DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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How I Wrote My Prospectus

Writing the prospectus was one of the most enjoyable parts of my graduate school experience. The task is daunting, since you have to come up with a plan for original research, but the freedom is incredible. I took about a semester to write my prospectus. During this time, I tracked down all the questions I had to leave unanswered during coursework. I looked back through class notes, seminar papers, and primary sources that I had run across but hadn't been able to examine. I tried to find the questions that had animated my intellectual inquiries up to this point.

Once I had a general idea of my topic - the reception of classical Greek thought in early modern European imperial ideology - I began to collect sources. I skimmed secondary literature to figure out how my dissertation might speak to the broader scholarly conversation, and I perused primary texts to find potential key sources. As I researched, I wrote and re-wrote my general plan for the thesis, and kept refining it through conversations with my advisers. Above all, it was (and I think should be!) an exciting experience. It was the first time that I got to exercise freedom and creativity as a maturing scholar.

Advice for Prospectus Writers

There are a number of things that current graduate students should keep in mind. The prospectus is not a contract. You will deviate from it. I proposed five chapters and ended up with eight. You will change your mind in the course of research. You will find new sources and come up with new ideas. The prospectus is just a "hunting license" that allows you to go do the real research. Don't put too much effort into producing a perfect document. Focus on writing a document which asks interesting questions and proposes intriguing answers. Above all, enjoy the process. This is what you came to graduate school to do - to investigate intellectual problems with an unparalleled degree of freedom. Have fun, and remember that the best dissertation topic is one that will keep you interested for three or four years.

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Dissertation Prospectus

Classical Greece in the European Imperial Imagination, 1500-1700

Beginning in the late fifteenth century, European powers, propelled by the new maritime discoveries, began the quest to create truly global empires. Portugal and Spain inaugurated this trend, and they were followed by England, France, the Netherlands, and smaller players such as Sweden, Denmark, and Scotland. Traditionally, scholars have pointed out the importance of the Roman Empire as an ideological model during this period**.** This dissertation aims to show that, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a distinct and highly influential trend of imperial thought that stemmed from the classical Greek tradition and influenced all the major European colonial powers. By pointing out the importance of a distinct Greek tradition, this project will provide new understandings of the following topics: 1) the connection between sea power and empire, 2) the sources and development of international maritime law, 3) the colonial strategies of early empires and their relationships with native cultures, 4) the tensions between empire, freedom, and democracy, and 5) European conceptions of barbarism and civilization in colonial encounters.

SUMMARY

CHAPTER 1: SEA POWER

Question: How did Greek sources shape European understandings of sea power and its connection to empire?

Thesis: The example of the Athenian Empire demonstrated a clear connection between empire and naval dominance. In order to expand imperial power, a nation had to own the seas, and the example of Athens influenced national plans for building up maritime strength. However, while some thinkers focused on the maritime foundations of Athens' imperial rise, others focused on its fall, highlighting sea power's impotence without corresponding land forces and the tendency of the sea to corrupt morals and lead the population to licentiousness and luxury.

CHAPTER 2: LAW OF THE SEA

Question: What role did Greek sources play in the new legal debates among empires about sovereignty and ownership of the seas?

Thesis: 1) Greek examples provided legal precedents for national sovereignty over the seas. 2) The ancient Rhodian sea laws constituted a major but now-neglected part of this legal discussion. 3) Greek mythic literature and its understanding of the state of nature sparked numerous debates over the status of navigation and trade in natural law and the *ius gentium*.

CHAPTER 3: COLONIAL STRATEGY

Question: Colonialism was a prominent feature of the ancient Greek world. Did early modern empires look to Greece for particular colonial models? And was there a typology of Greek colonialism which was different from Roman colonialism?

Thesis: Europeans developed three particular ideas for colonial strategy and models that were directly drawn from Greek sources: 1) Defensive colonies in Eastern Europe, populated by the lower classes and intended to fight off the Ottomans, 2) New World colonies that would allow younger sons of European nobility opportunities for advancement, and 3) a colonial model based off of the Spartan Lysander, in which indigenous culture is totally eradicated and replaced by the colonizer's culture.

CHAPTER 4: FEDERATION, REPUBLIC, AND EMPIRE

Question: Although Rome began its imperial project as a republic, the republic collapsed into a monarchy and then into ruin. Did the Greek tradition provide a model for an empire that was a republic, not an absolutist monarchy? What about for empires that were federations or composite monarchies?

Thesis: The example of the Achaean League provided ample resources for early modern federations (in the case of the Dutch Republic) and composite monarchies (in the case of Britain) to make sense of the relationships between the mother nation(s) and imperial holdings.

CHAPTER 5: RACE, ETHNOGRAPHY, AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

Question: Many of the European descriptions of new cultures and new races, particularly in the Americas, were couched in terms borrowed from the Greek mythological tradition. Why was this, and what does it mean?

Thesis: Europeans used Greek thought to describe and understand native cultures because for them, Greek myth was the vocabulary of the bizarre. In using Greek mythological concepts to describe native cultures, they rendered them "savage" and "exotic." Europeans also used the ancient Greek ethnographic tradition to connect American peoples to Hellenic ideas of barbarism and civilization. Finally, Europeans relied upon Greek state of nature ideas to characterize new cultures as primitive and to justify dispossession, conquest, and enslavement.

PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The majority of historiography has focused on the Roman empire as the model for early modern European nations. Of course, this is with good reason – Rome was the empire *par excellence* in the ancient world, and Roman-style world domination of the *orbis terrarum* was the goal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Anthony Pagden's *Lords of All the World* clearly expresses the heritage of Rome in early modern imperial ideology, focusing largely on Spain. David Armitage's *Ideological Origins of the British Empire* explains the presence of Roman ideas in the British context. Frances Yates' *Astraea* demonstrates Rome's prominence as a model for universalist world empire as utilized by the sixteenth century Habsburg, Tudor, and Valois monarchies in the sixteenth century.

Scholars have written very little on the Greek tradition of imperial thinking during this period. Although still overshadowed by the literature on neo-Roman humanism, a number of works

have addressed the Greek influence on civic humanism and republicanism. Eric Nelson's *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* points out an uniquely Greek tradition of thinking on wealth inequality and redistribution that can be found in More, Harrington, Montesquieu, and Tocqueville. Jennifer Tolbert Roberts' *Athens on Trial: The Antidemocratic Tradition in Western Thought* addresses Athens as a negative model in the early modern period, and discusses how it was demonized for its unstable political institutions and used in antidemocratic arguments. Wyger Velema and Arthur Weststeijn's collection of essays, *Ancient Models in the Early Modern Republican Imagination,* contains several insightful treatments of Greek influence on civic republicanism. In this volume, William Stenhouse uncovers contemporary political influences in early histories of ancient Greece. Jaap Niewstraten shows how the example of the Achaean League provided inspiration to two seventeenth century Dutch writers. Christine Zabel demonstrates how the image of Athens changed in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain from a negative example of the evils of democracy to the model of high culture and politesse. Wessel Krul discusses artistic depictions of Sparta in the Dutch Republic, and Wyger Velema shows how the eighteenth-century Dutch used the example of Athens to attack popular government. However, these all only address civic republicanism. The only work that I have found about Greek influence on imperial ideology is Kinch Hoekstra's excellent article, "Thucydides and the Bellicose Beginnings of Modern Political Theory," which argues that there was a strand of sixteenth and seventeenth century Thucydidean thought which included Gentili, John Dee, Antonio Zeno, and others, who were influenced by the Greek historian's support of preemptive strikes and offensive warfare as a means to preservation of one's kingdom. These fine works have established the importance of the Greek tradition in early modern political thought. However, this dissertation aims to show the essential contribution of the Greek tradition to the particular shapes that early modern empires took.

Scholarship in this field has gravitated towards Rome for obvious reasons. For several early modern empires, three aspects of Imperial Rome were particularly appealing: 1) the presence of a single figurehead, the Emperor, 2) the primarily land-based, as opposed to naval, character of the Empire, and 3) its universalism. The leadership of a single Emperor had resonances with emerging absolutist monarchies, especially in Spain, France, and the Holy Roman Empire. Although Rome developed into a naval power, its empire was largely terrestrial, and its dominance of far-flung lands characterized the empire more than its naval dominance in the Mediterranean. Finally, the Roman Empire was universal, that is, the emperor was *dominus mundi*, which was particularly appealing for European Catholic monarchs such as Philip II of Spain or Charles V, who sought to unite all of Europe, and then all of the world, under the head of one ruler, one nation, and one church. However, not all early modern European experiences fit so comfortably within this mold. As a result, these outlier nations, including Portugal, England, Venice, and the Netherlands, turned to ancient Greece. To be clear, this was not a black-and-white choice; these states utilized Roman imagery as well, and the empires that relied primarily on Roman models also utilized Greek elements. And in many cases, identifying an idea as particularly Greek or Roman was impossible in the early modern world; oftentimes ideas just bled into each other as a part of the "classical tradition."

What was the "Greek Tradition"?

While the Roman tradition offered a diversity of brilliant works, Rome as a political and historical subject presented a unified narrative. Early modern writers admired the rise of republican Rome as recounted in Livy, but most of their sources wrote at the end of the republican period (Sallust and Cicero) or in the early empire (Tacitus). Although these were two distinct eras in Rome's past (to which most scholarship on early modern reception of Roman history has not been sufficiently attentive), Roman history provided a linear story, from monarchy to republic to empire to fall, which created a single narrative which early modern writers could appeal to. In Greece, the tradition was more varied. Because Greece was never wholly united until the era of Philip II of Macedon (d. 336 BC), and because of the constantly shifting power dynamics in ancient Hellas, it was more difficult for early modern writers to grab hold of a single narrative or look to one city-state as *the* representative of the Greek tradition. As a result, Greece provided early modern writers with a great diversity of materials, including the mythic past of Homer and Hesiod, Herodotus' Persian wars, Athenian democracy and empire, Sparta's unique political institutions, Macedonian imperialism, the Achaean League, and later Hellenistic political theory.

Greek diversity presented a number of different imperial visions, but one of the most popular was the Athenian Empire, which dominated the seas after its victory in the Persian wars and absorbed the defensive Delian League into its hegemony. While Athens' reputation was not always positive in the early modern world, it was often an inspiration to imperial thinkers. Sparta provided another exemplary Greek commonwealth, although it was not an empire. Rather, it was seen as the anti-imperial ballast to Athenian ambition – Sparta chose to preserve its own liberty rather than to seek expansion, a choice which precipitated debates about the relationships between domestic liberty and empire abroad, and about the corrupting potential of foreign engagements. The various Greek leagues, most prominently the Achaean League, provided examples for early modern federations, most notably the Dutch Republic, as they struggled to conceive of empire with no emperor. Philip II and Alexander the Great also served as a model for rapid explosion of imperial ambition and success. Various other figures from the Greek mythic past, including Jason, the Homeric Argives, and Odysseus, provided inspiration that seafarers could not find as readily in the Roman tradition. The diversity of the classical Greek tradition and its many strains of thought provided ample raw material which imperial thinkers could use in a variety of ways.

To conclude this introduction, I should note that the "Greek tradition" is, of course, an ambiguous term. My tentative definition of this naturally includes the classics of ancient Greek thought such as Homer, Hesiod, Herodotus, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Aeschylus, Euripides, Isocrates, and Thucydides. Though more scholarly attention has been paid to his influence, the Renaissance resurgence of interest in Plato, and the distinctness of Plato's political ideas, warrants his inclusion. The other great Greek philosopher and political theorist, Aristotle, occupies a unique and somewhat troubling position for this project. By the early modern period, because of Aristotle's

importance in medieval scholasticism, it may be difficult to see Aristotle as a particularly Greek, as opposed to generally Christian and scholastic, influence. Separating out a uniquely Aristotelian (instead of Thomistic) tradition of imperial thought in the Salamanca school is probably a doomed endeavor. In addition, I believe that, due to the amount of scholarship written on the early modern Aristotelian political tradition, inclusion of Aristotle in this project may make it significantly less interesting and unique. In short, I'm not sure what to do with Aristotle, and I would appreciate my committee's thoughts on this issue.

Second, I include in the "Greek tradition" any ancient author who wrote in Greek, regardless of his subject matter. Works like Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, about the Persian king Cyrus, is included although its focus is Persia, not Greece. Perhaps a more difficult case is Polybius, who wrote in Greek about Roman history. Due to the fact that he was from Arcadia (part of the Achaean League), wrote in Greek, and came from a Hellenistic background, I include him. However, his interest in Rome, his experience with Roman imperial rule, and his close relationship with Scipio Aemilianus illustrate the ambiguities involved in attempting to draw clear lines between the Greek and the Roman. The same goes for Plutarch, and for Cassius Dio and Appian, although I have not found much relevant early modern material relating to these two authors.

The last case is that of Byzantium. Thoughts on Byzantium differed in the early modern era – some viewed it as a corrupt version of Christianity that fell because of heresy, whereas others, like Philipp Melanchthon, saw it as the continuation of ancient Greek culture. I think the inclusion of medieval Byzantine law or political theory would take this project too far afield, but the story of Byzantium did provide some interesting historical material for early modern writers. As discussed below, John Dee mixed Gemistus Pletho, a fifteenth-century Byzantine writer, with Thucydides in his proposal for English sea power. In addition, the idea of Byzantium as heir to ancient Greece raises some interesting questions about *translatio imperii* and a challenge to Catholic universal monarchy. As with the case of Aristotle, I am unsure about the place of Byzantium in this project, but I think that its inclusion would spread things too thin.

CHAPTER 1: SEA POWER

Question: *How did Greek sources shape European understandings of sea power and its connection to empire?*

Thesis: *The example of the Athenian Empire demonstrated a clear connection between empire and naval dominance. In order to expand imperial power, a nation had to own the seas. However, while some thinkers focused on the maritime foundations of Athens' imperial rise, others focused on its fall, highlighting sea power's impotence without corresponding land forces and the tendency of the sea to corrupt morals and lead the population to licentiousness and luxury.*

The Greek maritime empires of the classical world provided early moderns with an abundance of inspiration for their own new imperial ventures. Outside of the Holy Roman Empire, which reached its apex under Charles V, pan-European imperial dreams did not last long. The constantly shifting natures of territorial inheritance created a patchwork of "composite monarchies" but made European dominance an elusive goal. The East Indies, however, provided an opportunity

for European powers to dominate maritime trade, as did the Portuguese and later Dutch and English, and power in the New World depended on the ability of Europeans to secure shipping lines across the Atlantic. European empire in the East was largely centered around trade and strategic forts at Goa, Hormuz, Macau and other ports, while New World empires, outside of Nueva España and Portuguese inland expeditions in Brazil, were largely confined to the coasts. Thus, sea power emerged as the new *sine qua non* for European empires, and many imperial thinkers turned to the ancient Greeks to construct varying visions of sea power and its importance in early modern Europe.

John Dee, a counselor to Queen Elizabeth I, sketched out a detailed plan for the creation of an English navy based wholly upon Thucydides' description of Pericles' naval policies at Athens. The Athenian naval empire was a model that could recommend particular policy proposals for the consolidation of English power over the British Isles and protection against the Spanish threat. Martinus Schoock, a Dutch jurist, utilized ancient Greek examples to show the intimate connection between empire and sea power, particularly for states with small territories such as Athens or the Dutch Republic. Ancient naval histories, such as those of Sir Thomas Ryves, Johannes Scheffer, and Isaac Casaubon, served more than an antiquarian interest, describing the historical relationships of sea power and imperial dominance in ancient Greece. However, the Greek tradition was not wholly positive on the question of maritime might. The Venetian Paolo Paruta, in his reading of ancient history, saw sea power as a purely defensive force that was powerless to create lasting empire. If a state wanted to expand, it needed Roman style land power, whereas Greek style naval power served only to protect and preserve. Finally, the Greek critics of Athenian empire posited a link between naval power and moral and institutional decline, which early modern authors took as a warning to imperial powers about the dangers of empire and corruption.

John Dee and Thucydidean Naval Power

John Dee (1527-1608), counsellor to Queen Elizabeth and one of the chief architects of early English naval power, wrote several works outlining plans for an English navy based on Athenian precedents. His *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Arte of Navigation* (1577) lays out one such plan. In this work Dee explains that England needs a powerful navy to ensure its own safety, particularly in light of the Spanish threat. Further, in the context of England's attempts to colonize Ireland, naval power is the only way to consolidate local imperium in a truly united Britain. He puts forth the model of Athens, with Pericles as the consummate leader in this arena. He proposes that Athens adopt as a slogan a part of Pericles' speech to the Athenians in Thucydides 1.143: *Si essemus insulani* (suppose we were islanders). The advantages that Pericles saw if Athens had been an island are realized in Britain. For Dee, Periclean plans for naval dominance, which had caused the growth of the Athenian Empire, were to be directly adopted in Elizabethan England. This parallel between ancient Greek thalassocracy and English naval power was not unique to Dee- Thomas Craig, in his 1605 *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus,* boasted about the extended parallels between Crete's Minoan naval dominance of the Mediterranean and the power that Britain's navy exerted over Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Spain, "though never has her power embraced those opposite shores."

In addition, Dee attaches to the end of the work two "Orationes de rebus Peloponnesiacis," which Georgius Gemistus Pletho (1355-1450/2) delivered to the Byzantine Emperor Manuel II in 1415 and 1418. These orations promote the importance of sea power in maintaining empire, further pointing to Dee's reliance on the Greek tradition. Dee's work, which is a clear policy proposal to Elizabeth I, makes a vivid link between sea power and imperium, and it is entirely based on the Greek tradition of imperial and naval thought. Pletho's inclusion here is interesting for another reason. He was a critic of Byzantine ideas of universal empire and advocated for a return to classical Greek institutions. He wrote a book, modeled after Plato's *Laws,* which proposed a plan for Byzantium to adopt an idealized form of the government of classical Athens. Did Dee's interest in Pletho extend this far? And how did Dee respond to the successes of his proposed navy? For example, did he commemorate the 1588 victory over the Spanish armada, extending his allegory to call it a modern Syracusan expedition or a battle of Salamis?

Besides this treatise, Dee penned two others, both of which are now in the British Library. One, named "*Thalassocratia Britannikē*" is particularly promising for its Greek title. The links between Greek thought and imperialism in Dee's writing is obvious, and needs further investigation.

Martin Schoock

In the mid-seventeenth century, as the Netherlands was reaching the height of its overseas empire, Martin Schoock, a professor at Leiden, wrote the *Disputatio Historica Expendens Commoda Potentiae maritimae, tum a foederatis Belgis hactenus, tum ab aliis multis Regibus et Respublicis* in 1648, in which he laid out the importance of sea power for Dutch imperial designs. Four years later, he wrote *Imperium Maritimum* to advocate for the importance of sea power in acquiring and maintaining empire. The first part of the work is historical, and he uses it to show the importance of sea power in history. Athens was able to dominate Greece because of her sea power. He notes that the Athenians wanted to rule the seas so they could bring harmony to a divided Greece, showing the importance of naval power in uniting the disparate parts of a far-flung empire.

As Schoock's historical analysis moves forward in time, he points out that the Carthaginians were able to rise to power quickly because of their prowess on the waves. In contrast, the early Romans were land-locked until the Punic Wars, which prevented their expansion beyond central Italy. When Rome expanded her naval power, she became a true imperial force in the Mediterranean. As Schoock goes on in time, he shows this correlation between maritime supremacy and empire by citing Venice, Genoa, the Ottoman Empire, Denmark, Britain, and finally the Dutch.. Schoock's historical chronicling of the maritime *translatio imperii*, which started with the early Greeks, demonstrates the intimate connection between *imperium maritimum* and *imperium* in general. The treatise ends with a plea for the Dutch to focus on maintaining naval power in order to maintain their empire. For Schoock, Greek history showed that empire was impossible without supremacy on the seas.

Ancient Naval Histories

The theme of the importance of sea power, modeled on the example of ancient Greece, was present in many other works on ancient history. These historical works were intended to provide knowledge about the past as well as wisdom for the present. Sir Thomas Ryves, an English civilian and expert on maritime law, (1583-1652) wrote the *Historia Navalis Antiqua* (1633), a maritime history which stretched from Noah to the fall of Constantinople. In the dedication to Charles I, he draws a comparison between English admirals like Drake to Themistocles and others, claiming that their daring was what enabled the English to "tread upon Spanish soil" in the New World. His accounts of ancient naval history are interspersed with judgments on Athenian and Roman imperialism and comparisons with recent European history. Johannes Schefferus (1621-1679), a Swedish humanist, wrote *De Militia Navali Veterum Libri Quatuor, ad Historiam Graecam Latinamque utiles* (1654), a treatise on ancient naval history dedicated to Queen Christina. His prefatory epistle to her is full of glowing praise of Sweden's growing naval power and imperial reach, and the entire work draws upon mostly Greek sources to lay out the basics of building, maintaining, and using a powerful navy. As naval power became more important for attaining and preserving overseas empires, scholars turned to the examples of antiquity, most of which came from the Greek world, to demonstrate the importance of sea power.

Another scholar who saw the clear link between sea power and empire was the French arch-humanist, Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614). Kinch Hoekstra points out that Domenico Molino, a Venetian senator, urged Casaubon to write a commentary on Polybius to provide a republican counter to the Lipsian, prince-centered Tacitism that pervaded the political theory of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[1] In this work, Casaubon writes a ten page commentary on sea power and its importance for empires in history. Did he have a distinctly Polybian perspective on naval power and empire that was contrary to the Tacitism he was encouraged to refute?

Paolo Paruta

However, not all discussions of sea power named it as a requirement for empire. Paolo Paruta (1540-1598), a Venetian historian and politician, undertook a comparative study of historical empires in his *Discorsi Politici* (1569). He asks why Greece and Venice did not achieve the same level of imperial dominance that Rome did. In Greece, internal divisions and a love of liberty, or reluctance to unite, prevented Hellas from becoming a world power on the level of Rome. Athens' unstable political institutions undermined the potency of its sea power, and Sparta's poverty and fierce independence prevented any large-scale project of empire building. For Paruta, Venice was more similar to an amalgam of Athens and Sparta than it was to Rome – it had Athenian sea power and wealth combined with Spartan stable institutions and love of liberty. So why had it failed to achieve imperial dominance?

[1] Kinch Hoekstra, "Thucydides and the Bellicose Beginnings of Modern Political Theory." In *Thucydides and the Modern World.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012). 25-54.

The answer lies partly in his vision of sea power, which is contrary to that of Dee or Schoock. Paruta saw sea power as a purely defensive and commercial force that had no use in procuring empire. For Venice, naval power served as a defense against the encroaching Ottomans, but was powerless to expand beyond the Mediterranean. At a time when the thalassocracy of Venice was being compressed by Ottoman advances and overshadowed by the global exploits of Portugal and Spain, Paruta's work presents a thoughtful criticism of global empire, touting Venetian defensive sea power (in the mold of Athens) and stable institutions (in the mold of Sparta) as a durable combination that will preserve her after these other, Roman-inspired empires flame out due to their excessive ambition.

Corruption

Although ancient Greek writers respected the clear importance of sea power for empire, they were also wary of its negative effects. Reliance on the sea generated severe corruption, and the influence of sailors and ports had a deleterious effect on morals. Isocrates in *On the Peace* 64 states, "For I… consider that we shall manage our city to better advantage and be ourselves better men and go forward in all our undertakings if we stop setting our hearts on the empire of the sea. For it is this which plunged us into our present state of disorder…" In the *Laws,* Plato's Athenian claims that the sea "fills the land with wholesaling and retailing, breeds shifty and deceitful habits in a man's soul, and makes the citizens distrustful and hostile, not only among themselves, but also in their dealings with the world outside" (*Laws* 705). The corrupting influence of naval power is a strong theme in Greek literature, especially in the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE following the fall of the Athenian naval empire.[2]

Early modern writers heeded this warning from the Greeks. John Dee acknowledged that the economic prosperity that will come from trade and naval supremacy can have a corrupting influence. However, he notes that the Athenians themselves encountered this problem, and to solve it, he proposes an Athenian solution (from Thucydides), in which the potential corruption brought about by maritime trade is mitigated by a combination of tariffs and dedicated funds that divert commercial revenues into projects for the public good. Martinus Schoock noted the difficulties that came with living near the sea: "a seafaring race should take care to always be on the lookout, for they are accustomed to be lazy and create great disturbances…", citing Plato and Xenophon's judgments on Athens. And Carolus Sigismundus, in his dissertation *Minos Dominus Maris* (1656) balanced his support for imperial sea power with Isocrates' warnings about the corruption and societal decay that come with reliance on the sea. Much has been written about Renaissance discourses of corruption, mostly focusing on those writers who used Tacitus and Sallust to draw a link between empire and moral decline or luxury and laxity. However, in Greek thought, the concept of corruption was linked to the sea in general and maritime empire in particular, revealing a new dimension that warrants further consideration. In addition to these points, I am still looking for any connection between Greek thought and developing ideas of commerce and political economy. If I can find any ideas of

[2] See Arnaldo Momigliano, "Sea Power in Greek Thought." *The Classical Review* 58.1 (May 1944): 1-7.

Athens as a commercial maritime republic contrasted with Rome, or anything along those lines, I think this would really serve to enforce the point of this chapter.

CHAPTER 2: LAW OF THE SEA

Question: *What role did Greek sources play in the new legal debates among empires about sovereignty and ownership of the seas?*

Thesis: *1) Greek examples provided legal precedents for national sovereignty over the seas, 2) the ancient Rhodian sea laws constituted a major but now-neglected part of this legal discussion, and 3) debates over natural law and* ius gentium *often appealed to Greek mythic literature for its understanding of the state of nature.*

Examples from Greek history showed that naval power was closely intertwined with empire. But recognizing the importance of empire and attaining it were two different things entirely. As European powers began to clash in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans and the Mediterranean, North, and Baltic Seas, legal debates over ownership and sovereignty of the seas dominated international law throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Greek tradition influenced international law of the seas in three ways. First, the precedent of the Greek (Minoan, Athenian, and Rhodian) dominance of the sea was used as historical proof that a nation could legally have *imperium maris.* Second, the ancient Rhodian Sea Laws, a collection of Greek customary maritime law, featured prominently in legal discussions of imperialism and ownership of the sea and raised provocative questions about universal empire and absolutism. Third, the status of navigation and commerce was highly contested in these international law arguments, and many of the disagreements stemmed from disparate interpretations of ancient "state of nature" passages found in Homer, Hesiod, and Thucydides.

Greek Precedent

First, Greek precedent served as a strong proof of the legal concept of *imperium maris.* In John Selden's discussions of England's ownership of the surrounding seas, a large part of *Mare Clausum* (1635) is dedicated to Greek naval power as a proof that states can have sole jurisdiction over waters. In fact, the introduction draws the connection between naval power and empire: "…The king of Great Britain is Lord of the sea flowing about, as an inseparable and perpetual appendant of the British Empire." To prove his point, he shows the importance that naval power has had to two historical empires – first he mentions the Spanish, and then he cites the Athenians. For Selden, empire, maritime superiority, *imperium maris*, and the Greek model are inseparable. But the relevance of the Athenian empire and other thalassocracies for modern international law were not always accepted. Isaac Pontanus saw ancient history as a high-stakes legal battleground as he sought to refute Selden's claims on historical grounds in the *De Discussionibus historicis adversus Seldenum* (1637).

The Greek influence in maritime law debates was particularly prominent in the waters north of Europe. Johannes Loccenius was a German jurist who was recruited by King Gustavus Adolphus

to teach politics and law at Uppsala University. He wrote a famous treatise entitled *De Jure Maritimo et Navali*, which focused on Swedish control of the Baltic Sea and is filled with citations of Greek sources. Johann Heinrich Boecler taught at Strassburg for most of his career, but was also employed by Queen Christina of Sweden as Swedish state historian from 1650-1654. He wrote on ancient history, but he also taught politics and law and wrote a commentary on Grotius' *De Jure Belli ac Pacis,* which relies heavily on ancient Greek sources. Boecler's Greek influences are evident in the titles of several dissertations that he supervised, including one by Carolus Sigismundus entitled *Minos Maris Dominus* (1654), which discussed various historical thalassocracies, beginning with the Greek Minos. In this text Sigismundus argues that the historical precedent of Minos constitutes a proof for the legal concept of *imperium maris*, showing that a nation can have sovereignty over the waters.

A host of other sources about the law of the sea are filled with Greek influences. Serafim de Freitas, one of the chief opponents of Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum*, relied on Greek precedents to argue for the Portuguese "right of discovery" in the Indian Ocean. Scholars who were very interested in ancient Greece also published on maritime law. Hermann Conring, who supervised a number of dissertations on ancient Greek topics, including Sigismundus' *Minos Maris Dominus*, wrote his own *De Dominio Maris* (1676), in which the example of ancient Athens features prominently. Jacques Godefroy, a Huguenot jurist, wrote the oration *De Causis Achaeorum Reipublicae Interitus* (1641) in addition to his *Opusculum de Imperio Maris* (1637). Ancient Greek thalassocracies often served as historical models for jurists seeking historical proof that nations could have sovereignty over the seas.

Lex Rhodia

The Greek tradition also influenced early modern maritime law by providing one of its fundamental texts. One of the main Roman law passages that dealt with the sea was that known as the *Lex Rhodia,* or Digest 14.2 *de jactu* (on jettison). This section contains a rescript from the Emperor Antoninus, who answered a question about what should be done with jettisoned materials in the case of shipwreck. His response, in Latin translation, says, "*Ego orbis terrarum dominus sum, lex autem maris, lege Rhodia de re nautica res iudicetur, quatenus nulla lex ex nostris ei contraria est*." The emperor's language is ambiguous, giving sixteenth and seventeenth century scholars much to argue about. Is he saying that the Emperor is *dominus* of the world, but the law is *dominus* of the sea? Or is he saying that the emperor is also the *lex maris*? Is the emperor conceding the legitimacy of the ancient Greek customary law, or is he placing himself above it? As Anthony Pagden notes, this passage was often utilized by early modern imperial thinkers to promote the king as *dominus mundi*. However, the ambiguity of the emperor's language and the tensions between imperial absolutism and Greek customary law provided early modern jurists plenty to argue about.

What exactly was the *Lex Rhodia*? It was an ancient collection of maritime laws from Rhodes which had been used throughout the Mediterranean as a form of customary sea law. It was officially affirmed by Roman law in the Digest, and the text of the laws was made available to European humanists through Johannes Leunclavius' Latin translation of Greek civil and canon law, the *Iuris Graeco-Romani tam Canonici quam Civilis Tomi Duo* (1596). After the translation and propagation of the

text of the *Lex Rhodia,* it entered the mainstream debate over the sovereignty of the seas. Jacques Godefroy, who was also interested in parallels between the Dutch Republic and the Achaean League, wrote a treatise on it. Peter Peckius the Elder, a Dutch jurist, wrote the *In titulis Digestorum et codicis ad rem nauticam pertinentes* (1647), focusing on this passage from the Digest. Arnold Vinnius, another Dutch jurist, wrote the *Leges Navales et Jus Navale Rhodiorum* (1648), and similar themes were covered in Johannes Strauch's *De Imperio Maris Dissertatio,* Johannes Stypmannus' *Ius Maritimum et Nauticum* (1652), and Dirk Graswinckel's *Maris liberi vindiciae* (1652). A stream of dissertations and lectures on the *Lex Rhodia* poured in throughout the second half of the seventeenth century from Henricus von Aschen (1664), Hermann Witsius (1686), Arnoldus Cloens (1686), and others.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the *Lex Rhodia* had become the *locus classicus* for discussions of maritime law. What was the significance of these debates? Were they animated by the emperor's superiority over the waters? Or were they more drawn to the ancient Greek laws on *res nauticae*? Could this passage be interpreted to favor Greek law over Roman absolutist universalism? Moreover, what was the position of the Greek laws on freedom of the seas? If they decisively point towards dominion of the sea, or towards the freedom of the sea, then the interpretation of this passage in the Digest and these ancient Greek maritime laws may be an overlooked flashpoint in the legal history of imperial ideology.

Navigatio **in the State of Nature**

Finally, the debate over the freedom of the seas was shaped by Greek conceptions of the beginnings of civilization. One of the most pressing questions involved in this debate was whether seafaring, *navigatio,* was a part of the natural law, primary *ius gentium,* or secondary *ius gentium* (and whether the *ius gentium* was divisible at all). If navigation was part of the natural law, it could not be denied to anyone. However, if it only fell under the *ius gentium*, it was more flexible and could be forbidden by the norms of international law.

To discover where natural law belonged, the jurists looked to the Greek and Roman sources that addressed primitive human life, namely Hesiod, Homer, Ovid, and in some cases, Thucydides. Petrus Baptista Burgo argued in favor of Genoese sovereignty over the sea in *De Dominio Serenissimae Genuensis Reipublicae in Mari Ligustico* (1641). He presents the arguments of his opponents, who are in favor of free seas, and notes that they are particularly dependent upon Hesiod and his myth of the primeval Golden Age, in which all things were held in common by men. This original commonality was important for Grotius and others who used it to prove that navigation was a part of the state of nature and original natural law. However, Burgo attacks Hesiod and this idea, claiming that it never existed and provides no grounds for legal debate. Burgo and Grotius are just two of the authors who engage in this debate over the golden age; they are joined by Freitas, Covarrubias, Vasquez, and others. How did these writers use Hesiod and the other Greek writers to argue for or against freedom of the seas? Did they oppose the Greeks to the similar Latin tradition of Ovid and Virgil, or did they view them as in fundamental agreement?

CHAPTER 3: COLONIAL STRATEGY

Question: *Colonialism was a prominent feature of the ancient Greek world. Did early modern empires look to Greece for particular colonial models? And was there a typology of Greek colonialism which was different from Roman colonialism?*

Thesis: *Europeans developed three particular ideas for colonial strategy and models that were directly drawn from Greek sources: 1) Defensive colonies in Eastern Europe, populated by the lower classes and intended to fight off the Ottomans, 2) New World colonies that would allow younger sons of European nobility opportunities for advancement, and 3) a colonial model based off of the Spartan Lysander, in which indigenous culture is totally eradicated and replaced by the colonizer's culture.*

An indispensable component of early modern empire was overseas colonialism. This process was not new; it had taken place in the Mediterranean since the days of ancient Greece, and Rome and Carthage were also famous for their colonial activities. As the early moderns worked to figure out what forms their overseas (and European) colonies should take, they turned to the models of ancient Greece. Juan Luis Vives and Hieronymus Wolf were inspired by Isocratean ideas of colonialism, and they wanted to mimic the Greek practice of founding colonies in Ionia as a bulwark against the Persians. Inspired by his *On the Peace* and *Panegyricus*, Vives and Wolf promoted the foundation of Athenian-style defensive colonies in Austria, which would siphon off the lower classes from European metropoles to serve as a buffer between western Europe and the Turkish threat. In his work on Athenian history, Guillaume Postel held up Athenian colonial practices as a potential opportunity for the younger sons of the nobility, who were denied inheritance because of French laws of primogeniture. For him, Athenian-style colonies in the New World was a way to make use of the wasted talent that caused unrest within France. Finally, authors such as Richard Beacon and Jean Bodin used Greek ideas to address the obstacle of native cultures in colonial enterprises. Using the contrasting examples of the Spartan Lysander and the Roman Sulla, they debated whether it was better to eradicate native cultures or encourage them when seeking to establish stable colonial rule.

Greek Defensive Colonies

One specifically Greek model that appealed to early modern humanists was that of the defensive colony, populated by the destitute and the rowdy who inhabited the metropolis. Juan Luis Vives and Hieronymus Wolf, two prominent sixteenth-century humanists, both advocated for the creation of defensive colonies in Austria, taking direct inspiration from the writings of Isocrates (436-338 BCE). This was not an uncommon view; Achille Tarducci, an Italian soldier, proposed it in his *Il Turco Vincibile in Ungaria Con mediocri aiudi di Germania* (1597), and Christoph Besold discussed the plan in his 1623 *Discursus Politicus de incrementis imperiorum, eorumque amplitudine procurandum*, noting the difference between Greek-style defensive colonies and other colonial typologies. Isocrates' political career was dominated by his dream of pan-Hellenic unification against the threat of the Persians and later the Macedonians, and part of his goal of expanding Greek influence in the Mediterranean was the planting of Greek defensive colonies all throughout Asia Minor. The colonists he had in mind were not soldiers or elites, but the lower classes who failed to prosper in the Greek cities and resorted to violence and unrest.

Wolf and Vives, who were both prominent Hellenists and were greatly concerned about the Turkish threat, developed their own colonial proposals based on Isocrates' thought. They wanted to send the lower classes from European cities to act as a sort of buffer state against Turkish aggression in Pannonia (western Austria). Wolf's proposal is found in a translation of Isocrates' works, and he mentions that Vives had proposed the same thing. I have not found this yet in Vives, but I imagine it is in his *De Europae dissidiis et republica,* a work which included two translations of Isocrates and laid out an Isocratean plan to end European wars and focus on the Turkish threat. These two humanists drew inspiration for their unusual plan from a Greek model of colonization that was popular in Isocrates' writings. Was it distinctly different from a Roman model? If so, this idea of a defensive colony to protect Habsburg territories is directly connected to imperial ambitions.

Guillaume Postel and Athenian Colonialism

Greek colonial ideas also gained a foothold in France. Guillaume Postel, a diplomat, orientalist, cartographer, and scholar, composed the work *De Republica seu Magistratibus Atheniensibus* in 1541. In this work, he explained various Athenian governmental institutions, often comparing them to French, Roman, Venetian, or Turkish institutions. In his preface, he refers to Athens as the "*praestantissimam rerumpublicarum imaginem*," and although he recognizes that it was a democracy and France is a monarchy, he thinks that comparisons are still useful.

Most saliently, Postel discusses the Athenian *klerouchoi*, or colonial administrators, who were tasked with sending citizens to new Greek colonies. Postel is enamored with this idea, and he thinks that it should be implemented in France to send away the vagrants and the poor from French cities into "empty new lands," where their talents would be put to use and their taxes would be returned to the king. He does not specify a geographic region, but the language of *terras novas*, combined with Postel's extensive knowledge of maritime discoveries, point to the New World. This problem of the poor multitude is aggravated by French inheritance laws, which allow the passing down of the estate to only one son. As a result, the rest of the sons of the nobility are left with nothing. The Athenian colonial model is a perfect solution for this. Postel puts forth this suggestion, and then follows it with an impassioned plea to allow him to present this plan to King Francis and to Guillaume Poyet, the chancellor. Did Postel write more of this plan? Did he ever present it to the king? The importance of the Athenian colonial model for Postel, who was an important figure in early French exploration and colonization, shows the strong influence of Greek thought on the beginnings of French imperialism.

Colonialism and Cultural Repression

Another strain of Greek influence in early modern colonial thought addresses the question of indigenous cultures. Richard Beacon wrote a dialogue concerning English colonial practices in Ireland entitled *Solon His Follie* (1594). The work's structure is that of a Platonic dialogue, and it is filled with Greek language and Greek characters. Among the intriguing themes is his typology of colonial strategies. The first is the Lysander (Greek model), in which the culture of a place is totally eradicated and then replaced with the colonizer's culture. The other is the Sulla (Roman) model, in which the existing culture is left alone. Beacon advocates for the Greek model, contending that the Irish cannot be civilized unless their barbarian and pagan culture is totally annihilated. The idea of

civilizing the barbarian is familiar from Spanish and Portuguese colonial practices, but did those empires also turn to a distinctly Greek model? Was this dichotomy of colonial strategies a common typology in the early modern world? Jean Bodin also refers to the Lysander model in his *Six Livres de la Republique* (1576). Where else can it be found, and who advocated for it? And where else was this applied besides Ireland?

These three categories show that early modern imperial thinkers often drew inspiration from Greek models of colonialism. There are further references as well - Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), which is full of Greek imagery and language, describes the peculiar mode of colonization of the Utopians, which is based solely on population control. Was this an explicitly Greek model, and different from the Roman one? Were these Greek ideas prominent in the writings of other English colonialists concerned with Ireland and the Americas, such as Edmund Spenser, Samuel Purchas, or Richard Hakluyt? At least two of these had strong interests in ancient Greek culture, as Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is full of Greek references and Hakluyt penned a commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*.

The dichotomy between Greek and Roman colonialism became stronger in the following two centuries. In the eighteenth century, the distinction between the two typologies became a political tool used by the American founders. James Otis, Samuel Adams, and John Adams, among others, compared British colonial rule to oppressive and authoritarian Roman rule, holding up the example of Greek independent colonies as a better model.[3] In Britain in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a vision of Greek settler colonialism emerged.[4] As the relationships between the crown and far-flung British colonies like India, Australia, and Canada became murky, proponents of this "Greek model" advocated for colonies that were politically and legally independent from the UK, but attached by a strong alliance and mutual affection. The historical accuracy of these typologies aside, where did these distinctions come from? Did this view of Greek independent colonies emerge around the time of the American Revolution, or was it passed down from colonial debates in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

CHAPTER 4: FEDERATION, REPUBLIC, AND EMPIRE

Question: *Although Rome began its imperial project as a republic, the republic collapsed into a monarchy and then into ruin. Did the Greek tradition provide a model for an empire that was a republic, not an absolutist monarchy? What about for empires that were federations or composite monarchies? Further, how did the Greek tradition allow for the reconciliation of imperial and republican thinking?*

Thesis: *The example of the Achaean League provided ample resources for early modern federations (in the case of the Dutch Republic) and composite monarchies (in the case of Britain) to make sense of the relationships between the mother nation(s) and imperial holdings.*

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[3] David Bederman, *The Classical Foundations of the American Constitution: Prevailing Wisdom.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). p. 54ff.

[4] Duncan Bell, "From Ancient to Modern in Victorian Imperial Thought." *The Historical Journal* 49.3 (2006): 735-759.

Imperial Rome provided a ready model for monarchs to promote themselves as the singular emperor at the center of a world-wide universal monarchy. Philip II of Spain came closest to realizing this dream, but it provided inspiration in France, Portugal, and Holy Roman Empire as well. Combined with Catholic universalism and a desire to unite the entire world under one Church and one State, this strand of absolutist imperialism proved to be a powerful and enduring model. However, in other countries, most notably England and the Netherlands, this model never fit comfortably. For one, Protestantism held sway, mitigating the universalism that came with Catholic ecclesiology. Additionally, the political composition of these two nations cast doubts upon the idea of universal monarchy. England's union with Scotland beginning with the accession of James I and VI, and later the creation of the United Kingdom in 1707, meant that for almost the entirety of its imperial life, Britain was a "composite monarchy" which often struggled to work out the precise relationships among its various parts. The Netherlands was of course a federation, existing as a constitutional outlier among the powerful players of Europe. In addition, republican sentiments were also strongest in Britain and the Netherlands during the two centuries examined by this project. For all of these reasons, the model of the Roman Empire under a single, absolute, almost deified sovereign never served these two nations particularly well. As a result, they turned to the Greek tradition to tackle the problems caused by the relationship between federation, republic, and empire.

The Dutch Republic

The Dutch used the example of Greek federations to understand their own political constitution and empire. Dutch scholars frequently explicitly compared their Republic to the ancient Greek federations, including the Achaean League and the Amphyctionic League. This comparison was often discussed in academic works on sovereignty, as in Samuel Pufendorf's *De Systematibus Civitatum.* Marcus Zuerius Boxhorn, a jurist at the University of Leiden, wrote *Disputatio Politica, de Veteri Achaeorum Republica, et diversa eius mutatione ac forma* in 1647, as well as the *Commentariolus de statu confoederatum provinciarum Belgii* in 1668, both of which draw extended comparisons between the two commonwealths. In his *Illustrium disquisitionum politicarum liber* (1613), Paul Buis compared the Swiss to the Aetolians and the Dutch to the Achaeans. Peter Cunaeus made a similar comparison in his *De Respublica Hebraeorum* (1617)*,* as did Hugo Grotius in his *Parallelon Rerumpublicarum* and his *Antiquity of the Batavian Republic* (1610). Jacques Godefroy, who wrote *De Imperio Maris* (1637)*,* mentioned above, also wrote *De causis interitus reipublicae Achaeorum oratio* (1641), in which he draws explicit comparisons between the Dutch and the Achaeans and presents lessons from Greek history that are profitable for the Dutch. Martinus Schoock, who is familiar from the section on maritime law, also composed a number of other works that addressed the themes of federalism, the Dutch Republic, and ancient Greece, including *Disputatio Historica Expendens Commoda Potentiae maritimae, tum a foederatis Belgis hactenus, tum ab aliis multis Regibus et Respublicis.* (1648), *Belgium Federatum* (1652), and *Respublica Achaeorum et veientium Duabus disssertationibus* (1664). Finally, Joannes Meursius, one of the preeminent Hellenists of his age, wrote two works on ancient Athens, namely the 1622 *Archontes Athenienses, sive, de iis, qui Athenis summum istum magistratum obierunt, libri IV,* and the 1633 *Regum Atticum, sive, de regibus Atheniensium, eorumque rebus gestis.* However, in 1625, he published a work praising the University of Leiden, entitled *Athenae Batavae,* which drew a blatant comparison between Athens and the Dutch Republic. Further, Vincenzo Maria Coronelli founded the oldest surviving geographical society in Venice, "The Argonauts' Academy."

This consistent comparison between the Dutch Republic and the Greek Leagues show that Greece was clearly a model to these jurists and historians How did they understand the relationship between the various states and the Dutch overseas holdings? How did they resolve the tension between federation and global empire? And how did they square their view of themselves as a defensive league devoted to liberty and freedom while engaging in aggressive foreign policy towards their imperial rivals and often brutal practices towards their colonial subjects?

The British Empire

The problems of unifying diverse political bodies appeared in Britain with the Jacobean Union of the Crowns in 1603. Once James I and VI ascended to the English throne, writers became consumed with working out the proper legal understandings of the union and proposing political strategies for an effective unification. Naturally, in their attempts to do this, they turned to ancient history. Thomas Craig, a Scottish lawyer, wrote *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus* in 1605. He begins his work by claiming that, from its earliest days, Britain's fundamental political problem has been its *polykoirania*, or diversity of rule. Using Homer and Aristotle, he lays out the problems inherent in political disunity and presents an argument for a single monarch over all of the British Isles. As he proposes strategies for a peaceful and lasting unification, he turns to the examples of ancient Greece. The Achaean League and Peloponnesus provide particularly poignant examples of how unification in language, weights, measures, and magistrates made these regions so unified that they "needed but a surrounding wall to complete [their] likeness to a single city-state." Alberico Gentili also weighed in on the issue, penning his *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae,* which is filled with citations of Plato and Aristotle and held up the Achaean League as a model of federation. In contrast, the Scot Andrew Fletcher, writing a century later to oppose the formation of the United Kingdom, looked to the Achaean League as a standard that the United Kingdom could not hope to match. He lamented that the founders of political constitutions never take into account the universality of mankind, but look out only for the good of their own nation. One of the only exceptions was the Achaean League, which held "something like a consideration of the common Good of Mankind," but its political promise was soon snuffed out by Roman imperialism, which looked only to its own advantage. The same questions apply to the British that apply to the Dutch – how did they use Greek federal models to understand the constitution of Great Britain and its relationships to colonial holdings?

Other Nations

In addition to the Dutch and British, there were several other early modern composite monarchies that were players on the imperial stage. The most prominent was Spain-Portugal from 1580-1640, but Denmark-Norway was also involved in colonial projects, and Poland-Lithuania, while not involved in overseas imperialism, was involved in wars of expansion with its neighbors and was a current subject in academic debates over sovereignty and political constitutions. Did these countries look to the Greek federations as well?

CHAPTER 5: BARBARISM, PRIMITIVISM, AND CIVILIZATION

Question: *Many of the European descriptions of new cultures and new races, particularly in the Americas, were couched in terms borrowed from the Greek mythological tradition. Why was this, and what was its significance?*

Thesis: *Europeans used Greek thought to describe and understand native cultures because for them, Greek myth was the vocabulary of the bizarre. In using Greek mythological concepts to describe native cultures, they rendered them "savage" and "exotic." Europeans also used the ancient Greek ethnographic tradition to view American peoples through Hellenic ideas of barbarism and civilization. Finally, Europeans relied upon Greek state of nature ideas to characterize new cultures and justify dispossession, conquest, and enslavement.*

Much of this discussion so far has centered upon the models of Athens, Sparta, and the Achaean League, and the various political institutions or values that they contributed to the early modern debate over empire. However, the Greek traditions of myth, ethnography, and historiography also played an essential role in European constructions of the other cultures that they were now encountering. In the voyages of discovery, Greek myth supplied a pre-existing vocabulary of the strange, marvelous, foreign, and savage, which European explorers and colonialists adopted to describe the native cultures they had contacted. Historiographers of the New World took Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, and Strabo as their models as they sought to interweave history and ethnography in relating the stories of these civilizations and their clashes with Europeans. These ethnographic projects eventually led to debates over the origin of the Native Americans, which employed ancient Greek sources (and prejudices) to understand the genesis of these peoples, the stakes of which were closely related to the imperial projects. And finally, I hypothesize that Europeans viewed "primitive" native cultures through the lens of Greek literature about the beginnings of human civilization, particularly Hesiod, Homer, Aeschylus, and Thucydides, contributing to typologies of the noble and vicious savages, which ultimately held great stakes for doctrines of dispossession and just war against the native Americans.

Greek Myth and Natives as "Savages"

In European narratives about contact with the New World, Greek mythic imagery was often used to describe the wonders that were found there. The exotic and fantastical world of Greek mythology, unlike that of the Romans, was filled with stories of strange lands, bizarre peoples, and terrifying monsters. For the educated man of the Renaissance, this was the perfect canvas on which to paint descriptions of the Americas.

Peter Martyr de Anghiera, author of the *Decadas de Orbe Novo* (1530), wrote of an island of women near Hispaniola: "It appeared that the cannibals went at certain epochs of the year to visit these women, as in ancient history the Thracians crossed to the island of Lesbos inhabited by the Amazons." He notes the similarities between the war paint of the fierce Ciguanas and that of the Scythians and Agathyrses which fought the Greeks. Anghiera provides merely one example – these sorts of references are found all throughout European histories and travel narratives. As Richard Eden related in 1572, John Lok described the peoples he encountered in his travels with language straight out of Herodotus – troglodytes, Blemmines, and satyrs. Luis de Camoes uses Greek imagery

to create an exotic picture of the other nations that the Portuguese encounter on their travels. In Mombasa, Mercury warns da Gama that the king will try to feed them to horses, like Diomedes, and make them into human sacrifices like Busiris (2.62). He compares the Moors to Atreus, who served Thyestes his own sons for dinner (3.113).The Portuguese pass the "Islands of the Gorgons" (5.11) and encounter a native who is "wilder than Polyphemus" 5.28). As Camoes exoticizes the foreign peoples whom the Lusitanians encounter, he does not turn to the Roman tradition and compare them to the various barbarian tribes whom the Romans battled. He turns to the Greek tradition and identifies these foreign peoples with the most exotic and vicious elements in Greek mythology.

Further, Greek imagery was often used to sexualize descriptions of native women. D'Anghiera writes of them, "All were beautiful, so that one might think he beheld those splendid naiads or nymphs of the fountains, so much celebrated by the ancients." The theme of the shipwrecked mariner, stranded on an island full of beautiful women, goes back to Odysseus' imprisonment by Calypso and his encounter with Nausicaa, and was often echoed by early modern works such as Henry Neville's utopian novel, *The Isle of Pines* (1668). In books 9 and 10 of the *Lusiads,* da Gama and his men encounter a group of nymphs on a newly discovered island, who ambiguously represent both the rewards of ambition and the sexual, luxurious corruption brought about by empire. What was the significance of describing these women in Greek terms?

These constant references to the exotic New World raise an interesting question: Did the vocabulary of mythical Greek monsters and savages actually *limit* their ability to accurately describe the indigenous inhabitants? In other words, did the Europeans fail in accurately describing the New World precisely because they expected it to fall within the boundaries created by the ancient authorities of the Old World? European accounts abound with stories of warrior women and cannibals, but these phenomena were not as widespread in the Americas as they appeared to the early explorers. European attempts to explain the New World in the terms they knew from antiquity often led to projection of Greek antiquity onto the New World, and therefore its mischaracterization.

Although the Greek vocabulary gave Europeans a steady supply of material with which to depict the Native Americans as brutal and savage, comparison with the ancients was not always negative. While the North American tribes and the Brazilian Tupinamba were often described in terms of exotic Greek myth, the Aztec and Inca cultures, with their impressive political, religious, and economic institutions, were sometimes equated with the cultures of classical antiquity. In the introduction to volume two of his *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, Jose de Acosta (In Edward Grimston's translation) wrote, "And if any one wonder at some fashions and customes of the Indies, and wil scorne them as fooles, or abhorre them as divelish and inhumane people, let him remember that the same things, yea, worse, have beene seene amongst the Greekes and Romans, who have commanded the whole world…" For Acosta, the savagery that he attributed to the natives was no worse than what Christians see in antiquity. Garcilaso de la Vega, the son of a Spaniard adventurer and Inca noble, wrote his own history of the Incas, the *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* in 1609. Garcilaso defends the Inca system of government, which had much to commend it: "Nor is it wonderful that they should have mingled grave errors with those good customs, for such are found

in the works of the greatest philosophers and legislators, even including those of Lycurgus and Plato." As Acosta and Garcilaso show, classical antiquity (not only Greece, but Rome as well) served as a reminder that pagan nations, although they lacked the light of the Gospel, could still create admirable institutions. Classical antiquity contributed to exotic, barbaric, and savage depictions of native cultures, but it also provided a comparison that could prevent their total condemnation.

The Origins of the American Peoples

The influence of Greek thought also affected discussions over the origin of the American peoples, a debate which had significant stakes for imperial claims. When the Europeans first came into contact with native American cultures, the question of their origins arose. Some thinkers turned to the biblical tradition and tried to trace them to one of the sons of Noah, usually Ham. However, a particularly influential theory was that they were related to the ancient Scythians, who were, according to Herodotus, the most barbaric of all peoples. They were nomadic and pastoral, eschewing cities and agriculture for herds and often warfare. Johannes de Laet, president of the Dutch WIC, wrote an extensive treatise on the topic, trying to prove the Scythian origins of the native Americans. This view was common among the Spanish as well. However, other thinkers, including Jose de Acosta, claimed that they were the ancient inhabitants of Plato's Atlantis, brought to the New World by storms or shipwreck.

What were the stakes of this question? Why did it matter to these Europeans where the Americans came from? In fact, the question was deeply tied up with justifications for colonial claims over land and the natives themselves. John Dee and other Englishmen proposed that the Americans were descendants of the ancient Welsh king Madoc, who had found his way to the new world, citing similarities between Welsh and the American languages. This historical lineage was used as an argument supporting English colonial claims in the New World. Similarly, Hugo Grotius, in his *De origine gentium americanarum dissertatio* (1642), states that the Americans came from Scandinavia by way of Iceland and Greenland. The claim becomes more interesting when one considers that, during this time, Grotius was in the employ of the Swedish monarchy as ambassador to France, that this was the early period of Swedish overseas colonialism. Grotius' work seeks to establish a connection between Sweden and the New World, creating an implicit Swedish claim to the land and peoples there.

The examples of Dee and Grotius show that the question of the origins of the Americans was not a politically neutral one. So how did it relate to the Greek context? In using Herodotus and Strabo to equate the native Americans with the Scythians, scholars could establish the total barbarity of these new cultures. The European descendants of the Scythians were the Tartars, another nomadic and often threatening culture that resided on the boundaries of Eastern Europe, and a common symbol for barbarism in Europe. By connecting the Americans and Tartars by the common ancestor of the Scythians, Europeans could create an image of vicious barbarians who had abdicated their rights to property, liberty, and even life by their depraved state of living. This vision of barbarism was incredibly influential in theological and legal justifications of dispossession and enslavement in the Americas. In positing the Scythian origin of the Americans, European

ethnographers appealed to millennia-old Greek concepts of barbarism and civilization, using these distinctions to justify some of the darker aspects of the imperial enterprise.

Interestingly, Edmund Spenser also posited the Scythian origins of the "savage" Irish in *A View on the State of Ireland*. The Scythian trope appears to have been a concept that could be applied to anyone that Europeans considered uncivilized, from the Native Americans to the Irish to the Tartars. This reinforces the idea that European colonial and imperial ventures in the New World were not completely *sui generis*, but were informed by their attitudes and policies towards their own "barbaric" European neighbors.

What is to be made of the other Greek theory of Atlantean origins? At this point, I'm not sure. Should this just be seen as an attempt to fit new discoveries into an old cosmology? Was it merely fantastical? Or perhaps was there a connection between this Atlantean origin story and the frequency with which Atlantis or Atlantean themes appear in utopian literature (More's *Utopia*, Harrington's *Oceana*, and Bacon's *New Atlantis*)? Is there a link between utopian/Atlantean ideas and a positive view of the "noble" or "innocent" savage? It's not clear if any of these links are substantial, but the Atlantean origin theory was popular enough to warrant investigation.

Ancient Greece and the State of Nature

Finally, Greek depictions of primitive humanity shaped European understandings of native American culture. As was mentioned above, Hesiod, Homer, and Thucydides were important in European understandings of the primitive existence of humanity, especially in regards to navigation and commerce. However, another Greek strain of thought about primitive society was important in shaping European conceptions of American natives.

There were two general ideas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries about the "savage" cultures that Europeans had begun to interact with. The first was the "noble savage" view that these other, "primitive" cultures represented an earlier, more innocent stage of human historical progression. The idea is expressed most famously by Rousseau, but it was popular in the two centuries before he lived. Margaret Hodgen points out that the Christian myth of the Fall, connected with classical and Renaissance ideas of entropy and decay, posited an idea of an original Golden Age of innocence, from which humanity steadily declined into moral degeneracy.[5] Adam and Eve lived in a state of innocence in the Garden before their sin, and Plato, Hesiod, and Ovid posited an original, idyllic state of nature. Columbus's letters show a positive view of the natives along these lines (at least soon after his landing in America), as does Peter Martyr's *Decades*. Montaigne also discussed idea that native Americans were living in a "Golden Age."

However, a number of problems accompanied this view. First, because Europeans assumed that, in the scheme of cultural progression, they were farther along than these primitive cultures, was it necessarily the case that European culture was more depraved, since it had been around longer? The unusually open-minded Montaigne entertains this possibility, but he was an outlier in his age. Further, the narrative of the Fall never fit so comfortably with the "noble savage" idea. The broad

[5] Hodgen, *Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964).

comparison between Eden and the Golden Age existed, but the idea that the native Americans were living in a prelapsarian state did not hold up to theological scrutiny. A theologian would assert that the Americans, primitive though they were, were also children of Adam and therefore corrupted by original sin. They might live in a more primitive state than the European Christians, but without a doubt they lived in a postlapsarian world and were no longer in the age of Edenic innocence. Therefore, for the rigorous theologian, the Golden Age does not extend beyond the first two humans.

The other view of human nature and history was the narrative of cultural progression and successive development. In this view, human societies advance from barbarism to civilization, showing incremental moral and cultural improvements. In this schema, viewing this process in temporal terms, American primitive culture was the beginning and European civilization was the end. It tended to describe native American cultures in negative terms – "without laws, without government, without arts, without letters," etc. It was understood that these nations were without these social and political institutions because they had not developed them yet. This is the view that appears in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590), Boemus' *Omnium gentium mores, leges, et ritus ex multis clarissimis rerum scriptoribus* (1520), Gonzalo's monologue in *The Tempest* (1611) and Cunyngham's *Cosmographical Glasse* (1559). Most famously, it is the way that Thomas Hobbes describes the state of nature in *Leviathan* (1651). This historical schema assuaged European fears about being at the far end of a declension narrative, but it did not square with the theological frameworks of the time, either. Augustine's idea of the *saeculum* between Christ's coming and return had none of this progressive content, and the reformed covenant of works/covenant of grace schema generally had little to say about social and cultural progress along these lines. Even the most sanguine sixteenth and seventeenth century apocalypticism, such as that of Thomas Müntzer or the English Diggers, saw the establishment of God's perfect kingdom as a result of a massive upheaval, not the culmination of centuries of progress.

The combination of the Christian myth of the Fall and classical Golden Age narratives provide a sufficient, but not perfect, basis for the "noble savage" declension narratives that were popular at the time. But two questions remain. First, why did Europeans view the difference between their own culture and those in the Americas as a purely temporal one? Why, instead of just being different cultures, did they have to occupy different spaces on the same line of historical progress? Secondly, where did the other narrative, the progressive one, come from? My hypothesis is that both of these ideas come from the ancient Greek tradition, and that they made their way into the intellectual discourse of the early modern era by way of Renaissance humanism.

To answer these two questions, a brief description of Greek thought is needed. While Hesiod's and Plato's Golden Ages are sometimes taken to be emblematic of the Greek philosophy of history, this is an incomplete picture. While Hesiod's *Works and Days* does demonstrate the decline of humanity from the Golden Age down to the vicious and violent Iron Age, his story does not end there. He describes the primitive Iron Age with his story of the hawk which snatches the nightingale and says to it, "If I like, I can let you go. If I like, I can eat you for dinner. He is a fool who tries to match his strength with the stronger. He will lose his battle, and with shame will be hurt

also." The story illustrates the raw realities of uneven power relations in a pre-governmental world. However, immediately following this, he admonishes the reader to strive for law, justice, and religion, promising that "Justice wins over violence as they come out in the end" (223-4). Decline may be the first part of Hesiod's story, but the taming of violence through social and political institutions is the end.

This tradition continues in Aeschylus, Thucydides, and Polybius, all of whom envision the early existence of mankind characterized by violence. In the primitive world, relationships were about force, and political community emerged only as a result of violence or as an attempt to control it. Aeschylus' *Oresteia* tells the story of the primitive cycle of viciousness and violence that attends the house of Agamemnon, and the Furies' constant haunting which precipitates an endless cycle of revenge. However, when the complaint of Orestes is brought before Athena's jury, the circle is broken and law and *polis* are interposed as mediators instead of violence. Law overcomes the primordial state of warfare. His *Prometheus Bound* paints another bleak picture of primitive life. It relates the wretched state of men – without houses, without agriculture, letters, numbers, etc. – until Prometheus brings the gifts of *techne* and civilization to them. Similarly, the beginning of Thucydides' work describes the formation of *poleis* not out of economic necessity or natural sociability, but out of the need for protection from wanton violence and pillaging. Later, the bald political realism of the Melian Dialogue constitutes a prose retelling of Hesiod's story about the birds. In Plato's *Republic,* Thrasymachus conveys a similar idea, defining justice as the rule of the stronger. Finally, Polybius theorizes that humans form a society out of their natural weakness, and that the leaders of these primitive societies are those who are physically strongest and bravest. The origins of law, authority, and justice all stem from physical force and the need for protection.

With this background in mind, the template for a narrative of social and cultural progress was clearly available for early modern writers, and, as far as I can tell, the Greek tradition was the best, if not the only, place they could find it. As far as their determination to view cultural differences as degrees of difference on a temporal scale, I'm not sure exactly how to attribute this to Greek influence. The Greek accounts are all linear narratives, with the exception of Polybius. But even in a cyclical view like his, Europeans could see themselves and the native Americans on the same half of the circle, headed the same direction. Yet this account isn't satisfactory to explain early modern dedication to a temporal scheme, and it's not clear that the Greeks always applied it either – for example, Thucydides' description of the uncultured Thracians or barbaric Persians includes no expectation that they will one day be cultured like the Greeks. This problem still needs to be worked out.

Perhaps these connections between Greek and Early Modern philosophy of history are only superficial, but I think the idea is interesting enough to pursue. It has been shown that Hobbes, who admired Thucydides enough to translate him into English, structured his own description of the state of nature almost identically to Thucydides' description of the early Hellenic peoples.[6]

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[6] Klosko, George, and Daryl Rice. "Thucydides and Hobbes's State of Nature." *History of Political Thought* 6.3 (Winter 1985), 405-409.

If this connection is valid, it has great implications for European colonial and imperial practice. If my hypothesis is correct, then Europeans looked at native American societies, especially those like the Tupinamba who engaged in brutal tribal warfare, through the lens of this Greek state of nature doctrine. The violent practices of these tribes led Europeans to equate American cultures with Greek primitivism, thereby contributing to a vision of the natives as people without law, order, or government. And people who lived without government needed the yoke of law and civilization to be placed upon them in order for them to flourish. In the Greek view of progress from anarchy and violence to civilization and justice, the native Americans were a step behind the Europeans and need to be brought forward. In short, Greek ideas of pre-political, violence-based human life contributed greatly to European views of native Americans as savages. In turn, these assumptions provided easy justifications for dispossession, enslavement, and even extermination.

EPILOGUE

As an epilogue, I hope to briefly show some of the directions where this Greek imperial tradition goes.[7] The following are some possibilities. The Achaean League remained a model for the reconciliation of empire and liberty, as shown in its appearance in the *Federalist Papers* and other documents of the American founding. Simon Bolivar envisioned post-revolutionary Latin America as a recreation of the Achaean League as well. As was noted above, the Greek/Roman typology of colonies became a popular trope as Americans tried to picture a palatable colonial rule and British attempted to reconfigure their empire along federal lines. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Athens' status as a thalassocracy was replaced by its status as a model for learning, *politesse*, and high culture. This model was held up by the Victorians, and earlier by German Hellenists, who, as Mark Peterson has shown, in turn inspired Bostonians to see their city as the "Athens on the Charles." The early modern discussions over state of nature, savagery, and philosophy of history were rekindled in the Romantic era, but by then, changing perceptions of the Scythians, Arcadians, and other "primitive" peoples had become much more positive, and the primitive state was seen as a blissful, not violent, one. As these early modern empires entered the fully modern world, they continued to turn to the Greek tradition that had inspired their birth.

[7] Thanks to Professor Nakhimovsky for most of these suggestions.

Finally, I present below two brief sections: 1) Why does this project matter? and 2) Potential problems going forward.

Why Does This Project Matter?

Why does this matter, and why should anyone care? Answering these two questions will help me focus my project and make it more interesting and insightful. Here are some suggestions:

1) A large part of this project focuses on the relationship between empire, liberty, and republicanism. My hope is that it helps make sense of the paradox between republican and imperial thought. In trying to work out the relationship between freedom and empire, the Greek tradition provided a ready supply of resources.

2) It will illuminate the various self-understandings of imperial actors. The Greek tradition did not view empire as a massive, authoritarian structure of military domination. In examining the Greek traditions, we see a variety of ways in which the agents of empire understood their own goals and actions.

3) It asserts the importance of classical humanism on political thought of the 16th-17th centuries. Of course, not all political theory was based on Greece and Rome; there were many important innovations during this period. But to a large degree, thinkers could not (or did not want to) escape the heritage of classical civilization.

4) It complicates the notion of the "classical tradition" that is so often cited in political theory. Oftentimes, it was difficult to distinguish between Greek and Roman ideas. But in many cases, it is absolutely necessary to pay attention to the nuances between these two traditions to understand the nuance and variety of EM political thought.

Potential Problems

The following are issues that I will have to be careful to resolve in this project (Thank you to my committee for pointing these out)

1) As mentioned above, what exactly constitutes the "Greek tradition"? Aristotle is the main problem here.
2) Scope: This project has a large geographic and temporal scope. On the one hand, I think it's appealing and ambitious, but I don't want to try to do too much.
3) Change over time: In a period of 200 years, these ideas don't stay static. I'll need to account for how the Greek influence changed, grew, diminished, or even disappeared.
4) National context: The project addresses thinkers from 8 different nations – I'll need to be careful to distinguish carefully between different national contexts, as well as the relationships between them.
5) What is the difference between Greek sources being determinative of arguments or attitudes, and Greek sources merely being used rhetorically or ornamentally? i.e., is an author using

classical Greek sources to shape his thinking or is he just following humanist rhetorical conceits?

6) I'll need to be acquainted with the various Greek histories of the period – early modern reception of Greek history was dependent upon the available knowledge about ancient Greece.

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