieldwork practices, and networks of trust. Both Blakiston and Reid trained as Ordnance cadets at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, but served in different regiments. As a member of the Royal Artillery, Blakiston followed in the footsteps of previous Royal Artillery officer-scientists — including Sir Charles Blagden and Sir Edward Sabine, Presidents of the Royal Society — who maintained a passion for birds. Reid, however, was commissioned to the Royal Engineers, a regiment devoted to its engineering tradition and which often competed with the Royal Artillery for scientific prestige.

Special attention to biography and “place” revealed different notions of Britishness and privileged whiteness in British military culture. Adams, for instance, came from humble beginnings in northeast Scotland and sought opportunities as a military surgeon in the British Army. His Britishness thus was tied to social mobility within Britain, and to his encounters with European East India Company officials in India.⁵ As a Scot of modest origins, Adams, however, attained the social status of Blakiston, Irby, and Reid, all of whom came from the English landed gentry. For Adams, life in empire allowed him the freedom to move beyond the social and

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⁵ Linda Colley discusses how “Britishness” was a Scottish invention. See: Colley, Britons, 120-132.
oppressive conventions of English life, while his “home” and his homeland birds would forever be tied to the Grampian Mountains of northeastern Scotland. He once recalled his “pleasurable remembrances of foreign lands merely by comparison with less agreeable scenes at home, and particularly when contrasted with dismal London fogs and uninviting landscapes.”

The notion of the “semi-civilized” southern European and their “pothunting” practices resulted from multiple cultural encounters in the Mediterranean region and in other parts of the British Empire, including at “home” in Britain. Blakiston and Irby both engaged with Crimean indigenous Tartars in the Crimean War, as well as French soldiers who practiced pot-hunting in the “theatre of war.” Many officers, including Blakiston, also sampled non-traditional game birds, but retained high opinions of themselves as moral men of science. Adams and Irby formed racialized views of colonial Indians after their own experiences in India during the Second Sikh War and the “Indian Mutiny.” Irby’s involvement in India, in particular, accentuated his prejudices regarding the untrustworthiness of Bengalis. In Gibraltar, British military officers such as Irby and Reid perpetuated the stereotype of the pothunting “Rock Scorpion” as a way to denigrate the locals as undeserving colonials. Similar sentiments were expressed in Malta, where officers such as Adams highlighted the great avian carnage perpetrated by the Maltese. When back “home” in Britain, officers, including Reid, contrasted their temperate cultures of nature with the hunting practices of rural Britons, who engaged in unrestrained and wanton destruction of native birdlife. Examining differences and resonances between colonial cultures of nature can shed light on the British military’s relationship to nation and empire, as well as ornithological practice.

Following life geographies is revealing but it is also tremendously difficult to do comprehensively, and I recognize its limits. All four military men served in different stations across the British Empire, making it nearly impossible to account for all of the particularities of

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“place,” and the role of other networks of empire (e.g. North Atlantic and Indian Ocean) in shaping their identities and ideas and practices of ornithology. Similarly, while I attempted to trace the “lives” of specimens and avian species, it became too challenging to follow the different trajectories and their changing meanings in varying sites and collections. There is potential in georeferencing the avian specimens using Geographical Information Systems to highlight in more detail the movement of specimens and military men in different places and times. Although such work would be time consuming and labour intensive, military avian specimens include detailed information on locality, species names, dates, and habitat descriptions, which would allow for the mapping of historical landscape changes, distribution of avian species, and military trajectories of British military men at particular times.

Nevertheless, I would argue that an inductive approach to tracing the life geographies of British military officers using the fragments of the avian imperial archive has provided an exciting, creative, and fruitful avenue of uncovering connections and relations previously overlooked, including the role of the military in zoogeography. Framed by a critical historical geopolitics of empire, it helped to elaborate and complicate notions of the British Mediterranean, temperate martial masculinities, and “British” national birds. Such an approach also sheds light on the avian colonial afterlives of British temperate cultures of nature in the Mediterranean, as well as the researcher’s involvement in the avian imperial archive. In all these ways, it calls attention to the role of the British military and birds in the geographical tradition.
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   Emily Mary Bibbens Warren Watercolour Series
   Keeper of Zoology's Correspondence and Files

Natural History Museum, Ornithological Library, Tring
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   Philip Savile Grey Manuscript Collection

Norfolk County Record Office, Norwich
   John Henry Gurney of Northrepps and Keswick Papers
   Irby Family of Boyland Hall, Morningthorpe, Papers

Perth & Kinross Council Archive, Perth
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Reid Private Collection
   Philip Savile Grey Reid Papers

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University of St. Andrew’s University, St. Andrew’s
   Robert Lambert Playfair Papers
1.1.2 Natural History Collections

This thesis also is informed by research carried out in the following natural history collections, in particular, those museums which hold avian specimens from the British Mediterranean and Aldershot, Hampshire, England.

Andrew Leith Adams

Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK
Natural History Museum, Tring, UK
University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK
World Liverpool Museum, Liverpool, UK
L. Howard Irby
Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK
Natural History Museum, Tring, UK
Norwich Museum, Norwich, UK
University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK

Thomas Wright Blakiston
Natural History Museum, Tring, UK

Philip Savile Grey Reid
Natural History Museum, Tring, UK
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New Brunswick Museum, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada
Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Washington D.C., USA

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