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Dangerous Meats in Colonial Hà Nội

In his pioneering article “Colonial Governmentality,” anthropologist David Scott asks the question, “In any historical instance, what does colonial power seek to organize and reorganize?”¹ The imposition of French colonial governance over Vietnam involved the organization and reorganization of multiple areas of social life, but one underlying effort in this broader agenda focused on what could legitimately circulate therein. In the case of the colonial economy, a fitting example was the establishment of government monopolies on alcohol, opium, and salt, which sought to restrict the production, distribution, and sale of these commodities. Colonial public health policies could impose similar restrictions, such as the isolation of female prostitutes infected with venereal diseases in official health facilities or the establishment of sanitary cordons around villages in which a cholera or smallpox outbreak had occurred. These sets of examples involve the imposition of restrictions on circulation, of commodities in the former case or people and pathogens in the latter, and each have their distinctive “political rationalities,”² be it the generation of revenue or the protection of public health.

In his research on the alcohol monopoly, Gerard Sages demonstrates that the imposition of such restrictions had significant consequences. In terms of governance, the establishment and enforcement of the monopoly led to the development of “new forms of administration,”³ a point most

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evident in the extraordinary growth of the Department of Customs and Excise.⁴ Sasges also argues that, in order to properly function, the monopoly “required the creation of vast and intrusive networks of surveillance and control focused ostensibly on the interdiction of contraband.”⁵

This article’s purpose is to examine a different sector of social life that the colonial state reorganized, surveilled, and attempted to control—Hà Nội’s meat market. Starting with legislation passed in April 1888, the colonial government began to assert control over meat in Hà Nội with the establishment of the Municipal Slaughterhouse [*Abattoir municipal*] and an associated system for the inspection and verification of meat. In the following decades, the infrastructure for controlling the circulation of meat continued to develop, but from the perspective of city administrators, these efforts were never fully effective, as evidenced by the thriving black market in meat. The situation became so acute that in 1937 Hà Nội’s mayor, Edouard Virgitti, and the Director of the Municipal Hygiene Service, Dr. Bernard Joyeux, wrote a lengthy pamphlet, entitled *La Question des Viandes dans la Ville de Hanoi* [The Question of Meats in the City of Hà Nội], in which they asserted that these repeated violations of city ordinances resulted in the presence of “dangerous meats” [*viandes dangereuses*] in Hà Nội’s food supply.⁶

One of this article’s empirical objectives is to examine the scale of the alleged dangers in the meat supply, a point that will be assessed through an examination of slaughterhouse data from the 1930s. The deeper objective is to draw out the implications of the new meat system for understanding the nature of and responses to colonial governance. Regulation of the meat trade in colonial Hà Nội was unique as it straddled significant distinctions. By definition, the new system attempted to shift the boundaries between public and private by asserting greater government control over the formerly private act of slaughter.⁷ Similar to the monopolies, the meat regulation system existed as a mechanism to generate revenue, in this case through slaughter taxes, but it also functioned as a mechanism to protect public health, which created competing though complementary justifications for its existence and activities. These justifications added an extra dimension to the conception of meat as contraband and played a role in restating differences between colonizers and colonized as manifest in notions of the edibility or inedibility

of meat. Finally, the establishment of the new system in colonial Hà Nội had to contend with a critical legal reality in which French law prevailed in Hà Nội, which was classified as a colony, while its surrounding territories were under Vietnamese jurisdiction since they were protectorate land. This distinction played a critical role in the administrative and geographical structuring of the nature of unsanctioned activities associated with the new system. As will be demonstrated, contending with these distinctions produced unique responses from both the colonial administration and the indigenous population that sought to circumvent the new system.

Animals, Meat, and Precolonial Ecology

In order to appreciate the changes associated with the creation of a regulated meat market in colonial Hà Nội, it is useful to first describe human-animal relations in precolonial Hà Nội. When French officials began asserting control over Hà Nội in the mid-1880s, they had to contend with an urban ecology that was in many ways markedly different from that of the French metropole. Administratively, the city had been under the control of the Vietnamese mandarinat, but that government had lacked any official organizations devoted to either the protection of public health or the food system's security. This absence had several important consequences for human relations with animals and meat. At the time, humans in the city shared the landscape with a wide variety of species. There were large numbers of what the French settlers considered "harmful animals" [*animaux nuisibles*], such as rats and crows. Such animals created concern because of the economic damage they could cause as well as, in the case of rats, their ability to transmit disease. Some families kept pets, such as cats or dogs, though many dogs were kept as guard dogs, and the city also had large numbers of stray dogs [*chiens errants*]. According to a 1902 report, there were also large numbers of animal stables in the city as well as in the Suburban Zone surrounding the city. These stables held larger animals used for milk or meat, but according to the report, they were "poorly maintained, a grave source of insalubrity."⁸

By the time of the French arrival, Hà Nội had for centuries been the Red River delta's primary commercial entrepôt and was known informally as Kê Market [*Kê Chợ*]. The combination of its economic centrality and the

absence of overarching administrative control had the important consequence that animals circulated within the city and between the city and the rest of northern Vietnam. Even after decades of French attempts to monitor and structure animal movements, Hà Nội continued to receive animals from outlying areas, sometimes in unpredictable manners. Smaller animals were transported in simple conveyances into and around the city, while large animals were moved in large trade networks. Dr. Adrien Le Roy des Barres, in a report on the functioning of the slaughterhouse in 1923, comments that due to an outbreak of bovine plague, eighty-five percent of the cattle and sixty percent of the buffalo slaughtered in the slaughterhouse had been purchased in Dong Dang market in the northern highlands, while the principle locales for the pork supply were the provinces of Hải Dương, Nam Định, and Hà Đông.⁹ In the late 1920s, French officials prepared a comprehensive accounting of the Tonkin animal trade. In addition to noting the importation into Hà Nội of bovines from Annam, they also describe the movement of animals to and from China and Hong Kong as well as between different locations in Tonkin.¹⁰ According to Pierre Gourou's 1936 account in *Les Paysans du Delta Tonkinois* [The Peasants of the Tonkin Delta], the Red River delta had an active trade in animals, particularly in more than twenty "livestock markets" [*les marchés aux bestiaux*]. These markets were distinct from other periodic markets that sold such basic provisions as food and butchered meat. Two of the most important animal markets were Phù Lưu, located to the east of Hà Nội in Bắc Ninh province, and Cầu Đơ, located to its south in Hà Đông province.¹¹ These and other markets constituted important sites for the circulation of animals in the delta and ultimately into Hà Nội. As an urban space, therefore, Hà Nội was a hub for the entry of animals and any parasites or infectious diseases that they might bring with them.

Many of the animals that humans shared the Hà Nội landscape with did not enter the human food chain, and given the general poverty of the period, meat was not a regular part of the Hà Nội diet.¹² Nevertheless, meat was available in the city in a number of different ways. There were some streets that specialized in the sale of particular types of animal flesh, such as *Hàng Cá* devoted to fish and *Hàng Gà* devoted to poultry, both of which were located in the city's old quarter. The city also had over a dozen permanent



FIG. 83. -- (D.) Marchande de chiens et de volailles. *Đàn bà bán chó và gà vịt.*

FIG. 83: Dog and fowl merchants.

market areas, such as the Cửa Đông, Cửa Nam, and Đông Xuân markets, where families could provision themselves with meat of popular animals, such as beef, buffalo, pork, or more infrequently dog. Images from the turn of the twentieth century (see figs. 83–87) illustrate that a common place for the sale of uncooked meat was a simple market stall constructed of bamboo, wood, and/or thatch. The meat was placed on the surface and displayed uncovered for inspection by customers. There were also ambulant traders who sold both live animals, such as dogs or poultry, and cooked meats, such as roast pork. As for the social production of meat, animal slaughter was carried out privately, usually by families who killed smaller animals, although there were individuals who worked regularly as butchers. Slaughter was conducted in places of convenience, even on street sides and courtyards, and Hà Nội lacked any permanent structure resembling a slaughterhouse. Significantly, meat that had been slaughtered was not subject to any system of inspection.

Governmentality I: Regulating Slaughter and Animals

It was this fluid and porous environment that the French colonial administration began to reorganize and exert its control over in the late 1880s. In a manner that complemented efforts being made for the human population, the dominant justifications for the assertion of control over the animal



FIG. 84. — (D.) Marchande de viande de chien.
Người đàn bà bán hàng thịt chó.

FIG. 84: Dog meat merchant.



FIG. 85. — (D.) Charcuterie. *Hàng thịt.*

FIG. 85: Pork products merchant.

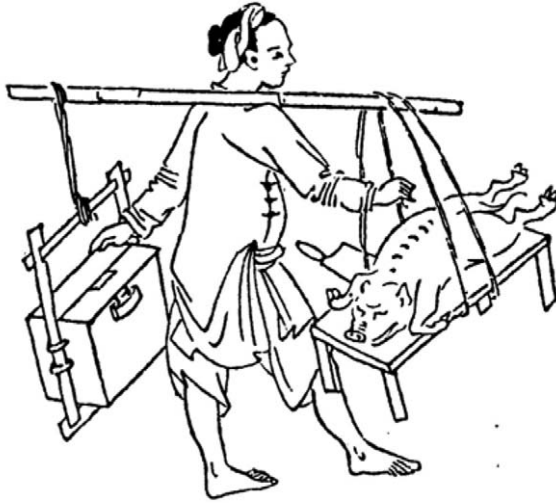


FIG. 86. — (D.) Marchande de porc rôti. Người buôn bán rong thịt lợn quay.

FIG. 86: Roast pork merchant.



FIG. 87. — (D.) Marchande de pâté de porc. Nhà làm giò; người đàn bà pha thịt, người đàn ông giã giò.

FIG. 87: Pounded pork roll [giò] merchant.¹

¹All images from Pierre Huard and Maurice Durand, *Connaissance du Việt-Nam* [Knowledge of Vietnam] (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1954), 196–200.

population were to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and protect the public health, although in this case the effort applied to protecting the health of *both* humans and animals. As was the case with other aspects of colonial rule, the realization of this goal took place within a bureaucratic context in which legislation was enacted that delineated the establishment of new institutions and the powers they could exercise in social life. The first piece of legislation that initiated the colonial government's control over human-animal relations and meat arrived in 1888 with the establishment of the Municipal Slaughterhouse. The city of Hà Nội, despite the French presence in the city since 1884, was only officially established as a municipality on July 19, 1888. However, by April 6, 1888 the interim administration had already passed a directive that established a municipal slaughterhouse and laid down the outlines for the conduct of animal slaughter therein. According to the directive's second article, from May 20, 1888 (the date when the slaughterhouse was scheduled to begin operations), no horned animals or pigs destined for commercial sale could be slaughtered outside of the slaughterhouse and "meat destined for alimentation" was to go through it.¹³ Exceptions were made for individuals who sought to slaughter pigs for noncommercial purposes in their homes (this was later modified with the April 16, 1892 directive that required asking the mayor's permission first). With the slaughterhouse's opening, all indigenous sites for slaughter were to be closed down. The French administration at one level defended its new slaughterhouse in terms of the need to protect public health since, in the eyes of French veterinarians and officials, there was too much infected or tainted meat in the Hà Nội meat supply. When trying to justify the slaughterhouse's construction in an 1887 report, an official declared that the Vietnamese "are not afraid of slaughtering a sick animal, and often sick to the point of creating a serious peril."¹⁴ An October 1888 article in the French newspaper *L'Avenir du Tonkin* directly echoed this theme when the author commented, "We built the slaughterhouse with the intention, without any doubt, of obliging the Indigènes, as well as the butchers, to observe the laws of hygiene and cleanliness and to exercise control over meats that are destined for consumption."¹⁵

A more fundamental reason was financial. By establishing the slaughterhouse, the city administration hoped to control all slaughter so that it could collect a tax on every animal slaughtered. Cows, buffalos, horses, and mules

were charged the highest tax at 1.20 piasters per animal. Pigs of fifteen kilograms or more were taxed at 0.60 piasters per animal, but since they were slaughtered in greater numbers, they provided more revenue.¹⁶ To give one example, in 1915 the city received approximately 10,844.40 piasters in taxes for the 9,307 cows, buffaloes, horses, and mules slaughtered at the Municipal Slaughterhouse, while the 30,931 pigs slaughtered there generated approximately 18,558.60 piasters. In a June 21, 1887 letter to the president and members of the Municipal Consultative Commission, the Vice-Resident of Hà Nội had even gone so far as to declare that the city should build a slaughterhouse so that the revenues could be used to finance construction in the city.¹⁷ French official control over meat was thus to become an important financial component in building the city.

The next major assertion of control over Hà Nội's animals came in April of 1898 when the French law of July 21, 1881 that established the "Sanitary Police for Animals" [*Police Sanitaire des Animaux*] was officially enacted in Indochina.¹⁸ This law's purpose was to prevent or limit the spread of contagious diseases from infected animals to other animals or humans. In its initial sections, the law detailed the various infectious diseases that needed to be monitored and in which species to monitor them. For example, bovine plague was to be monitored in all ruminants; foot-and-mouth disease in cattle, sheep, goats, and pigs; and rabies and anthrax in all animals.¹⁹ Responsibility for monitoring for diseases fell squarely upon animal owners. If an animal was found to be or suspected of being infected, local officials and veterinarians were to be promptly notified and the suspected animal was to be immediately isolated. This legislation also gave local authorities, who were to work in consultation with and receive the advice of a veterinarian, a wide range of powers over animals. Officials could order the isolation of suspect animals and compel the disinfection or destruction of any objects the animal(s) had come into contact with. In some cases, such as with bovine plague or rabies, they could order the animal's immediate destruction. In the case of rabies, all other animals the infected animal had come into contact with, even those without symptoms, could be destroyed as well. In its closing section, the law prohibited the slaughter for human consumption of the flesh of animals that had been infected with such diseases as bovine plague, anthrax, or rabies. Their corpses were to be buried intact instead.²⁰ An

August 1899 directive outlined the requirements for the locales used to bury animals that died of infectious diseases and mandated that these sites be enclosed and marked with signs in French and Vietnamese forbidding entrance.²¹

For Hà Nội's authorities, their assertion of control over the region's animal population took a number of immediate forms. One of the more spectacular early episodes in Hà Nội occurred during a 1902 plague outbreak when the authorities offered a cash payment to Vietnamese citizens for every one hundred dead rats they captured and killed. In the period between early April and early June, tens of thousands of rats were killed and their carcasses then boiled in cauldrons next to the main police station in order to disinfect them.²² A more constant concern was the transmission of rabies within the city, particularly by rabid dogs. Hà Nội historically had large numbers of stray dogs and in January 1892 municipal authorities passed an order that restricted the movement of dogs on public byways. Motivated by the "regrettable injuries that had recently been caused by bites from rabid dogs," the authorities required all dogs in public to have a collar and a muzzle.²³ Any suspect animals, whether they had bitten another animal or been bitten themselves, were to be immediately seized and taken to the pound for evaluation by a veterinarian. All animals diagnosed with rabies were to be immediately destroyed.²⁴ Revisions of the regulations on rabid dogs continued over the following decades. In 1904, legislation was introduced that allowed the slaughter of stray dogs found without collars or with unknown owners after being held for twenty-four hours.²⁵ The authorities' fears about rabies were not unfounded: between 1902 and 1911, the Antirabies Institute in Hà Nội treated an average of 178 people for rabies each year; there were approximately two fatalities annually.²⁶ By 1930 the Pasteur Institute was treating over three hundred cases, of which there were eleven fatalities, although in both of these cases some of those treated came from outside the city.²⁷

The circulation of stray dogs within Hà Nội pointed to a much larger issue facing the city's authorities: their inability to create effective controls that restricted the movement of animals both within the city and between the city and its environs. An early attempt to establish a structure to monitor this situation was the Zootechnical and Epizootic Service for Indochina,

established in November 1901.²⁸ This service was to work in conjunction with the Sanitary Police for Animals and monitor issues related to animal husbandry, as well as disease outbreaks among animals, known as epizooties. The monitoring structure was then strengthened in November 1905 when Tonkin was divided into six “Veterinary Sectors” [*Secteurs Vétérinaires*]. Hà Nội was placed in the Hà Nội sector, which included the city itself as well as the nearby provinces to the south and west, all of which lay on the Red River’s western bank. Each sector appointed one veterinarian tasked with ensuring the Zootechnical and Epizootic Service’s proper functioning. The six-sector structure was expanded to ten sectors in 1907.²⁹ The important consequence for Hà Nội was that this legislation initiated the process of establishing boundaries around the city wherein meat and animals entering the city were to be inspected. In the succeeding decades, the colonial administration continued to develop and refine this structure. In July of 1918, a directive was passed that required all bovines, buffalo, and goats to submit to a “sanitary visit” [*visite sanitaire*] and receive a “sanitary certificate” [*certificat sanitaire*] at specific inspection stations in order to enter the city.³⁰ A November 1925 city ordinance prohibited holding live animals and fowl in the city prior to selling them, and when brought in, they needed to be kept in special locales and receive the mayor’s permission to be there.³¹ In a June 1933 report, the Municipal Veterinary Inspector of Hà Nội described an elaborate structure in which the city’s Veterinary Service, Hygiene Service, and police exercised extensive control over the city’s animals and meat. The Veterinary Service carried out the majority of the important tasks, such as the surveillance of dairies, stables, butcher shops, the slaughterhouse, and meat in the markets. They were aided by the Hygiene Service, which analyzed milk samples and monitored animals that bit others or showed rabies symptoms, and also by the police, who seized corrupted or fraudulent meat and dealt with stray dogs.³² This latter task proved to be significant. For example, according to a report by the Municipal Hygiene Service in 1931, the police had captured at night and then destroyed 421 stray dogs in 1930 and 714 in 1931.³³

Governmentality II: Creating Meat in Colonial Hà Nội

With the establishment of this new system, the French colonial authorities, in a manner similar to Mary Douglas’s comments about “chasing dirt,” were

“positively reordering” their environment and “making it conform to an idea.”³⁴ In this case, the dominant idea was that colonial Tonkin and Hà Nội were environments in which parasites and pathogenic organisms thrived and easily circulated, thus requiring measures to limit their circulation, especially in the food supply. This agenda took a number of forms, such as continual efforts to ensure the safety of the water and milk supplies and episodic prohibitions on the consumption of uncooked fruits and vegetables during cholera epidemics.³⁵ The creation of this new administrative structure also had significant consequences for the social production of meat. What had previously been a private activity conducted without official concern or scrutiny for Hà Nội residents immediately became a focus of official surveillance.

Before analyzing the implications of this new system, it is useful to make some observations on the nature of meat. As anthropologists have discussed, while use of the term meat has a commonsensical and everyday quality, the term conceals a number of interesting and important sociocultural subtleties. Most definitions refer to meat as deriving from the flesh of animals, particularly flesh that is acceptable for human consumption. However, as anthropologist Nick Fiddes argues in *Meat: A Natural Symbol*, while the flesh of some animals often definitively belongs in this category, such as that of cows or pigs in many societies, variations can exist regarding the membership of others, such as poultry and especially fish.³⁶ These variations attest to the culturally constructed nature of the category and, as Fiddes rightly notes, its definitional complexities.³⁷ A different approach to defining meat is advanced by Noëlie Vialles in her monograph on French slaughterhouses, *Animal to Edible*.³⁸ In this study, Vialles examines the operations of slaughterhouses in order to understand the cultural dynamics of the transition from animal to meat that occurs within their confines. For something to become meat, she argues, it must fulfill two important requirements. Similar to Fiddes, she observes that defining meat as “an edible product of animal origin” is inadequate because it obscures the fact that there are some living organisms that can be classified as “animals,” but the flesh of which is not meat, such as the flesh of the puffin, which was regarded as fish in medieval England.³⁹ Vialles therefore argues that meat must come from what are culturally regarded as “permitted species” and in some contexts the flesh

of some animals, such as cats, cannot become meat.⁴⁰ Beyond meeting the appropriate classificatory requirements, the provenance of meat is culturally significant as well since “meat is obtained only by slaughtering animals.” As she argues, animals that die naturally, or from illness or accident, “are thought of as unfit to eat.” To become meat, therefore, a culturally acceptable animal must be slaughtered, in a culturally appropriate way, particularly by the shedding of its blood. Significantly, she notes that over time in Europe, although animal slaughter remained a common activity, it underwent an important spatial transformation from being an event performed in public, such as in ritual contexts or in public squares or streets, to “an invisible, exiled, almost clandestine activity.”⁴¹ The slaughterhouse, therefore, became the culturally recognized and accepted place for animal slaughter.

Vialles’ arguments compellingly demonstrate that the cultural categorization of meat is always linked to definitions of edibility, but it is also the end result of a set of culturally prescribed processes. With the 1888 construction of Hà Nội’s slaughterhouse, French authorities initiated a process that sought to redefine what could be considered as meat fit for human consumption. On May 12, 1888 an ordinance was passed that detailed which animals were to be slaughtered therein. The list included buffaloes, bulls, cows, horses, mules, pigs, calves, sheep, and goats. It excluded all fish and fowl, but in an interesting acknowledgment of Vietnamese culinary practices, permitted the slaughter of dogs.⁴² As noted above, the earliest versions of the regulations permitted the independent slaughter of pigs, though this was later restricted in April 1892. This later ordinance was significant as it forbade the sale of any meat that had been slaughtered outside the slaughterhouse. Official control over meat received its strongest expression in a June 21, 1910 ordinance that stated, “It is forbidden to slaughter outside the Municipal Slaughterhouse any animals destined for consumption.”⁴³

The articulation of this new system established a new set of rules regarding the creation of edible animal flesh, but from as early as the 1888 ordinance, officials made it clear that slaughter was not to interfere with efforts to increase the cattle population, so cows could not be slaughtered unless they could no longer reproduce. The slaughter of pregnant cows was also forbidden, but if it was conducted, its flesh was “considered unhealthy.”⁴⁴ For the other animals that arrived at the slaughterhouse, the transition to

slaughter first involved a waiting period in which they were held in a stable and given a medical inspection by a veterinarian. If the animal appeared healthy, slaughter was initially to occur “the next day.”⁴⁵ This was later clarified with a 1918 ordinance the required slaughter within twenty-four hours.⁴⁶ Some animals, it should be noted, were inspected and determined to be too ill, unhealthy, or otherwise unsuitable for slaughter, and as such were turned away.

Little information exists on the actual act of slaughter within the slaughterhouse or the conditions therein. A city ordinance restricted slaughter to the period between 3:00 pm and 9:00 am,⁴⁷ but according to a 1924 report by Le Roy des Barres, then director of Hà Nội’s Hygiene Bureau, a lack of lighting within the facility necessitated slaughter in the morning. He also noted that inadequacies in the facility prevented adequate drainage within, creating “bad smells” [*mauvaises odeurs*].⁴⁸ Virgitti and Joyeux later claimed that slaughter occurred between 3:30 and 5:30 am, so that it could be presented to the veterinarian for inspection at 5:30 am.⁴⁹ Regarding the personnel or techniques employed therein, little direct evidence exists, though it is fair to conjecture that the process was similar to “artisanal slaughter” employed in France in which small teams of men working in individual “slaughter rooms” [*échaudoirs*] collaboratively slaughtered individual animals, rather than the assembly line-like “industrial slaughter” favored in the contemporary United States. As for the personnel conducting the slaughter, they likely would have primarily been Vietnamese who had received some level of training or supervision by French personnel. Such assertions, however, remain conjecture. Le Roy des Barres did note that in 1923 there were usually some twenty children, ranging from seven to twelve years of age, who were employed to remove small pieces from slaughtered flesh, a practice he sought to ban.⁵⁰ Such youth were most likely Vietnamese.

Once the slaughter was completed, the final moment in the transition from animal flesh to meat came with the obligatory inspection of the slaughtered flesh by a staff veterinarian or other trained specialist. Under the new system’s requirements, a recognized possessor of expert knowledge became the final arbiter of whether the slaughtered flesh could indeed become meat that could be sold for human consumption. From its inception, responsibility for meat inspection was given to a French veterinarian, though this was

modified in a 1911 ordinance that expanded responsibility to one Veterinarian Inspector of the Epizootic Service and one indigenous veterinarian appointed by the Epizootic Service chief.⁵¹ When inspecting the slaughtered flesh, the veterinarian could reject either the entire carcass or specific parts of it. As will be explained further below, flesh could be rejected as a result of contusions caused by trauma or fractures, or because it had degenerated in some manner. Visible infections were another reason. One very common parasitic infection was that of tapeworm larvae (*taenia* in Latin, *ladres* in French) in the muscle tissue. In French official and veterinary discourse, meat with these parasites was classified as “*ladres* meat” [*viandes ladres*]. Veterinarians and others were especially concerned about this given the sometimes severe consequences it could have for the eyes, brains, and nervous systems of humans. Nevertheless, there were differences of opinion in the veterinarian community as to whether muscle tissue that had only a small number of visible larvae could be classified as edible after excision of the affected area or whether it should be seized and destroyed. Hà Nội’s initial position was the latter, though in the mid-1930s advocates of partial seizure emerged.⁵² As will be analyzed further below, the annual report on the functioning of Hà Nội’s Hygiene Bureau, which included detailed data on the Municipal Slaughterhouse activities, provided insights into the numbers of and reasons for seizures of animal flesh.

By the inspection’s conclusion, the veterinarian identified which flesh was acceptable for consumption by humans as meat. The final action required of the veterinarian was stamping the meat. The affixing of this stamp indicated that the meat met the city’s hygienic standards and that the slaughter tax had been paid. Once the meat had been stamped, it could then be taken from the slaughterhouse and sold in the city’s markets. As many Vietnamese who sold meat quickly learned, the stamp was the first thing that colonial inspectors looked for when they visited markets and other places where meat was sold. The lack of a stamp could lead to immediate difficulties for the meat’s possessor.

Fraud and the Black Market in Meat

The construction of the Municipal Slaughterhouse and the creation of a novel meat inspection system introduced a new level of control into

colonial Hà Nội's social life. Actions that had previously been outside of the domain of official control now fell under the gaze of a variety of officials, and thus the act of slaughter and the sale of slaughtered animal flesh placed the Vietnamese in a theretofore unknown relationship with official surveillance and control. The slaughter and sale of animal flesh in this new regime, therefore, presented Vietnamese with an immediate choice: to fully abide by the new system or to either partially or completely reject it. Records kept by the city's Hygiene Bureau demonstrate that over the decades there was some level of compliance with the new system, but the archival record also shows that, from the moment of its creation, Vietnamese made efforts to circumvent it.

At the broadest level, the kinds of evasions of the new system practiced by the Vietnamese were powerfully influenced by the new administrative environment established by French colonization. Vietnam is often referred to as a French colony, but the situation in northern Vietnam was more complex. According to the 1884 Paténôtre Treaty, the northern section of Vietnam, known as Tonkin, was a protectorate, which meant that while the French had ultimate control over the region, the preexisting Vietnamese legal system and internal administrative structure remained in place. The city of Hà Nội, however, was classified as a French colony, so French law prevailed therein and the city's administration was established and run by the French. This distinction had a number of important consequences. Administratively under this arrangement, as Virgitti and Joyeux observed in 1938, "the limits of the city of Hà Nội are not only municipal, but also and above all veritable national frontiers."⁵³ For officials of the city's hygiene-related services, this meant that their jurisdiction ended at the city's borders and any efforts to enforce hygiene regulations depended upon the cooperation of Vietnamese officials in the surrounding areas. It also meant that city officials did not have the authority to independently intervene in any locations, circumstances, or activities in the surrounding areas that had an impact upon the city's health and hygiene situation, including its food supply. This was significant because, as noted above, there was a great deal of human and animal traffic from the surrounding areas into the city. Perhaps most importantly, it created a social space wherein Vietnamese could creatively ignore or work around the new restrictions imposed by the municipal government.

At a classificatory level, this new system produced two novel innovations related to meat, both of which challenged the system. The stipulation that slaughter for consumption was only to take place in the slaughterhouse reclassified much of the slaughter that Vietnamese had previously performed as “clandestine slaughter” [*l’abattage clandestine*]. Semantically, this usage implied that it was conducted away from official scrutiny, but more significantly, as Kyri Claflin notes of its usage in France, it also implied that the meat involved was uninspected and untaxed.⁵⁴ The second innovation related to the spatial dimensions associated with authorized slaughter. Municipal regulations effectively defined an exclusive area—the city’s boundaries—wherein only meat slaughtered and inspected in the slaughterhouse was to circulate. A great deal of slaughter, however, was conducted outside of the city limits, and any meat slaughtered there and brought into the city was classified as “*foraine* meat” [*viande foraine*]. This term defies precise English translation. Virgitti and Joyeux defined *viandes foraines* as “meats of external provenance” [*les viandes de provenance extérieure*],⁵⁵ but that definition elides the fact that externality was predicated upon administrative structures. Thus, *viande foraine* can better be loosely defined as meat slaughtered in one administrative unit and then transported into another for sale and consumption, such as from Hà Đông province into the city of Hà Nội. A July 1897 police report indicated that from at least that year, though likely from earlier years as well, *viande foraine* was being slaughtered outside of the city and brought in for sale.⁵⁶ When considering meat as contraband in Hà Nội, therefore, it was not simply defined by the absence of paid taxes, but also by unauthorized slaughter and the illicit crossing of administrative boundaries.

The implementation of this new system had the unintentional consequence of structuring the nature of Vietnamese resistance to and subversion of it. One of the early techniques for evading the new system was the employment of a fraudulent stamp. According to Bodin, a veterinarian who worked as an inspector at the slaughterhouse in 1909, officials used only a simple stamp with the letters “BM” in violet ink, which was easily copied. He sought the introduction, similar to what had been adopted in France in the previous year, of a rolling stamp with dates, mobile countermarks, and alternating red and violet inks.⁵⁷ As French inspectors became more

sophisticated, Vietnamese subverters of the system employed other tactics as well. In some cases, individuals transporting meat would place pieces of stamped meat on top, while underneath they placed clandestinely slaughtered meat. Another approach employed in the 1930s by some Vietnamese charcutiers, or specialists in the manufacture of pork products, was to take one or two pigs to the slaughterhouse in order to receive the stamp, but then when making goods in their shops, sneak in pork from pigs they had slaughtered themselves or obtained outside the city.⁵⁸ Officials in 1936 recognized that on some streets, such as Lò Đúc, Rue des Eventails, Rue des Paniers, and Route de Huế, traders were so brazen as to establish delivery services for non-stamped meat.⁵⁹

Over the decades, officials recognized that the demand for non-stamped meat remained consistently strong and in order to meet this demand, an extensive infrastructure developed just beyond the city limits. By 1908, officials reported that markets beyond the city limits sold mostly buffalo meat and pork. One important center for the slaughter and trade of clandestine meat was the community of Bạch Mai, situated just beyond the city's southwestern border. In 1908, Bạch Mai attracted official attention as one of the main sources of clandestine meat entering Hà Nội. Residents slaughtered, among other animals, cows, bulls, and buffalos, and according to a 1909 report, a Bạch Mai village chief [*lý trưởng*] received two piasters for every buffalo slaughtered in his community. By this same time, the Huế and Sơn Tây markets, located to the south and west, opened every day in order to satisfy the demand for meat.⁶⁰ Although the official documents are unclear on this point, opening daily possibly represented a change from the more common pattern in rural markets of opening periodically, usually once every five days. In 1913 it was reported that a meat market had been established only ten to fifteen meters from the city, although its precise location was not identified.⁶¹ By 1936, the Municipal Veterinary Inspector commented that markets selling clandestine meat that was brought into the city were active at the "city gates" [*portes de la ville*], such as on the Route de Huế, Khâm Thiên, Sơn Tây, Yên Phụ, Bạch Mai, and Yên Thái.⁶² By this point the city had effectively been encircled by markets or traders that sold clandestine meat. In their calculations, Virgitti and Joyeux estimated that there were over two hundred tables in the Suburban Zone where meat was sold.⁶³ These were

provisioned by at least thirty-three basically permanent clandestine slaughter operations that slaughtered many animals daily [*tueries importants*], combined with many other sites that slaughtered either the occasional animal or one or two animals daily [*petits tueries*].⁶⁴ It should be noted that not all meat slaughtered in the Suburban Zone was sold in the city, though Virgitti and Joyeux estimated that in 1935 nearly fifty-two percent of it was.⁶⁵

Officials recognized that the amount of meat that entered the city from its outskirts was significant. A several month investigation by the city's security services in 1916 revealed that a "large quantity" of meat was being brought in, usually to be made into *giò*, a type of pounded pork roll, though some was sold roasted as well.⁶⁶ Le Roy des Barres estimated in 1923 that approximately ten thousand pigs were slaughtered in the outskirts, which equaled over twenty-seven pigs daily.⁶⁷ In the 1930s, officials began compiling more precise statistics regarding the amount of contraband meat they found in the markets, though they thought that this was but a fraction of the actual total. In their July 1934 inspections of *viandes foraines*, the Market Service (*Service des Marchés*) seized 214 kilograms of pork, four kilograms of beef, twenty-three kilograms of beef tripe, and eighteen kilograms of beef organs. These items were of high enough quality to be donated to a local charitable organization. The same could not be said of the sixty-eight kilograms of confiscated meat, fish, and crustaceans declared unfit for human consumption.⁶⁸ Based on an examination of data from the previous two years, the Municipal Veterinary Inspector concluded in January 1936 that on average 1,200 kg of pork was brought into the city daily, which was equivalent to the amount of meat produced by the slaughter of forty pigs. By his estimation, since the city earned one piaster for each slaughtered animal, it daily lost forty piasters in revenue, which amounted to 14,000 piasters in lost revenue annually.⁶⁹ In their 1937 text, Virgitti and Joyeux provided a new set of figures. Reexamining the data from 1935, they estimated that the total quantity of *viandes foraines* that annually came into the city was 3,200 tons. According to their calculations, this represented forty-three percent of the total of approximately 7,440 tons of meat consumed annually in Hà Nội. For them, this was "a particularly dangerous fraud for public health and damaging to the community's interests."⁷⁰ They reaffirmed the latter with their assertion that

the 3,200 tons of *viandes foraines* brought into Hà Nội cost the city 45,000 piasters annually in lost revenues.⁷¹

Official awareness of the illegal meat trade led to increased scrutiny of the people and methods used to circulate it. A variety of officials, including the slaughterhouse veterinarians, Municipal Hygiene Bureau officials, and police officers who surveyed and inspected the city's markets and ambulant traders (referred to later by Virigitti and Joyeux as the "Brigade for the Repression of Contraband Meats" [*Brigade de la Répression de la Contrabande des Viandes*]), surveilled the slaughterhouse, streets, markets, boats, rickshaws [*pousse pousses*], and other conveyances and sites involved in the black market trade. The illegal trade began inside the slaughterhouse where employees were known to disguise meat and remove it for external sale or personal consumption.⁷² The trade's most significant dimension was the meat smuggled into the city to supply restaurants, inns, pork roasters, and those who manufactured Vietnamese pork products.⁷³ By the early 1930s, city officials had gone so far as to post police officers at the city's entrances in order to inspect people entering, which in turn demanded ever more clever responses from the smugglers. In official discourse, individuals engaged in meat smuggling were referred to as "fraudsters" [*fraudeurs*] and they employed a variety of practices. Similar to the case mentioned above, one approach was to smuggle contraband meat in a basket in which stamped meat was placed on top of unstamped meat. Another was to smuggle large pieces of meat underneath the smuggler's clothing. Virigitti and Joyeux's 1937 text has a series of photographs of the rather ingenious harnesses that smugglers, both male and female, employed in order to carry meat underneath their clothing. The majority of meat came into the city carried by humans, but smugglers also took advantage of the vehicle traffic between the city and its outskirts. One 1932 police report indicated that smugglers hid contraband meat in the chassis of passenger-less rickshaws that came into the city. During this same time period, a tramline ran from the Suburban Zone into the city center and tramline employees hid meat inside the trams. An April 1932 inspection revealed ten kilograms of unstamped meat placed between the tram's electrical gear and body. The "wattman" responsible for the tram's electrical system was promptly punished. The smugglers were undeterred and in November 1934 officials of the Market Service discovered

thirty kilograms of pork underneath the floorboards of the Route de Hué tram. Several employees were fired because of the incident.⁷⁴ Virgitti and Joyeux also commented that the active movement of people between Hà Nội and its outskirts due to the latter's vibrant nightlife created opportunities for rickshaw drivers to secret several kilos of meat beneath their seats when they traversed the boundary, while a related tactic was employed by bands of hungry children who, for small change, wandered back and forth with small quantities of meat.⁷⁵ There were even chases within the city when smugglers brought in meat hidden in trucks and were pursued by the police. In one case, a truck smuggling three hundred kilograms of meat crashed into a tree on Avenue Puginier, seriously injuring the driver, while his passengers fled on foot.⁷⁶ Indeed, suppressing the contraband meat trade could take a dangerous turn, a point evident in a 1937 note written by Virgitti that claimed that on one occasion in October, a high-ranking police official was "seriously injured by the *fraudeurs*."⁷⁷

Officials had some success in disrupting the trade by periodically arresting and seizing the contraband meat of black marketers, such as the unfortunate Lưu thị Thi of 19 Hàng Thuốc street, who was arrested in May of 1906 for selling dog meat that had been slaughtered outside the slaughterhouse.⁷⁸ Those involved with the *tueries importantes* apparently went so far as to maintain a communal fund that they paid into and which could be accessed in cases of arrest or meat confiscation.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, despite the arrests, seizures, and occasional violence associated with official attempts at suppression and control, the distributors of contraband *viandes foraines* were still able to maintain "their profitable commerce."⁸⁰ Indeed, looking only at the year 1935, officials reportedly seized a mere 4.8 tons out of the estimated 3,200 tons of illegal meat brought into the city.⁸¹

Knowledge, Inedibility, and Danger

The establishment of the new slaughterhouse inspection system created new standards within Hà Nội for defining which animal flesh was edible and which was inedible. Transport-related contusions, fractures, and other degradations aside, the primary defining feature of inedibility was the presence of parasites or other infectious pathogens in or on the slaughtered animal's flesh. These pathogens represented the core of the danger that French

officials felt that the city's residents faced. Infected meat had the potential to make people sick, perhaps even fatally so; with the proper system of inspection and control, this danger to the population's health could be minimized, if not completely eliminated. Official records unfortunately cannot provide a definitive answer to the question of whether official attention to this issue was primarily derived from concerns among French officials regarding the potential infecting of European residents or of the Vietnamese more generally, a point that will be returned to below. Nevertheless, what is clear is that official discourse definitively identified the Vietnamese and their habits as bearing primary responsibility for the continued presence of pathogens in Hà Nội's food supply. On this point, official discourse repeatedly emphasized the ignorance, indifference, and sometimes greed of individual Vietnamese for endangering the health of city residents.

Before examining the potentially dangerous practices the Vietnamese were held to engage in, it is important to understand the extent of the diffusion of germ theory in colonial Hà Nội by the mid-1930s. For the French inspectors, who were themselves products of a medical education that championed germ theory, assertions in 1936 by their superiors that "the introduction into Hà Nội of noncontrolled pork is dangerous for public health" had a commonsensical quality.⁸² For them, it was indisputable that the consumption of the flesh of sick or infected animals could transmit illness-inducing pathogens into a human host. For many Vietnamese, however, knowledge of germ theory was much more limited, and therefore their understandings of the potential infectiousness of meat were similarly restricted. The idea of the "germ" [*vi trùng*] was only introduced into Vietnamese society in the early twentieth century and germ theory had only begun to be popularized in northern Vietnam after that. Over the years colonial officials often commented on the Vietnamese lack of knowledge regarding germs and their presence in the natural world. For example, at one meeting of the city's Hygiene Committee in July 1910, officials discussed the "harmful effects of the water from ponds, water courses, [and] shallow wells" that the Vietnamese "habitually consume" that resulted in diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid, parasites, and cholera.⁸³ Later in December of that year, the committee championed the propagation of "useful notions" regarding "the places mosquitoes reside and their malevolent role."⁸⁴ Similar efforts would

be continued in the following decades. Nevertheless, by the mid-1930s, Vietnamese understandings remained mixed. In 1936, the Hà Nội-based Vietnamese doctor Bửu Hiệp published a study entitled *La Médecine Française dans la Vie Annamite* [French Medicine in Annamite Life] arguing that the understanding of French medicine in Vietnamese society was incomplete.⁸⁵ Consciousness of the presence and effects of microscopic pathogens was therefore limited; as a result, Vietnamese people engaged in a variety of practices that were considered by the French to be potentially dangerous. It should be noted, however, that the veterinarian inspector's detailed knowledge was also specialized and not universally shared, and French colonists exhibited their own limitations regarding germ theory. This point was evident in different ways. For example, in a 1913 circular to all province chiefs, the Resident Superior of Tonkin commented that "in most of the provinces, the inspection of slaughterhouses is given to a functionary who does not possess sufficient professional knowledge," thus in order to exercise proper control over meat destined for human consumption, he urged such provinces to acquire an Aureggio Mural that did a superb job of visually depicting the information necessary for successful slaughter.⁸⁶ When Tonkin was faced with a major cholera epidemic in late 1937, the French doctor Jacques May commented that one contemporary method to avoid contracting cholera was by drinking whisky, an idea that doctors would in no way endorse today.⁸⁷

The historical record indicates that, from the time of the introduction of this new system, the behavior of Vietnamese residents in Hà Nội and its outskirts regularly violated French expectations regarding the proper treatment of infected food in general and infected meat in particular. Indeed, inedible food items were easily found in the markets and as Le Roy des Barres observed in 1915, there was every year the "consumption of considerable quantities of damaged food products, of spoiled fowl, fruits, and fish."⁸⁸ Officers of the Market Service, as noted above, also seized inedible food items in the markets. Similar problems could be found in the milk supply. Le Roy des Barres noted for the year 1923 that "the Veterinary Service has signaled on numerous occasions the lack of hygiene that is present in the harvest and transport of milk that is destined for resupplying the city."⁸⁹

This begs the question of how what the French defined as inedible meat found its way into the food supply. French officials outlined a number of common practices. One of the most common was the use of the meat of either dead or sick animals. In one case in 1903, the controller of the slaughterhouse reported to Hà Nội's mayor that he had caught a Vietnamese coolie slaughtering a sheep that had died of gangrenous pneumonia. The only way to stop the man from completing "his sad and insalubrious job" was to grab the knife away from him.⁹⁰ By 1909, Bạch Mai had become a center for the slaughter of sick cows or those that no longer produced milk, a distinction it would retain in the following decades.⁹¹ This theme was again repeated in 1913 when one official noted that "pigs that the slaughterhouse would bury due to suffocation or illness are slaughtered and sold."⁹² The desire to slaughter sick animals was also evident in the slaughterhouse records as every year sick animals were brought in for slaughter, but were then rejected by inspectors due to illness or other causes. Although city officials could control the introduction of sick animals into the food supply through the slaughterhouse inspection system, the flourishing unregulated trade in the city's outskirts left the city permanently vulnerable.

Another Vietnamese practice identified by French officials, the historical duration of which is unclear, was the use of meat that had been rejected and discarded by the slaughterhouse. In 1909, Bodin reported that local Vietnamese would sometimes dig up and eat the flesh of animals buried after being rejected by the slaughterhouse.⁹³ In a 1917 police report, an inspector reported having arrested on the morning of May 2 a woman named Nguyễn thị Nói from Lương Yên south of the city, who every morning would go to the slaughterhouse burial ground [*charnier*] and dig up pieces of beef that had been buried there because they had been declared unfit for human consumption. She would then cook the meat and sell it. Slaughterhouse workers would also throw waste into a nearby pond, pieces of which local residents pulled out daily for consumption, while also washing their vegetables in the same pond. Unsurprisingly, the inspector commented that the pond emitted a "pestilential odor."⁹⁴ Virgitti and Joyeux reported in 1937 that "in spite of their state of putrefaction," discarded meat in the slaughterhouse's *charnier* was still dug up at night.⁹⁵ They also claimed that slaughterhouse workers would rub crésyl, a bleach-based solution, on the outside of

the basins holding seized meat, instead of submerging the meat in the solution. This created the illusion of having properly processed the meat and facilitated its removal from the slaughterhouse.⁹⁶

The reference to using discarded meat scraps and dirty pond water for washing vegetables fits with a common pattern in French comments about the perceived deficiency in Vietnamese hygienic habits. Unaware of the microscopic presence of pathogens, the Vietnamese engaged in practices that opened up pathways for the transmission of parasites and pathogens to humans. This tendency had an impact upon how they treated their farm animals and handled their foodstuffs. Speaking on impurities in the milk supply, Le Roy des Barres commented:

The (lack of) cleanliness of cows which, due to a lack of bedding lay down in their own waste, the insufficiencies in the cleaning of the buckets, cans, bottles that serve for the collection and sale of milk, the employment of contaminated pond water used in washing, are a source of danger for the public health, especially since the majority of consumers do not boil their milk, but take it off the fire when it rises, which is around 70 degrees Celsius, a temperature that is insufficient, not to mention that the time of heating is of very short duration.⁹⁷

The handling of meat once it had been slaughtered raised similar concerns. Again Le Roy des Barres described this situation well. As he noted, contemporary meat transportation methods were “defective” and as a result, “meat is susceptible to becoming contaminated, soiled, and from that, dangerous for the consumer.”⁹⁸ Part of the problem derived from meat being left uncovered during transport, which exposed it to contamination by dust and insects; the vehicles themselves were also not regularly cleaned, and some, such as wheelbarrows, were unsuitable for meat transport. The physical handling of the meat was also suspect. He commented, “Often the meat is handled, wiped with cloths of an amazing dirtiness, soaked in dirty, purulent water, then the quarters are piled up in the cars, or suspended by hooks, all mixed together.”⁹⁹ Taken in the aggregate, these practices created the potential for pathogens to be transferred into human bodies.

Official observations on Vietnamese habits regarding food impurities over the decades were consistent, and would in fact become a focus of the revolutionary authorities once they took power in the 1950s, but the existence of these habits and the presence of infected meat in the Hà Nội market

did not necessarily need to be an immediate danger for French residents.¹⁰⁰ They did have the ability to personally examine any meat they were to consume. The same could be said of many Vietnamese. The relative endangering of French residents, however, relates back to the dominant practices in their domestic spaces. During the colonial period, Hà Nội had a thriving market for domestic servants, who were employed by both Vietnamese and French. Most French residents had a number of servants, such as maids, nannies, and especially cooks. In official records, the individual identified as the central player in creating the structural vulnerability of French families was the house cook. Referred to colloquially in French as the *bep*, a term derived from the Vietnamese term for cook, *nhà bếp*, the cooks represented a critical intermediary between French families and the local food supply as they had the responsibility for making purchases from local markets and preparing the families' meals. The historical record does not illuminate the extent to which cooks and others associated with food understood the existence of germs or parasites in meat. Thus, no claims can be made about their actual handling of food in the kitchen, but French officials recognized that cooks often sought out clandestine meat because it was cheaper. An 1897 police report noted that lower meat prices in the outskirts had been driving down the prices of meat from the slaughterhouse.¹⁰¹ In 1909, officials reported that cooks and other servants were purchasing cheaper uninspected meat in Bạch Mai, the implication being that they received a daily sum to purchase inspected meat, but then would purchase uninspected meat and keep the difference.¹⁰² A 1913 report commented of the markets in the Suburban Zone that "a number of *beps* went there to provision themselves, the meat was at a better price."¹⁰³ Such differences were noted as early as 1897, but the trend remained. According to a report by the Municipal Veterinary Inspector in January of 1936, pork sold for twenty-two cents per kilogram in the markets at the edges of the city, while it sold for twenty-five cents per kilogram within the city.¹⁰⁴ This desire to purchase cheaper uninspected meat in the outskirts continued to have potentially dangerous consequences, as was evident when the investigation behind the report revealed that the majority of Vietnamese restaurants and charcutiers purchased their meat at the markets at the city's gates. The report also concluded, perhaps with some overstatement, that all of the meat sold by ambulant peddlers was

purchased in the Bạch Mai market.¹⁰⁵ The pursuit of the cheapest meat, therefore, had a persistent role in pushing uninspected meat into the Hà Nội market and potentially into French homes and kitchens.

How Dangerous was Meat?

The data collected by French officials in Hà Nội during the early decades of the twentieth century demonstrate that there indisputably were pathogens in Hà Nội's meat supply, and their claims that a variety of practices carried out by Vietnamese resulted in pathogens entering the food supply contained an element of truth. Thus, from one perspective, there was some justification in Virgitti and Joyeux producing a thirty-two-page pamphlet on the dangers that the black market and uninspected meat posed for Hà Nội's residents. Nevertheless, as scholars who have researched public portrayals of crime and illegal activities have demonstrated, while a danger may legitimately exist, the portrayal of its severity can at times exceed the severity that it actually constitutes.¹⁰⁶ While there was a danger associated with meat, the question that requires clarification is the extent of the danger that meat actually presented, and whether, as Virgitti and Joyeux wrote, Hà Nội was facing a "situation eminently dangerous for public health."¹⁰⁷

Colonial records, while admittedly possessing some gaps in continuity over time, provide several approaches for assessing the extent of the danger in the meat supply. Beginning with the animals, extant records indicate that the numbers of animals whose bodies were so riven with disease or other problems that they required complete seizure at the slaughterhouse, such as dying before slaughter, were in fact quite small. Data from a number of years are available on this point. An examination of Hà Nội's Bureau of Hygiene reports from 1914, 1915, 1918, 1923, 1927, and 1928 reveal that a total of 298,340 animals were slaughtered. This included 215,114 pigs (72.1%) and 60,438 cows (20.3%) as the most commonly slaughtered animals, but of these numbers, there were only 253 cases of total seizure (0.1%). Of this figure, 89 pigs (35.2%) and 79 cows (31.2%) were the most commonly seized.¹⁰⁸ Virgitti and Joyeux compiled similar statistics on animals slaughtered between 1930 and 1936.¹⁰⁹ During these years, 530,669 animals were slaughtered, with 374,188 pigs (70.5%) and 109,796 cows (20.7%) again representing the most commonly slaughtered animals. At this same time,

officials only completely seized the carcasses of 864 animals (0.2%), of which the vast majority of those seized were 385 pigs (46.8%), 281 cows (29.3%), and 157 calves (19.1%). These figures demonstrate that across the years the number of animals completely unfit for slaughter was extremely small, though this interpretation should be tempered with Virgitti and Joyeux's assertion that the "merchants of little scruple (and of whom there are many)" did not bring the sickest animals that would likely be rejected for slaughter into Hà Nội and instead slaughtered them in the outskirts.¹¹⁰

Another measure of the presence of "unhealthy meats" [*viandes malsaines*] was the quantity of partial meat seizures. As discussed, in some cases slaughterhouse officials allowed for infected portions of the animal's carcass to be excised and the rest made available for consumption. Drawing comparisons between different years is difficult given inconsistencies in how the data were recorded, especially since in some years officials only recorded the total number of kilograms seized, while in others they distinguished between the quantity of *viande*, meaning muscle tissue, versus organs or viscera.¹¹¹ In the years 1918, 1923, and 1928, officials reported the seizure of 471, 377, and 353 kilograms of *viande* respectively. (In the latter year, 291 kilograms (82.4%) were seized due to contusions.) In those years, a total of 46,024, 50,112, and 63,267 animals were slaughtered, respectively; thus, the total quantity of partial seizures of *viande* was very small. Comparatively, in 1918 and 1923, officials reported the seizure of 15,119 kilograms and approximately 25,000 kilograms of organs and viscera; thus, the *viande* seized only accounted for 3% and 1.5% of the total seized. Virgitti and Joyeux reported that in the year 1935, 5,283,485 kilograms of meat had been slaughtered in the slaughterhouse, but only 48,000 kilograms were seized (0.9%), and of that, muscles constituted 1,916 kilograms (4%). As in the earlier years, the vast majority of the seizures thus came from organs. They noted that the two most commonly seized organs were livers (12,387) and lungs (10,656), a point that was also evident in earlier reports.¹¹²

Virgitti and Joyeux listed twelve different types of "unhealthy meats," but among these they acknowledged that meats infected with parasites represented the greatest danger to human health.¹¹³ Interestingly, one parasitic disease that according to them had yet to be discovered in Indochina was pig-borne trichinosis. The three most common diseases included the

tapeworm-related diseases of echinococcus and cystercosis as well as distomatosis.¹¹⁴ Echinococcus, which only reaches mature form in dogs and cats, was rarer in humans than cystercosis, which was the disease most commonly referred to as *ladrerie* and which was a pig-borne parasite. In these diseases, the parasite is transferred to humans through the consumption of tapeworm eggs. Distomatosis is the condition caused by liver flukes, which again is caused by the consumption of their eggs. In all of these cases, the primary method of transmission was the human consumption of feces, human or other, that contained the parasite's eggs, though this was not exclusively so with cystercosis. Although inconsistent data recording by the Bureau of Hygiene makes it impossible to provide exact figures, these three diseases were among the most common reasons for the partial seizure of tissue from animals slaughtered in the slaughterhouse, with the main tissues seized being the livers and lungs mentioned above.

One final method for measuring the danger of meat is to examine the illnesses and causes of death for Hà Nội's residents, both French and Vietnamese. One puzzling aspect of Virgitti and Joyeux's text is the complete absence of epidemiological data on morbidity and mortality related to meat-borne illnesses in the Hà Nội population, despite its extensive use of quantitative data on official and unofficial slaughter and seizure. Indeed, the closest they come to providing data is their comment that they would not be aware of these disease's presence, "except when they occur with French or well-to-do families who have recourse to the care of our doctors."¹¹⁵ The Bureau of Hygiene's annual reports, however, present a limited but more concrete picture. In the six years examined above for slaughter, only one death was recorded in 1914 due to distomatosis. In 1918 and 1923, no cases of any of these diseases were recorded. Illness due to the tapeworm-derived conditions were the most common, with a total of forty-five cases treated in 1914, 1915, 1927, and 1928, though it should be noted that twelve cases occurred in 1914 and twenty-four in 1915 (80% of the total).¹¹⁶ These cases, therefore, would appear to be those that officials became aware of by consulting colonial doctors.

There are obvious limitations in drawing sweeping conclusions from these data—indeed it is impossible to state anything regarding morbidity and mortality in the population among those who never visited a colonial

medical facility—but the numbers are still remarkably small. Data from those same years provided by the Bureau of Hygiene also demonstrate that other diseases, such as waterborne dysentery or others, caused more illnesses than those derived from meat. On the largest scale, perhaps the greatest threat to human health linked to the food supply was cholera. For example, official records confirmed that cholera epidemics in Hà Nội in 1926–1927 and 1937 took the lives of 1,101 and 304 residents respectively, the latter occurring over a forty-five day period.¹¹⁷ Finally, it is also worth noting that in 1938, Virgitti and Joyeux published their second pamphlet, *Le Péril Vénéreien dans la Zone Suburbaine de Hanoi* [The Venereal Peril in Hà Nội's Suburban Zone], in which they demonstrated with concrete cases and data the devastating impact that venereal diseases had on Hà Nội's population, a devastation that far exceeded that caused by meat.¹¹⁸ Comparatively, the negative health implications of meat, which certainly existed, did not match those presented by other diseases.

Danger and Difference

An examination of the slaughterhouse data provided by Hà Nội officials demonstrates that while there undoubtedly were definite dangers associated with meat, the severest of those dangers, as found in the liver and lung tissue, could easily be controlled for, while the rest, when examined in the aggregate, did represent a danger, but not a threat to the public health on a scale equivalent to cholera or other infectious diseases, such as venereal diseases. Meat-borne illnesses could degrade health, but they generally did not represent a fatal threat, which something as simple as contaminated water could. It is impossible, given an absence of primary data, to definitively state why the issue of the black market in meat became such a focus of official concern in the 1930s. However, several factors can be identified as having played an important role. The first was the obvious fact that uninspected meat could be dangerous. French public health officials' concerns about pathogens were not confined exclusively to meat, but in fact extended to a much larger effort to control the existence and circulation of pathogens in the city's environment. This was particularly true of the administration of Mayor Virgitti, who launched a number of prominent public health initiatives, such as improving the Municipal Dispensary for treating prostitutes

infected with venereal disease, constructing new medical facilities, and responding aggressively when the 1937–1938 cholera epidemic threatened Hà Nội. Virgitti worked closely with Joyeux on several of these projects; thus, their interests were part of a larger endeavor. A second reason for official interest was the obvious financial loss to the city that illegal slaughter involved. From the time of its creation, city officials had envisioned a significant role for the slaughterhouse in providing the city with a steady stream of revenue. Illegal slaughter and contraband meat had deprived the city of a large amount of revenue over the decades, but in the late 1930s, when the city struggled to fund its budget, the loss of this revenue was felt particularly acutely. Virgitti and Joyeux's 1937 calculation that the city lost approximately 45,000 piasters annually to meat-related fraud was indeed a significant amount of lost revenue.

A third reason for official interest related back to French official frustrations with the administrative status quo and their inability to achieve the cooperation of Vietnamese officials in the surrounding provinces, particularly with Hà Đông province to the south and east, in implementing a unified set of public health policies. Hà Nội officials lacked jurisdiction in the surrounding areas, and the Vietnamese officials in those provinces did not allow for the extension of that jurisdiction, nor did they energetically work to unify policies. As such, Hà Nội was seemingly ringed with various sites that had the potential for transmitting pathogens into the city. This was obviously the case with contraband meat, but it was also the case with venereal diseases, a central point in Virgitti and Joyeux's 1938 text.¹¹⁹ Prostitution was technically legal in Hà Nội, if conducted according to the regulatory regime established there, but by the 1930s, an enormous and completely unregulated commercial sex industry had also developed in the city's outskirts. This was perhaps most visible in the infamous unlicensed brothels and *Á Đào* singing houses on Khâm Thiên Street in Hà Đông province.¹²⁰ In the minds of such top officials as Virgitti and Joyeux, the intransigence of Vietnamese officials and citizens on these issues seriously undercut their efforts to improve public health within the city and, from their perspective, endangered the population in numerous ways.

On this point, therefore, the situation in colonial Hà Nội accorded with the historian Philip Jenkins' comment that "perceived crime waves reflect

deeper social tensions, often arising from conflicts based on class, race, age, or gender.”¹²¹ In this case, the deeper tensions related to those between the colonizer and the colonized. From the French perspective, the black market in meat was yet another manifestation of Vietnamese resistance to their efforts to reorganize and order the natural and social world, a reality that genuinely exercised French officials. At a deeper level, however, the persistence of the official discourse regarding suspect or outright dangerous meat also served to subtly restate the social differences that existed between the French and the Vietnamese. The discourse on dangerous and contraband meat repeatedly focused on the failure of the Vietnamese to adhere to standards of civility, hygiene, and edibility advocated by the French colonial administration. Phrased another way, the accidental or willful violation of the slaughter and meat sale regulations marked the Vietnamese as not yet having fully actualized the standards of the colonial administrators. Interestingly, the almost five decades of archival material on illegal slaughter reveals significant shifts in the discourse regarding the reasons why Vietnamese flouted the restrictions introduced by the French. In earlier years, this was often linked back to the issues of Vietnamese ignorance of both germ theory, which was still inadequately understood at that point in time, and French standards of edibility. Under the new system, French officials sought to introduce a new process for the social production of edible meat, with its own physical infrastructure, experts, procedures, definitions of edible animal flesh, and standards for the treatment of that flesh. The Vietnamese, who were described as slaughtering sick animals, digging up and eating carrion, inadequately protecting meat for sale, and selling degraded or diseased flesh, routinely violated these expectations, thereby introducing potentially dangerous and therefore inedible animal flesh into the food supply. While such practices continued through the decades, in the later decades, factors related to ill will, greed, and dishonesty received greater emphasis. This was particularly true in the 1930s when the mature and sophisticated black market had emerged, complete with organized smuggling and violent encounters between the police and smugglers. Those engaged in this illicit economy did so to avoid paying taxes, to maximize their profits, or to simply buy cheaper meat, the latter constituting “a clientele insouciant to danger who want to buy at the lowest price.”¹²² Their

actions obviously involved noncompliance with the new standards, but from the French official gaze, they were amoral at best or immoral at worst because the pursuit of what they regarded as illicit profit or savings ended up creating a health danger for others. Taken in the aggregate, this constellation of attitudes and practices played a subtle role in restating and reproducing the socially marked differences between the Vietnamese and their colonial rulers.

Conclusion

Nick Fiddes has argued that “meat is a medium particularly rich in social meaning.”¹²³ With the imposition of colonial rule over Hà Nội and northern Vietnam, meat was semantically recast and acquired an expanded range of meanings related to the new colonial context, such as a marker of difference, an example of contraband, or a source of danger. These meanings animated and in important ways shaped encounters between the Vietnamese and the colonial administration. In the new administrative system, the regulation of the meat market paralleled the introduction of the three monopolies in terms of introducing new mechanisms for surveillance and control, especially regarding restrictions on the circulation of designated objects in social life. For meat, however, the justifications for the new restrictions went beyond collecting revenue to also include protecting the human population from dangerous pathogens. To achieve this latter goal, the colonial administration created a new system for the social production of meat in which the slaughterhouse and its personnel were tasked with identifying and designating which pieces of animal flesh were permitted to enter the market. In doing so, the colonial state attempted to expropriate the formerly private act of slaughter and place it under official control.

The public health justifications for the new system were distinctive, but it is important to recognize that the system as designed by the colonial administration helped to create the conditions for its subversion by indigenous actors. The boundaries between urban Hà Nội and the Suburban Zone, which Virgitti and Joyeux described as “veritable national frontiers,” became a primary site where the limits of colonial rule were physically manifest in the proliferation of meat markets and unsanctioned slaughter operations

that supplied the movement of contraband meat into Hà Nội. The movement of pathogens over these boundaries was not unique to meat, as a similar phenomenon was present in the spread of venereal diseases from the Suburban Zone's unlicensed brothels and *Á Đào* singing houses. This arbitrary legal boundary therefore had implications beyond the circulation of animal flesh into Hà Nội's meat supply. It represented a space in which different ideas about the responsibilities and limits of governance, and the deeper sociocultural conceptions that informed them, engaged and often clashed. The introduction of the new system to reorganize and regulate Hà Nội's meat market was an ambitious and far-reaching endeavor, but official efforts at surveillance and control aside, that reorganization remained incomplete, and indigenous actors continued to circulate unapproved and "dangerous" meats across the boundaries and into Hà Nội's streets, markets, and kitchens.

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ABSTRACT

This paper historically and anthropologically examines colonial Hà Nội's black market in meat. Beginning in 1888, colonial officials attempted to assert control over the slaughter, sale, and consumption of meat in the city. These efforts were resisted for decades and resulted in the presence of what officials described as "dangerous meats" in Hà Nội's food supply. This resistance revealed tensions that existed between colonizers and colonized related to such issues as (in)edibility and the social production of meat, but it also had deeper implications regarding the acceptable limits of governance and the manner in which legislation structured and informed unsanctioned activities, notably the production of contraband meat, in colonial Hà Nội and its environs.

KEYWORDS: *Colonial Hà Nội, resistance, contraband, definitions of (in) edibility, the social production of meat, black markets*

Notes

1. David Scott, "Colonial Governmentality," *Social Text* 43 (1999), 197.
2. *Ibid.*, 193.
3. Gerard Sasges, "State, Enterprise and the Alcohol Monopoly in Colonial Vietnam," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2012): 134. The colonial alcohol monopoly is also examined in Philippe Le Failler, *Monopole et prohibition de l'opium en Indochine: Le pilori des chimères* [Monopoly and Prohibition of Opium in Indochina: The Pillory of Chimeras], (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003) and Erica Peters, "Negotiating power through everyday practices in French Vietnam, 1880–1924" (PhD diss., University of Chicago Department of History, 2000).
4. Sasges, "State, Enterprise," 152.
5. *Ibid.*, 135.
6. H. Virgitti and B. Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes dans la Ville de Hanoi* [The Question of Meats in the City of Hà Nội] (Hà Nội: Imprimerie de l'Extrême-Orient, 1937), 2.
7. A similar tension between public and private in animal slaughter was present in the colonial British Straits Settlements. See Nurfadzilah Yahaya, "The Question of Animal Slaughter in the British Straits Settlements during the Early Twentieth Century," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 43 (2015), 173–190.
8. Au sujet d'une réglementation sanitaire concernant les étables de Hanoi, 1902, Residence Supérieure du Tonkin (RST), File no. 78724, Vietnam National Archives I (VNA-I), Hà Nội.
9. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923* [Annual Report on the Operation of the Hygiene Bureau of the City of Hà Nội (1923)] (Hà Nội: Imprimerie d'Extrême-Orient, 1924), 10–11.
10. Etat sanitaire des animaux/Mouvement du personnel Européen; Importation; Exportation et transit des animaux de 1927 à 1931, 1927–1931, RST, File no. 34323, VNA-I.
11. Pierre Gourou, *Les Paysans du Delta Tonkinois: Étude de Géographie Humaine* [The Peasants of the Tonkin Delta: A Study in Human Geography] (Paris: Les Éditions d'Art et d'Histoire, 1936), 543.
12. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 3.
13. Règlement sur la police de l'abattoir municipal d'Hanoi, 1892, Mairie de Hanoi (MH), File no. 5792, Vietnam National Archives I (VNA-I), Hà Nội.
14. Construction d'un abattoir municipal à Hanoi, 1886–1892, MH, File no. 5788, VNA-I.
15. "Inspection des viandes abattues" [The Inspection of Slaughtered Meat], *L'Avenir du Tonkin* [The Future of Tonkin], October, 1888.

16. Règlement sur la police de l'abattoir municipal d'Hanoi, 1892, MH, File no. 5792, VNA-I.
17. Construction d'un abattoir municipal à Hanoi, 1886–1892, MH, File no. 5788, VNA-I.
18. Règlementation sur la police sanitaire des animaux, 1898–1904, RST, File no. 78269, VNA-I.
19. Lois, décrets . . . portant sur la police sanitaire des animaux, 1881–1907, MH, File no. 5787, VNA-I.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Peste – le dératisation, une des mesures de prophylaxie, par la concession des primes, 1902 and 1911, RST, File no. 74472, VNA-I. See also, Michael G. Vann, “Of Rats, Rice, and Race: The Great Hanoi Rat Massacre, an Episode in French Colonial History,” *French Colonial History* 4 (2003): 191–203.
23. Au sujet des chiens circulant sur la voie publique, 1892, RST, File no. 5744, VNA-I.
24. Ibid.
25. Interdiction de circulation des chiens errants dans la ville de Hanoi, 1905, RST, File no. 10393, VNA-I.
26. Procès-verbaux du comité d'hygiène du Tonkin, 1907–1913, Direction Locale de la Santé du Tonkin (DLST), File no. 474, Vietnam National Archives I (VNA-I), Hà Nội.
27. Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Service municipal d'Hygiène de Hanoi en 1930, 1930, MH, File no. 5754, VNA-I.
28. Inspection et réglementation générale des Abattoirs de la ville de Hanoi, 1903–1918, MH, File no. 5800, VNA-I.
29. Lois, décrets . . . portant sur la police sanitaire des animaux, 1881–1907, MH, File no. 5787, VNA-I.
30. Visite sanitaire des animaux pénétrant sur le territoire de Hanoi, 1925, RST, File no. 31901, VNA-I. The language of the “sanitary visit” was the same as that used for the obligatory weekly visits by registered prostitutes in Hà Nội's Municipal Dispensary; see Vũ Trọng Phụng, *Lục Xi: Prostitution and Venereal Disease in Colonial Hanoi*, trans. Shaun Kingsley Malarney (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011).
31. Ville de Hanoi, *Règlement Sanitaire (Arrêté du 12 Novembre 1925)* [Sanitary Regulations (Ordinance of 12 November 1925)] (Hà Nội: Imprimerie Tonkinoise, 1925), 30.
32. Attributions des services Vétérinaire, Hygiène et Police, au point de vue de la surveillance des laiteries, boucheries et porcheries, 1933, MH, File no. 5822, VNA-I.

33. Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Service municipal d'Hygiène de Hanoi en 1931, 1931, MH, File no. 5756, VNA-I.
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37. *Ibid.*, 3.
38. Noëlie Vialles, *Animal to Edible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
39. *Ibid.*, 4.
40. *Ibid.*, 5.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Règlement sur la police de l'abattoir municipal d'Hanoi, 1892, MH, File no. 5792, VNA-I.
43. Règlementation du fonctionnement de l'abattoir de Hanoi, 1892–1900, RST, File no. 4750, VNA-I.
44. Règlement sur la police de l'abattoir municipal d'Hanoi, 1892, MH, File no. 5792, VNA-I.
45. *Ibid.*
46. A.s. de la visite des animaux destinés à l'abatage, 1918, RST, File no. 4723, VNA-I.
47. Règlement sur la police de l'abattoir municipal d'Hanoi, 1892, MH, File no. 5792, VNA-I.
48. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923*, 15.
49. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 21.
50. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923*, 14.
51. Inspection et réglementation générale des Abattoirs de la ville de Hanoi, 1903–1918, MH, File no. 5800, VNA-I.
52. Viandes lades, 1935, MH, File no. 5823, VNA-I.
53. H. Virgitti and B. Joyeux, *Le Péril Vénérien*, 1.
54. Kyri Claflin, "La Villette: City of Blood (1867–1914)," in *Meat, Modernity, and the Rise of the Slaughterhouse*, ed. Paula Young Lee (New Hampshire: New Hampshire Press, 2008), 42.
55. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 30.
56. Abatage clandestin des animaux et mesures prises contre cette infraction aux règlement par le service de l'Abattoir, 1897–1918, MH, File no. 5795, VNA-I.

57. Rapport du Vétérinaire Bodin sur les modifications intéressant le service de l'abattoir et l'hygiène publique, 1909, MH, File no. 5805, VNA-I.
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61. Rapport au sujet des marches et abattoirs de la ville de Hanoi, 1913, MH, File no. 5807, VNA-I.
62. Introduction dans la ville de Hanoi des viandes provenant d'abattoir clandestins, 1932, MH, File no. 5811, VNA-I.
63. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 24.
64. *Ibid.*, 23–25.
65. *Ibid.*, 25.
66. Abatage clandestin des animaux et mesures prises contre cette infraction aux règlement par le service de l'Abattoir, 1897–1918, MH, File no. 5795, VNA-I.
67. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923*, 10.
68. Rapports mensuels sur les animaux abattus à Hanoi, 1934–1945, 1945, MH, File no. 5816, VNA-I.
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71. *Ibid.*, 21.
72. *Ibid.*, 19.
73. *Ibid.*, 22.
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78. Abatage clandestin des animaux et mesures prises contre cette infraction aux règlement par le service de l'Abattoir, 1897–1918, MH, File no. 5795, VNA-I.
79. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 25.
80. Abatage clandestin des animaux et mesures prises contre cette infraction aux règlement par le service de l'Abattoir, 1897–1918, MH, File no. 5795, VNA-I.
81. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 11.
82. *Ibid.*

83. Procès-verbaux du comité d'hygiène du Tonkin, 1907–1913, DLST, File no. 474, VNA-I.
84. Ibid.
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86. A. s. de l'utilisation des tableaux mureaux Aureggio par l'inspection des viandes dans les postes dépourvus de Vétérinaire, 1913, RST, File no. 74547, VNA-I.
87. Jacques May, *Un Médecin Français en Extrême-Orient* [A French Doctor in the Far East] (Brussels and Paris: Éditions de la Paix, 1951), 231.
88. A. Le Roy des Barres, "Rapport sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi en 1914" [Report on the Operation of the Hygiene Bureau of the City of Hà Nội in 1914], *Bulletin de la Société Médico-Chirurgicale de l'Indochine* [Bulletin of the Medico-Surgical Society of Indochina] (*BSMCI*) 5 (1915): 186.
89. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923*, 17.
90. Abatage clandestin des animaux et mesures prises contre cette infraction aux règlement par le service de l'Abattoir, 1897–1918, MH, File no. 5795, VNA-I.
91. Ibid.
92. Rapport au sujet des marchés et abattoirs de la ville de Hanoi, 1913, MH, File no. 5807, VNA-I.
93. Rapport du Vétérinaire Bodin sur les modifications intéressant le service de l'abattoir et l'hygiène publique, 1909, MH, File no. 5805, VNA-I.
94. Rapport du Vétérinaire Bodin sur les modifications intéressant le service de l'abattoir et l'hygiène publique, 1909, MH, File no. 5805, VNA-I.
95. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 19.
96. Ibid.
97. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923*, 18.
98. A. Le Roy des Barres, "Rapport sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi en 1914," 183.
99. Ibid., 185.
100. The revolutionary campaigns are discussed in Shaun Kingsley Malarney, "Germ Theory, Hygiene, and the Transcendence of 'Backwardness' in Revolutionary Vietnam (1954–1960)," in *Southern Medicine for Southern People: Vietnamese Medicine in the Making*, eds. Laurence Monnais, C. Michele Thompson, and Ayo Wahlberg (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012).
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105. Ibid.
106. See, for example, Joel Best, *Random Violence: How We Talk about New Crimes and New Victims* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Philip Jenkins, *Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Homicide* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1994).
107. Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 28.
108. The data for the slaughterhouse seizures are derived from A. Le Roy des Barres, "Rapport sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi en 1914"; A. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi en 1915* [Report on the Operation of the Hygiene Bureau of the City of Hà Nội in 1915], *BSMCI* 7 (1916): 216–38; Le Roy des Barres, "Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi (année 1919) [Annual Report on the Operation of the Hygiene Bureau of the City of Hà Nội (1919)]. *BSCMI* 2 (1920): 97–120; Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1923*; Genevray, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1927* [Annual Report on the Operation of the Hygiene Bureau of the City of Hà Nội, 1927], *BSMCI* 4 (1928): 163–186; Anonymous, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1928* [Annual Report on the Operation of the Hygiene Bureau of the City of Hà Nội, 1928], *BSMCI* 12 (1929): 692–715.
109. The calculations are drawn from Virgitti and Joyeux, *La Question des Viandes*, 16–17.
110. Ibid. 18.
111. Virgitti and Joyeux (*La Question des Viandes*, 7) employ a more expansive definition of *viande* to include more than muscle tissue, but this is at variance with earlier official definitions.
112. Ibid., 11.
113. Ibid., 14.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., 18.
116. A. Le Roy des Barres, "Rapport sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi en 1914," 166–167; A. Le Roy des Barres, *Rapport sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi en 1915*, 238; Genevray, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville*

- de Hanoi, année 1927*, 182; Anonymous, *Rapport annuel sur le fonctionnement du Bureau d'Hygiène de la ville de Hanoi, année 1928*, 711.
117. Le Roy des Barres, "Rapport sur le épidémie de choléra en Hanoi en 1926" [Report on the Cholera Epidemic in Hanoi in 1926] *BSMCI* 7 (1927): 305; Note sur le choléra à Hanoi en 1937, 1937, MH, File no. 5842, VNA-I. The significant difference in mortality in the two epidemics was due to an aggressive and successful vaccination campaign in the latter epidemic.
 118. Virgitti and Joyeux, *Le Péril Vénérien*.
 119. *Ibid.*
 120. This is explored in depth in Vũ Trọng Phụng, *Lục Xi*. See also Christina Firpo "Sex and Song: Clandestine Prostitution in Tonkin's Ả Đào Music Houses, 1920s–1940s," *Journal of Vietnamese Studies*, 11 (2016): 1–36.
 121. Jenkins, *Using Murder*, 4.
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 123. Fiddes, *Meat*, 5.