BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY AND THE EMPIRES OF ANTIQUITY

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by
C. Akça Ataç

Department of History
Bilkent University
Ankara
September 2006

Yıldız, Mete ve Mehmet-Ali'ye

BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY AND THE EMPIRES OF ANTIQUITY

THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
BILKENT UNIVERSITY

BY
C. AKÇA ATAÇ

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA, SEPTEMBER 2006

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

         Assoc. Prof. C.D.A. Leighton
               Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

         Asst. Prof. Julian Bennett
         Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

         Assoc. Prof. Gümeç Karamuk
         Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

            Asst. Prof. Paul Latimer
         Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

         Asst. Prof. Timothy Roberts
         Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

         Professor Erdal Erel
               Director

ABSTRACT

BRITISH PHILOSOPHICAL HISTORY AND THE EMPIRES OF ANTIQUITY
Ataç, C. Akça
Ph.D., Department of History
Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. C.D.A. Leighton
September 2006

Although eighteenth-century British empire may seem a topic much exhausted by historians, there is still room for fresh primary sources and new approaches. Ancient Greek and Roman histories published in eighteenth-century Britain are in fact valid primary sources to contribute to the studies of empire. This dissertation strives to place these sources among the vast literature on the eighteenth-century British empire. In comparison with other types of history, ancient history was believed to play a more significant role in the design of guiding the political nation. Historians were attracted to ancient history particularly on account of the belief that the ancients had already experienced all the hardship that troubled the moderns in their political life. In this sense, the eighteenth century witnessed the publication of an inordinate number of texts on ancient history. Throughout the first half of the century, in particular, the analogy between Rome and Britain so predominated that the historians of antiquity thought of little else than demonstrating a common interest in producing the most authentic, well-written and informative Roman history ever, with the hope of providing the political nation with all the instruction required. Only from the 1740s onwards was the attention of the historians with ancient history diverted to ancient Greece to a certain degree. Therefore, it was an eighteenth-century truism that ancient history had the capacity to offer valuable insights into all contemporary political debates among which the question of empire had a prominent place. The British looked into a multitude of sources with the hope of finding guidance in the unknown path to imperial greatness. Eighteenth-century ancient history writing offered insights into imperial matters such as expansion, colonial governance, the role of commerce as a substitute for military action, the desirable degree of interaction with natives and the fight against decline. Under the influence of Plutarch and venerable literary genre, the "mirror for princes," ancient Roman histories elucidated those subjects. As for ancient Greek histories, whose publications mostly coincided with the rise of discussions about civilisation, they sought to deliver their remarks on empire through comparisons of the states and civilisations that ancient Greece sheltered.

Keywords: Eighteenth-century British empire, ancient history-writing, imperial studies

ÖZET

İNGİLİZ FELSEFÎ TARİH VE ANTİK ÇAĞ İMPARATORLUKLARI
Ataç, C. Akça
Doktora, Tarih Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. C.D.A. Leighton
Eylül 2006

Onsekizinci yüzyıl Britanya İmparatorluğu, tarihçiler tarafından çok çalışılmış bir konu olsa da, hâlâ taze birincil kaynakların getireceği yeni yaklaşımlara olanak tanımaktadır. Onsekizinci yüzyılda Britanya'da yayımlanmış antik Yunan ve Roma tarihleri, söz konusu çalışma alanına yeni yaklaşımlar katabilecek niteliktedir. Bu tez, bu antik tarih kitaplarının da onsekizinci yüzyıl Britanya İmparatorluğu ile ilgili çok sayıdaki eser arasında sayılması gerektiğini savunmakta ve bu şekilde onsekizinci yüzyıl Britanya İmparatorluğu ile ilgili literatürü genişletmeyi amaçlamaktadır. O dönemde tarihçi, bilimsel nesnelliği hedeflerken tarih bilgisine, hukuk bilgisi gibi, ortak bilimsel yöntemlerle ulaşılabileceğini savunuyordu. Bu tartışmalar, İskoç Aydınlanması ile birlikte iyice yoğunlaştı. Bu bağlamda antik tarihin, diğer tarihlere kıyasla devlet adamlarına rehberlik etmede daha belirgin bir rol oynadığına inanılıyordu. Tarihçilerin antik tarihe olan bu ilgisi ve bağlılığı, antikite insanının, modern insanın karşılaştığı bütün politik güçlüklerle daha önceden karşılaştığına ve hepsine çözüm bulduğuna yönelik inançtan kaynaklanmaktaydı. Antik dönem bilgeliğinin, modern insana, tecrübe ettiği bütün zorluklarda rehberlik edeceği düşünülüyordu. Bu nedenle de onsekizinci yüzyılda, önemli sayıda antik tarih kitabı basıldı. Yüzyılın ilk yarısında, özellikle Roma ve Britanya arasındaki analoji o kadar güçlüydü ki, antik tarih yazarları, o zamana kadar yazılmış en doğru ve kapsamlı Roma tarihini yazma eğilimi gösteriyorlardı. Özellikle imparatorluk konusunda İngilizler, büyüklük ve kalıcılık hedefine ulaşmada kendilerine rehberlik etmesi beklentisiyle sayısız kaynağa başvuruyorlardı. Bunlardan bir tanesi olan antik tarihse içinde, genişleme, kolonilerin yöntemi, askeri yöntemler yerine ticaret aracılığıyla hükmetmek, yerliler ile iletişim ve çöküşün önlenmesi gibi imparatorluk konularına yanıtları barındırmaktaydı. Bu nedenle de Britanyalı tarihçilerin bir kısmı, yukarıda bahsi geçen konulara, Plutarch'ın etkisinde ve dönemin edebi akımı, "prensler için ayna tutma" yöntemini kullanarak yazdıkları antik Roma tarihi ile yanıt aradılar. Diğer bir kısmı da, ideal bir imparatorluk yaratmanın yollarını, basımları medeniyet ile ilgili tartışmaların gündemde olduğu bir zamana tesadüf eden, esas olarak antik Yunanistan'daki farklı devlet ve medeniyetlerin karşılaştırılmasından oluşan antik Yunan tarihleri yazarak aradılar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Onsekizinci Yüzyıl Britanya İmparatorluğu, Antik Tarih Yazımı, İmparatorluk Çalışmaları

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In the eighteenth century, history-writing underwent a considerable change consequent to the historians' attempt at transforming it into a science similar to law with a complete set of rules to be followed universally. With the new invaluable contribution of archaeology, numismatics, and cartography as well as the application of proper footnoting, history reached an advanced level, at which it provided a more compendious knowledge of the past than ever before. Of course, not every historian who wrote in the eighteenth century emulated his predecessors and excelled in terms of style, methodology and fresh approach. Still, discussion of writing good history permeated intellectual life and historians felt obliged to live up to the standards put forward in such discussions. Failure to produce a high quality text did not go unnoticed, as the appearance of a new volume of history was soon followed by a critical review in one of the popular journals such as *Craftsman* or *Monthly Review*.

The eighteenth-century historian aspired to "scientific objectivity" and claimed that historical knowledge could be acquired and evaluated through scientific methods common to all historians in Europe.[1] Such claims reached their zenith particularly within the Scottish Enlightenment. Through scientific objectivity, historians sought to arrive at the truth not only about the wars and diplomatic manoeuvres but also the political regimes, legal and administrative systems, characters of the monarchs, agriculture, marital practices and social life. Thus, history came to be "a means of civilised recreation"[2] of every aspect of the past lives.

---

[1] Linda Kirk, 'The Matter of Enlightenment,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (December 2000), p. 1143.
[2] John Kenyon, *The History Men: The Classic Work on Historians and Their History* (London: Weidenfeld&Nicholson, 1993), p. 44.

Since the range of topics treated by historians had thus extended from traditional issues to encompass political ideal, virtue and liberty, history was enhanced with the capacity of providing a solution to the problems that preoccupied the philosophical mind. In this way, history as science took on a philosophical dimension.

A philosophical history, whose more accomplished examples came along under the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century, sought to display "the past actions and creations of mankind" with the purpose of "understanding the human condition."[3] According to this mindset, the historian should be concerned with turning the scattered information from the past into a meaningful whole that would shed light on current political, religious and philosophical debates, which were in fact not entirely different from those of the previous centuries. While recounting the common experiences of mankind, philosophical history, to a great extent, dwellt on the rise, decline, and fall of states and civilisations. Elaboration of this aspect of history in particular was believed to fulfil best the moral responsibility of instructing the men of the age "in civil prudence" through examples of the past.[4] The "men of the age" were, in the first place, the monarchs, prominent politicians and statesmen. Finally, in the philosophical history the relevant examples should be acquired from authentic sources.[5]

In comparison with other types of history, ancient history was ascribed a more significant role in the design of guiding the political nation. Historians were attracted to ancient history particularly on account of the belief that the ancients had already experienced all the hardship that troubled the moderns in their political life.

---

[3] Peter Hans Reill, 'Narration and Structure in Late Eighteenth Century Historical Thought,' *History and Theory*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (October 1986), 286.

[4] Anon., *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History* (Oxford: James Fletcher, 1746), 5.

[5] Peter D. Garside, 'Scott and the "Philosophical" Historians,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (July-September 1975), 506.

For every question asked in the mainstream discussions of politics, there was always an answer, sometimes explicit and sometimes not, provided by the experiences of the ancients. Following the footsteps of the ancient states to grandness and avoiding their mistakes would endow any modern state with the potential to endure. Such was the conviction in eighteenth-century Britain as well. It was believed that in the capable hands of the British historians, ancient history would reflect its own wisdom on the topics dominating contemporary political debates. Among these topics, the ideal sort of empire was a major interest for statesmen and political thinkers.

The eighteenth-century ancient history texts of the British historians, with the exception of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, have not been assessed in terms of the instructions they contained about empire. Yet, the current studies of the eighteenth-century understandings of the British empire have completely neglected these texts' authority in pinning down the intellectual tenets which were to achieve the imperial ideal. This study is hence concerned with the ancient Greek and Roman histories of the eighteenth century with the purpose of unveiling the imperial lessons embedded in them. With the help of fresh primary sources that are by no means exhausted by scholars of empire, it aims at filling a long-standing gap in the studies of eighteenth-century British empire. Gibbon's Roman history has already been examined from this imperial perspective and therefore is not here dealt with.[6]

The eighteenth century witnessed the publication of an inordinate number of texts on ancient history, but not all of them fell into the above-defined category of philosophical history. Volumes of tracts and pamphlets made copious use of ancient history while discussing patristic-based divinity, antiquarian practices and party

---

[6] See Rosamond McKitterick, *Edward Gibbon and Empire.* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

politics. Nevertheless, such works did not intend to assume the task of writing a more complete and scientific history than the existing ones, but rather sought "to examine the evidence arising from ancient history,"[7] for their own polemical purposes. In this study, the multi-volume works explicitly intended as histories constitute the principal focus. As will be seen in the progress of this dissertation, party politics inevitably leaked into the philosophical histories and therefore its reflection on the ancient history-writing is assessed, for it provides us with invaluable insight into the varying ways in which empire was perceived in eighteenth-century Britain. The party-political pamphlets, of course, which aimed at scoring in an ongoing political polemic and thus borrowed partial information from antiquity for that reason only, fall under our exclusion.

The study is comprised of five chapters. The first two chapters strive to provide the necessary background to the topics of eighteenth-century ancient history-writing and imperial understanding in Britain, whereas the last three chapters seek to exhibit the historians' approach to the question of empire. Chapter I is designed to elucidate the meaning that history acquired in the eighteenth century, the mission attributed to ancient history-writing and comment on the historians who wrote ancient Greek and Roman histories and their politics. To serve a similar introductory purpose, Chapter II dwells on the stages through which the British understanding of empire evolved, the eighteenth-century definition of empire, the discussions over the ideal sort of empire and the political events that had a direct impact on the formation of the imperial ideal, particularly within the first British empire. The Scottish Enlightenment is also briefly touched upon here, since this contemporary intellectual

---

[7] E. W. Montagu, *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Republics: Adapted to the Present State of Great Britain* (London: A. Millar, 1759), 5.

movement so powerfully influenced our historians and in many respects contributed to their political debates, including those over the empire.

The chronological precedence of ancient Greece over ancient Rome is disregarded in this study. The chapter on the ancient Roman history texts stands ahead of the chapters on ancient Greek histories; for in eighteenth-century Britain the appearance of the Roman history texts pre-date the texts dealing with Greece. Throughout the first half of the century in particular, the analogy between Rome and Britain so predominated that the historians of antiquity thought of little other than demonstrating a common interest in producing the most authentic, well-written and informative Roman history ever with the hope of providing the political nation with all the instruction required. Only from the 1740s onwards was the attention of historians with ancient history diverted to ancient Greece, to a certain degree.

Chapter III deals with the views of empire encompassed by the Roman history texts of eighteenth-century Britain. These works have attracted considerable attention from the scholars who have studied them with narrow reference to the civic humanism of the eighteenth century. It is true that our Roman histories are pervaded by remarks, either positive or negative, on republican virtue and liberty. Nevertheless, these are not the only political topics embraced by them. The question of empire has a prominent place among the other contemporary political debates and no analysis has approached these history texts from the perspective of empire. By adopting such a perspective, Chapter III argues that the Roman history texts provide valuable information about how the ideal empire was perceived. What is clear is that the historians made a distinction between empire as a regime and empire as a political entity. Empire connoting the authoritarian rule of an emperor exercised not only in the periphery but also at the centre and the limitation of liberties this authority

brought about were commonly disapproved. On the other hand, empire defined by Dominic Lieven as "a specific polity with a clearly demarcated territory exercising sovereign authority over its subjects who are, to varying degrees, under its direct administrative supervision" [8] was regarded as desirable. Furthermore, British statesmen's reluctance to adopt a specific policy, which would realise such an empire, was criticised.

Adam Ferguson, among the most celebrated Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, put forward in his Roman history a definition of empire which reflected the need to comply with the rules of progress. Overshadowed by the philosopher's more famous arguments about the progress, of civilisations and civil society, his views of empire have been neglected. Chapter III hence seeks to rectify this imbalance. Also examined in this chapter are the understanding of Carthage as a purely and exclusively commercial and hence despised empire; the optimum degree of expansion for empire; and the ways in which luxury exercised a destructive influence on the persistence of empire and what other factors led to the decline of empires. Of course, the historians' differing definitions of the Augustan empire and the conclusions drawn from that episode of Roman history are probed as well.

The scrutiny of ancient Greek history texts are pursued in two complementary parts, Chapter IV and Chapter V. In Chapter IV, the imperial lessons from Sparta and Athens are discussed. The scholars of our day tend to regard these histories from a single vantage point, noting merely that the historians favoured Sparta since it was a monarchy and employed examples of Athenian history to exhibit the evils of democracy. However, since they were founded on the belief that ancient history offered universal rules for establishing balance and enduring order under varying

---

[8] Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 9.

political circumstances, philosophical histories of ancient Greece covered a much wider range of topics than the merits of monarchy and the demerits of democracy, including the ideal conduct of empire. Chapter IV argues that according to the topic selected the tone of the assessments in these texts alternates between pro-Spartan and pro-Athenian. Also, it is contended that when eighteenth-century historians of Britain turned to the topic of empire, it was Athens, not Sparta that came to the fore as a model for the British political nation.

Finally Chapter V deals with what the ancient Greek historians had considered as lesser imperial models, Macedonia and Persia. Though they never saw Macedonia as equal to Sparta and Athens in importance, the historians nevertheless attempted to provide some useful information about Macedonian imperial practices as well. With the exception of the Alexandrian period, no analogy between Macedonia and Britain within the context of empire was drawn. The Macedonian empire was militaristic in character and governed by an authoritarian regime, which curtailed the liberties both in the metropolis and colonies. In this sense, it resembled greatly to the imperial ventures of contemporary Spain and France. Furthermore, Macedonia overstretched its territory and sank under the heaviness of this unwieldy structure. The fear of abundance was a recurrent theme in the eighteenth-century discussions of empire and thus echoed in the Greek histories of the age. Alexander, however, was an exception in that. His short-lived empire was presented as a strategically ideal sort of empire and indeed a source of emulation for the British political nation.

Chapter V is also concerned with the ways that the historians depicted the Persian empire. To their minds, the Persian empire did not offer the kind of imperial lessons that they most sought. Instead, it was expected to provide the British reader

with the knowledge of how to manage relations with an alien and despotic empire. Equally important, through the study of Persia the possible role to be played by a similarly despotic empire in the eighteenth-century game of balance of power was investigated. Of course, there also exist some historians' positive remarks of the Persian empire, so that one can not wholly exclude this alien empire from the list of eighteenth-century analogies of Britain. Still, the Persian empire was predominantly considered as the bearer of a civilisation incomparable in degree with the sophistication and refinement of ancient Greece. It was the quintessential outsider in history that would teach the British statesmen how to develop their attitudes towards the modern outsiders. In this sense, the way that the ancient Persian empire was described bore undeniable similarities with how the eighteenth-century Ottoman empire was perceived.

Ancient Roman and Greek histories are valid primary sources to contribute to the eighteenth-century studies of empire. This dissertation strives to place these sources among the vast literature on the eighteenth-century British empire.

CHAPTER 1

ANCIENT HISTORY-WRITING IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

With the coming of the Renaissance, history acquired something of the prestige that theology had enjoyed in the Middle Ages. It was claimed that it had been cleansed of myths and forgeries and born as the prescription of the true and ethical life. Throughout the following centuries it continued to enjoy the same prestige and came to be considered as the most worthy type of literary prose. Within this context, in the eighteenth century, historical practice was not essentially different from that of the Renaissance and history was held in high esteem for its unmistakable "defining quality of truthfulness,"[1] both on the Continent and Britain. Indeed history was respected in the first place for unveiling the truth. Then, being true, it was also instructive, in the sense that it provided the political elite with political and moral lessons taken from truthful stories of the past. The function of history was therefore to set the political and moral examples to be followed in public and private spheres and thus to serve "as a source of precedent and a means of establishing norms."[2] This instructive quality of history would teach members of political society "to conduct armies, secure conquests, invent necessary laws, restrain the intemperate rule of princes and acquire power and happiness."[3] Additionally, though they were to contain serious erudition, histories were to be entertaining. Using dull language was

---

[1] Phillip Hicks, *Neo-classical History and English Culture: From Clarendon to Hume* (London: Macmillan, 1996), 11.
[2] Kenyon, *History Men*, 2.
[3] Anon., *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History*, 6.

usually criticised equally with offering incorrect historical knowledge. The historian who possessed advanced literary skills would be regarded most highly. Thus, accepted as true, instructive and entertaining, history enjoyed a great readership, intended to include the eminent political figures of the age.

To understand how history was conceived in eighteenth-century Britain, one needs to scrutinise the *artes historicae* of the age. The *artes historicae* were the manuals which first appeared in the sixteenth century to prescribe "the way or means of studying or writing history."[4] The reason why they were widely written and published, as Astrid Witschi-Bernz points out, was the Humanist desire to establish "a more orderly system among the traditional disciplines."[5] These works would parallel those in juridical studies. They attempted to provide a definition of history and to put forward certain rules about its methodology. All those rules, of course, were to meet the criteria already set by the classical authorities in antiquity.

Two of the most significant *artes historicae* of eighteenth-century Britain were in fact in French as, in understanding historical theory and practice, the British were to a certain degree still dependent on the French historians.[6] Pierre Le Moyen's *Of the Art Both of Writing and Judging of History* (London, 1695) and Charles Rollin's *De la Maniere d'Ensiegner et d'Etudier les Belles-Lettres* (Paris, 1726-28) enjoyed a mass readership and their definitions of history were widely accepted. According to Moyen's definition, history "is a continued narration of things true, great and public, writ with spirit, eloquence and judgement; for instruction to particulars and princes, and [the] good of civil society".[7] It was essentially addressed to the prince and other influential statesmen and aimed to play a prominent role in

---

[4] Astrid Witschi-Bernz, 'Main Trends in Historical-Method Literature: Sixteenth to Eighteenth centuries', *History and Theory,* Volume 12, No: 12 (1972), 51.
[5] *Idem,* 52.
[6] Hicks, *Neoclassical History,* 10.
[7] Pierre LeMoyen, *Of the Art both of Writing and Judging of History* (London, 1695), 8.

their education. Nevertheless, in the course of time the common individual would also be attracted to these 'truthful' stories of the past and history would present something for his benefit too. According to Rollin, historical instruction would definitely make an *honnete homme* of the common individual.[8]

As indicated above, these two French *artes* were not the only examples of their kind. In the first half of the eighteenth century, many British tracts also appeared aiming to convince the British reader of the utility and the applicability of history, as well as to set forth the rules for writing an ideal one. The historians of the age submissively tried to keep up with these standards in writing their histories. The second volume of Thomas Hearne's celebrated *Ductor Historicus* (1714), for example, is known to have served as an outline for Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.[9] These texts, therefore, commenting on the purpose and methodology of history, established "a specific, reasonably thorough and coherent theory of historiography."[10] What is more, as the most prominent ones were actually written in order to take part in the eighteenth-century debate between the 'ancient' and 'modern' historians, the Battle of the Books, they achieved mass circulation and reached more readers than the *artes* of the previous centuries did. In the coming pages, the British *historicae artes* will also be studied within the context of the Battle of the Books. However, before elaborating on that debate about what kind of history would be more relevant and pass as more instructive, I shall further clarify the purpose of history, as it was then conceived in Britain with the help of these eighteenth-century texts.

---

[8] Charles Rollin, *De la Manier d'Enseigner et d'Etudier les Belles-Lettres* (Paris, 1726-28), 13.
[9] James William Johnson, *The Formation of English Neo-classical Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), 223.
[10] *Ibid*, 39.

1.1 Importance of History

In eighteenth-century Britain, the ways of writing good history and the benefits of learning it were extensively discussed in works such as *An Essay upon the Ancient and Modern Learning* (1690) by William Temple, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) and *A Defence of the Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1705) by William Wotton, *Ductor Historicus* (1705) by Thomas Hearne, *A Dissertation on Reading the Classics and Forming a Just Style* (1709) by Henry Felton, *An Essay on the Manner of Writing History* (1746) by Peter Whalley, and *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (1779) by Lord Bolingbroke. Despite their differences of opinion on what kind of history should be written and read, these authors collectively demonstrated a profound belief in the importance of history in creating a moral code which was expected eventually to become a binding tool for their political society.

History had since antiquity been commonly considered as "philosophy of teaching by examples how to conduct ourselves in all the situations of private and public life."[11] While recounting the past events and the lives of great men, the historian aimed "to explore the counsels, unfold the measure and remark the consequences that belong to every important action, to distinguish between prudence and temerity, design and chance."[12] He presented his findings to the reader as instructive lessons hoping that they would be taken as rules. The knowledge of complete sequences of events would prove that there were not necessarily different causes and effects of various wars, revolutions and invasions that took place in

---

[11] Henry St John [Lord] Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Study and Use of History* (London: T. Cadell, 1779), 48.

[12] Anon., *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History*, 5-6.

12

different periods of time. In fact, a thorough study of history would show that past events followed a common pattern, had "all their turns and forms" and eventually came "about to the same point where they first began."[13] That would enable man to design norms to regulate current affairs such as military operations, overseas expansions or elections. This commonplace of the age is best expressed in Lord Bolingbroke's words:

> There are certain general principles, and rules of life and conquest, which always must be true, because they are conformable to the invariable nature of things. He who studies history, as he would study philosophy, will soon distinguish and collect them, and by doing so will soon form to himself a general system of ethics and politics on the surest foundations, on the trial of these principles and rules in all ages, and on the confirmation of them by universal experience.[14]

On this account, the examples of the past appeared indispensable in teaching the political society what ought to be done, the ideal being "to equally take notice of good and evil, to imitate the one and avoid the other."[15]

In unveiling the general principles and rules of becoming virtuous and avoiding corruption, history essentially aimed to improve the reader.[16] The study of history inculcated the idea of "a constant improvement in private and public virtue"[17] for the purpose of making better men and better citizens. In this sense, its primary motive was in the first place to instruct the monarch and the other statesmen, on the grounds that a people could be improved by virtuous and moral rule only. The common man could have difficulties grasping the true meaning of the histories. As one historian complained, the history texts were "hardly understood beyond the

---

[13] Thomas Hearne, *Ductor Historicus: Or, a Short System of Universal History, and an Introduction to the Study of it* (London: Tim. Childe, 1705), I, 123.
[14] Bolingbroke, *Study and Use of History,* 53.
[15] Richard Rawlinson (trn), *A New Method of Studying History, Geography and Chronology with a Catalogue of the Chief Historians of all Nations* (London: Cha. Davis, 1730), I, 24.
[16] [Peter Whalley], *An Essay on the Manner of Writing History* (London: M. Cooper, 1746), 8.
[17] Bolingbroke, *Study and Use of History,* 14.

verge and purlieus of the court."[18] For this reason, as another historian warned his reader, "it would be very dangerous for a private person in applying himself to the reading of historians, to turn his head to political reflections." Still, the common man too could study the historians, but only those "who have somewhat in relation to our own circumstances", or dealt with those circumstances "we have in common with the rest of mankind." [19] The political reflections were to be left to the statesman.

According to Thomas Hearne, a history should consist of two parts; the narration and the political reflections. Narration was the body of the text that aimed to "relate impartially all remarkable actions of this life," whereas political reflections were the soul of it that set forth the examples "to be imitated upon all occasions."[20] As stated, the political reflections were to instruct and improve the statesman. A constant following of these instructions would achieve prosperity, political stability, military victories and above all a virtuous people. In this respect, history was believed to offer an unmistakable guide to the statesman that would lead him to faultlessness, greatness and virtue in governing the country:

> The statesman travels in the field of history, to enrich himself with maxims of prudence and civil policy; and these, as a map or chart, point out to him those rocks and sands he should avoid in the administration of the republic, and which those who sit at the helm ought necessarily to be acquainted with.[21]

That shows us the reason why in the eighteenth century the study of history was considered crucial and why almost all history texts were dedicated to the eminent political characters of the age, if not to the king.

The definition of history given in these lines certainly was not peculiar to the eighteenth century. Since the Renaissance, it had come to be similarly

---

[18] [Whalley], *Manner of Writing History*, 26.
[19] Rawlinson, *New Method*, I, 25-26.
[20] Hearne, *Ductor Historicus,* I, 120.
[21] [Whalley], *Manner of Writing History*, 11.

formulated. Nevertheless, in the eighteenth century the historians took more occasions to prescribe the purposes of history and thus the number of the *artes historicae* published at that time was remarkably high when compared to the previous centuries. Besides, in the eighteenth century history did undergo certain changes and suffered certain innovations. The historians adopted an ever more critical approach to their sources, cross-examining documents in order to confirm their reliability, and benefiting from the findings of other disciplines such as philology, palaeography and archaeology.[22] In this respect, they achieved a higher quality of work, as we should see it, than their predecessors and developed a more scholarly method of history writing. The chronologies, compilations, collections and annals in the humanist tradition were dismissed as 'plodding' and 'uninspired' on the grounds that, generally consisting of a massive list of facts, they lacked detailed and illuminating commentary. [23] In most cases, the older history texts were actually the verbatim translations of the primary sources and in the others, the texts were not histories but long descriptions of various collections by the antiquarians. These "unscholarly" and "unhistorical"[24] works failed to fulfil the requirement of instructing and guiding. Consequently, the eighteenth-century historian pulled his sleeves up to reach the historical truth and offer clear instructions by meticulously and critically analysing the primary source and commenting on it rather than just paraphrasing. In doing that, he adopted the extensive application of footnote, appendix and index.

In this way, history writing grew more complex and better defined, and its topics more varied. The range of subjects that preoccupied the historians was

---

[22] John Hale Rigby, *The Evolution of British Historiography: From Bacon to Namier* (Cleveland, New York: World Publishing, 1964), 29.

[23] Laird Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing: Histories of England in the English Enlightenment* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1991), 9.

[24] Howard Erskine-Hill, *The Augustan Idea in English Literature* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), 11.

eventually enlarged to embrace geography, culture, manners, religion, etc. in addition to politics and war. Thus the historians began to offer "new views about how society operated in the past and present, by philosophical history, which was concerned with all aspects of civilisation."[25] They treated their subjects either as 'particular' histories that studied particular reigns, events and regions or as 'general' histories that covered the history of a kingdom or an empire. Within this context, the history texts that emerged in the eighteenth century took the forms of ecclesiastical history, universal history, natural history, local history, biographies and memoirs. An anonymous universal history, for instance, entitled *An Universal History from the Earliest Account of Time to the Present Compiled from the Original Authors* was published for the first time in England in thirty-eight volumes between the years 1736 and 1765. However, the most popular historical subjects at the time were undoubtedly the English and the ancient histories. Before proceeding with the well-known eighteenth-century bent towards ancient history which is of particular interest to this study, I shall further elaborate on the English histories, as they too contribute to our perception of eighteenth-century historiography.

English history, both in particular and general studies, was among the subjects that fascinated most eighteenth-century historians. With the saddening belief that they had failed to live up to both classical and continental standards, these historians laboured to produce a history of England which would put an end to the discomforting absence of a masterpiece on this subject.[26] Their desire to compete with the ancient and the contemporary continental historians resulted in a considerable number of histories of England, among which the most prominent ones were *The Critical History of England Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1726) by John

---

[25] Philip Hicks, 'Bolingbroke, Clarendon, and the Role of Classical Historian,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol. 20, No: 4 (Summer, 1987), 471.
[26] Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 2 and 4.

Oldmixon, *A Complete and Impartial History of the Ancient Britons* (1743) by John Owen, *A General History of England from the Invasion of the Romans…to the late Revolution* (1744-51) by William Guthrie, *The History of England (1763-83)* by Catherine Macaulay and, of course, *History of England* by David Hume. The general histories mostly began with Roman Britain,[27] as this area of history attracted considerable attention. The reader desired to learn about Britain, "both as part of the Empire and, before that, as a vigorous primitive society in its own right,"[28] in order to find out the true origins of the nation. With the help of topography, archaeology and palaeography, not only the Roman but "many pasts of Britain" were reconstructed.[29] The particular English histories concentrated much on the eventful seventeenth century.[30]

In fact, the eighteenth-century debate on the English past between the Tories and the Whigs gradually came to dominate the histories of England. The party polemicists began to act as historians and tried to score over their political rivals on issues such as the ancient constitution, mixed government, parliament and liberty.[31] Thus a considerable number of English history texts must be regarded as political pamphlets in disguise, advocating either the Tory or the Whig cause. Unlike the histories mentioned in the above paragraph, these pamphlets were not examples of serious erudition. They were polemical works filled with distorted historical facts mostly about political factions in history. In this sense, they were not intended to serve the purposes spoken of above. On the contrary, they actually "trammelled" the

---

[27] Joseph Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987),. 87.
[28] Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 2.
[29] *Ibid,* 358.
[30] Jeremy Black, 'Ideology, History, Xenophobia and the World of Print in Eighteenth-century England' in Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (eds), *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain 1660-1800* (Manchester University Press, 1991), 205.
[31] Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing,* 2.

history-writing business.[32] Such was the case in the ancient histories of the age as well, as the party authors commonly tried to make their points by using examples taken from antiquity, particularly from the works of Polybius and Diodorus.

The interdependence of history and politics in the eighteenth century is undeniable. As already stated, history texts were considered as providing political and moral examples for statecraft. Therefore, it is not possible to come across a history which was free of politics and a historian who was completely impartial, especially at a time when the favourite topic was the notion of kingship and governance as moral activity.[33] Even so, there were many historians who abstained from writing from an explicit political perspective and tried to stay away from "abusive, small minded partisanship".[34] This dissertation will be concerned with the works by such historians only who "valued classical correctness next to godliness"[35] in instructing the political society. The other texts which have been well-assessed by a wide range of modern scholars, as reflecting eighteenth-century British political thought are less relevant to our search.[36] Before introducing the ancient history texts and their authors that this study will examine in detail, I shall first explain the eighteenth-century interest in antiquity in Britain and the motives behind that remarkable engagement in ancient history-writing.

---

[32] Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing,* 5.
[33] Black, 'Ideology,' 208.
[34] Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 45.
[35] Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 1.
[36] See Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968); J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton University Press, 1975); Reed Browning, *Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Court Whigs* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1982) and J.A.W. Gunn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought* (Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983).

1.2 Meaning of Ancient History

The eighteenth century witnessed an incredible increase in the number of ancient Roman and Greek history texts; that was the emergence of neo-classical history. According to J.C.D. Clark, it is not apt to name this "unique historical formation" neoclassicism; for the term is "too replete with meanings from the history of art in which it signifies a reaction against the Baroque, [is used] to identify a cultural formation which included the Baroque and, in its later neo-Grecian phase, even distinguished the Romanticism of the years before the 1830s."[37] Nevertheless, as this phenomenon still lacks another name, it will be here adopted in the sense used by James William Johnson:

> …an ideological construct, taking many of its assumptions from traditional sources and modifying them by current beliefs with the urge to rediscover and preserve *all* of the ancient culture.[38]

The chief inspiration that eighteenth-century neo-classicism drew from was the common belief in its own utility in better analysing and understanding the British past and present by means of ancient examples. "Neo-classicism was thoroughly empirical. And it was unashamedly utilitarian."[39] This belief in the utility of the ancient histories was based on the completeness and applicability of the ancient world in which one could see the complete picture of events, all major and minor causes and effects. That would lead us to the "neo-classical conception of cyclism."[40]

It was believed that the complete picture of antiquity essentially depicts a kind of dynamic cyclism, in which the civilisations rose and fell. It was first the

---

[37] J. C. D. Clark, *Samuel Johnson: Literature, Religion and English Cultural Politics from the Restoration to Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 2.
[38] James William Johnson, 'What was Neo-Classicism?', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 9, No: 1(1969), 52.
[39] *Idem,* 53.
[40] *Idem*, 63.

ancients who experienced this cycle of birth, growth, maturation, decline and death; but all nations were subject to it. They would follow the same historical patterns and inevitably meet the same end, which was irrecoverable degeneration. For British statesmen and those who wrote for them, the only way to prevent or at least delay this degeneration and to preserve stability was the meticulous examination of ancient history. Ancient history was full of lessons and it would teach the nation to follow the footsteps of the ancients to greatness and to avoid the mistakes which caused their fall. Thus the British would constantly make progress and eventually find the universal rules to establish balance and enduring order.

Works concerned with the ancient world had been in continuous progress since the Renaissance. Throughout the early modern period, they appeared in the form of either narrative text or antiquarian study. The former which came to be called simply 'history' was the narrative of events "organised in linear and casual fashion"[41] without caring much about the tangible remains of antiquity. On the other hand, the latter exhibited the "non-literary remnants of antiquity"[42] such as the philological, geographical, numismatic, epigraphic or archaeological facts, while completely ignoring the political narrative. With the coming of the eighteenth century, however, the narrative and antiquarian traditions converged amazingly to improve the quality of ancient history-writing. Although it is frequently commented that the most perfect form of this convergence as philosophical history emerged towards the end of the century in Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*,[43] the eighteenth century produced many other successful volumes of Roman and Greek histories that attempted to combine the critical narration of events and the antiquarian elements.

---

[41] Mark Salber Phillips, 'Reconsiderations on History and Antiquarianism: Arnaldo Momigliano and the Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 57 (1996), 297-8.
[42] Hicks, *Neoclassical History,* 32.
[43] Phillips, 'Reconsiderations', 301.

Ancient history's claim to complete truth was thus enhanced. Before that, however, the historians were to fight and learn from the Battle of the Books.

The eighteenth century opened with the British extension of the ongoing continental quarrel between the Ancients and Moderns. During this quarrel, which in England was dubbed the Battle of the Books, and in its aftermath, the debate remained inconclusive and later faded away. It was fought in different areas such as science, technology, literature and philosophy but, in Joseph Levine's words, this was "at bottom a dispute over the uses of the past, a quarrel about history."[44] Both sides wrote volumes of ancient histories for the sake of proving their method to be the fittest in reaching the truth. The Ancients considered the task of history-writing as reinterpreting, sometimes imitating, the accounts of classical authors. They put the emphasis on literary style, in other words, on being entertainingly readable and in return were attacked on the grounds that they ignored antiquarian scholarship. To them, in ancient history there was no room for "the intervention of any critical apparatus."[45] The Moderns, on the other hand, depended on the findings of archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics or philology. Through "the critical capacities" that they developed, the study of ancient history began to bear considerably insightful results.[46] Although they were criticised for writing unreadable texts without elegant narrative and ridiculed as "pedantic and frivolous, purveyors of mere curiosities of little value or interest to the rest of society,"[47] the Moderns silently took over the Ancients' camp.

The battle was triggered by William Temple's *An Essay Upon the Ancient and Modern Learning* (1692) in which he claimed that the modern historians failed

---

[44] Levine, *Humanism and* History, 156.
[45] J.G.A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon 1734-1764* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), I, 149.
[46] *Ibid.,* 108.
[47] Hicks, *Neoclassical History*, 34.

to supersede the ancients and hence failed properly to instruct the British society. The "imperfections of learning" of the age produced a poor quality of statecraft:

> It is the itch of our age and climate, and has over run both the court and the stage, enters a House of Lords and Commons as boldly as a coffee-house, debates of council as well as private conversation; and I have known in my life more than one or two ministers of state that would rather have said a witty thing than done a wise one, and made the company laugh rather than the kingdom rejoice.

Temple believed that it was impossible to produce better histories than those of the ancient Greek and Roman historians. Therefore, it would be wiser for the moderns to imitate their refined style rather than to invent their own methods of writing ancient history. Although Temple stated in the conclusion that "this small piece of justice I have done the ancients will not, I hope, be taken any more than it is meant, for any injury to the moderns," [48] his disapproval of modern historians gave way to a bombardment of pamphlets from the Moderns. The most famous Modern was William Wotton and he fought back against Temple in his *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (1694) and *A Defence of the Reflections* (1705). According to Wotton, "[i]f the ancients have so far excelled as to bring them to perfection, it may be thought that they did it because they were born before us." What is more, "there is no absolute necessity of making all those melancholy reflections upon the sufficiency and ignorance of the present age", as "by some great and happy inventions, wholly unknown to former ages, new and spacious fields of knowledge have been discovered." [49] Temple and Wotton were soon to be joined in this battle by many other eminent names of the age, such as Jonathan Swift and Richard Bentley.

---

[48] William Temple in J.E. Spingarn (ed.), *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient and Modern Learning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 42.
[49] William Wotton, *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning* (London: J. Leake, 1694), 10.

As a matter of fact, despite his enthusiasm, Wotton was a moderate Modern and did not deny the authority of the ancient texts. To him, the ancient and modern scholarships were not mutually exclusive. They were actually complementary.

> It must be by joining ancient and modern learning together, and by studying each as originals, in those things wherein they severally do most excel by that means, few mistakes will be committed, the world will soon see what remains unfinished, and men will furnish themselves with fitting methods to complete it: and by doing justice to every side, they will have reason to expect, that those that come after them will do the same justice to them…[50]

Nevertheless, in the eighteenth century there were people who questioned the reliability, relevance and usefulness of the ancient history altogether. Its reliability was at stake because the ancient sources, particularly those dealt with the early period, were filled with fabulous stories rather than authentic accounts of history. In an age when even the authority of the most sacred texts were called into question, the ancient history texts could well be dismissed as unfit to enlighten their readers. Secondly, they were considered irrelevant on the grounds that the modern peoples did not follow the footsteps of the ancients. The modern nations evolved in a completely different way, so they had nothing to learn from the ancients. Thus, ancient history was not capable of improving the society. Such a view was expressed in one of the *artes historicae*:

> But it may very reasonably be doubted whether the histories of ancient times are so conducive to these purposes, as we are generally apt to think. It is certain, the first ages of the world, though they may supply matter of wonder and curiosity can never be fit patterns for our imitation. The plainness and simplicity of the early inhabitants of the earth, their wandering and laborious life, their ignorance of ambition, and contempt of luxury and riches, can find no place among the false improvements of later times. [51]

According to the same text, ancient history, particularly Roman history, was an insufficient source to instruct statesmen when compared with the modern history. Modern history would better inform them of the subtleties of international relations.

---

[50] Wotton, *Ancient and Modern Learning*, 358-9.
[51] Anon, *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History*, 6.

There is yet a further proof, that the best source of civil instruction must be searched for in examples not altogether so remote from our own times. The grand business of the Roman policy was only to contain their own dominations in order and obedience: on the contrary, the interests of modern communities depend entirely on their management of many neighbouring states, equal perhaps in power to themselves. It is not now sufficient to invent wise regulations, by which the honour of the prince and liberty of the subject may be secured at home. Foreign treaties and negotiations are become more dangerous than open war.[52]

The Irish poet Richard Flecknoe also made that same point in his *An Essay on Wit* rather ironically.

In short, ancient history seems to me, with regard to the modern, what ancient medals are in comparison with the current coin: the first remain in cabinets; the second circulates in the universe, for the commerce of mankind.[53]

Still, in the eyes of the many ancient history-writing remained as one of the most prestigious intellectual activities that could be engaged in and the most appropriate way of instructing the statesman and improving society. Lord Bolingbroke, among others, argued that the period from the fifteenth century to the present was "peculiarly useful to the service of our country,"[54] but explained why it was impossible to renounce the ancient histories.

In ancient history, as we have said already, the examples are complete, which are incomplete in the course of experience. The beginning, the progression, and the end appear, not of particular reigns, much less of particular enterprises, or systems of policy alone, but of governments, of nations, of empires, and of all the various systems that have succeeded one another in the course of their duration.[55]

The authenticity of the early ancient sources could of course be called into question, but then again

[i]f a thread of dark and uncertain traditions, therefore, is made, as it commonly is, the introduction to history, we should touch it lightly, and run swiftly over it, far from insisting on it, either as authors or readers.[56]

---

[52] Anon, *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History,* 23.
[53] Richard Fleknoe, *An Essay on Wit: To which is Annexed, a Dissertation on Ancient and Modern History* (London: T. Lownds, 1748), 28.
[54] Bolingbroke, *Study and Use of History,* 159.
[55] *Ibid.,* 35.
[56] *Ibid.,* 59.

Despite having been frequently attacked, the ancient history texts of the age reached to a wide range of readers and proved to be highly influential. As Ogilvie aptly points out,

> [t]hey were read universally in all walks of life and by old as well as young… They formed the intellectual background to contemporary arguments as well as the educational foundation for scholars. Where such books – and there are only a few in any generation– are so widely digested, it is reasonable to believe that they contribute to form opinion and to mould attitudes.[57]

For that reason, the eighteenth century was more heavily associated with neo-classicism than any other century.

As mentioned above, ancient history-writing aimed to guide the reader through the problematic political situations of the present. Undoubtedly, in the eighteenth century the most challenging situation in which the British were required to learn how to preserve their stability was Britain's gradual transformation into a spatially extended empire. Confronting this situation, classical historians of the age paid particular attention to the ancient notion of empire and attempted to draw the necessary lessons for their own emerging empire. Few texts dealt with this notion in the explicit way that William Barron did in his *History of the Colonisation of the Free States of Antiquity, Applied to the Present Contest Between Great Britain and Her American Colonies.* Nevertheless, it is certainly possible to grasp the eighteenth century British understanding of empire through the general histories of Greece and Rome and that will be what this study aims to do.

1.3 Roman History

Among the other ancient histories, Roman history stood as the supreme source to be consulted in political and legal matters throughout the centuries. As

---

[57] R. M. Ogilvie, *Latin and Greek : A History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), xiii-xiv.

Thomas O'Connor states; "[o]ne could say that as the Scriptures were to worship and morals so the history of Rome was to civil government and law."[58] According to the eighteenth-century text *A New Method of Studying History*, the Roman history was the second most important area of history requiring study:

> After the sacred history, that of the Romans is the largest, and most necessary. It is not only useful for ecclesiastical history, but for that of the new monarchies, which are all so many dismemberings of that great empire. It is not the history of only one nation, but of the whole world, which in process of time was subject to it. [59]

While Britain was growing into an empire in the eighteenth century, the British were engaged in a constant search for historical archetypes that would guide them to greatness. For being the history of nations and hence universal and complete, the Roman history appeared to be the most appropriate source. The Romans had experienced and overcome all the difficulties of becoming an empire and remaining so. Therefore, Roman civilization constituted a role model for every state on account of its sophisticated governing mechanisms, just laws, refined culture, strong military, above all, on account of its durability. Thus, the interest in the Roman history in eighteenth-century Britain was immense. Particularly in the first half of the century, volumes of Roman histories were written, each aiming to supersede the existing ones.

However, the uncertainty of its early period made this dependence on Roman history highly problematic. The historians generally dismissed the early period of ancient nations as 'fabulous history' and preferred not to invest much time and work in that. Such was the case for the Greek histories of the age, as will be noted in the coming pages. Nevertheless, although the Romans had the existence of a dark age "in

---

[58] Thomas O'Connor, *An Irish Theologian in Enlightenment France: Luke Joseph Hooke 1714-96* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995), 20.
[59] Rawlinson, *New Method of History*, 55.

common with every other people,"[60] the British historians were rather reluctant to acknowledge the unreliability of even that most uncertain and obscure period in Roman history. The only text that was exclusively concerned with this issue was a pamphlet of French origin, entitled *A Dissertation upon the Uncertainty of the Roman History during the first Five Hundred Years*, which was published in the second half of the century. While this took the view that "[t]he more rude and ignorant the first age of the Roman people was, the less wonder it is to find it adorned with fables,"[61] the general tendency of the British historians was to treat those fables as facts. Thomas O'Connor rightly attributes this reluctance of the eighteenth-century historians to question the reliability of the early Roman sources to the belief in the political continuity of the institutions of antiquity into the modern period. In the eyes of the many, in the "justification mechanism of the *ancien régime*", the Roman history had a prominent place and any sign of disbelief in its authenticity would be "an implicit attack on the integrity of the old order."[62]

The Roman histories of the eighteenth century were preoccupied with demonstrating the ways of becoming and being a good monarch. As Armitage holds, "the mirror for a prince" was a "humanistic genre" very common in England.[63] Among its prominent eighteenth-century examples, there were Daniel Defoe's *Of Royal Education* (1728), Andrew Michael Ramsay's *A Plan of Education for a Young Prince* (1732) and, of course, Lord Bolingbroke's *The Idea of a Patriot King* (1738). In particular, Bolingbroke's model of the patriot king acquired a considerable

---

[60]Anon., *A Dissertation upon the Uncertainty of the Roman History during the First Five Hundred Years* (London: T. Waller, 1760), 1.

[61] *Ibid.,* 12.

[62] O'Connor, *Irish Theologian*, 20.

[63] David Armitage, 'A Patriot for Whom? The Afterlives of Bolingbroke's Patriot King,' *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 36, No: 4 (October, 1997), 401.

fame as the champion of blue-water policy, which will later be emphasised in the coming chapter.[64]

Such preoccupation with creating the ideal monarch was revealed in the Roman history texts and the British historians of Rome dealt with men a great deal more than with events. It was generally believed that the greatness of Rome depended on the virtuous character of its men and a study of these characters would provide the British reader with a Roman role model.[65] The Roman history had been proven to be essential in the search for the virtue, as "[t]he characters of great men to be met within it are so numerous, that it may be affirmed, that there are models of all the moral virtues fit for every one's imitation."[66] Under the influence of Virgil and Horace, the character that attracted the most attention was undeniably the first emperor Octavius Augustus (31BC-14AD). This fascination with Augustus gained part of the eighteenth century the name of the Augustan age. During the reign of Augustus, Rome was transformed from a republic to an empire. The accession of territory increased to such an extent that "never before had one man ruled so much of the world." What is more, to the amazement and admiration of the historians, Augustus enhanced Roman rule all over the empire, both east and west, despite the vastness of the newly acquired lands. In this sense, the history of Augustus's reign was considered as the history of "the idea of empire in the west." [67] The tradition was, of course, very old: Augustus was the subject of much attention and praise, since Jesus Christ was born in that extraordinary stretch of time.

For these reasons, the British historians meticulously studied the reign of Augustus as a model for emulation and attempted to draw parallels between

---

[64] Armitage, 'Patriot for Whom,' 408.
[65] Johnson, *Neo-Classical Thought*, 94.
[66] Rawlinson, *New Method*, 56.
[67] Erskine-Hill, *Augustan Idea*, x.

Augustus and the British monarchs. At the same time, they also highlighted the reigns of Tiberius and Nero, who stood for the bad ruler as a contrast to everything Augustus represented. They instructed the present and future kings of Britain to become not a Tiberius but an Augustus. The Augustan period witnessed an unprecedented territorial expansion and a miraculous peace and order, which were thought to be naturally incompatible with spatial expansion. The British Augustus was therefore expected to similarly "emerge to settle the world and throw open permanently the gates to the temple of peace."[68] On this account, in the modern period whenever a monarchical crisis was resolved and the increase in the kingdom's wealth and power began to accelerate, the monarch was hailed as a possible Augustus. Charles II's reign, for example, was commonly accepted as the beginning of an Augustan era. Nevertheless, George I and II came to be associated with Augustus more than any other monarchs in British history.

At this point, it should be underlined that the Augustan designation of the reigns of George I and II owed a great deal to the party politics of the age. The word Augustus was frequently used by the party polemicists while commenting on the similarity of the political affairs of their age and those of Augustus. The coronation of George I in 1715 was enthusiastically welcomed by the Whigs. George I was treated as an Augustus who came to save Britain from the Tories and bring peace to the kingdom. When George II, christened George Augustus, ascended the throne in 1727, this confirmed once again in the eyes of the Whigs that they were living in the age of Augustus. Many Whig pamphlets were published in which the similarity between George II and Augustus was emphasised. Meanwhile, the Tories also were eagerly scrutinising the Roman history, not surprisingly, to disprove the Whig

---

[68] Johnson, *Neo-Classical Thought,* 18.

argument associating the Georges with Augustus. In this sense, they claimed that if George I was to be identified with a Roman, that would be Julius Caesar rather than Augustus on the grounds of "his suppression of individual freedoms."[69]

Nevertheless, the views of Augustus were not always necessarily positive. As Erskine-Hill most rightly points out: "[n]o period ever thinks only one thing on a subject: it is rare for one person ever to think one thing only on a subject, even at one time."[70] Beside Tories who despised the court of Augustus for being corrupted, there were Whigs who accused Augustus of wiping out the republican features of Rome. Whether Augustus was a fit archetype of a good ruler or whether the Georges were fit to be called the British Augustuses were questions extensively discussed in the political pamphlets of the age. In such literature, the polemical works, which concentrated on Cato of Utica (95-46BC) came fore as the most influential, particularly *Cato: A Tragedy* (1713) by Joseph Addison and *Cato's Letters* (1720-3) by John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon. Interestingly enough, Cato, who was widely known as the 'last Roman republican' and whose death indicated the beginning of the imperial era in Roman history, became the symbol of both the republicans and the Tory opposition in eighteenth-century Britain.

The varying views of Augustus and Cato in political writings are not of particular interest to this study and therefore will not be further examined here. As mentioned above, this dissertation is exclusively concerned with the history texts, though, of course the history texts were political enough. Additionally, the points, where the historians stood politically, did determine whether they would lay positive or negative emphasis on certain topics. Therefore, eighteenth-century politics will be brought into this study to the degree it was embedded in the ancient history texts and

---

[69]Johnson, *Neo-Classical Thought,* 24.
[70] Erskine-Hill, *Augustan Idea*, 264.

not in the way it was reflected in the political pamphlets written by the party polemicists who drew analogies between Britain and Rome.

1.4 Eighteenth-Century Roman History Texts

From the very beginning of the century, as before, translations of Livy, Tacitus, as well as the poets, Ovid, Virgil and Horace were published in great number, among which those by John Dryden (1631-1700), Thomas Hearne (1678-1735) and Richard Bentley (1662-1742) were highly appreciated and enjoyed a massive readership. There were also a considerable number of histories of Rome which were originally written in French and translated into English. *Histoire des Revolutions arrivées dans le gouvernmenet de la République Romaine* (1720) by Abbot de Vertot, *Histoire Romaine, depuis la foundation de Rome* (1728) by François Catrou and Pierre Julien Rouille and *Histoire Romaine depuis la foundation de Rome jusqu'a la bataille d'Actium* (1754) by Charles Rollin were the most renowned examples of their kind. We understand from the prefaces of the Roman histories written by the British historians that they benefited highly from these French works, both in terms of context and methodology. While explaining his aim in writing a Roman history, Nathaniel Hooke, for example, overtly expresses his admiration of these French historians in his *The Roman History from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth* thus:

> My design therefore was, to form a general history of the Romans…which should be full without being diffuse, and short without being dry…In the pursuit of this design I have been chiefly aided by the labours of the learned Jesuits Catrou and Rouille, and by the amusements of the ingenious Mr Vertou, whose several collections I have compared with the ancient writers…

Hooke concluded that Catrou, Rouille and de Vertou in fact offered "a more correct and more connected summary of the events therein recorded."[71]

In particular, de Vertot's history was held in higher esteem than the others and treated as a masterpiece. Those who read it in French harshly criticised the translator John Ozell (d.1743) for not doing justice to the original. Peele and Woodward under the pseudonym the "Translators" denounced Ozell's translation as "full of unpardonable blunders."[72] However, none of these works was exempt from criticism. On the contrary, the "exhaustiveness" of the French histories of Rome could be rightly seen as one of the reasons that led the British historians to write Roman histories themselves. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-1774), for instance, states in his *Roman History* that he felt the urge to write a Roman history mainly because the French texts were "too voluminous for common use." Catrou and Rouille's history was in six volumes, whereas Rollin's history of sixteen volumes reached to thirty volumes octavo with the contribution of Crevier, Rollin's continuator after his death. Moreover, the period they dealt with was "entirely unsuited to the time and expense mankind usually chose to bestow upon this subject." [73] Similarly, Hooke criticised Rollin's work for being "diffused and circumstantiated in matters of small importance, and too much crowded with speeches, in many of which are but little spirit of instruction."[74]

Although the first British history of Rome written in the eighteenth century was *The History of Rome from the Death of Severus Alexander* (1701) by the modern William Wotton, Basil Kennet's *Roma Antique: Or, The Antiquities of Rome* (1696)

---

[71] Nathaniel Hooke, *The Roman History from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth* (London: James Bettenham, 1738), I, unpaginated preface.

[72] John Ozell, *Mr Ozell's Defence against the Remarks published by Peele and Woodward* (London: T. Edlin, 1725), 7.

[73] Oliver Goldsmith, *The Roman History: From the Foundation of the City of Rome, to the Destruction of the Western Empire* (London: S. Baker and G. Leigh, 1769), I, ii.

[74] Hooke, *Roman History*, I, unpaginated preface.

should in fact be considered as the first on the grounds that *Roma Antique* cast light on how to write good history and thus remained influential throughout the century. Basil Kennet (1674-1715) had a countrywide reputation for his remarkable scholarship and amiable character which won him a huge circle of friends, which included both Whigs and Tories. His eight-volume work went through several editions and took its place in the libraries of the coming generation of historians. Kennet dedicated *Roma Antique* to the Duke of Gloucester with the purpose of exhibiting "the most celebrated examples of virtue and great achievements" to him, even though "this would prove a needless piece of service," since the Duke already "goes on like the Trojan prince."[75]

William Wotton's *The History of Rome from the Death of Antonious Pius to the Death of Severus Alexander* was dedicated not to the Duke of Gloucester but his instructor, Gilbert Burnet, the Whig bishop of Salisbury, who "best knew how such a prince ought to be educated."[76] It was also widely believed that this history may have been "the first piece of Roman history" which George, then Electoral Prince of Hanover, read in English.[77] In writing it, Wotton aimed to choose "the properest examples in the whole Roman history, to instruct a prince how much more glorious and safe it is, and happier both for himself and for his people, to govern well than ill."[78] As mentioned above, the Roman histories of the eighteenth century were designed to arrive at a good Roman prototype which would serve as a role model to present and future British monarchs. In this sense, Wotton also adapted the method

---

[75] Basil Kennet, *Roma Antique Notitia: Or, the Antiquities of Rome* (London: A. Swall and T. Child, 1696), unpaginated epistle dedicatory.
[76] William Wotton, *The History of Rome from the Death of Antonious Pius to the Death of Severus Alexander* (London: Tim. Goodwin, 1710), unpaginated epistle dedicatory.
[77] "William Wotton, 'Biographical Notice,' British Library MSS ADD 4224, f. 158.
[78] Wotton, *History of Rome*, unpaginated epistle dedicatory.

of exemplifying, using both good and bad examples, in order to better highlight his

point:

> At first no more was intended than the lives of Marcus and Commodus, and of Elagabalus and Alexander. A very bad prince who immediately succeeded a very good one; and a most extraordinary prince, who came after one of the most profligate of man; were thought the properest instances to set virtue and vice, and the consequences of them both in a clear and a full light. And real examples, if faithfully set forth, have a greater influence upon the minds of men, than any feigned story, though never so artificially related.

He then included other good and bad emperors in order to produce a more complete

history. In doing that, Wotton, as a Modern, acknowledged how much he benefited

from the numismatic findings:

> I have all along paid a great deference to the authority of medals, in illustrating the history of every emperor, and in fixing the times of their greatest actions. That is a field which has not been so thoroughly cultivated as most others have been; and it is but lately learned men have had such general recourse to these undisputed monuments of antiquity, to explain many things which the historians do very lamely tell us. [79]

At the same time, though confessing that his own method could have made his

history heavy, he criticised the Ancient obsession with eloquent style. And in return,

Tory High-church literary men who were won over by the Ancient argument did not

hide their discontent with this Modern and Whiggish history of Wotton.

Laurence Echard's *The Roman History from the Building of the City to the*

Perfect Settlement of the Empire by Augustus Caesar in five volumes followed

Wotton's work in 1707. Although Echard (1670?-1730) previously produced the first

two volumes separately, it was in the year 1707 for the first time in five volume

form. Nevertheless, despite the appearance of all five under his name, only the first

two volumes were written by Echard himself. He was known as "a moderate

---

[79]Wotton, *History of Rome,* unpaginated preface.

Hanoverian Tory" and backed by Tory statesmen.[80] The Romans, he considered, constituted a perfect example for the British, as

> [i]t was a nation that was virtuous through a true principal of honour; whose valour was more the product of the head than heart; a nation that courted or avoided danger, from a result of prudence, and knew as well when to expose itself, when to retreat, by the dictates of reason; and obtained the sovereignty over the rest of the world more by the reputation of its virtue, than the force of its arms.[81]

Their history "contains such variety of extraordinary examples, proper for the instruction of princes." Thus, Echard too dedicated the second volume of his work to Prince William, Duke of Gloucester, with the expectation that he would "learn the deplorable and fatal mischiefs of a boundless tyranny; what flames it raises on earth, and what punishments it draws down from heaven."[82] Yet, Echard was a historian firmly committed to exhibit the virtue of Roman imperialism with a particular emphasis on the Augustan era. Because of its overzealous praise of Augustus, Echard's history was ridiculed in *Monthly Review* in 1771 as "a tasteless, hurriedly composed work."[83] Before that however, it had already been criticised by Nathaniel Hooke (d.1763), the author of the next Roman history to appear in Britain, as "too dry, too brief and unsatisfactory."[84]

Hooke's *The Roman History from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth* dedicated to his friend Alexander Pope was published in 1738 and gained him a substantial fame as a historian of Rome. Unlike his predecessors, he laid the emphasis on "the civil affairs of the Romans, and the revolutions in their

---

[80] Laird Okie, 'Ideology and Partiality in David Hume's *History of England,*' Vol. 11, No: 1 (April, 1985), 7. It should also here mentioned that Deborah Stephen claims that Echard was, in fact, a Whig historian. Deborah Stephan, 'Laurence Echard- Whig Historian,' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 32 No. 4 (December, 1989), 843-866. Nevertheless, his views with which this study is concerned overlap with contemporary Tory ideals.

[81] Laurence Echard, *The Roman History from the Building of the City to the Perfect Settlement of the Empire by Augustus Caesar* (London: R. Bonwick, J. Tonfon, W. Freeman and etc., 1707), I, Preface.

[82] Echard, *Roman History*, II, epistle dedicatory.

[83] *Monthly Review*, No. 44 (1771), 529 quoted in Howard D. Weinbrot, 'History, Horace and Augustus Caesar: Some Implications for Eighteenth-Century Studies,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (Summer, 1974), 393.

[84] Hooke, *Roman History*, I, unpaginated preface.

government" rather than the wars. Nevertheless, despite all his claims to perfection, Hooke included tedious footnotes and massive extracts from Cicero but one cannot see much of his own explicit observations and remarks in his work. As he himself pointed out, he limited such comments to "principally those on Sir Isaac Newton's objections to the chronology observed by the ancient writers of the Roman story."[85] Still, what messages he intended to give are clear enough, especially those on the liberties of the senate and people. As a matter of fact, his views on the senate proved to be highly controversial and were challenged by Conyers Middleton's *Treatise on the Roman Senate* (1747) and Thomas Chapman's *Essay on the Roman Senate* (1750). Since Hooke preferred to answer his critics out of his Roman history, this study will not further elaborate on this polemic and will only be concerned with Hooke's assessments as they appeared in the *Roman History*.

Between Hooke's work and Thomas Blackwell's renowned *Memoirs of the Court of Augustus* (1753), a rather insignificant history by John Lockman (1698-1771) was published in 1740 in the form of questions and answers, principally designed for young people. With the concern that the existing Roman histories would "convey very imperfect ideas to the mind of a learner and consequently contribute very little to his real improvement,"[86] Lockman endeavoured to simplify those erudite texts. Then Blackwell (1701-1757) published the first two volumes of the *Memoirs*, which was received as a very remarkable account of the Augustan age. He stated that his design was never "to write a book of antiquities, to correct an error in the Fasti, settle a dubious consul, or determine the precise day of a battle" but "to show by what steps a brave and free people, from being the conquerors of the western world, came first to forfeit their liberties, and, by degrees, sunk into slavery,

---

[85] Hooke, *Roman History*, I, unpaginated preface.
[86] [John Lockman], *A New Roman History by Question and Answer* (London: T. Astley, 1760), iii.

and become the meanest of mankind." In doing that, he considered himself engaged in philosophical history, which was, in his words, the "difficult science of men."[87]

Through his court-Whig idealisation of the republican era, Blackwell sought to prove that the British could possibly end up as 'the meanest of mankind' too, if they gave up on their liberties. His attachment to republican politics caused Samuel Johnson's explicit discontent. Still, his work was highly praised by the British reader as a product of serious research and scholarly knowledge and translated into French in 1781. The less influential third volume, based on Blackwell's notes, was written by John Mills (1717-1786) and published in 1763. Though an author principally on agriculture, Mills undertook this scheme to fulfil his duty to the happiness of his nation which depended on the governors "whose manners the people are rather more ready to imitate than to obey their commands."[88]

In passing, it might be emphasised that agriculture was not considered a topic out of imperial discussions. In his *Nature's Government*, Richard Drayton holds that it was thought desirable that "the research of local plants and their uses" to be conducted concurrently and within the imperial ventures with the hope of "the discovery of the raw materials for food, medicines, dyes, and perfumes."[89] Furthermore, acquiring scientific knowledge of "nature's government" was seen as arriving at a way of making "estates, nations or colonies self-sufficient or wealthy." Therefore, advancement in agriculture was imperative in the empire-building process and, to some, the ideal man at the service of empire was the Roman type of "the

---

[87] Thomas Blackwell, *Memoirs of the Courts of Augustus* (Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour and Neill, 1753), I, 4 and 5.
[88] John Mills, *Augustus*, III, 1.
[89] Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the Improvement of the World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), xv.

farmer-statesman." [90] On this account, Mills engagement in Roman history should not be seen as a coincidence.

In 1759, Edward Wortley Montagu (1713-1776) published his *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Republics*. This was not properly a history text, but did include very useful insights into the Roman and Greek histories, particularly with reference to the notion of empire. Thus, it will also be examined thoroughly in the coming chapters. Coming back to the history texts, Oliver Goldsmith's *The Roman History from the Foundation of the City of Rome to the Destruction of the Western Empire* appeared in 1769. Goldsmith, who was influenced by "a non-religious but somewhat high prerogative Tory tradition,"[91] became one of the most popular authors of his age. He wrote various kinds of history texts among which the histories of Rome and England were more widely read. Although his colleagues generally looked down on him as a hack writer, he was rather comfortable with this image and did not claim "discoveries," or to "offer anything…which has not been often anticipated by others."[92] In his Roman history, he underlined that he simply aimed "to supply a concise, plain, and unaffected narrative of the rise and decline of a well known empire" and not to tire his reader unlike "many dull men" of his time. In doing that he reflected Augustus in an extremely positive light throughout his work; for Goldsmith was among the men who created the literary cult of Augustus in the eighteenth century.

It is crucial here to note that Goldsmith's assessment of Rome's decline, which in fact predates that of Gibbon, related the relationship of the Roman Empire with Christianity. His non-religious stance gave him the liberty to explain the

---

[90] Drayton, *Nature's Government*, 50.
[91] James J. Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain 1760-1832* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 122.
[92] Goldsmith, *Roman History*, I, unpaginated preface.

imperial disarray by the supposed decaying effect of a state religion on the free spirit

of human beings. Although Gibbon's conclusion alone is considered as so ground-

breaking as to "permanently alter the study of Roman history,"[93] Goldsmith who

elaborated on the same point before him, continued to be remembered as a hack

writer. One may surmise that this was because Goldsmith was a name extremely

associated with the eighteenth-century image of the coffee-houses in "the small and

gossipy town of London."[94] As elucidated in Peter Gay's *Enlightenment*, the belief

that emancipation from religion would bring along progress was commonsense for

the 'enlightened' minds.[95] Therefore, both historians should in fact be considered as

a mouthpiece for common enlightenment ideas. Nevertheless, it should here be stated

that there were certainly still religion-oriented historians among those who wrote

Roman history.

Finally, following the publication of the anonymous *Roman History in a*

Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son (1774) in two volumes, Adam Ferguson

published his *History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* in

1783 with a dedication to the king. Ferguson (1723-1816) believed that in his age "a

relation worthy of the subject, simple and unambitious of ornament, containing in the

parts an useful detail, and in the whole a just representation, of the military conduct

and political experience" of Rome, were still lacking in Roman history writing.[96] To

know Roman history well was "to know mankind; and to have seen our species

under the fairest aspect of great ability, integrity and courage."[97] For these reasons

Ferguson engaged in such an activity and the success of his history was such that his

---

[93] O'Connor, *Irish Theologian*, 22.

[94] Northrop Frye, 'Varieties of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Winter 1990-1991), 159.

[95] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* , 2 vols. (London: Weidenfeld&Nicolson, 1967-1970).

[96] Adam Ferguson, *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1783), I, unpaginated dedication.

[97] *Ibid.*, 3.

work eventually superseded that of Hooke's. His account of Augustus was, however, singled out as the most hostile. In this respect, he adopted the Whig approach, attacking Augustus for bringing an end to the Roman Republic. Also Ferguson, as a philosopher of the Scottish Enlightenment, was preoccupied with the question of progress and the stages through which a state could evolve. Interestingly enough, he adopted such an approach in his Roman history and thus produced one of the most philosophical history texts of his age. Although his *Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic* was in the course of time forgotten and his other works, such as the *Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), received considerably more attention from the next generation scholars. The former piece offers valuable insight for our research.

Ferguson's Roman history was the last prominent example of its sort in the eighteenth century. As the political interest began to lean towards the discussions of democracy, the history of ancient Greece appeared to be "a more useful polemical device" than that of Rome.[98]

1.5 Greek History

Till the 1740s, although certain "Greek forces" were "visibly operative"[99] in literature, the eighteenth-century British interest in ancient history was predominantly in Rome rather than Greece. From the 1740s on, however, there developed a profound interest in Greece and much labour was invested in works dealing with Greek history, both ancient and modern. Thus "a reorientation within a surviving classical tradition from a Roman to a Greek axis" took place. [100] Joseph Levine regards this concentration on Greek antiquities and histories as the

---

[98]Frank M. Turner, 'British Politics and the Demise of the Roman Republic,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 29, No:3 (September, 1986), 587.
[99] Johnson, *Neo-classical Thought*, 77.
[100] Clark, *Samuel Johnson*, 251.

coincidence of interest and opportunity, which was to "produce a spasm of activity that stirred all Europe and prepared the way for the 'Greek revival.'"[101] In Britain, the opportunity was provided by newly founded societies with an interest in antiquity, such as the Society of Dilettanti (1732?). This society granted patronage for some of the proposed voyages to Greece, among which that of James Stuart and Nicholas Revett in 1751 was notable. Although the British had long been acquainted with various kinds of sources for the study of Greece, particularly through the Levant Company, first-hand information obtained as a consequence of these voyages contributed to the prevailing and ever-increasing interest in the Greek history. Stuart and Revett's *Antiquities of Athens* (1762-1816) which has been highly praised as "an important work of scholarship and a magnificent picture book,"[102] was followed by Richard Chandler's *Antiquities of Ionia* (1789) published by the same society. Among the future members of the Dilettanti, there was also William Mitford whose Greek history became one of the most widely read texts of its time. Such attempts unquestionably inspired the idea that Athens, "the nourisher of Rome," [103] had been sadly neglected and that it was time for its rediscovery. Equally important, the Ottoman Empire which had for long blocked the way to the East no longer put off the ventures of discovering Greece. That made Greece approachable for the first time since the fall of Constantinople.

Particularly from the second half of the century, a large number of historians, each one claiming possession of the best method of research and a fuller knowledge of Greece, laboured to produce volumes of Greek history. Some of these works were texts dealing with ancient history only, while the others were in the form of accounts of voyages to Greece with scattered information on its past. Additionally, there were

---

[101] Levine, *Humanism and History*, 98.
[102] Jenkyns, *Victorians*, 5.
[103] Levine, *Humanism and History*, 98.

widely read translations of similar works by the French historians, who had demonstrated a similar interest in Greek history. Nevertheless, when compared with the Roman histories, the Greek histories remained of secondary importance for much of the eighteenth century. This was mainly because the Roman history texts aimed to provide the reader with "the formulation of personal codes of conduct"[104] in the first place and the Greek histories did not. In other words, the attempts to celebrate the virtuous and honest man in Roman history left Greek studies in the shade throughout the century. As Johnson rightly points out: "the roster of Greek heroes and citizens" did not much appeal to the Whigs on the grounds that it could not offer "an attractive, workable model of conduct."[105] The ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain bore the undeniable marks of Tory political discourse.

It is a truism that the impact of Greek culture remained limited in the eighteenth century when compared with that of Roman civilisation. The age, after all, came to be called Augustan. Nevertheless, though considered secondary, the Greek history texts eventually proved not to be insignificant. They too reflected the eighteenth-century point of view on certain issues and actually did enjoy a considerable number of readers, especially following the remarkable and contagious interest of Charles James Fox and his friends in Greek studies.[106] Although the majority of the Whigs generally seemed unimpressed by the themes from Hellenic studies, Fox's scholarly knowledge and concern made ancient Greece fashionable in his own circle of Whig friends. Also, frequent references to Greek history in their works by the more famous authors such as Jonathan Swift and Thomas Hearne, raised a curiosity for the books of the British historians of Greece. Similarly, the English versions of the ancient Greek texts such as those of Herodotus translated by

---

[104] Johnson, *Neo-classical Thought*, 91.
[105] *Ibid.*, 93.
[106] Clark, *Samuel Johnson*, 251.

Isaac Littlebury in 1709, and of Thucydides, translated by William Smith in 1753, contributed much to public interest. All in all, the men who were preoccupied with serious Greek scholarship in the mid-eighteenth century were not many in number; but they produced works that left a mark on politics, literature and art.

The main motive of the historians in writing Greek histories was to exhibit the Greek spirit of liberty in a way that showed the British reader the very source of his manners and knowledge. They argued that both individuals and nations could cultivate themselves by increasing their acquaintance with ancient Greece, particularly with the reasons behind its corruption and fall. In advancing this purpose, the emphasis was not laid on the man but on the differing characters of peoples and civilisations. Of course, many pages were devoted to the lives and characters of Solon, Lycurgos, Pericles, Phillip II and Alexander. Nevertheless, the accounts of great men in the Greek history texts were actually subordinated to more extensive treatments of differences and similarities between civilizations. Another recurrent theme in the ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain was the historians' undeniable dislike of democracy, in their monarchical convictions. In such analyses, it is generally believed that unlike the partiality for Athens in the nineteenth century, in eighteenth-century texts, Sparta attracted much attention and was commonly reflected in a positive light, by virtue of its being a monarchy. Athens, on the other hand, was not viewed fit to inspire the political nation. Its greatest deficiency was that it had given excessive rights to the common people.

After producing the most complete, scholarly and elegantly-written text ever, the historian's main motive was to bring his political ideas into his work and thus to campaign for the causes which he considered worthy. Thus, many contemporary political issues from party politics to parliamentary elections emerged in the ancient

Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain. When these texts are scrutinized theme by theme, however, one sees that judging them as pro-Spartan, solely by taking the arguments for monarchy into consideration is an oversimplification. Different themes were elaborated by the British historians of ancient Greece from differing perspectives which complicates the assessment of eighteenth-century ancient Greek historiography. The purpose in this dissertation is to demonstrate that if empire alone is picked among numerous political issues prevailing in ancient Greek history texts that are prescribed below, the appreciative remarks switch from Sparta to Athens. In doing that of course I shall also seek to pin down the notion of empire as understood by the British historians, which was the reflection of how the political nation perceived, or rather ought to have perceived, the affairs of the empire.

In addition to Athens and Sparta, Macedonia and Persia also concerned the historians a great deal, although the views of these states, with reference to the notion of empire, were not always as positive as those of Athens. The historians inclined to stereotype the Spartan empire as the antithesis of the Athenian imperial venture, but it was unquestionably the part of the Greek family which taught the western civilization about liberty. Particularly in the Greek defiance of the Persians, Sparta ceased to be depicted as a rival empire with incompatible features to those of the Athenian empire and assessed as an ally sharing the same geography, culture, language and religion and facing the same enemy as its neighbour. Macedonia, on the other hand, received less respect than Sparta as only intermittently included in the Greek family. Furthermore, its vast empire, representing an unwise expansionist policy, did not exhibit, in the eyes of the historians, an ought-to-be empire to inspire the British. Unsurprisingly, at the bottom of the hierarchy of empires there was the

Persian empire, which was treated as the alien, hence inferior to the kind of empire found desirable. In the next section, the texts from which such argument is derived will be briefly introduced.

1.6 Eighteenth-Century Greek History Texts

No book has been entirely devoted to the ancient Greek historiography of eighteenth-century Britain. The existing assessments of the topic take place as chapters, or parts of chapters, in the works concerned with larger subjects, such as neo-classicism. The most comprehensive examples of the sort are Clarke's *Greek Studies in England 1700-1830* (Cambridge, 1945), Ogilvie's *Latin and Greek: A History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918* (London, 1964); and Johnson's *The Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought* (New Jersey, 1967). Nevertheless, though including the most extensive analysis of the historians and their texts, Clarke's approach remains superficial, out of fashion and emotional as it is in the example where he calls one of the historians a "superficial moralist."[107] And, the works of Ogilvie and Johnson lay more emphasis on the Roman side of the neo-classical studies. There is also Momigliano's *Ottavo Contributo Alla Storia Degli Studi Classici e del Mondo Antico* (Rome, 1987) in which the author concentrates on only the works of two historians and then shifts his area of interest to the nineteenth century. Additionally, there are few articles which show limited interest in only some of the ancient Greek history texts by eighteenth-century British historians and such works contribute to perpetuate the comments giving the reader the impression that these texts consist of monarchical and pro-Spartan arguments all along.[108]

---

[107] M.L. Clarke, *Greek Studies in England 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)*,* 106.
[108] See Paul Cartledge, 'Ancient Greeks and Modern Britons,' *History Today*, April 1994, Kyriacos Demetriou, 'In Defence of the British Constitution: Theoretical Implications of the Debate over

The ancient Greek historiography of eighteenth-century Britain has been neglected on the grounds of its poor scholarly level which becomes more evident when compared to that of the nineteenth century. However, it may be noted that none of the works mentioned above provides a complete list of the ancient Greek histories of the age discussed. Their analyses focus on only one aspect, which is its monarchical tone, and tediously refer to the same words of the same historians, namely of John Gillies and William Mitford. For the historians who engaged in writing ancient Greek history, their design was to serve a twofold purpose. On one hand, the political nation would have read a more accurate and skillfully-written account of ancient Greece, but they also sought to make this an invaluable source of inspiration. Given the lack of textual criticism and archaeological information, eighteenth-century British histories of ancient Greece failed to attain the first objective. This failure, nonetheless, does not justify the neglect of these texts by modern scholars, as there is insight in them, if indeed a lack of historical accuracy.

The historians secondly aimed to express their own vantage-point on hotly-debated contemporary political issues with reference to the political experiences of ancient Greeks. Their works encompass political comments of a wide range and in this respect, provide additional insight into eighteenth-century British politics. The debate over monarchy is only one of the themes that pervade the ancient Greek histories. Therefore the assessment of the subject should not be confined to only this theme. Other matters on the political agenda of the British, such as empire-building and –administration, deserve attention. For that reason, if not for their scholarly value, ancient Greek history texts of the eighteenth century should not be dismissed. Particularly on the notion of empire, they present significant information. Ancient

Greek history-writing in eighteenth-century Britain was an attempt to understand the British empire with reference to ancient examples, both positive and negative. It also made reference to the contemporary imperial practices of Spain and France within this attempt at negative exemplification.

Certainly, better Greek history was produced in the nineteenth century, which proved to be inspiring for the poets and artists in creating a cult of Greece in Britain. When compared with the books by Richard Porson (1759-1808), George Grote (1794-1871) and Connop Thirlwall (1797-1875), the eighteenth-century histories have been criticised as "unsatisfactory" and "incomplete".[109] They unquestionably failed to reach high scholarly standards in discovering the unknowns of ancient Greece and included some error. As Ogilvie rightly puts it, "ancient Greece seemed young," even at the end of the century.[110] Still, it is not the concern of this study to discuss these texts, to praise or criticise their efforts to reconstruct ancient Greece. These texts were written with the purpose of transmitting certain political messages to the public. As indicated before, this study aims to detect and exhibit those based on the notion of empire. A closer look at the eighteenth-century British histories of ancient Greece and their authors will be taken in the coming pages.

Unlike the Roman histories, the Greek histories of the French historians were not widely translated and published in eighteenth-century Britain. The most prominent example among the few was *Abrége de l'Histoire Grecque* by Pons Augustin Alletz which appeared in 1768 with an introductory preface by William Robertson, the Historiographer Royal for Scotland. The French texts which appealed more to the British public were in fact the accounts of journeys to Greece such as *A Sentimental Journey through Greece* by Pierre Augustin Guys (1773) and *Letters on*

---

[109] Ogilvie, *Latin and Greek,* 90.
[110] *Ibid.,* 73.

Greece by Claude Etienne Savary (1788). Nevertheless, they did not have much influence on the British historians in the way that the works by Rollin and de Vertot did. Nor could they compete with the popularity of the Greek diaries of Stuart and Revett or Chandler.

The first examples of British histories of ancient Greece were those by John Potter (1673/4-1747) and Thomas Hind. At a time when the Greek history was not yet a matter of interest, Potter's history entitled *Antiquities of Greece* (1697), was received with considerable enthusiasm and interest. Probably on account of his later becoming the Archbishop of Canterbury, the *Antiquities* went through several editions and was even translated into German. Though a high churchman, his close relationship with the Whig ministers of George I and George II made him a popular figure in the Whig circle. On the other hand, Hind managed only to have the first volume of his *History of Greece* (1707) published, although he aimed to produce the first complete history of Greece in English. Apparently he was not as fortunate as Potter who, as he stated in his work, "first put me upon this design, and has all along, out of his great friendship to me, afforded me his assistance in it."[111] All Greek histories published subsequent to Potter's history in some way aimed to supercede his work and develop the parts left unclear by him. William Mitford, for example, both admired and criticized Potter for the reason that "after all, his labors, leaves" the coming generation "in the dark concerning some circumstances."[112] Even if it was the author's name which brought it success, it would be wrong to doubt the scholarship in Potter's *Antiquities of Greece*. In fact, Potter was a very learned classical scholar and, as their prefaces made clear, his work became a source of inspiration for the Greek histories published in the second half of the century.

---

[111] Thomas Hind, *The History of Greece* (London: S. and J. Sprint, A. and J. Churchill, Tim. Childe and Rob. Knaplock, 1707), unpaginated preface.

[112] William Mitford, *The History of Greece* (London: J. Murray and J. Robson*,* 1784), I, 253.

Temple Stanyan (1676/7-1752), for example, the first Englishman to write a complete history of ancient Greece in the eighteenth century, acknowledged in his *Grecian History* his admiration for Potter due to "his extensive knowledge in all parts of learning."[113] In addition, Richard Jackson (d. 1787), who was the author of *Literatura Graeca*, written for young people, praised him for "giving a form to a shapeless mass of antiquities, and reducing it within a convenient compass." To some minds, however, Potter's work was fit only "to satisfy one who had advanced in letters." [114]

In 1739, Temple Stanyan's enlarged second edition of *Grecian History* dating from 1707 appeared and was to be the forerunner of subsequent publications on Greek history in the second half of the century. Stanyan's work ran through several editions and was translated into French by Diderot in 1743.[115] According to Stanyan, "the Grecians were the only people of note" in history who "for many ages followed only their first guide, tradition."[116] For that reason, their history deserved to be widely read and studied. Though aiming to produce a complete history, Stanyan did not include the reign of Alexander in his two-volume work, on the grounds that the affairs of Alexander were related more to Macedonia and Persia, rather than Greece. The *Grecian History*, however, failed to keep up with the criteria of textual criticism set by scholars such as Bentley and was dismissed as a compilation after the arrival of the histories by John Gillies and above all William Mitford. On the other hand, the works of Oliver Goldsmith and John Gast failed to supercede Stanyan in

---

[113] Temple Stanyan, *The Grecian History: From the Original of Greece, to the Death of Phillip of Macedon* (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1766), II, unpaginated preface.

[114] Richard Jackson, *Literatura Graeca* (London: F. Newbery, 1769), vii.

[115] Diderot not only translated Stanyan's history, but referred to it in the *Encyclopedié* in 1747. According to James Doolittle, Diderot's reference to Stanyan was in effect a turning point for the French philosopher in his transformation from a hack-writer to an accomplished editor. James Doolittle, 'From Hack to Editor-Diderot and the Booksellers,' *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (February, 1960), 133-139.

[116] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, I, unpaginated preface.

the eyes of the historians of historiography. Till the publication of Mitford's work, Stanyan dominated the field despite its shortcomings in terms of methodology. Although this history has been frequently labeled 'pro-Spartan' because the author, in an unhidden dislike of democracy, argued that "in Athens the power of the people was too excessive," he equally distanced himself from Sparta as "too limited" a monarchy. To Stanyan, hardly surprisingly, the English system which was "the middle scheme between these extremes" seemed to be "the nearest to perfection." [117] Still, both Athens and Sparta offered invaluable lessons to his eighteenth-century reader and that was why he undertook the task of writing a Greek history. When it came to the matter of managing an empire, as will be seen in Chapter IV, the lessons of Stanyan were mostly derived from Athens.

Before the publication of the general history texts by Gillies, Gast and Mitford, however, in 1758 a particular history of ancient Greece, entitled *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip, King of Macedon* by the Irish clergyman and historian Thomas Leland (1722-1785), who was also known as the translator of *The Orations of Demosthenes,* did appear. In this work of two volumes, following the contemporary Roman history-writing tradition and evidently inspired by Plutarch's character sketches, Leland concentrated on the character of Philip and endeavoured first "to trace the progress of an artful, penetrating, and sagacious prince," then "to disclose the latent causes of declension and ruin of nations, of the grandeur of kings, and the establishment of empires."[118] In this, his history, which aimed to be more comprehensive than "the learned" Samuel Puffendorf's "short" but "perfect and accurate" account of Philip from the previous century, was unique among the Greek histories read in eighteenth-century Britain and received much admiration. His

---

[117] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, II, unpaginated preface.
[118] Thomas Leland, *The History of the Life and Reign of Phillip King of Macedon, the Father of Alexander* (London, Thomas Harrison, 1758), I, xvii.

concluding remark on Philip declaring that "[i]f he was unjust, he was like Caesar, unjust for the sake of empire"[119] was to become one of the most cited and controversial references in those years. Leland's *Philip* reflected a highly positive view of Athens which contradicts belief in the universality of pro-Spartan sentiment. Because the tone of these texts switches from Spartan to Athenian according to the themes elaborated, it would not be apt to label the ancient Greek histories of eighteenth-century Britain as pro-Spartan altogether. *Philip*, in this respect, stands as a proof of the non-existence of solid Spartan argument in this body of writings.

The Greek history of Oliver Goldsmith, whose Roman and English histories actually became more popular, was not published in the lifetime of the author. This may indicate that despite the increasing concern with Greece, the publishers still preferred Roman and English histories to the Greek ones in the 1770s. Nevertheless, it is known from his very well-documented financial affairs that for his Greek history Goldsmith was paid £250, which was an amount rarely paid to a historian of Rome. Besides, in 1787 his *Grecian History from the Earliest State to the Death of Alexander the Great* (1785) was abridged for the use of schools. To Goldsmith, the history of ancient Greece was basically the history of "a number of petty independent states, sometimes at war and sometimes in alliance with one another." On this account, while writing "with as much brevity as is consistent with perspicuity," he regarded the accounts of great men to be of secondary importance.[120] Nevertheless, despite his wide audience, charming style and claim to offer a better Greek history,

---

[119] Leland, *Philip,* II, 308.
[120] [Oliver Goldsmith], *Dr Goldsmith's History of Greece*, *Abridged for the Use of the Schools* (London: J.F. & C. Rivington, 1787), 1.

his attempts at writing histories, including this one, only contributed to his reputation as a great hack-writer.[121]

Yet, Goldsmith's Greek history should not be dismissed as a hack-work deprived of any useful insights. It included the author's personal opinion on many contemporary issues, including empire, with reference to similar experiences of ancient Greeks, which should be considered as a representative of eighteenth-century Tory discourse. In 1784 Goldsmith's history was superseded by that of William Mitford (1744-1827) which was the most monarchical and Tory history published up till that day. As a matter of fact, the notable success of Mitford's history was alone responsible for the labeling of eighteenth-century ancient Greek historiography as anti-Athenian and pro-monarchy.

Mitford was convinced by his friend from their militia days, Edward Gibbon, to try his hand at the Greek history. Consequently, his five-volume work took its place among the most eminent and controversial texts of the age and gained him the reputation of the 'Tory historian of Greece.' The first volume of this monumental work appeared in 1784 and the fifth did not come out before 1810. Apart from the first volume, Mitford's Greek history was preoccupied with the French Revolution and attempted to associate the events of ancient Athens with those of eighteenth-century France. By citing examples from Athens, he condemned democracy as a curse to moral government, as also seen in revolutionary France, and enthusiastically idealized Sparta at the expense of Athens. He even adopted Montesquieu's definition of despotism, which was at the time very commonly associated with the Ottoman Empire, in analyzing the Athenian government. In the light of this definition, Mitford contended that the assembled Athenian people represented nothing but "a despotic

---

[121] As is known to many, Goldsmith's *History of England* was hacked from David Hume's *History of England* and *The Present State of the British Empire* from William Burke's *Account of the European Settlements in America*.

multitude"[122] and for that reason there existed "many marks of kindred between the Turkish despotism and Athenian democracy."[123] Thus exhibiting the evils of democracy, he sacrificed his ideal of writing good history and desire of "avoiding equally negligence and tediousness"[124] which was expressed at the beginning of the first volume. He ended up with a "lengthy, clumsily written, rather ill-balanced"[125] work which became the subject of disapproving remarks of next generation historians such as Grote. Although this work became "enormously popular"[126] among the readers of history, only the first volume, and the second one to a degree, might be considered as history and it would be more appropriate to regard the rest in the category of political/polemical tracts. Besides, the last three volumes fall out of the period of this study.

Two years after the appearance of the first volume of Mitford's history, John Gillies (1714-1836), the Historiographer Royal for Scotland as the successor to William Robertson in 1793, published his Greek history in two volumes in 1786. In his own words, Gillies sought to write a "perpetual unbroken narrative" that would "promote the great purposes of pleasure and utility."[127] To ensure that it would be utilised by the intended person, he dedicated this work to the king with the hope that it would demonstrate "the dangerous turbulence of democracy" as well as "the inestimable benefits, resulting to liberty itself, from the lawful dominion of hereditary kings, and the steady operation of well-regulated monarchy."[128] Evidently "in a spirit of decidedly monarchical tendencies,"[129] Gillies too brought his political

---

[122] Mitford, *History of Greece*, II, 88-9.
[123] *Ibid.,* III, 14.
[124] *Ibid.*, I, unpaginated preface.
[125] Clarke, *Greek Studies*, 107.
[126] Kenyon, *History Men,* 64.
[127] John Gillies, *The History of Ancient Greece, Its Colonies and Conquests from the Earliest Accounts till the Division of the Macedonia Empire in East* (London, 1786), I, vi.
[128] *Ibid.,* I, p.iii.
[129] Paul Cartledge, 'Ancient Greeks and Modern Britons,' *History Today*, April 1994, 8.

concerns into his history and following the footsteps of Mitford transmitted his message in the form of anti-Athenian argument. In Chapter IV, however, it will be argued that in his enquiry into ideal empire-building, Gillies's messages switched to pro-Athenian ones. Though considered inferior as scholarship to Mitford's history, Gillies' work ran through several editions and was also translated into French and German. During his retirement later in 1807, he wrote two more volumes elaborating on the Greeks, under Roman dominion, as a sequel to his *History of Greece*. With this sequel this study will not be concerned.

The last Greek history of the age came from an Irish historian, John Gast (b.1715), who became the Archdeacon of Glendalough in 1793. This was actually the new version of his previously published *Rudiments of Grecian History* (1753), which was bizarrely written in the form of a dialogue between the teaching elder Palaemon and the learning youngsters Eudoxus and Cleanthes. As *Rudiments* was disregarded because of its rather unusual form, Gast decided to transform it into an uninterrupted narrative in order to reach more readers. Nevertheless, for years he could not succeed in finishing this project. Finally, on the publication of histories by Mitford and Gillies, he felt obliged to finish his history of Greece and published it consequent to an intensified "labor at the expense of ten hours a day writing for two months."[130] Although he claimed in the preface that he did not feel threatened by these works and that "if a work is really worthy of public perusal, and may contribute to the improvement of the public manners" [131] it would surely find its way to the community, he could not compete with the reputation of Mitford and Gillies. Despite his efforts, Gast's history remained largely neglected even in his lifetime. In the

---

[130] Letter (January 8, 1785) in John Gast, *The History of Greece* (Dublin: John Exshaw, 1793), xix.
[131] *Ibid.*, xii.

studies of eighteenth-century ancient Greek historiography, Gast's history is not always counted alongside with those of Stanyan, Goldsmith, Mitford and Gillies.

In the above paragraphs, comment has been made on the eighteenth century revival of the ancient history writing, the reasons that led the British historians to write ancient Roman and Greek histories and how these texts were received at that time. These texts were considered in the first place as a means to instruct and guide the monarch and statesmen in current political affairs and therefore included many remarks, both explicit and implicit, on the notion of empire. Before attempting to pin down this understanding of empire embedded in the ancient Roman and Greek history texts of the eighteenth century, however, the British perception of empire prevailing in the eighteenth century in general should be examined.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDINGS OF EMPIRE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

This chapter seeks to provide a general understanding of how the concept of empire was developed in the eighteenth century. In doing that, I shall employ only some of the quintessential eighteenth-century political pamphlets which dealt with the issues of empire, for it is obviously not possible to treat the entire imperial literature of the age within the limits of one chapter. Also, as secondary sources, the works by the well-known theorists of empire of our day such as Robert Koebner, Anthony Pagden, David Armitage, James Muldoon and Kathleen Wilson as well as Frederick Madden who studies the legislative aspect of the British Empire, will be utilised. Thus, in the end it is aimed to establish the important elements embedded in the eighteenth-century definitions of empire which will also be sought in the coming chapters, scrutinising the ancient history texts.

The first British Empire, which is of particular interest to this study, was greatly associated with Protestantism, maritime power, commerce, non-aggressive settlements and political liberties. The concept of Catholic empire implying universal monarchy and conquest, on the other hand, had always carried a negative meaning and its constituent parts were not to be justified easily. Despite the incessant discussions over the conquest of Ireland, the purported character of the British Empire did not include conquered lands. It was commonly believed that Britain never aimed to become a universal empire which would grow by virtue of conquest, but conversely was committed to preventing that phenomenon's emergence in

Europe at any cost. Even when the territorial expansion began, it was particularly stressed by statesmen that Britain was "a protectorate of several interests" rather than "a universal state."[1] A universal empire was to confront constantly the problems of legitimising and securing its conquests which were "usually as burthensome as dishonourable to the conquered" and "seldom of longer continuance."[2] What was more, the burden of preserving the overstretched territory of such an empire was overwhelming. In order not to confront these problems in its imperial experience, Britain had sought to limit the spatial expansion. Utilising its identity as an exceptionally great sea power, it successfully replaced conquest with commerce. While pursuing that course, it paid close attention to the imperial schemes of the continental powers such as the French, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch Empires. All of this provoked reflection and discussion, part of which related to those ancient empires whose ultimate fate Britain was to seek to avoid.

The emergence of these notions and their incorporation into the definitions of Britishness and the British Empire were undoubtedly not exclusively or even mostly eighteenth-century phenomena. As Kathleen Wilson rightly argues, the eighteenth-century conception of empire was the outcome of "many systems and ideas, linked to each other through often disparate bounds of identity, experience and practice," rooted and developed in the Isles through centuries.[3] In this sense, in order to provide a better and more complete understanding of the eighteenth-century notion of empire, it is imperative to extend the scope of this chapter to cover the imperial concepts of the preceding centuries.

---

[1] Anthony Pagden, *Lords of the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France 1500-1800* (Newhaven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 127.
[2] Anon., *A Discourse upon the Uniting Scotland with England* (London, 1702), 21.
[3] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 15.

2.1 Historical Development of Imperial Sentiments

Although in Britain, due to its unpleasant implications as a regime, the word 'empire' was used with extreme caution in political discourse; but neither England nor Britain ever ceased to claim to be an empire. Obviously, the term carries more than one meaning and the one which stood for universal monarchy was only one of them. Koebner, Pagden, Armitage and Muldoon agree on the 'elusiveness' of the term and very skilfully explain its different meanings and varying usages, beginning from its first emergence in ancient Rome.[4] The Roman term *imperium* first denoted the legitimate sovereignty of the ruler within his territory.[5] Then, as Rome extended its power, it came to mean rule over multiple kingdoms or dominions. Therefore, throughout the period of Roman supremacy, the notion of *imperium* acquired two dimensions – sovereignty and territorial expansion. Later, as Muldoon asserts, there emerged the theory of *translatio imperii* which emphasised the imperial power of the pope and viewed rulership of the empire as "an office within the Church" and the emperor as established "at the behest of the pope."[6] Following the revival of Roman law in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, European rulers became acquainted with the idea of *dominus mundi*. Thus the idea of universal empire emerged.[7] Dante's

---

[4] Richard Koebner, *Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961) 52-3, James Muldoon, *Empire and Order: The Concept of Empire, 800-1800* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 15-17, Pagden, *Lords of the World*, 8-17.

[5] As J.S. Richardson most aptly assesses in his '*Imperium Romanum:* Empire and the Language of Power', *inperium* originally meant the authority exercised by a magistrate on behalf of Rome, both at home (*domi*) and abroad (*militae*). However, as Rome spatially extended, this difference between home and abroad disappeared. J. S.Richardson, '*Imperium Romanum:* Empire and the Language of Power' in David Armitage (ed), *Theories of Empire1450-1800* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Variorum, 1998), 3.

[6] Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 15.

[7] There were actually different perceptions of universal empire in which the relationship between the empire and the pope differed. *Ibid.,* 17.

prescription of a universal Christian rule which would embrace the entire *humana civilitas* in his *Monarchia* also contributed to the European understanding of empire. In addition, during the Renaissance a negative meaning of the term flourished, derived from Tacitean history. 'Empire' was that "corrupt form of government" which put an end to the admirable Roman republic.[8] Republican nostalgia was a theme which resonated strongly in the ancient history texts with which this study is concerned. Then, there was the notion of empire which bore a particular eschatological meaning given in the Book of Daniel. In this context, empire signified one of the four world governances described in the prophecy, which actually stood for the four stages of the divine plan for mankind. According to Daniel's vision, when four world empires had ended there would be a fifth and last stage of the providential plan: the fifth empire "which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to other people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever."[9] Hence, empire also denoted the eternal kingdom of Christ. The interest of some politicians, historians, clerics and philosophers in the topic of the capacity of an empire to achieve permanence and resist decline might be partly explained by this religious conviction.

The historical claim of England to be an empire was essentially grounded in the idea we should denominate as sovereignty, seeing each ruler as the emperor in his own kingdom: *rex in regno suo est imperator*. In his realm, the *rex imperator* recognises no other internal or external authority superior or equal to his own and thus solely exercises his *imperium*. This was the legal justification of England when detaching itself from papal jurisdiction and the term 'empire' never ceased to retain this meaning thereafter, even when the territorial expansion began under the name of

---

[8] Muldoon, *Empire and Order,* 17.
[9] Daniel 2:44.

Britain and thus the term acquired its second meaning. In the second half of the twelfth century the English kings ruled over multiple dominions such as Normandy, Anjou, Gascony and Aquitaine which were acquired through marriage, conquest or inheritance and this entity was known "traditionally, if not quite accurately"[10] as the Angevin Empire. In truth, territorial implications were attached to the word 'empire' in Britain much later, in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, the Englishness of both the Angevin Empire and its kings has remained a disputed topic.

It was undoubtedly during the reign of Henry VIII when the debates on the concept of 'empire', considered as sovereignty, for the first time became important in English political thought to any great extent. During the break with Rome, Henry VIII and his parliament asserted that England was an empire. They employed this term in the Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533) and the Act of Supremacy (1534) in order to claim England's independence from papal jurisdiction, as well as the king's unrestricted sovereignty over the realm of England. Thus they emphasised that the 'imperial crown of this realm' was sovereign in both ecclesiastical and temporal matters.[11] The idea remained useful for a long time. An anonymous Tory pamphlet, written with the purpose of condemning the execution of Charles I, defines the Henrican understanding of sovereignty as being "accountable to none except God."

> For if there be any power to which princes, or states are accountable, within their dominions, let their names sound never so big, they are not *sovereign,* but *subject sovereignty*, as the very notion implies, being such a pre-eminent jurisdiction, as makes all other persons within the lines of it, accountable unto it, but it, or the person, or persons invested with it, accountable to none.[12]

---

[10]C. Warren Hollister and Thomas K. Keefe, 'The Making the Angevin Empire', *Journal of British Studies,* Volume 12 (May, 1973), 1. James Muldoon stresses the point that the Angevin kingdom was an empire even though the rulers did not employ the term. Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 142.
[11]Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 128.
[12]Anon., *The English Realm a Perfect Sovereignty and Empire, and the King a complete and imperial Sovereign.* (London, 1717), 16.

In vindicating his claims, Henry VIII and his advisors referred to the most ancient historical traditions such as the one claiming that the rulers of Britain inherited the 'imperial crown' from Constantine the Great. Parliament affirmed that

> [i]t was resolved, and so declared, that by sundry authentic histories, and chronicles, it is manifestly declared and expressed, that this realm of England is an empire, and so has been accepted in the world, governed by one supreme head, and King, having dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown of the same.[13]

The role of Parliament could have cast a shadow over this ultimate sovereignty of the English king and made England a limited monarchy rather than an *imperium*. On this issue, however, it was most assertively set out that Henry VIII had all the essential rights of perfect sovereignty, both as king and king-in-parliament.

This version of *imperium* had been extended to the plantations and colonies much earlier than the territorial version. During the American crisis, the thirteen colonies refused to recognise this *imperium*, claiming that the supreme authority of the British kings and the dissolution of the first territorial empire then followed. Now when we return to the definition of *imperium* in early modern England, we see that the English kings were held to enjoy a perfect *imperium*, at least at times and always in the estimation:

> ...though the *House of Commons* bears the show of a *democracy*, and the *peers* look like an *aristocracy* among us, yet our government is a perfect *monarchy*, because the *supreme power* is,…neither in the one, nor in the other nor in both together, but solely in the person of the King.[14]

In accordance with his imperial scheme, in 1541 Henry VIII also made the Irish parliament change his title from Lord of Ireland to King of Ireland. With this act the crown of Ireland was declared 'imperial' as well and the king of England was to be the supreme sovereign.

---

[13]24. Hen 8. C12 quoted in *English Realm*, 19.
[14] *Ibid.,* 30.

Unlike Henry VIII, the other monarchs of the Tudor dynasty never used the term *imperium* to the same degree. In fact, as Muldoon informs us, Edward VI and Mary I did not employ it at all in royal decrees.[15] Yet, in the years between 1547 and 1550 much emphasis was put on the Protestant character of the island. Following the Scots' conversion to Protestantism in 1560, it had come to be the bond to unite England and Scotland. The foundation of the Protestant conception of the empire, which would later emerge, was thus laid. Protestantism in this context was less about "any shared conception of doctrines of salvation, the church or of Jesus' divinity", than the embracing of "a common anti-Catholicism."[16]

During the Elizabethan era, there were a few appearances of the term 'empire' in some royal documents, referring to the English crown's sovereignty; but the concept of empire unofficially, as remarked by Frances A. Yates, came to imply a "golden age for England" and to carry the eschatological meaning mentioned above.[17] The restoration of the "pure imperial religion" was enthusiastically embraced as the proof of England's identity as a sacred empire.[18] Then, the naval power of England, overseas expeditions by English sailors and the defeat of the Spanish Armada were considered as the partial fulfilment of the prophecy of "the golden age of a world empire," in which the secrets of God were revealed through voyaging and discovery.[19] In this respect, it was particularly Elizabeth's victory over the Spanish Armada which symbolised the victory of the empire of England over the *other* spiritual power. As a consequence, Elizabeth was personified as 'the Virgin Astrae' who ruled England in its golden age.

---

[15] Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 130.

[16] David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 62.

[17] Frances A. Yates, *Astrae: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Pimlico, 1975), 38-59.

[18]*Ibid.,* 39.

[19]*Ibid.*, 54.

At this point it should be noted together with Yates that the English understanding of the golden age did not necessarily denote a militarily aggressive and territorially expansionist empire. It rather emphasised the conviction that "the world is at its best and most peaceful under one ruler and that then justice is most powerful."[20] One of the prerequisites of attaining and distributing this peace and justice was the obtaining of the sovereignty of the seas through a powerful navy. Based on this belief, the maritime understanding of empire began to develop. The first work to delineate the maritime character of England was John Dee's *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfect Arte of Navigation* published in 1576. Here Dee put forward a theory of *mare clausum* which was at odds with the liberal naval policies of Elizabeth.

The reflection of the 'golden era' on the following century appeared as the emergence of apocalyptic theories of empire. The Fifth Monarchy, which was believed to be the last world empire, preceding the kingdom of Christ, was central to these theories. The works dealing with the association of England with the Fifth Monarchy, such as those by Thomas Brightman, Joseph Mede, Henry More and Isaac Barrow dominated the intellectual sphere of seventeenth-century England. Still, in the royal decrees the term 'empire' preserved its Henrican meaning and, with the coronation of James I, once again became the king's basis of claiming sovereignty over his realm.

When in 1603, James VI of Scotland was declared as the legitimate heir to the crown, united in his person, the realm of Great Britain became an *imperium* in the historical sense that England and Scotland had been imperial realms. Like his predecessors, he imposed an insular understanding of empire to spread and

---

[20] Yates, *Astrae,* 58.

strengthen his royal authority, resting heavily on his Protestantism, throughout the kingdom. The Ulster plantation was founded on this "idea of a larger expanded realm united in Protestantism"[21] and appeared as the sequel to Tudor empire-building at home. On the other hand, the reign of James I also witnessed the first permanent settlement in America and the foundation of the Virginia Company on 10 April 1606. Therefore, one may point to the emergence of a new imperial perception, in terms of the possession of overseas territories, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. However, the scope of the overseas activities was confined to "the harassment of the Spanish figure"[22] and is rather to be evaluated as the overseas phase of the Protestant-Catholic rivalry than as a shift of emphasis from the internal empire to the colonial one.

The existing concepts of the British *imperium* were seriously challenged during the Civil War and Interregnum. There is no doubt that in this republican age, consequent to the regicide, the term 'empire' lost its primary meaning in the political discourse, as Cromwell established the 'Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland.' The conquests of Ireland and Scotland in the 1650s by the Commonwealth armies, particularly, damaged the imperial claims of England over these kingdoms, which, it was alleged, were not based on conquest. Still, through conquest, Britain was more unified than the Stuarts had ever made it and now there emerged the problem of what to make of it. When Oliver Cromwell began to set his Western Design, although the confusion over its meaning had not yet completely disappeared, an imperial scheme parallel to that of Elizabeth came forth. Attacking the Spanish once again appeared as "a rather useful instrument of Protestant propaganda;"[23] but,

---

[21] Tristan Marshall, *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI and I* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 6.

[22] Marshall, *Theatre and Empire,* 17-18.

[23] Timothy Venning, *Cromwellian Foreign Policy* (London: St Martin's Press, 1995), 74.

in contrast to the Elizabethan wars with the Spanish, this one would be fought beyond the 'line,' in the Spanish colonies in the West Indies. According to Cromwell, defeating the Spaniards overseas would put a definite end to their claim that Spain had exclusive rights to America, by virtue of the papal decree of 1494. Undoubtedly, the prospect of attacking the Catholic empire encouraged the ongoing eschatological theories of empire in Britain. Nevertheless, despite the capture of Jamaica in 1655 and the settlement of English Protestants there, the Western Design was criticised at home, as hardly fitting well with the monarchy's imperial legacy, which defined the sovereign empire as "a stable and defensive unit."[24] Such convictions visibly prevailed in the ancient history texts that this study is concerned with. The unusually offensive character of the Western Design was equally despised among both royalists and republicans. In the eyes of the royalists, Cromwellian *imperium* would undermine the historical royal language of empire, whereas according to the republicans, such an empire would corrupt 'republican virtue'.[25] The failure of the Design terminated these debates as well as the rumours about Cromwell becoming the emperor.

The Commonwealth is a significant phase in British imperial history and not only for the reasons mentioned above. In 1656 James Harrington's *Oceana*, one of the first texts to prescribe what sort of an empire Britain ought to be, was published. Harrington, criticising the Western Design, argued that any attempt to acquire overseas land would be a wasteful investment and that an oceanic adventure was utterly undesirable. What he meant by *Oceana* was the incorporation of *Marpeisa* (Scotland) and *Panopea* (Ireland), with the aim of reinforcing the English 'Empire of the Sea.' He was, in other words, preoccupied with the question of empire in the

---

[24] David Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Language of Empire', *The Historical Journal*, Volume 35 (Sep., 1992), 535.
[25] *Idem.*, 532.

domestic context.[26] The balanced republican constitution was not yet sufficiently fortified and hence too fragile to support an overseas expansion. Nevertheless, through naval supremacy and advanced agriculture, Britain, or *Oceana*, could eventually pursue a "godly mission" to expand in the name of "liberty and aid."[27] The *Commonwealth of Oceana*, as the text first arrived on the scene, set forth the prerequisites for Britain to become an empire of the sea, emphasising, of course, maritime efficiency more than anything else.

In the meantime, an empire in the sense of a territorial expansion was in the making in North America. Charles I's proclamation of 1625 made the settlement in Virginia directly dependent on the English *imperium* by declaring that "we hold those territories of Virginia and of Summer Islands, as also that of New England… to be a part of our royal empire descended upon us." A similar employment of the term also appeared in another proclamation in 1680 which asserted the king's privileges concerning the settlement in Pennsylvania. In this decree, Charles II expressed his "commendable desire to enlarge" his "English empire."[28] Till the Anglo-Scottish union of 1707, the territorially expanded empire was English and it was associated above all with English maritime power.

2.2 The Union of 1707

The Union of 1707 was one of the last manifestations of 'empire' denoting sovereignty, which would be followed by the idea of expanding empire as the century unfolded. Once the Union was secured, it raised the hope that Britain, for the

---

[26] Derek Hicks, 'The English Republic and the Meaning of Britain', *The Journal of Modern History* , Vol. 66 (September 1994), 467.
[27] Armitage, 'Cromwellian Protectorate', 552.
[28] Quoted in Koebner, *Empire and Order*, 75.

first time, would become an empire with vast overseas lands acquired through, not conquest but settlement. Koebner stresses that

> in the course of the eighteenth century…in Great Britain and its dependencies overseas the name of Empire became overlaid with meanings which were unprecedented additions to those which had shaped its former career.[29]

In this sense, the Union of 1707 stands for the beginning of an era. It had unmistakable imperial implications for both sides, as the English scheme of Union, expressed in terms of sovereignty, coincided with the Scottish desire to have overseas colonies. Though only one among many elements in the debate about the Union, here we must confine ourselves the imperial issues.

During the reign of William III, the previously shattered dream of an Anglo-Scottish Union was revived. From the English perspective the union of two kingdoms was desirable as this would, in the first place, put an end to the situation of two neighbour kingdoms sharing the same monarch.[30] More immediately, a unified Britain would gain power against its continental rivals, particularly France. Thus, the possibility of a Jacobite invasion of England from Scotland and the accession of James III to the throne would, it was hoped, be ruled out. However, the union could only be in the form of the acquisition of the inferior kingdom by the superior. Undoubtedly, this was due to "the intensity of the internal union of the Kingdom of England." Since the breach with Rome, the English monarchs never compromised their claims of being the only sovereign, the emperor, within the realm of England. In the case of a federating union between two equal empires the ultimate sovereignty of the king of England would be challenged, even though he was at the same time the king of Scotland. In Pocock's words:

---

[29]Koebner, *Empire and Order*, 60.
[30] John Robertson, 'Union and Empire' in John Robertson(ed), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4.

> …if the King of England could not conceivably share his *imperium* with the Pope, he could not share it with himself as King of Scots. [31]

This was because the English political tradition prescribed the king's *imperium* to consist of two elements, the *imperium* of the crown and the *imperium* of the crown-in-parliament. The union of two equal kingdoms would not defy the *imperium* of the crown but would definitely challenge the *imperium* of the crown-in-parliament, if a wholly new British parliament were to come into existence. Thus, the Scottish parliament was to be absorbed in a union and Scotland was to share a common legislature with England in an 'incorporating' union.

On the other hand, till the failure of the Darien venture and beyond, the Scots claimed equality on the grounds that the crown of Scotland was as imperial as that of England and Scottish sovereignty equally deserved to be preserved. The Darien venture (1698-1700) was the Scottish attempt at establishing a colony on the Isthmus of Panama. Scotland was highly committed to this venture, with the thoughts that a profitable overseas colony would improve its provincial economy as well as provide the means necessary to acquire fiscal independence from London, thus strengthening its defences against any possible conquest.[32] In order to grasp a better understanding of what an overseas colony really meant to the Scots, one needs to examine the writings of Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, in which is found "the only major work in support of the Darien venture."[33] Fletcher wrote that the venture was of immense importance to Scotland as

> …the ruin of it, which, God forbid, may very probably draw along with it that of the whole trade of the kingdom, and a perpetual discouragement from ever attempting anything considerable hereafter.[34]

---

[31] J. G. A. Pocock, 'Empire, State and Confederation: The War of American Independence as a Crisis in Multiple Monarchy' in Robertson, *Union for Empire,* 320.

[32] David Armitage, 'The Scottish Vision of Empire: Intellectual Origins of the Darien Venture' in Robertson, *Union for Empire*, 107.

[33] *Ibid.,* 7.

[34] Andrew Fletcher, 'The First Discourse on the Affairs of Scotland' (1698) in *The Political Works* (London, 1732), 80.

Indeed when the colony was deserted and the venture failed, all these hopes of economic regeneration and independence faded away. Additionally, the negative role the English played in this failure made evident the fact that if Scotland aimed to be active and successful overseas, cooperation with England was obligatory. As a consequence, discussion of a union with England was not back on the political agenda. The Union, for Scots, appeared as an "alternative to an independent colonial empire."[35]

An anonymous pamphlet by a 'Scotsman' entitled *A Discourse upon the uniting [of] Scotland with England* (1702) displayed all the advantages to come, once the Scots agreed not to "contend with the greatest naval power that ever yet appeared upon the seas, for a dominion, all the world seems to give them the sovereignty of."[36] The author argued that the Scots were now to choose between "endeavouring a closer Union" with the English and "thereby partaking of their wealth and glory" and "seeking a more complete separation from them," which would "quench" their growth. Scotland should accept all the English conditions concerning the Union for the sake of a prosperous imperial future.

> That the growth of empire therefore may not be hereby diverted or rendered uncertain; we must not only quit all thoughts of the project in the union of the three northern crowns, of a reciprocal residence of our sovereign in each kingdom; but expect for that reason, and our propinquity to the English plantations, our trade thither should be burdened like the Irish, and that we like them should be obliged to touch in their ports.[37]

The quotation above indeed reflects a Scottish point of view on the eve of the Union. Nevertheless, it was not then common to express it in public in such an enthusiastic

---

[35] David Armitage, 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?', *The American Historical* Review, Volume 104 (Apr., 1999), 442.
[36] Anon., *Discourse,* 5.
[37] *Ibid.,* 7 and 63.

tone. This is explained by the fact that the author of the pamphlet was in fact an Englishman pretending to be a Scot.[38]

> Scotland then forget your emulation, forget your name, cancel the imaginary bounds of each kingdom; and as our constitutions and customs, shows us plainly to be originally the same people; let us no more scruple the calling ourselves English, than we do the calling our language so, in any part beyond the seas.[39]

Still, it is a significant pamphlet exposing the role that the question of empire played in debates on the Union. Andrew Fletcher's writings are equally important in reflecting the views of an enemy to the British Empire as well as "all great and over-grown powers."[40] For the same reasons that England was hostile to the Spanish and French empires, Fletcher despised the idea of an expanding Britain. He was persuaded that

> [a]ll great government, whether republics or monarchies, not only disturb the world in their rise and fall; but by bringing together such numbers of men and immense riches into one city, inevitably corrupt all good manners, and make them uncapable of order and discipline.[41]

By the Union of 1707, Scotland acquired free access to the overseas settlements of England and the same economic opportunities as the English. Although the overseas colonies were to remain under the law of England, on the grounds that there no longer existed Scottish colonies after the loss of Darien, the Scots did not resent this. What was granted by Article IV of the Treaty of Union was sufficiently gratifying:

> That all the subjects of the United Kingdom of Great Britain shall from and after the Union have full freedom and intercourse of trade and navigation to and from any port or place within the said United Kingdom and the dominions and plantations thereunto belonging.[42]

---

[38] Koebner, *Empire*, 77.

[39] Anon., *Discourse*, 63.

[40] Andrew Fletcher, *An Account of A Conversation Concerning A Right Regulation of Governments for the Common Good of Mankind* (1703) in *Political Works*, 385

[41] *Ibid*, 421.

[42] Quoted in Bruce P. Lenman, 'Colonial Warfare and Imperial Identity' in Michael Fry (ed), *Scotland and the Americas 1600 to 1800* (Providence, Rhode Island: John Carter Brown Librray, 1995), 77.

In return, England enforced the monarch's sovereignty over Britain in terms of both the *imperium* of the crown and the *imperium* of the crown-in-parliament through the incorporating union of the parliaments. The Act of Union, in which imperial language was deliberately avoided in order not to offend the Scots, called the new entity the 'Monarchy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and of the Dominions.' The word *imperium* was employed exclusively to refer to independence from the papacy.[43] Still, the ultimate outcome of the Union of the two kingdoms was the British Empire, endowed with new possibilities of expansion. Henceforth, within the British realm the word *imperium* would not primarily refer to sovereignty. In this respect, the Union was in fact "the cornerstone of the British empire-state of the eighteenth century."[44]

Having built the safeguards at home, Britain turned its eyes to the colonies in America. From the beginning, the English (later the British) justified their existence there as a mission "to establish themselves, without any expense to the nations, in the uncultivated and almost uninhabited countries".[45] This was how they differentiated their empire from the universal empires of Europe, which were enlarged by means of conquest. Yet, empire was not, as Wilson points, an end in itself, but "the means through which national power and ascendancy could be proved and demonstrated."[46] Within this contradictory context, the relationship between Britain and the colonies, in other words the first British Empire, was never explicitly defined. David Hancock points out that "no one organised England's American agricultural-commercial dependencies the way the East India Company attempted to order the Indian sub-

---

[43] Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, p.132.
[44] David Armitage, 'The British Conception of Empire in the Eighteenth Century' in Armitage, *Greater Britain 1516-1776: Essays in Atlantic History* (Aldershot & Vermont: Ashgate Variorum, 2004), 97.
[45] Richard Bland, *An Enquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies* (London, 1769), 13.
[46]Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue: The Imperial project and Hanoverian Culture 1720-1785' in Lawrence Stone (ed), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815* (London and NewYork: Routledge, 1994),155.

continent."[47]   Instead, it was assumed that an informal code regulated American affairs. This reluctance of the British monarchs to clarify the official status of these territories was to cause immense problems from the second half of the eighteenth century. Despite this vague attitude of the Crown, however, in the public mind a certain understanding of overseas empire, mostly associated with being Protestant, commercial, maritime and free was developing.

The term 'British Empire,' denoting Great Britain and the colonies together, came slowly to be employed in the pamphlets dealing with the political, economic or military affairs of the age. One of the first uses of it appeared in an eccentric pamphlet by a Scotsman, Samuel Vetch, who was demanding assistance for some conquests in Canada which, he maintained, would be to the advantage of the entire British Empire.[48] Nevertheless, it was above all John Oldmixon's then widely read survey of the British plantations which introduced the British Empire to the British public. Oldmixon, an imperial topographer, successfully attracted the attention of the reader to transatlantic affairs by his *British Empire in America*, which was published in 1708, immediately after the Anglo-Scottish Union. In 1698, his predecessor, Nathaniel Crouch, had also attempted to provide a complete picture of the colonies in America as "a set of political communities distinct from, though subordinate to, the English monarchy."[49] His *English Empire in America*, however, was solely a geographical scrutiny and left out normative remarks on the structure of the empire. Oldmixon, on the other hand, extensively delineated the new understanding of empire and combined it with the geographical analysis.

---

[47] David Hancock, ' "World of Business to Do": William Freeman and the Foundation of England's Commercial Empire', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 57 (January 2000), 5.
[48] Koebner, *Empire*, 78.
[49] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 95.

Following the commonplace of the age, Oldmixon's conception of empire was principally commercial. He argued that the English needed this commercial empire because they were 'inhabitants of an island':

> …we have no ways of conveying our product and manufactures abroad, but by navigation, the best and easiest of all ways; we have no ways of making ourselves considerable in the world, but by our fleets, and of supporting them, but by our trade, which breeds seamen, and brings in wealth to maintain them.[50]

On this account he assessed that "the American plantations are an advantage, and a very great one, to this kingdom."[51] In his pamphlet, Oldmixon also attempted to answer the criticisms rising at home about the colonies. The main criticism was that the colonies were weakening the kingdom "by draining England of her people".[52]

Not surprisingly, he gave examples from antiquity as an answer:

> Did the Athenians and other Greeks lose by the colonies they sent into Asia? Or rather, was not Ionia the barrier of Greece, which defended it against the Persian usurpation? Did these colonies dispeople Greece? Is there any complaint of it in all the Greek story? No certainly! On the contrary, the Grecian states thrived after it; their navigation increased and by their navigation they became masters of Asia; for had they not destroyed the naval power of the Persians, they could not have injured their domination by land. But after they were entirely masters at sea, they never ceased till they were so at land also.

The other problematic issue was doubt about the profitability of the colonies. Oldmixon assured his reader on the matter:

> …that our colonies in America are so far from being a loss to us, that there are no hands in the British Empire more usefully employed for the profit and glory of the commonwealth.

He asserted that the British colonial system was different from that of the Romans and in this respect would be "much more advantageous."[53]

---

[50] John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America* (London: John Nicholson, Benjamin Tooke and Richard Parker, 1708), xxi.
[51] Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America,* xxxv.
[52] *Ibid.,* xix.
[53] *Ibid.,* xxxvii.

2.3 The Balance of Power

The empire introduced by Oldmixon, as Armitage concludes, was "the British Empire in America" or "the British Empire of America," rather than an empire which had emerged as the outcome of firm integration between the colonies and metropolis.[54] The integration of the Atlantic empire with the motherland did not become an issue before the 1750s. Till then continental affairs determined the imperial policies and activities of Britain within the framework of the ideal of balance of power which was associated with a Whiggish political stance. It should be clarified here that the dichotomy of Whig-Tory is a very useful tool while pinning down eighteenth-century perceptions of empire. Although the usage of the term 'Tory' became "spotty and uneven"[55] between 1768 and 1812 and thus the Whig-Tory distinction faded away, the stance of both parties, originating much earlier, continued to resonate in contemporary political discourse. As to the ancient histories published within this specific period, the historians' political tendency could still be categorised as Whig or Tory. Mitford's explicit support of Tory ideals, for example, did not go unnoticed, as he acquired the reputation of the "Tory historian of ancient Greece" at a time when "there was a problem applying 'Tory' to individuals or groups."[56] That the views of empire reflected party ideologies have some importance for this study.

In early modern Europe, the more common usage of the word 'empire' connoted "a presumed right of lordship over the entire world" which was grounded in the ideal of universal monarchy.[57] The Roman legacy of *dominus mundi* had survived through the Middle Ages and was revitalised in the sixteenth century as a

---

[54] Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, 175.

[55] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative,* 64. The exact period when the Tory-Whig distinction ceased to be clear-cut remains a disputed topic among the scholars.

[56] *Ibid.,* 50.

[57] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 8.

consequence of the zealous attempts of the Habsburg monarchs at overseas expansion. Spain became the first to pursue the ways to acquire a universal monarchy and was followed by Portugal and France. In their quest for an empire through conquest, these Catholic powers acted co-ordinately with the papacy which provided them with the indispensable bulls to legitimise their expansionist and aggressive policies. In return, the title 'lord of the world,' whenever earned, was to be shared by the pope.

In the eyes of the English, this concept of empire was that of their enemies. Within their aggressive political behaviour and the use of military power for conquests, such empires were very likely to "disturb the international relations".[58] The European empires were considered despicable and dangerous and an English understanding of empire was offered, which aimed to be the antidote to the continental one. From the late 1680s to the late 1750s, first the English then the British perception of empire was shaped by the Whigs and the idea of balance of power was central to it. In that period, the Whigs pursued the policy of deep engagement in European affairs declaring that they were thwarting the possible designs of universal monarchy on the continent. The balance of power was "a system of alliances" which basically aimed to stabilise the aggressive powers of France and Spain.[59] The Dutch Republic and Austria remained the most loyal allies of Britain until the 1720s. Subsequent to the decline of Dutch power and the Prussian challenge of Austria in the 1740s, however, the profile of the allies that Britain counted on changed.

---

[58] Franz Bosbach, 'The European Debate on Universal Monarchy' in Armiatge (ed), *Theories of Empire*, 87 and 97.

[59] H.M. Scott, ' 'The True Principles of the Revolution:' The Duke of Newcastle and the Idea of the Old System' in Jeremy Black, *Knights Errant and True Englishmen: British Foreign Policy 1660-1800* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989), 57.

The European balance of power was to be preserved and it was the historical mission of the British to do so at any cost. Britain had distinguished itself from the neighbouring absolute monarchies and thus, in its own eyes, merited to act as the umpire of Europe more than any other state. This commonplace found a strong echo in the contemporary histories of ancient Greece in particular. Whereas militaristic, aggressive and expansionist Sparta and Macedonia were associated with eighteenth-century France and Spain, Athens engaged in the pursuit of non-aggressive mercantile ideals, with Britain. Charles D'Avenant's *An Essay upon Universal Monarchy* (1701) appears to be the quintessential expression of this Whiggish point of view in pamphlet form. What the balance of power stood for will be best elaborated from this work.

D'Avenant explicated the English understanding of universal monarchy:

> …principalities and commonwealths, finding they increased in fame, and value with the world, as they increased in wealth and power, and that success covered any crime, and gave it a new name and another sort of lusture, proceeded forward still to fresh conquests, till they had subdued all round about them; and from thence came what we call universal monarchy or empire.[60]

England came forth as the most fervent adversary of the expansionist policies of such empires and as the preserver of the balance of power in Europe. Maintaining this international stance was the historical concern of England.[61] In particular, following the reign of Charles V, England kept a close eye on the Habsburgs, who considerably intensified their expansionist activities within and beyond Europe. As the Spanish were discussing whether their monarchy was the equivalent of the "world-monarchies of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans,"[62] the English were extremely alarmed by the threat posed by this Catholic empire rapidly growing to

---

[60] Charles D'Avenant, *An Essay upon Universal Monarchy* (London, 1701), 30-31.
[61] *Ibid.*, 4-5.
[62] Koebner, Empire, 56.

surpass all its European rivals. At the same time, they carefully observed the reasons that led to its rise and the causes of its fall. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the English had learned the lesson from the Spanish case that it was impossible to maintain the rapid growth in the long term. Indeed, the Spanish monarchy "rose too fast to continue long" as "the parts that composed" it "had not time to cement strongly together."[63] Therefore the Spaniards could be associated with the Macedonians, rather than the Romans and the Assyrians, whose advance to empire was a slow process.[64]

According to D'Avenant, in addition to rapid growth, Spain committed to another fatal error which was actually an inevitable outcome of conquests and overseas settlements. The Spanish monarchy "dispeopled" the motherland.[65] The English apprehension that the territorially overstretched empire would depopulate the motherland had been proven right by the fall of the Spanish empire. Colonisation far beyond the ability and capacity of Spain had exhausted its military, financial but above all human resources. As Linda Colley emphasises, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there was serious discussion about whether the population of Britain was sufficient to maintain an overseas colonisation.[66] Those who argued that it was not, based their argument on the depopulation of Spain. The point remained as one of the principal lessons deduced from the rise and fall of the Spanish empire and continued to preoccupy the British public even during the second British Empire. This fixation with population could be explained with the considerably high rate of mortality in the earlier part of the eighteenth century. At the very beginning of

---

[63] D'Avenant, *Universal Monarchy*, 52.
[64] *Ibid.*, 34.
[65] *Ibid.*, 39.
[66] Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002), 8.

George II's reign, for example, "the entire population gained since the Restoration" was lost.[67]

Similar to the designs of Habsburg monarchs of Spain, the activity of the Bourbon monarchs was also continuously monitored by the English. In order to prevent a French universal monarchy, France should never be "left in a condition to insult and subdue one nation after another." Such was the role Whigs desired England to play with regard to the Catholic French empire; to block its expansion while maintaining the European balance of power.

> Is there a man that does not think it honourable for England to hold the balance? Are we not at all afraid that France unopposed may attain to universal empire? Do we not all think ourselves safe, led by the King, and fighting under his auspicious banners? Will not nations crowd in to confederate with a prince, whom, above all the kings of the earth, it most imports to preserve the liberties of Europe? [68]

This stance of England against the universal monarchies was so enthusiastically propagated that it was also adopted verbatim in some of the political pamphlets published in other European states. In the English translation of *An Introduction to the History of the Principal Kingdoms and States of Europe* (1702) by Samuel von Pufendorf, the German jurist and political philosopher, for instance, the position of England in Europe was interpreted in these words:

> If we duly consider the Condition and Power of England, we shall find it to be a powerful and considerable kingdom, which is able to keep up the balance betwixt the Christian princes in Europe; and which depending on its own strength is powerful enough to defend itself. For because it is surrounded everywhere by the sea, none can make any attempt upon it, unless he be so powerful at sea, as to be able entirely to ruin the naval forces of England.[69]

Meanwhile, it was not only the Spanish and French empires against which England was to be on its guard; there were also the Protestant Dutch who, in the eyes

---

[67] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 146.

[68] *Ibid.,* 25- 26.

[69] Samuel Pufendorf, *An Introduction to the History of the Principal Kingdoms and States of Europe* (London, 1702), 159.

of the English, aimed at a universal dominion. It was true that in its imperial design the Dutch Republic did not follow the same pattern as the Catholic empires which entailed conquest and instead enforced an expansionist policy based on commerce, similar to the English design of empire. Nevertheless, following the third Anglo-Dutch war in 1673, England was convinced that the Dutch were equally a threat to the European balance. The Dutch claim for freedom of the seas, which was most influentially formulated by Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) in his *Mare Liberum* (1609) was an effective challenge to the English claim to the control of the seas. Although the Elizabethan naval policy was grounded in liberal practices in terms of fishing and navigation, since James's accession to the English throne, the Scottish policy of *mare clausum* came to be executed as the official naval policy of Britain. In this way, the sea around the island too was incorporated into the *imperium* of Britain. This reversal of naval practice was formulated and justified by John Selden in his *Mare Clausum* written as a response to Grotius. All in all, the Anglo-Dutch clash of the 1660s and 1673 was also considered as a threat to the balance of power, this time on the seas in the name of *mare liberum*. At the turn of the century, however, the prospect of a closer partnership with the Dutch appeared wiser to the English than the prospect of war.[70] Thus, through the first half of the eighteenth century Britain sought Dutch cooperation to counterbalance French aggression.

Before the "evident weakness and neutralism"[71] of the Dutch Republic, which came in the 1740s, the superiority of the Dutch over commerce and their naval power made them an important power in Europe. And, on this account, the Republic was an example to emulate for the British. It was a common belief that maritime ascendancy

---

[70] Scott, 'True Principles in Black (ed), *Knights Errant,* 57.
[71] *Idem.*, 81.

was the key to fulfilling a nation's universal dreams. This point was in fact

mentioned in Pufendorf's analysis:

> Holland seems to be the only obstacle that the English cannot be sole
> masters of the sea and trade, though for the rest they have no reason to fear
> the Dutch by land, but only at sea.[72]

Therefore, the balance of power had not only religious, but also commercial

connotations. The ascendancy of a commercial power which would be a possible

threat to the balance in Europe was perceived in a manner similar to the Catholic

powers' seeking for universal dominion on the continent. Not only the ascendancy

but also the decline of such commercial power attracted considerable attention

among the British. The answer to the question of how permanent a purely

commercial state could be was sought in the contemporary assessments of the Dutch

Republic. The Dutch acquired significant power because they achieved the ideal

combination of being a nation of both patriots and merchants.[73] Whenever its

military assets became insufficient to support its commercial assets, the Dutch

Republic lost a great deal of its glory and power. This lesson taught the British the

importance of being at once a military and commercial power. Of course, military

measures were to be employed as a last resort to safeguarding the commercial

interests. In antiquity, as will be seen in the next chapter, Carthage stood as the

typical example of a purely commercial and militarily weak state. Its subordination

to Rome, for this reason, was no surprise.

Although the Anglo-Dutch, alternately rivalry and partnership, was an

important aspect of the British attempt to create and maintain a balance of power,

attention was concentrated on Spain and France. And from the 1690s to the 1750s,

the image of the British Empire was determined within this Whig ideal. Britain was

---

[72] Pufendorf, *Introduction,* 160.
[73] James H. Bunn, 'The Tory View of Geography,' *boundary 2*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Winter 1979), 157.

to be the opposite of everything that these continental empires were. Where the empires of Spain and France were Catholic, aggressive, territorial and enslaving, the British Empire was to be Protestant, commercial, maritime and free. Thus, the historical sensibilities of the English people were incorporated into the understanding of empire which prevailed in the first half of the eighteenth century. Most importantly, despite the existence of Catholics on both sides of the Atlantic, this was primarily a Protestant empire which aimed to serve to the Protestant cause, not only on the continent but overseas, in particular following the Union of 1707. Then, contrary to the aggressive polices attributed to the Catholic empires, the British Empire was to seek a more benign way of dominance, through commerce. An empire kept together by commerce was, despite the hostile interpretation of Dutch power, believed not likely to challenge the European balance of power and not to commit the same errors which the other empires committed "more for reasons of power (often over subject peoples) than plenty."[74] And in terms of territorial settlement, the British, it was said, settled on *terra nullius* only, and hence did not build colonies through conquest.

Additionally, because circumstances and effort had endowed Britain with exceptional maritime power that none of the European states could compete with, or so Whig propagandists claimed, the British Empire was to be an empire of the seas. Thus, it avoided the undesirable consequences of being a land-based empire, with overextended territories and a depopulated homeland. Another unattractive tendency of a land-based empire was to turn into an entity that suppressed the liberties of the subject, for the conquered lands could not be stabilised and governed otherwise. As Madden remarks, keeping up the balance between *imperium* and *libertas* which

---

[74] Armitage, *Idelogical Origins*, 8.

means the balance "between central unity and local autonomy, or between similarity and diversity, assimilation and autochthony, authority and justice, interdependence and independence"[75] was a tough business. The land empires, many Britons came to believe would, sooner or later, fail to do that. A maritime empire, on the other hand, promoted the liberating effects of commerce in the extra-European territories. In other words, the British Empire was alleged to "offer the chance of liberty to remain intact" through its ships and sailors.[76] Also within this context, it was argued that Britain possessed a free constitutional government and that its people enjoyed exceptional liberties. Therefore, the British overseas settlements too would be granted with the same liberties, as the colonies were the projections of the motherland.

In this period a certain understanding of empire was implanted by the Whig writers and it was defined as the opposite of the Spanish and French understanding. However, imperial affairs remained secondary, if not utterly neglected, on the Whig political agenda, particularly when British concerns are compared with continental ones. There is some truth in Edmund Burke's words that the colonies were "formed, grew and flourished as accidents," under the lack of a "regular plan."[77] Undoubtedly, there were certain laws enacted but, first of all, they were scattered over a long period of sixty years and, moreover, they were primarily designed for "fostering the national interest" of the motherland.[78] Parliament on one hand issued laws which claimed to secure the freedom of all the subjects of Britain, and, on the other, overtly sought to eliminate the possibility of the colonies' competing with the

---

[75] Frederick Madden with David Fieldhouse (eds), *The Foundations of a Colonial System of Government Select Documents on the Constitutional History of the British Empire and the Commonwealth*, 3 Volumes (New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1985)*,* I, xxiv.
[76] Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, 145.
[77] [Edmund Burke], *Account of European Settlements* (London, 1756)*,* II, p. 288.
[78] Madden with Fieldhouse (ed.), *Foundations*, II, 3-4.

motherland through acts such as the Wool Act of 1699, the Hat Act of 1732 and the Iron Act of 1750. Among these, the Molasses Act of 1733 was most fervently opposed as virtually inhibiting trade between the thirteen colonies and the rest of West Indies and enhancing the British monopoly of sugar.[79] There were other measures such as the Representation of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations to the Lords Justices (1697), the Representation of the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations to the House of Commons (1699), an Act to Encourage the Newfoundland Trade (1699), an Act for Suppression of Piracy (1700), an Act Securing the Criminal Liability of Colonial Governors (1700), a Naval Stores Act (1705), an Act for Encouraging the American Trade (1708) and an Act to Establish a General Post Office (1710); but they were far from being the part of a coherent imperial plan to unify legislatively the colonies and incorporate them into Britain. At that time, the British parliament's sessions were thoroughly consumed by the expensive and tedious engagement in continental affairs.

In the name of maintaining the balance of power, from 1689 to 1763, Britain was involved in costly continental wars. The Nine Years War (1689-97), the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-14), the War of the Austrian Succession (1739-48) and the Seven Years War (1756-63) exhausted the military and financial sources of Britain that could have been better employed to strengthen the commercial bond between the metropolis and the colonies, though they did preserve the regime from overthrow by the Jacobites. Till the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), this ideal of maintaining the balance of power remained at the core of the British political discourse. Even in the 1740s, when opposing voices began to be heard criticising the British engagement in the European affairs, the Whig pamphleteers were attempting

---

[79] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 170.

to convince the nation that "our figure abroad must depend upon our holding the balance of power, and being at the head of that interest which opposes universal monarchy."[80] Against the discontent over the land wars and the neglect of imperial concerns, it was argued, in an attack on Cardinal Fleury that

> …Great Britain can not safely sit still, see the affairs of the continent go this way or that with indifference; …if ever she was bound in interest to bestir herself in favour of her neighbours, and against the ambitious designs of an overgrown and overbearing power, it was in the present case, when an old man, who had gained a high esteem from his character for probity and moderation, suddenly threw off the mask, and, by his intrigues, thought to subjugate all Europe to the will of his master, that is, to his own.[81]

It was no time for Britain to bow out:

> But if it shall be ever thought criminal to animate the people of Great Britain to imitate their ancestors, to assert their right of holding the balance of power and set themselves at the head of such states as are for maintaining the independency of Europe, we may soon run back to that low state in which we were, when this spirit was treated as Don Quixotism, and have nothing else to do but to harass and destroy each other with disputes about forms of government which are equally fruitless and endless, and serve only to subject the honest, the industrious, and well-being, to the self-interested views of cunning and ambitious men.[82]

Nevertheless, in the 1740s the opposition began to lay emphasis on the point that the ideal of balance of power was not compatible with the commercial and maritime character of the British Empire. As one pamphlet stated, because of this "fatal pretext," Britain was "excluded from the interests of the empire."[83] The balance of power cost much loss in trade which was

> …our present food; our future hope; our strength; our treasure; and the source of our recreations, no subject can come within a man's choice that would be more worthy of the time he may bestow upon it, for nature has so provided that what remains to us may be improved, and perpetuated if we turn our thoughts to the promoting it.[84]

---

[80]Anon., *Observations on the Conduct of Great Britain in respect to Foreign Affairs* (London: T. Cooper, 1742), 12.

[81]*Ibid.*, 24-5.

[82] Anon.*, Observations,* 60-1.

[83] [T. W.], *The Natural Interest of Great Britain*, *In its Present Circumstances, Demonstarted in a Discourse in Two Parts* (London: Printed for the Author, 1749), 16.

[84]*Ibid.,* 30.

Besides, the commercial loss would eventually put an end to the British superiority at sea which "cannot be continued without a return of the trade by which it was acquired."[85] Britain should immediately take the necessary measures to promote its overseas trade and to maintain its maritime power, as "opportunity seldom makes second offers after the first are refused."[86]

Thus, the disillusionment with the Whiggish rhetoric of the balance of power made its way into the political pamphlets before the Seven Years' War. Lord Bolingbroke's *Idea of a Patriot King* (1738), as cited in the previous chapter, is widely accepted as a pioneer work creating a public awareness of what the primary duty of a British monarch ought to be. The British engagement in the continental affairs had remained as the greatest concern of the Hanoverian kings of Britain, it was lamented, and this design sadly wasted the financial and human resources which could have been invested in a better management of domestic and colonial affairs. What was worse, Bolingbroke cautioned, such engagement could possibly result in Britain's becoming a province of the European confederacy. In this way, the *Patriot King* served as one of the "hymns to blue-water patriotism."[87]

In an anonymous pamphlet, dated 1745, the question was put whether the British people had been vainly preoccupied with a distorted version of this notion of a balance of power for years:

> They were told of a balance of power, the independency of Europe, the Protestant cause, and a multitude of other things, which though they might have [had]originally some meaning in them, yet have been so tortured and tost about by politicians, that at present I make no scruple of affirming it is very hard to know, whether they have any meaning at all; or which is much the same thing in other words, it is very difficult, if not possible, to settle their true meaning.

---

[85][T. W.], *Natural Interest of Great Britain*, 17.
[86] *Ibid.*, 63.
[87] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 106.

Ideally, the argument went, "every state should mind its own business and every country study and pursue its own interests." In reality, however, this was reversed as if "every state should forget its own interest, and mind that of its neighbours."[88] The true interest of the British nation lay not in maintaining the European balance of power but solely in commerce which connected it "not only to the continent of Europe, but to Asia and Africa, and more intimately than with any of these to America."[89] Still, the conviction that the British should no longer take such great interest in continental affairs and instead concentrate on its overseas colonies was placed on the top of the political agenda mainly in the period after the Seven Years' War.

2.4 The Blue Water Strategy

Because some considerable part of the British public suspected that the Hanoverian kings put the priorities of Hanover ahead of those of Britain and the cost of the foreign troops deployed by the British army was overwhelming, the ideal of balance of power was gradually replaced with the blue water policy. Blue water was based on the Tory notion about Britain that a sea power should not be involved in land wars. The resignation of the Duke of Newcastle in 1756, the principal upholder of the notion of a balance of power, could be considered as the most notable sign of this change. Later becoming a partner in William Pitt's second ministry in the following year, he too pursued the blue water war waged on France, together with Pitt.[90] Thus, the Tory emphasis on Britain's natural and historical supremacy on the

---

[88] Anon., *A Modest Enquiry into the State of Foreign Affairs, Founded on Facts and Intended to Open the Eyes of the Nation to their True Interest* (London: M. Cooper, 1745), 3-5.
[89] *Ibid.,* 9.
[90] Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina, 2000), 51-2.

seas was also embraced by the Whigs in the end. Toryism, then, was ceasing to represent "a coherent creed."[91]

According to Niall Ferguson, "[t]he Seven Years War was the nearest thing the eighteenth century had to a world war."[92] The European threats of war were important. Britain sent off troops to Prussia to hinder any possible attacks from the coalition of France, Russia, Austria and Spain. Nevertheless, it was the overseas phase which made the war significant in terms of increasing the awareness of the blue water strategy that had first emerged towards the end of the War of the Austrian Succession. When, in the early 1750s, the French threatened Ohio, the Great Lakes and Nova Scotia, some of "the fastest-growing markets" of the motherland, British officials recognised the importance of these colonies and how fatal this threat could be to their imperial interests.[93] It was due to this awareness that the capture of Quebec in 1759 was celebrated with remarkable enthusiasm.

Most briefly, the blue-water policy prescribed overseas expeditions as "the most efficient and cost-effective way" to neutralise the French threat.[94] In other words, through this policy based on naval and colonial strategies, the British could more successfully challenge the French far from Europe, where they could deploy less expensive and more effective methods. This would also put an end to the presence of foreign mercenaries of Dutch and Danish origin at home. Eventually, the blue water policy proved itself extremely profitable in the eyes of the British public, dissatisfied with engagement in continental campaigns, when Britain seized the colonial possessions of France in North America, India and the Caribbean at the end of the war. Undoubtedly, those possessions in America had a considerable impact on

---

[91] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 357.
[92] Nial Fergusson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2003), 34.
[93] Nancy F. Kohen, *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Gocernance in the First British Empire* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 163.
[94] Gould, *Persistence of Empire,* 37.

the motherland and supported the tendency to "national self-congratulation"[95] when was spoken of.

At the Peace of Paris in 1763, Britain acquired vast lands of Canada and Florida, in return of leaving Guadeloupe to France and Havana to Spain. The general tendency of the historians is to point to this treaty as marking the end of the period of 'salutary neglect' of imperial affairs. Thenceforth, the idea that the incorporation of all the British territories in North America into the British empire would enhance Britain's financial, military and imperial power became a commonplace in Britain. American affairs turned into one of the most fashionable topics of the age. From the early 1760s, for example, a great number of newspapers, magazines and journals began to include a separate section on the British plantations in America, a practice which boosted their circulation considerably. As Nancy F. Kohen notes, in 1760 9.4 million newspaper stamps were issued, whereas this figure ten years before was 7 million. Such increase in the circulation of newspapers should certainly be related to the increase in the popularity of the stories and comments about overseas issues published in those newspapers.[96] Equally, there was an increase in the number of political pamphlets in favour of this unprecedented territorial expansion, as against those advocating the British mission of maintaining the European balance of power. The main concern expressed in these former pamphlets was to find the best way of governing the colonies.

It should be stated here that not everybody was content with the increase of territory in North America. The concerns over the issue became more apparent in the discussions of whether to give Guadoloupe away in return of the much larger area of Canada. The reservations concerning territorial expansion to such an extent was most

---

[95] Linda Colley, 'The Apothesis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation,' *Past and Present*, No. 102 (February 1984), 99.
[96] Kohen, *Power of Commerce,* 177-8.

influentially expressed in the *Five Letters Entitled Reasons for Keeping Guadaloupe at a Peace Preferable to Canada*, raising an anti-expansionist voice, familiar in the early years of the century, propagating the notion of an empire based on trade only. According to the pamphlet, it was quiet possible that the acquisition of Canada would result in depopulation, loss of trade and even in rebellion. On the other hand, Britain, unburdened from the cost of managing an extensive empire and holding the highly profitable Guadaloupe, would have had the entire sugar island trade in its hands. Nevertheless, at that time the more popular approach was in favour of the overseas expansion. For this reason, the accession of Canada was accepted with much approval, in the belief that it would secure not only the North American colonies, but also the sugar islands. In the pamphlet published as a response to the letters, this view was stated.

> …what nation so ever shall have the sole possession of North America, that nation will always have it in its power to distress and to take the sugar islands: but the greatest efforts, that could be made from the West India Islands and the North American continent cannot prove the necessity of keeping Guadaloupe, in preference of Canada; but on the contrary, it calls upon us to maintain and pursue our conquests on the continent, till our strength in North America shall be able to make the sugar islands entirely dependent upon the measures, which Great Britain shall take, in regard to their trade.[97]

Still, although these colonies were believed to be of great use and advantage to Britain, how to govern them remained a problem not to be solved easily.

The implantation of a coherent imperial governing policy in the North American colonies had not been an issue in Britain before its recent vast acquisitions. As one pamphleteer stated, these colonies were far from being integrated into one single entity, particularly in terms of legislation.

> The first settlements of most of our colonies in America were made by private adventurers; many of the colonies were afterwards incorporated by charters or privileges granted by the crown, with a power to make laws, and

---

[97]Anon., *A Detection of the False Reasons and Facts contained in the Five Letters entitled Reasons for Keeping Guadaloupe at a Peace* (London: Thomas Hope, 1761), 32.

> to establish courts of justice…[R]emote colonies situate near barbarous nations…were authorised and empowered to levy, muster and train all sorts of men, of what condition so ever…There are several other colonies that are more immediately dependent on the crown both with respect to their laws and constitutions; yet it has been the pleasure of the crown, to allow them a kind of legislative power, under particular restraints and limitations.[98]

In addition to the varying legislative forms imposed by the motherland, the colonies also adapted "variants and substitutes" determined by the local conditions.[99] Looking at this extremely scattered imperial policy of Britain, one may suggest together with Madden that "the post office was probably the only institution common to all British America."[100] The blue water strategy, however, required this fragmentation to end, for it would have been impossible to defy France otherwise, and to enhance the economic relations between Britain and the colonies. Thus, in the pamphlets which appeared during the Seven Years' War and in its aftermath there was a call for a union of the colonies "to oblige them to act jointly, and for the good of the whole."[101] Undoubtedly, this could be attained through a uniform legislation only. The prospect of a legislative union was also assessed in the contemporary texts dealing with the Greek and Roman histories.

As much as this diverged in its application and the institutions it created, the essence of the legislation did not essentially differ from one colony to another. In all the colonies, there was one official to represent the king, who would be supervised by a central council and advised by a local one.[102] Besides, as one pamphleteer comfortingly informed his reader during the Seven Years War, colonial power was decidedly limited.

> …the charter governments are entitled to make by laws for the better ordering their own domestic affairs, …they are not entitled to make laws

---

[98] Anon., *Proposals for Uniting the English Colonies on the Continent of America* (London: J. Wilkie, 1757), 14-5.

[99] Madden with Fieldhouse (eds), *Foundations,* II, xxx.

[100] *Ibid.,* 33.

[101] Anon., *Proposals*, 15.

[102] Madden with Fieldhouse (eds), *Foundations,* II, xxvii.

which may have a general effect, either in obstructing the trade of this kingdom, or in laying restraints and difficulties on the neighbouring colonies: for…their power in a legislative capacity originally flows from the crown, under certain limitations and restrictions…

Those circumstances would enable the attempts at uniform legislation to run smoothly and eventually cure all the anomalies embedded in the governance of the colonies. As a first step, it was to be made clear to the colonies that they could never be "proper judges in their own case." It was made particularly clear to Rhode Island and Connecticut which had recently "enacted laws, that no law shall take effect in their colonies, unless it be first authenticated or enacted into a law by them" and thus "have made themselves judges of the fitness and expediency of their own laws."[103] The Currency Act of 1764, which introduced restrictions on the issue of paper money and the American Mutiny Act of 1765 which was designed to apply a single military code in the colonies were among the legislative measures taken in the post-Seven Years War era. Central taxation was to follow as the last step. The role of central taxation as a permanent bond firmly attaching the periphery to the centre was recurrently assessed by the contemporary historians of ancient Greece and Rome.

Since the beginning of the Atlantic expansion of the British, it was the first time, in the late 1750s, that it occurred to them how crucial these colonies were to their financial and military position and equally how disastrous it would if the colonies were to achieve some kind of autonomy. The colonies' claim to "a distinct, legislative authority based on colonial charters" had been, though on and off, one of the items on the political agenda since 1734.[104] These territories had now become "the valuable possessions in America" which were "evidently conducive" to the

---

[103] Anon., *Proposals*, 16 and 17.
[104] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 170.

British enjoyment of "true riches and security."[105] Throughout the war, it was argued that any thoughts of levying new taxes on the colonies should be put aside and their defence against the French at any expense should be made the priority.[106] After the Treaty of Paris, various schemes of colonial governance, mostly prescribing centralisation, were put forward. Among them, Thomas Pownall's *The Administration of the Colonies* (1764), proved to be the most significant, as the first attempt to define and regulate the motherland's relationship to the colonies. Pownall, Governor of the Colony of Massachusetts, defined what Great Britain was or rather ought to be.

> Great Britain may be no more considered as the kingdom of this Isle only, with many appendages of provinces, colonies, settlements, and other extraneous parts, but as a grand marine dominion consisting of our possessions in the Atlantic and in America united into a one Empire, in a one centre, where the seat of government is.

It was "the precise duty of government" to turn this entity "into one Empire of which Great Britain should be the commercial and political centre." [107] Only thus, a real *imperium* could be created in this "realm of the same will."[108] By calling attention to the inefficiency of the British overseas government and urging the government to take centralising measures, Pownall's proposal belonged to a new phase of British imperial history, in which the motherland would adopt a more authoritarian voice. His early work entitled *Principles of Polity Being the Grounds and Reasons of Civil Empire* (1752) which aimed to deduce instructive lessons from the imperial experience of the ancient civilisations, will be studied in the following chapters.

The new phase which began in the 1760s witnessed "constant exhortation, repeated assertions of certain principles, even an impatient patience" from Britain

---

[105] *A Letter to a Member of Parliament on the Importance of the American Colonies and the Best Measn of Making them most Useful to the Mother Country* (London: J. Scott, 1757), 22.
[106]*Ibid.,* 24.
[107]Thomas Pownall, *The Administration of the Colonies* (London: J. Dodsley and J. Walter, 1765), 9-10.
[108] *Ibid*, 33.

directed to the North American colonies.[109] Firstly, permanent British agencies were established in all the colonies. Then, Parliament, having abandoned its long negligence, took a primary role in these efforts at centralising and legislating. Nonetheless, this was soon to complicate the existing problems rather than solve them. Until now, the plantations and colonies had been directly administered by the Crown. With the exception of some Navigation Acts, Parliament remained indifferent to their governance and let their affairs to be conducted principally by the Crown and its advisory bodies. The parliamentary attitude drastically changed when Parliament faced the requirement of incorporating the North American colonies into another kind of British Empire. This was a scheme in which taxing the colonies was a crucial step. In this respect, Parliament first issued the Sugar Act of 1764 which aimed to put one of the finishing touches on the trade regime between the colonies and motherland. Though it spread much discontentment, it did not outrage the colonists, for it was an external tax levied on imports, mainly to curtail any kind of commercial engagement with the French. The next step, which was the Stamp Act of 1765, however, was to be fiercely rejected on the grounds of being an internal tax. In the following year when Parliament openly declared the people in the colonies to be dependent on the Crown and Parliament of Great Britain through the Declaratory Act, the colonies denied that they were part of the realm of Britain and that they were subject to the king's *imperium* and his parliament. The stance was maintained despite the later revocation of the Stamp Act.

The first British Empire, in Muldoon's words, remained "an empire in search of a theory to justify it and a constitutional structure to incarnate it".[110] Till the 1760s, the British had on one hand successfully avoided ending this search in

---

[109] Madden with Fieldhouse (eds), *Foundations*, II, 1.
[110] Muldoon, *Empire and Order*, 138.

legislation binding the colonies. Still, they assumed that Britain was an empire with its North American colonies. At the first real attempt to establish the rules that would lead to a complete integration of the colonies with the motherland, however, Briatin dramatically failed. An anonymous pamphlet, dated 1769, recorded that the British realised that things had changed in the colonies.

> That the first inhabitants of the colonies were part of the British community, and bound to obey its legislative power in all respects, as any other objects at the time of the establishment of those colonies, will not be denied. How then has that obedience been altered or released?[111]

Indeed that obedience had been altered and the reaction to the Stamp Act was the tangible proof of that. Although, as another pamphlet anonymously argued, the British considered it, innocently, as "the only internal tax likely to have operated there, from its nature of legalising the transfer of property not valid without it,"[112] the colonials took a different view. After the Stamp Act crisis, Britain was soon to discover that it had enjoyed imperial power only "in the ports and along the shores of its overseas colonies."[113]

Evidently, the failure to declare officially the colonies to be financially and legislatively dependent on Britain for centuries prevented the emergence of an imperial tradition on both sides of the Atlantic. In this respect, the Stamp Act was "unprecedented" in the eyes of the colonists and their dependence on Britain was "a novelty – a dreadful novelty."[114] At the beginning of the century the British perception of empire and empires called for avoidance of the acquisition of new territories and to put the emphasis on the navy, trade, and liberty. This was a kind of

---

[111] [William Knox], *The Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies Reviewed, the Several Pleas of the Colonies in supprt of their Right to all the Liberties and Privileges of British Subjects* (London: J. Almon, 1769), 70.
[112] Edward Stratford, *An Essay on the True Interests and Resources of the Empire of the King of Great Britain and Ireland* (Dublin, P. Byrne, 1783), 18-9.
[113] Gould, *Persistence of Empire,* pp. 53-4.
[114] Anon., *An Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain over the Colonies in America*, (Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1774), 94 and 97.

empire acceptable to the people in the colonies. A Spanish-like spatially extended one was not.

> There was a time, when England had no colonies. Trade was the object she attended to, encouraging them. A love of freedom was manifestly the chief motive of the adventurers. The connection of colonies with their parent state may be called a new object of the English laws. That her right extinguishes all their rights, -rights essential to freedom, and which they would have enjoyed, by remaining in their parent state, is offensive to reason, humanity and the constitution of the state. Colonies could not have planted on these terms.[115]

Thus the colonists adapted the same imperial language Britain was once accustomed to use. Similarly, in 1775 two Boston lawyers Daniel Leonard and John Adams deployed the word *imperium* in the sense of sovereignty and claimed that America was as much an empire as Great Britain. The British failure at home to define their overseas empire, it may be said, caused this breakup of 'the empire of Great Britain' and 'the empire wielded by Great Britain on the high seas'.[116]

In their first empire the British did not succeed in fully establishing a legislatively based political and commercial union between the colonies and motherland. What was more, although it was thought of as a Protestant empire, to be distinguished from those of Spain and France, because of "the denominational diversity of the British Atlantic world,"[117] the first British empire did not rise on a confessional unity either. The colonists were mostly the Dissenters and did not recognise the authority of the Anglican Church at home. Envisaging Britain as an exceptional source of religious liberty and tolerance in Europe was an important notion embedded in the British self-understanding in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, in reality, the place of even orthodox Protestant dissent was strictly circumscribed in the British polity.[118] The Anglican Church's attempt at keeping the

---

[115] Anon., *Essay on the Constitutional Power,* 113.
[116] Koebner, *Empire*, 81.
[117] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 95.
[118] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 289.

colonists within its institutional structure was, in fact, considered in the colonies as offensive as the Stamp Act. As the ideal conduct of religious matters as a part of imperial governance thus appeared crucial, the contemporary historians were inevitably preoccupied with this question in their ancient histories. The answer that they came up with was to pursue a policy of non-interference.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the popular perception of empire constantly shifted from the cautious, secure and trading empire to the daring, expansionist and costly one. From the late 1740s, the latter took over the 'mitigated" attitude "against unbridled enthusiasm for building a vast territorial empire." Nevertheless, the problematic years of the late 1770s once again triggered the apprehension that Britain, by annexing new lands so distant from it, would possibly end up "overextending the human and financial resources of the nation" like the continental powers had done in the previous century.[119] When the first empire ended in 1783 with the loss of the thirteen colonies, it became apparent in the eyes of many that, as one pamphleteer concluded, Britain "never could manage so distant and large an empire, but at a great annual and increasing expense."[120] Britain should have instead enjoyed "all the pristine benefits of America; without the expense of keeping it."[121]

Meanwhile, as the discussions around the political, economic and religious administration of the North American colonies were at the peak, a second empire of Britain to which India was central, happened to be in the making. After the battle of Plassey in 1757, the British rule in the Indian subcontinent extended to "twenty

---

[119] Philip Lawson, ' "Arts and Empire Equally Extend": Tradition, prejudice and Assumption in the Eighteenth Century Press Coverage of Empire' in Lawson (ed), *Taste for Empire*, 138.
[120]Stratford, *Essay on the True Interests of the Empire,* 18.
[121]*Ibid,* 20.

million of people in an area five times the size of England and Wales."[122] Essentially different from the American colonies, the Crown governed India through the royal-chartered East India Company (EIC). From the 1760s on, the EIC, besides its "commercial-cum-imperial role," was to perform a new role as the "Indian ruler."[123] Of course, being not yet experienced and able enough to exercise power over a vast and populous country so far away from the motherland, the EIC remained under the strict control of Parliament.

Following the loss of the thirteen colonies, the imperial discourse shifted to an "increasingly authoritarian and more conspicuously territorial" one.[124] India, St Lucia, Ceylon, Malaya, South Africa and Quebec under the second British empire was governed in accordance with this new conception of empire. Our historians of ancient Greece and Rome, however, did not take great interest in the affairs of the second empire. Furthermore, the novel imperial understanding which emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century conflicted with the notion of empire prescribed in their ancient history texts. As will be seen in the coming chapters, the topics of North America preoccupied the contemporary historians more.

During the first empire, Britain failed to arrive at a definite imperial policy but remained in constant search of one. In this imperial search, notions such as sovereignty, depopulation, overstretching territory, maritime supremacy, commerce, liberties, conquest, settlements and the role of religion had arisen as the topics to trouble the British. To find precise answers to their questions, they meticulously studied the previous imperial experiences of both the modern European powers and

---

[122] Jeremy Black, *British Politics and Society from walpole to Pitt 1742-1789* (London: MacMillan, 1990), 180.
[123] E.D. Potts, *British Baptist Missionaries in India 1793-1837: The History of Serampore and Its Missions* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), 139.
[124] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 106.

the ancient civilisations. In the coming chapters, I will seek to exhibit the answers provided by the British historians in the ancient history texts of the age.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

In his *Principles of Polity Being the Grounds and Reasons of Civil Empire* dated 1752, Thomas Pownall offered a full definition of the word 'empire.'

> This modelling the people into various orders, so as to be capable of receiving and communicating any political motion and acting under that direction as a one whole, is what the Romans called by the peculiar word imperium, to express which particular group of ideas, we have no word in English, but by adopting the word empire. It is by this system only that a people become a political body; it is the chain, the bond of union, by which very vague and independent particles cohere. It is Livy says, the Circean wand, touched by which, men and even brutes grow tame and manageable; where this cement is not all things run together into confusion, and fall to ruin where there is not this foundation.[1]

In this definition, the emphasis was laid on the binding and regulating aspect of empire. It was viewed as a governance, to glue together the disconnected, independent and sometimes incompatible components of an expanding state in harmony and peace. *Imperium* was the "power of government" to "extend its entire and perfect influence to the putting [of] the whole into motion, in the very direction that the power is impressed."[2] What comes to the fore in Pownall's words is, in fact, an understanding of empire in which sovereignty and spatial expansion intertwined inextricably. The sovereignty of the monarch spreads and binds as the territories of the state expands. Such was the quintessential explanation of what 'empire' was in eighteenth-century Britain.

It was also widely believed that the only way of securing an empire was to pursue the policy of optimum colonisation. As echoed in William Baron's *History of*

---

[1] Thomas Pownall, *Princpiles of Polity being the Grounds and Reasons of Civil Empire in Three Parts* (London: Edward Owen, 1752), 93-4.
[2] *Ibid.*, 97-8.

Colonisation, colonisation was considered as the means to secure and render the conquests permanent, to populate or depopulate the motherland and to civilise:

> Colonisation is one of the methods which nations, in all ages, have employed to secure their conquests, or to extend their territories. If a tract of country had been ravaged and depopulated by war, a colony was provided to re-people, to defend, or to cultivate it. If it was possessed by inhabitants, few in number, and unwarlike, who had territory to spare and would make little resistance to the first invaders, it was considered as captivating prey to any state advanced in cultivation, or perhaps overloaded with people; and a colony was dispatched to seize and appropriate it. Accordingly, we find that colonisation proceeds nearly in the same direction, and almost keeps pace with the progress of civilisation.[3]

Because colonisation had such great importance for the subsistence of empires, it was imperative to arrive at some normative rules concerning the best possible way of colonising, inevitably scrutinising histories of the ancient civilisations. Under the influence of philosophical history, pamphleteers such as Baron sought to pin down the commonalities between the ancient and modern political experiences. Baron, whose work aimed to draw analogies between the Roman and the British experiences of colonisation and to prove that this was far more efficient than the Carthaginian method, attempted to provide his reader with such rules:

> A practice [colonising] so general, it is natural to expect, should be the result of some common principles of human nature, or the constitution of civil society. A similarity of management, for this reason, would probably be adopted by the several states, who at different times, have sent out colonies; and, if such management can be discovered, it will lead to the general principles of colonisation. If, however, we shall not be so fortunate to ascend to principles, it may still be useful to survey, with attention, the conduct of cultivated and enlightened nations, as, from their example, we shall probably derive the most instruction.[4]

He argued that it was the Romans who enjoyed "the most extensive authority"[5] over the colonies and thus who most skilfully confronted the problem of preserving the new and the previous acquisitions while continuing to expand. In order to avert any

---

[3] William Baron, *History of the Colonisation of the Free States of Antiquity applied to the Present Contest between Great Britain and her American Colonies with Reflections concerning the Future Settlement of these Colonies* (London: T. Cadell, 1777), 1.
[4] *Ibid.,* 2-3.
[5] *Ibid.,* 135.

schemes of independence, they implemented varying colonial policies whose degree of firmness was determined by the colonies' attitude to and distance from the motherland. Besides, the Romans had always been cautious in establishing colonies "either very remote or very large." These were in part "the maxims and conduct, in the management of the colonies" [6] that the British were to take into consideration while establishing and governing colonies of their own.

Like Pownall and Baron, the British historians of Rome too were preoccupied with the idea of empire, above all with the issues of expansion and colonisation. In his well-known essay, 'The Tory View of Roman History,' Addison Ward underlines that the Roman histories of the age were examined only from the perspective whether they reflected "a Whig or Republican view" of Rome.[7] Although these texts mostly dwellt on the glorification of the Roman Senate and the promotion of liberty and virtue, not all of them exhibited a republican reading of Roman history. There were also histories written by authors with Tory tendencies such as those by Echard, Hooke and Goldsmith. Therefore, it is not apt to categorise the eighteenth-century Roman history-writing as simply republican. Alongside the comments on the republican virtues, different views on the ideal sort of empire too pervaded these history texts. After all, mixed constitution and liberties were not the only tenets held in common by Rome and Britain. Their imperial experience was another equally important element in the close analogy drawn between them. Britain, ironically once "the peripheral country" within the Roman empire and thought by Virgil as "cut-off from the world," was aiming at becoming a colonial power in the eighteenth century

---

[6] Baron, *History of the Colonisation,* 120 and 123.
[7] Addison Ward, 'The Tory View of Roman History,' *Studies in English Literature*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (1964), 413.

similar to that of Rome.[8] The imperial questions preoccupied all British historians of Rome. In their quest for a definition of empire, with the exception of Thomas Blackwell, they did not directly address the British nation anywhere in their works, other than in the prefaces, and avoided explicit association of Rome with Britain. The messages they intended to transmit were embedded in their accounts of Roman history. This chapter aims to elaborate on such messages and to exhibit how they treated the topic of empire.

3.1 The Rise

In the eighteenth-century histories of Rome, unlike those of Greece, most of the historians did not exhibit even slight doubt about the authenticity of the available sources on the first days of Rome. The only exception is the author who used the pseudonym 'Nobleman,' whose work is unique among the Roman histories, being written in the form of a letter. 'Nobleman' advised his son Frederick not to read "the accounts of the origin of the Romans," which were "no better than oral tradition, enveloped in fable, and obscured by the poets"[9] and, not surprisingly, did not include use of these accounts in his work. Nevertheless, as pointed out in the first chapter, in general, the British historians did not demonstrate any scepticism towards the sources on the origins of the Roman Empire, for they would thus have implied a rupture of knowledge of the Roman political, legal and religious establishment which was supposed to be continuous. Only a claim to possess a whole knowledge of the Romans would enable the historians to render their points as influential as they intended. Even those who argued that the accounts of the foundation of Rome should

---

[8] Norman Vance, 'Imperial Rome and Britain's Language of Empire 1600-1837,' *History of European Ideas,* Vol. 26 (2000), 212.
[9] Anon., *The Roman History in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to His Son* (London: R. Snagg, 1774), I, 19.

treated with extreme caution, presented, for example, the reigns of Romulus and Remulus to their readers as simple facts, for this aided them to enhance their arguments on certain issues. The most significant example in this matter is Nathaniel Hooke.

Though he underlined that the old records of Rome were burnt by the Gauls and even the histories of Plutarch and Severus included "great uncertainties in the originals of Rome,"[10] Hooke put all his scepticism aside while assessing the reign of Romulus. While treating that era extensively, he particularly stressed that the greatness of Romulus lay in his belief that "the happiness of states depended upon the favour of the Gods;"[11] therefore the states, from the very beginning, Romulus' laws sought to increase virtue and piety in the people and win God's favour. With this point which was in compliance with his religious stance, Hooke aimed to call his reader's attention to the point that the religious and legal establishments of the state were designed to serve to the future happiness of its people, not only in this but the other world as well. In doing that, however, he referred to a piece of history which might have been considered fabulous. Thus, Hooke made his point at the expense of writing, by his own standards, good history.

This contradiction in Hooke's history is significant as it brings us back to the argument of Thomas O'Connor saying the most heated political, religious and legal debates of the age were going around the assumption of the "very knowability of the past."[12] The inclination of historians to consider the Roman history as entirely accessible should be evaluated in this wider context. To them, the Roman history which stood as the ample proof of continuity in history, was completely unfolded to provide every sort of political instruction and moral lesson to modern man. Knowing

---

[10] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 126.
[11] *Ibid.,* I, 126 and 20-29.
[12] O'Connor, *Irish Theologian,* 21.

early Roman history was crucial to showing when Roman greatness began to be visible and to what the Romans owed their rise and progress. Thus it was believed that early Roman history would serve to exhibit the means through which the Roman empire was founded. The essential futures of the Roman empire had already appeared in the rude period of Rome. According to Laurence Echard, by studying the first Romans the reader would appreciate that from the beginning "they fought for dominion, but not for tyranny, and chose rather to be loved than feared" and "this made the provinces cheerful in their submission, hearty in their contributions, and unwavering in their obedience."[13]

Nevertheless, despite the claims to the 'knowability' of the entire history of Rome, there were a considerable number of dark or unclear points concerning the era of kings which could not be denied by critical minds. In this respect, with the aim of undoing the distortions of fact caused by false chronology, Hooke himself put forward a system of chronological computation, challenging that of Isaac Newton and thus believed to reinforce the authority of Roman history. In the first page of his Roman history, Oliver Goldsmith also expressed his distrust of the sources on the origins of the nations. For, he said, "where history is silent, they generally supply the defect with fable"[14] and such was particularly the case for the Romans. Nevertheless, in the following pages he praised Romulus as a man of "great temperance and great valour"[15] while recounting the events of his reign. As a matter of fact, the reign of Romulus appeared to be a popular topic among the historians, since it enabled them to raise at the very outset the issues they considered important. Laurence Echard, for instance, revealed his point of view on the constitutional aspect of state building, while elaborating on the constitution implanted by Romulus. With its "robust"

---

[13] Echard, *Roman History,* III, 170.
[14] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 1.
[15] *Ibid.*, 20.

founding constitution, which demonstrated "all the manifest signs of a thriving and long-lived state," Rome turned into the most excellent commonwealth.[16] The greatness of a constitution, his argument went, was determined by whether it left "the choice of the government to the people." The constitution of Romulus did, but even that did not prevent the monarchs in the end from being "carried away with some pleasing notions of arbitrary government." [17]

In addition to the end of Romulus, the era of the kings, the transition from monarchy to aristocracy and that from aristocracy to democracy, the Twelve Tables, the Decemviri, the duties of the senators and patricians and the consular power as a check on the conduct of the Senate were among the topics belonging to the period before the reign of Augustus which fascinated the historians most. A search through these subjects, above all, aimed to enlighten the British reader about the prescribed role that ought to be played by Parliament, particularly during times of crisis and transition. Either by exposing the errors committed by the Roman Senate or rejecting various allegations of corruption, neglect and treachery, the British historians of Rome, though not overtly, participated in the ongoing political debates of the eighteenth century. As these debates should be evaluated in a different context than the imperial affairs and do not include insights on the understanding of empire of the age, they will not be further elaborated here. Still, there is one historian whose comments on the above-mentioned issues were in fact articulated with particular reference to the idea of empire. For this reason, a closer look will be taken at the first volume of Adam Ferguson's history in the section below.

---

[16] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 11.
[17] *Ibid.,* 8 and 17.

3.2 Ferguson's Empire

As one of the philosophical historians of the Scottish Enlightenment, Ferguson presented his ideas of empire in a scientifically written Roman history. Adopting the progressive approach in his works, he frequently argued that societies underwent certain stages of development and "that the particular modes of government appropriate for one stage of development were inappropriate for others."[18] Ferguson applied the same rule to his understanding of empire and assessed the Roman history in terms of progressive stages. To him, the government of Rome first emerged as monarchy, then transformed into an aristocracy and eventually became a republic, as each time "a revolution" was needed in the empire "in order to preserve it in its former progressive state."[19] In other words, different regimes were progressively adopted in Rome according to their capacity of sustaining and governing an ever-expanding empire. Ferguson's moral philosophy was grounded in the idea that any topic could be elaborated "from the point of view of the improvements of which it is capable."[20] Such view was one of the hallmarks of the Scottish Enlightenment and was exactly how Ferguson studied the topic of Roman empire.

In his desire to evaluate the political transformations that Rome had experienced in the pre-Augustan era and judge the suitability of each regime to govern it, mainly from an imperial perspective, Ferguson was unique among his contemporaries who were rather inclined to focus on the issue of empire from the reign of Augustus onwards. He underlined that the territorial expansion and the exchange of population between the motherland and colonies had already reached a

---

[18] Turner, 'British Politics,' 584.

[19] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 14.

[20] Richard B. Sher, 'Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and the Problem of National Defense,' *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (June 1989), 250.

remarkable level during the monarchy of Rome which lasted 244 years. Thus "the nursery of Roman citizens" spread.[21] He argued, then, that in the beginning "the genius of monarchy was favourable to the growth of this rising empire."[22] Nevertheless, the monarchs in the course of time became subject to their personal ambitions and failed to serve to the imperial ideals. Such governance, then, as he quoted Montesquieu, "was likely to become stationary or even to decline." In order to live up its imperial progress, the government of Rome became an aristocracy which was, in the end, to be replaced by republic, since aristocracy was a regime "without any third party to hold the balance" between the nobles and the common people. [23] The republic therefore appeared as the next appropriate way of governing the empire.

Offering a Whig's republican reading of the Roman history, Ferguson laid particular emphasis on the republican era of Rome. It was true that during the republican era Rome experienced grave internal disruptions; for the Senators were lost in shallow personal arguments and domestic peace and union remained in danger. However, Ferguson claimed that despite the internal upheavals, the Roman state secured its acquisitions and continued growing without "any signs of weakness in the foreign wars."[24] Having met the criterion of securing territorial expansion, the republic proved to be appropriate and able to run an empire. Therefore, as implied here, Britain could be at once a republic and an empire.

As a matter of fact, Ferguson's appreciation of the Romans seemed to end in the third volume of his history. There he stressed that the republic was terminated on the pretext of "its unfitness to remain at the head of so great an empire." What is

---

[21] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I,12.
[22] *Ibid.,* 14.
[23] *Ibid.,* 14 and 17.
[24] *Ibid,* 48.

more, this was "the most plausible excuse" that had been made for the extinction of the republic in Rome.[25] For Ferguson who believed in the full capacity of republic as a regime to sustain a growing empire, the Romans had prematurely ended one of the stages of progress before the exhaustion of its capacity. Although the progressive potential of the republic was also eventually to be burnt out, at that time the Romans could have waited before they replaced the republican government with an emperor. In a comparison between the republic and the rule of an emperor he took stance in favour of the suitability of the republic for governing Rome, claiming that during the era of emperors, the Romans "retained…their ferocity entire" but "without possessing, along with it, any of those better qualities, which, under the republic, had directed their courage to noble, at least to great and national purposes." The emperors, as he concluded, "will scarcely gain credit with those who estimated probabilities from the standard of modern times." [26]

As the above paragraphs indicate, Ferguson examined the different phases of Roman history always from the perspective of empire and attempted to ascertain what kind of government would be ideal, of course in terms of progress, for such a gigantic political entity. In doing that, he drew a distinction between 'empire' as a regime and 'empire' as a territorially expanding state. As regime, the imperial governance with its agents and institutions as well as the extended authority of the ruler was not looked on favourably. This will be further elaborated in the coming pages focusing on the Augustan era. On the other hand, throughout the entire text, 'empire' as expanding territory through new acquisitions was regarded as desirable and to be promoted. In the other histories the empire-based arguments make appearance from the end of Republic onwards and in the era preceding that the

---

[25] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* III, 324.
[26] *Ibid.,* 563.

historians put the emphasis on subjects such as the function and composition of the Senate and the electoral issues. Ferguson, however, was alone in relating events, especially the extinction of monarchy and republic, to their fitness or unfitness to govern the empire. Interestingly enough, although in his *Essay on the History of Civil Society*, the philosopher argued against the possibility of "private and social subordination,"[27] he never understood the empire as an instrument of exploitation.

Though not as well-argued as in Ferguson's theory, there was acknowledgment in other historians of the necessity of distinguishing assessment of the regime governing the motherland from that suited to acquiring an expanding empire. Blackwell, who also belonged to the republican camp, remarked:

> Let us make a distinction between a model adapted to domestic quiet, and a constitution calculated for conquest and propagation of empire: they are two different ends, and require different means.[28]

Nevertheless, this approach, unlike the empire-oriented assessment of Ferguson, did not attempt to find the best domestic governance to serve as the most suitable regime to sustain the empire. Blackwell's argument goes on:

> [a] nation therefore proposing to live contended within its ancient limits, and enjoy peace and ease at home, may obtain these ends, by a form of government quite incapable of extending their territory.[29]

The Roman Empire was the most quintessential example in this sense. All historians emphasised that the Roman Empire witnessed an unprecedented expansion when there were severe political divisions and unrest at home. That, according to 'Nobleman,' was "the most remarkable thing we meet within the Roman

---

[27] John D. Brewer, 'Adam Ferguson and the Theme of Expolitation,' *The British Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 37, No. 4 (December, 1986), 466.
[28] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 89.
[29] *Ibid,* 89-90.

commonwealth"[30] and Ferguson too commented on "the curious spectacle of a nation divided against itself"[31] advancing to imperial greatness.

Interestingly enough, Blackwell also claimed that the powers that had enabled Rome to conquer were embedded in its constitution. In other words, the legal source that aimed to regulate internal affairs endowed the Romans with the power to make conquests. His concerns were similar to Ferguson's. Though not in exactly the same way Ferguson did, Blackwell in effect ventured to pin down the ideal domestic situation to sustain an ever growing empire. According to him, the Roman, of course republican, constitution provided this nation with two extraordinary gifts, namely with the consular government which was "a restless executive power always on the rack when not in action" and with freedom which produced

> a fierce undaunted people to fill their legions, combined with their original manners and fortunes, to produce the peculiar predomining character of Rome, to wit, a military state equally fitted to make conquests and to keep them.[32]

Therefore, in the eyes of Blackwell too, the factors promoting the growth of an empire were effectively dependent on domestic conditions. As such views demonstrate, the question of the ideal domestic government to back up territorial expansion one way or another preoccupied the British historians of Rome. Ferguson uniquely discussed it in explicit, clear language, with coherent argumentation of the progressive theory. In other historians' assessments the subject was stuck between the lines or treated rather less meticulously.

---

[30] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 297.
[31] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* II, 15.
[32] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 93-6.

3.3 Good Prince, Bad Prince

The British historians of Rome wrote their histories in the form of comparison between the good prince and the bad prince. As mentioned in Chapter 1, "mirror for a prince" was still a common literary genre in the eighteenth century and generously made use of in contemporary Roman history-writing. Through an analysis of the characteristics and the pattern of actions that rendered a prince either good or bad, the historians sought to teach the present and future monarchs to be good for the sake of the state and the people. As Colley points out, from the "immediate euphoria" of the Restoration to most of the eighteenth century, the English or British monarchs did not come to be seen as "an unquestioned cynosure for national sentiment." There was always a shortcoming in the public image of these monarchs, which prevented their full identification with the good prince, that would win over the entire British population. This "intermittent, uncertain quality of the monarchy's public presentation and appeal," [33] in fact, encouraged the literati to assume the responsibility of providing these monarchs with the guidelines of transforming them into one of the most virtuous princes in history. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the majority of the Roman history texts of the eighteenth century appeared during the reigns of George I and George II who, due to their German origin, seemed to be desperately in need of such wise guidance.

Of course, transmitting moral teachings through the lives of good and bad characters in history was not a purpose pursued uniquely in the eighteenth-century history writing. The origins of this practice could be traced back to the classical historians, particularly to Plutarch who as a biographer and moral philosopher aimed

---

[33] Linda Colley, 'Apotheosis of George III,' 95.

111

to exhibit deeds that were morally good.[34] Therefore, following in the footsteps of ancients such as Plutarch, our historians too engaged in reflecting moral lessons through the mirror of selective biographies. Such an approach was grounded in the belief that, in Goldsmith's words,

> …the characters of the Roman emperors have been intimately connected with the history of the state, and its rise or decline might have been said to depend on the virtues and vices, the wisdom or the indolence of those who governed it.[35]

For this reason, it appeared important to analyse the events in Roman history with reference to the character and the ruling capacity of the monarchs and emperors. Unveiling completely the reign of a good ruler in the first place, or "the blessings which a good prince brings to mankind,"[36] had always been the priority of historians. William Wotton declared: "something must be learned from every action of great men, if it be faithfully and intelligibly told."[37] Despite Goldsmith's assertion that "good subjects generally make good kings,"[38] for more interest was invested in the accounts of the characters and actions of the emperors than in their subjects.

Wotton pointed out that being the head of "so vast an empire as that of Rome" was "a laborious employment [requiring] abundance of thought, and great application to do it." One of his prerequisites of managing the empire was "a well-governed court" and only a good ruler could bear "the necessary state and order" of it.[39] 'Nobleman,' on the other hand, argued that, by comparing Numa Pompillius and Justinian, it was the content of the laws enacted which determined if a ruler was good. In this context, Numa Pompillius was judged good, on the grounds that he issued laws "for the political formation of a society, in order to promote their

---

[34] V. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, 'Plutarch as Biographer,' in Barbara Scardigli (ed), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 47 and 75.
[35] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 492.
[36] Wotton, *History of Rome,* 539.
[37] *Ibid.,* 116.
[38] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 257.
[39] Wotton, *History of Rome*, 246-7.

interest, and make them more civil in the manners."[40] Although in his times the Roman people were "little better than barbarians" and he was the "legislator of a few people" only, he designed laws which promoted liberties and improvement. Numa Pompillius, thus, became "the father of his people" whereas the emperor Justinian was "a designing tyrant, who wanted to trample on the liberty of the subject." In spite of the fact that, as Nobleman concluded, by the age of Justinian the Roman code of law had already reached "a state of perfection" through improvement, the emperor terminated this perfection by enforcing suppressive laws and bringing in "very iniquitous institutions." Therefore, the good prince was the one who issued the laws that would win him "the approbation of the public" and who did not rule "at the expense of fellow-citizens, trampling on their laws, liberties, privileges, and the whole of their constitution in government."[41]

Almost all historian of Rome in eighteenth-century Britain highlighted the reigns of two or three emperors as exemplary; but there was no consensus among them on who these monarchs/emperors were, with the exception of Marcus Aurelius of course. Those who presented contesting views of Augustus in their works collectively agreed that Marcus Aurelius was an adored emperor, who ruled the empire in absolute peace and therefore the good prince that the British king ought to take after.[42] In this sense, many pages were devoted to his reign and his ways of ruling. 'Nobleman,' for instance, hailed Marcus Aurelius as one whom

> nature had done her best to form a complete emperor, and his innate qualifications had been illustrated and brought to a state of perfection by the most excellent learning, regulated by judgement and prudence.[43]

---

[40] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 13.
[41] *Ibid.,* 12-3.
[42] Wotton, *History of Rome*, 245.
[43] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History*, II, 200.

His predecessor Hadrian was worthy of praise too, for, again in the words of Wotton, who grounded his entire history of Rome on the comparison of the good prince and the bad prince, he "had set the whole business of that vast empire in as exact order, as any private man does his domestic concerns." Till the reign of Commodus, the glorious Antonine dynasty managed capably

> the different interests of the several provinces, and many times of different cities in the same province; the numberless grievances of such divided nations, which must all be redressed by one single person; with a world of other difficulties.[44]

Still, the Augustan age remained as the major concern of historians hoping to arrive at the final and binding prescription for a good ruler. Additionally, they paid equal attention to bad rulers, such as Tiberius, Caligula and Commodus for contrast.

The bad prince was in general defined in terms of luxury and tyranny. As will be seen in the coming pages of this chapter, luxury had been among the notions that concerned the historians most, particularly when the issue was the stable government of the empire. Briefly, territorial expansion was, as a rule, to be accompanied by an increase of wealth, and "wherever there is a great superfluity of wealth, there will also be seen a thousand vicious methods of exhausting it."[45] Rulers in times of expansion above all were therefore challenged by the threat of the corruption brought by luxury, hence of their subjects and themselves becoming bad. In this context, while elaborating on the notion of luxury, Wotton warned his reader, or, more precisely, William Duke of Gloucester, that "princes that wholly give themselves up to their pleasures, never make themselves masters of their business." Luxury would lead to 'aversion to business' and this would lead to the loss of the approbation of the people and to an emperor "regardless of his people in all his actions."[46] Echoing

---

[44] Wotton, *History of Rome*, 24-5.
[45] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 212.
[46] Wotton, *History of Rome*, 245-6.

Tacitus, he held that the Roman Empire declined on this account, as the bad emperors were tempted by luxury and ignored the wellbeing of their people. Goldsmith ironically suggested that

> …if we were to enter into a detail concerning the characters of the princes of those times, it should be those of the conquerors, not the conquered; of those Gothic chiefs who led a more virtuous, and more courageous people to the conquest of nations corrupted by vice and enervated by luxury.[47]

The Roman rulers were contaminated by luxury subsequent to the fall of Carthage.

3.4 The Carthaginian Empire

The Roman encounter with the Carthaginians and the three Punic wars were treated with particular interest, for this was believed to be central to the glorious story of Rome growing into a world empire. It was consequent to the first Punic war (264-241 BC) that the Romans, for the first time, settled in a territory outside of Italy; at the end of the second (218-202 BC) Spain permanently became their province; after the third, Carthage fell. Through their century long struggle with this rival nation, the Romans came to know themselves, who they were and what their strong and weak points were in comparison with those of the Carthaginians. The British historians too attempted to attain a fuller understanding of the Romans and their empire by means of the Carthaginian experience. What is more, this was a story which could provide British statesmen with invaluable lessons in expansion, commerce, naval power, the use of foreign mercenaries and luxury. It deserved a great deal of attention.

In prescribing what Britain ought to be, the historians were obviously inclined to associate it with Rome, while Carthage, in their eyes, set the example of what ought not to be. One of the means to prevent the British reader's possible

---

[47] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 492-3.

identification with the Carthaginians was the Carthaginian practice of human sacrifice. Particularly, as 'Nobleman's words will demonstrate, the tragic death of the Carthaginian commander Hamilcar came to be known as one of the most revolting stories from antiquity.

> They were the most barbarous people that ever lived under a regular form of government; for they constantly offered up human sacrifices, and they were so ungrateful, that nothing was more common among them to crucify their bravest generals when they had the misfortune to lose a battle.[48]

Carthage was also to be criticized for luxury and military effeminacy. Before further elaborating on these more important justifications for rejecting the Carthaginian model of empire, it should be noted here that there was one exception to this general point of view, advanced by Edward Wortley Montagu. According to Montagu's argument,

> [o]f all the free states whose memory is preserved to us in history, Carthage bears the nearest resemblance to Britain both in her commerce, opulence, sovereignty of the sea, and her method of carrying on her land wars by foreign mercenaries.[49]

Rome, on the other hand, being a military state, was to be identified with France. Additionally, it lacked the commercial and naval superiority which Carthage and Britain commonly enjoyed.

In his work, Montagu, as usual, aimed to arrive at prescriptions that would prevent Britain commiting the same errors as Carthage. The capital mistake of "the Carthaginians, as a maritime power" was "their engaging in too frequent, and too extensive wars on the continent of Europe, and their neglect of their marine." The second one was "their constantly employing such a vast number of foreign mercenary troops, and not trusting the defense of their country, nay not even

---

[48] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 231.
[49] Montagu, *Reflections*, 176.

Carthage itself wholly, to their own native subjects."[50] Then came "the party disunion" and "luxury." [51] Thus, by drawing parallels between Carthage and Britain, he warned the British against too frequent engagements on the continent, hiring foreign troops, internal divisions and luxury. As a matter of fact, in the later Stuart period such discussions dominated the contemporary political writings of the Whig and Tory polemicists. Despite the erosion of the Whig-Tory dichotomy in the later Hanoverian era, similar concerns persisted.

Therefore, continental engagement, maritime policies and deployment of foreign troops occupied a prominent place in the contemporary political discussions. Though being a Whig in upbringing, Baron, in his assessment of the reasons behind the fall of Carthage, echoed a Tory-like view by arguing for aversion towards excessive engagement in the continental wars and resorting to mercenaries as well as for necessity of an enhanced maritime emphasis. Under the influence of the Tory and Whig political discourse, our historians too meticulously dealt with the fall of the Carthaginian empire. Unlike Baron, however, they did not fully associate it with Britain, because, despite the commercial and naval resemblances, Carthage and contemporary Britain differed on a very essential point. The Carthaginian empire was purely commercial and, in that sense, the quintessential example of why such empires could not last. The British empire, on the other hand, possessed the militaristic means to safeguard its commercial existence. The British, like the Dutch, should remain as "a nation of patriots and merchants."[52] For the sake of commercial superiority, they should be able to take on arms, when the time came.

---

[50] Montagu, *Reflections*, 189.
[51] *Ibid*, 196 and 221.
[52] Lord Bolingbroke quoted in Bunn, 'Tory View,' 157.

Long before the first Punic war, or in Hooke's words, "from time immemorial,"[53] the Carthaginians had been known as the most skillful maritime nation on earth. Their commonwealth had become a matter of admiration and envy among the Romans with its "dominions extending about 2000 miles in length, all bordering about the sea."[54] Even a brief look at the history of Carthage would tell that it expanded and secured its expansion through commerce and naval power, which were qualifications Rome then lacked in their empire building. The Romans, on the other hand, had a formidable army, homogenously made up of citizens of Rome. Such a benefit the Carthaginians were obviously deprived of, given their less warlike army of foreign mercenaries from Gaul, Spain and Africa. Besides, as Basil Kennet pointed out, some believed that on the grounds of having "wholly neglected all naval concerns for many years," Rome remained "long in its primitive innocence and integrity; free from all those corruptions which an intercourse with foreigners might probably have brought into fashion."[55] Kennet here echoed the Platonic association of corruption with contact with foreigners.

As a matter of fact, the comparison of Rome and Carthage endowed all eighteenth-century historians of Rome with the opportunity of reassessing the virtue of commerce over conquest, naval power over land force and a national army over foreign auxiliaries which were topics never absent from the British political agenda. The history of Carthage was commonly regarded as the history of "a republic of merchants, who understood the value of money, but not the merit of brave soldiers."[56] Prior to the Punic wars, Carthage, which had the reputation of being the

---

[53] Hooke, *Roman History*, II, 24.
[54] Echard, *Roman History*, I, 181.
[55] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 232.
[56] Hooke, *Roman History,* II, 66.

"queen of the commercial world"[57] and the "mistress of the sea,"[58] had built a glorious and profitable empire. According to Hooke, what the Carthaginians had then achieved in terms of commerce, naval supremacy and empire was "not to be paralleled in the history of any other nation."[59] However, when young and eager Rome challenged them, they eventually lost their empire to the Romans, whose naval strength and skill were in fact incomparable to theirs. Hardly surprisingly, this part of the history, particularly the reasons behind the tragic end of the Carthaginian sea empire, attracted considerable attention among the British historians. Polybius's thesis that the fall of Carthage was due to the incompetence of its Senate, was, of course, echoed in some histories of Rome.[60] Nevertheless, the majority rather elaborated on the reasons gathered under the titles of commerce, luxury and military inadequacy.

Commerce was the foundation on which Carthage was built. A maritime trade rendered the Carthaginians the wealthiest nation of the age. Despite all the land and sea wars they were involved in, commerce was "what they had most set their hearts upon."[61] But the obvious parallel with Britain ran counter to what the British historians of the eighteenth century had in mind: to warn the reader against Britain becoming anything like Carthage. They were greatly concerned with the end of Carthage with the purpose of revealing how fatal the consequences of luxury and the use of foreign mercenaries would be for a state. None disputed the desirability of commerce, nor its necessity in creating financial strength. All, on the other hand, pointed to the corruptive power of luxury which, throughout history, unmistakably followed a great flow of wealth to the country, generally obtained by trade. In this

[57] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History* , I, 259.
[58] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 90.
[59] Hooke, *Roman History* , II, 3.
[60] [Lockman], *New Roman History*, 114.
[61] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 235.

respect, the Carthaginians too suffered from the inescapable evil effects of luxury, "for riches had deprived them of valor, and rendered their manners effeminate."[62] The effeminacy spread to every aspect of life in the empire and, in particular, into the military, playing the decisive role in the fall of Carthage. Effeminacy was a frequently used term in the eighteenth-century political and philosophical texts connoting materialism, selfishness, corruption and relaxed manners.[63]

Being a wealthy nation, the Carthaginians who, according to Hooke, used to fight "for glory, or to give a wider extent to their empire,"[64] came to hire foreign mercenaries from Spain, Gaul and Africa, instead of fighting wars themselves. Thus, in Ferguson's words, they

> …had exhausted their sources, and consumed the bread of their own people in maintaining foreign mercenaries, who, instead of being an accession of strength, were ready to prey on their weakness and to become the most formidable enemies to the state they had served.[65]

The Roman army, on the other hand, like that of the early days of Carthage, was made up of

> …legions of free citizens, whose predominant passion was glory, and who placed the highest glory in facing every danger, and surmounting every difficulty, to preserve their liberty, and extend their empire.[66]

The historians, both the ancient and British, argued that the Roman victory over Carthage was due to the Roman soldiers who were all at the same time Roman citizens. As an eighteenth-century truism, the real strength of the Roman army rested on the absence of hired foreign mercenaries. This made Rome invincible in the face of effeminate Carthage.

In highlighting this episode of Roman history, the British historians intended to put forward the norm that an army which consisted of soldiers who are not citizens

---

[62] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I„ 231.
[63] Sher, 'National Defence,' 243.
[64] Hooke, *Roman History,* II, 67.
[65] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 101.
[66] Hooke, *Roman History,* II, 3.

of the country that they fight for would sooner or later destroy the coherence and stability of that country. In the eighteenth century, it was customary for the British to hire Swiss, Dutch and mostly German soldiers in their deep engagements in the continental wars. This, as mentioned in the previous chapter, was a delicate issue and a matter of opposition. Two arguments prevailed in the opposition to the foreign troops which accounted for approximately 40 to 50 percent of the entire British army in the period 1701-1760.[67] Firstly, it was argued that "[i]nstead of paying for German mercenaries, England should be nurturing her own seamen."[68] Therefore, the mercenaries, which were overwhelmingly Hanoverian in origin, were seen as wasteful expenditure putting the national wealth at stake. Secondly, hiring foreign troops would kill the manlike spirit of the British nation and degrade them to effeminate, corrupt merchants deprived of fighting skills. In this way, the question of national defense was discussed "within the wider framework of political economy and moral philosophy." At the hands of the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, this topic was further treated in the most articulate way.[69] British historians of Rome too were recipients of the Florentine civic humanist tradition and, by setting Carthage as an example, drew the attention of their readers to the possible disastrous outcomes of such erroneous national defence policies.[70]

Another lively eighteenth-century debate related to national defence was the question of a standing army and it was discussed in the same context with that of foreign troops. Since the Treaty of Rijswijk (1697), the prospect of maintaining a

---

[67] Stephen Conwoy, 'The Politics of British Military and Naval Mobilisation, 1775-83,' *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 449 (November, 1997), 25.
[68] Bunn, 'Tory View,' 162.
[69] Sher, 'National Defense,' 243.
[70] 'Nobleman,' for example, argued that hiring foreign mercenaries was "one of the worst notions that was ever embraced." Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History*, I, 231. Similarly, Ferguson concluded that "no free state or republic is safe under any other government or defense than of its own citizens." Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 276. For a detailed account of this concern with having a citizen army, rather than a standing army made up of mercenaries see, Pocock, Machiavellian Movement.

permanent army had been fiercely discussed by the ideologues of the Whig and Tory parties. Interestingly enough, on this particular topic there was no clear-cut distinction between the two groups. The Whigs such as John Trenchard and William Moyle were as much concerned as the Tories with the possibility that a standing army would put the credibility of the constitution into question and grant the monarch with "an important source of patronage with which to purchase influence in parliament."[71] Furthermore, the question of standing army had the same moral implication as in the debate over foreign troops. The virtues of a nation defended by a standing army, which was possibly comprised of foreign mercenaries, would significantly erode. Entrusting all their military duties to this army, the British citizens would lose their sense of patriotism. If the army were corrupted, there would remain no other means of national defence. On this account, since Harrington's *Oceana* the civic humanist tradition had built up a very strong case in favour of militias and against standing armies.[72]

It should here be highlighted that the emphasis on the necessity of a warrior-like attribute in a nation's identity was not a call for total militarization. Ideally, the polished nations should be governed by lawful authorities under which their liberties and rights to life and property were enshrined in the common law and they should pursue external relations secured by the mutually benefiting effect of commerce. However, they should at the same time be prepared to fight for their liberties, commercial assets and, in the end, for their empires. Such was the main thought behind the concern with national defence. As will be seen in the coming chapters, the British historians of Greece displayed a certain disapproval of the states with a

---

[71] Eliga H. Gould, 'To Strengthen the King's Hands: Dynastic Legitimacy, Militia Reform and Ideas of National Unity in England 1745-1760,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (June 1991), 332-333.

[72] Sher, 'National Defense,' 242.

military character and this disapproval became most evident in their comparisons of Athens and Sparta. One therefore should expect to come across the same tendency in the Roman histories as well. Militaristic attitudes were commended only within the context of national security and defence. The warlike spirit of Rome received much praise as something imperative in building and defending an empire. Subsequent to the Punic wars, the Romans

> …had acquired strength and security, not only by the reputation of great victories, but still more by the military spirit and improved discipline and skill of their people by sea and land.[73]

Rome thus succeeded in pacifying and subduing all its rivals and grew into a world empire. However, militarization of government was a subject of criticism in the Roman histories too. Goldsmith, voicing the Tories' "long-standing horror of militarism,"[74] denounced the excessive militarization of Rome in its latter days when the Romans "began to consider the whole world as their own" and "resolved to treat all those who withstood their arms, not as opposers, but revolters."[75]

3.5 Luxury

Carthage was "the rival state, whose destruction alone could establish the Roman greatness"[76] and therefore, following its defeat in the third Punic war, Rome was left without a rival. The victory over the most formidable enemy should have been the beginning of glorious days for Rome and the Romans, but in the eyes of 'Nobleman' and Goldsmith, this was, on the contrary, the beginning of the period that would, in the long term, bring the end of the Roman Empire. 'Nobleman' viewed the fall of Carthage, though "seemingly" one of "the most fortunate events in the

---

[73] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 101.
[74] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People,* 208.
[75] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 311.
[76] Hooke, *Roman History,* II, n, 66.

Roman history", as the opening of an era that would lead "to a change of manners, and to the extinction of Roman liberty." After the disappearance of the Carthaginian threat, the Roman citizens, who had once been glued together with "the sense of a common danger," eventually "grew altogether ungovernable." [77] This was followed by intolerance, suppression and finally by corruption. Goldsmith however evaluated the subject from the perspective of luxury.

From the end of third Punic war, Goldsmith argued, Rome was transformed into the mighty, extensive and wealthy empire, gracious to its citizens and most formidable to the enemies. Nevertheless, he also asserted that from the fall of Carthage, Rome, at the same time, was to be considered as "a powerful state, giving admission to all the vices that tend to divide, enslave, and at last totally destroy it." As the riches from Carthage and other newly-acquired colonies continued to flow to the empire, the Romans could not escape from the fate of the Carthaginians; hence their manners were eventually softened and corrupted. Although the empire did not cease to expand, the name of Rome only grew, not its strength:

> …their future triumphs rather spread their power, than increased it, they rather gave it surface than solidity. They now began daily to degenerate from their ancient modesty, plainness, and severity of life. The triumphs and the spoils of Asia, brought in a taste for splendid expense, and these produced avarice and inverted ambition, so that from hence forward, the history seems that of another people.[78]

The most obvious sign of corruption, as Goldsmith's argument goes, was the change in the Roman attitude towards the conquered. Once the "boast" of the Romans had been "to use lenity to those whom they had subdued."[79] But that was once.

The effeminacy of Roman manners brings us back to the question of luxury which appears to be a topic requiring further elaboration, being "one of the oldest,

---

[77] Anon., *The History of Modern Europe with an account of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire; and a View of the Progress of Society, from the Fifth to the Eighteenth Century in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son* (Dublin: S. Price, W. Whiteson+, 1779), I, 5.
[78] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 311-312.
[79] *Ibid,* 311.

most important and most pervasive negative principle for organizing society Western history has known."[80] In the eighteenth century, as in the ancient times, luxury had a very central place in political, economic and moral discussions.[81] Although in the second half of the century luxury came to be detached from the negative implications of vice and corruption and to be considered, within the context of Scottish Enlightenment, as the desirable stimulator of production, trade and progress, the more common attitude, which was also adopted by the historians of Rome as a whole, remained firmly critical of it. Montagu's words below reflect that point of view well:

> Though there is a concurrence of several causes which bring on the ruin of a state, yet where luxury prevails, that parent of all our fantastic imaginary wants, ever craving and ever unsatisfied we may justly assign it as the leading cause: since it ever was and ever will be the most baneful to public virtue. For luxury is contagious from its very nature, it will gradually descend from the highest to the lowest ranks, till it has ultimately infected a whole people. The evils arising from luxury have not been peculiar to this or that nation, but equally fatal to all wherever it was admitted.[82]

On this account, it appeared crucial to inform the British reader of the erroneous steps taken by the ancient empires, for they could be tempted equally by luxury. As S. Fawconer asserted in his *Essay on Modern Luxury*,

> [i]t is natural to imagine, that a prosperous and opulent people, flourishing in conquests, and secure from the apprehensions of foreign invasions, would indulge themselves in the gratification of all such pleasurable objects, as affluence enables them to procure, and ease prompts they enjoy.[83]

A considerable number of pamphlets were published to serve as a warning.[84]

---

[80] John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollet* (Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 1-2.
[81] For perceptions of luxury in the eighteenth century, please see Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[82] Montagu, *Reflections,* 221.
[83] S. Fawconer, *An Essay on Modern Luxury: Or, an Attempt to Delineate its Nature, Causes and Effects,* (London: James Fletcher, 1765), 3-4.
[84] See, for example, [G. Berkley], *An Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, (London: J. Roberts, 1721); Erasmus Jones, *Luxury, Pride and Vanity, the Bane of the British Nation*, (London: E. Withers, 1736); [Well-wisher to Great Britain], *Ten Plagues of England, or Worse Consequence than Those of Egypt*, (London: R. Withy, 1757).

In the eyes of the historians, luxury stood as an issue to be particularly dealt with, being the common enemy of all empires –past, present and future. For that reason, and since it was one of the most fashionable topics of the age, they were extremely preoccupied with the question in their works, discussing its emergence, contagious effects and prevention. It should also be noted here that in addition to the emphasis in his Roman history, Goldsmith engaged in the debates on luxury, separately in his ironic article entitled 'The Benefits of Luxury' which appeared in *The Public Ledge* as a part of a series of entertaining letters which he wrote under the pseudonym Lien Chi Altangi, supposedly a Chinese visitor to London. In that letter, he criticized the newly emerging positive understanding of luxury and sarcastically commented that

> [t]he greater the luxuries of every country, the more closely, politically speaking, is that country united. Luxury is the child of society alone, the luxurious man stands in need of a thousand different artists to furnish out his happiness; it is more likely, therefore, that he should be a good citizen who is connected by motives of self-interest with so many, than the abstemious man who is united to none.[85]

Blackwell, on the other hand, in addition to his Roman history, wholeheartedly recommended John Milton's *Treatise on Education* to everyone "who wishes to be deemed the father of his country, and to prevent Great Britain from undergoing sooner or later the dreadful fate of degenerate Rome,"[86] which had befallen it because of the habit of luxury.

To put emphasis on the inevitable corruptive effects of luxury British historians referred to the same emphasis in the ancient historians, above all Sallust, Livy and Plutarch. Luxury had been viewed as the curse of all great nations that none had escaped from. All the fallen empires, in origin, were virtuous, courageous and

---

[85] Goldsmith, 'The Benefits of Luxury' in J. C. Dent (ed) *The Citizen of the World* (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1928), 36-7.
[86] Blackwell, *Augustus,* II, 379.

simple, until an external flow of riches from the newly conquered territories, in most

of the cases from Asia, made its way into the center. In the Roman case, Rome was

contaminated following the fall of Carthage with the Carthaginian wealth gained in

Asian trade. In this way, the Romans lost, in Blackwell's words, "their primitive

poverty" which was one of the "chief sources…of the Roman virtue" and "afforded

them neither examples nor fuel for vice."[87] What caused the effeminacy of the

Carthaginians had the same effect on the Romans and led them into internal

conflicts, but more importantly, to the demise of the Republic. Cato's attempt at

combating this national deficiency bore no successful results and Rome gradually

sank into irretrievable degeneration.

In the pages devoted to exhibit the fatal side-effects of luxury, Cato came

forth as a character immune from all the vices. He was depicted as "rigid"[88] as well

as "brave and indefatigable, frugal of the public money and not to be corrupted"[89] by

Hooke, who echoed Seneca's remark that "it is easier to prove drunkness to be a

virtue than Cato to be vicious."[90] According to Goldsmith, he "was one of the most

faultless characters we find in the Roman history."[91] Similarly Ferguson declared

that

> he is a rare example of merit, which received its praise even amidst the
> adulation that was paid to his enemies; and was thought, by the impartial,
> equally above the reach of commendation and of censure.[92]

His struggle with Caesar had been assessed from many different aspects and his

stance against luxury, hence corruption, was one of them. Cato was an exception in

this age of luxury when the Romans were blinded, by excessive consumption, to the

---

[87] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 82.
[88] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 296.
[89] *Ibid.,* II, 377.
[90] *Ibid.,* III, 299.
[91] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 16.
[92] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* II, 547.

political corruption. In fact, in some of the Roman history texts, particularly that of Goldsmith, the emphasis on Cato within this context of luxury serves as a prelude to the Augustan age which was reflected as the miraculous but temporary cure of luxury. In the eyes of pro-Augustan historians, Cato's merits did not infuse itself into the other governors of Rome, whereas Augustus succeeded in reinforcing the virtuous character of the Roman people and the respectability of their institutions. Goldsmith while concluding his remarks on the period subsequent to the fall of Carthage, including Cato's time, argued that "[n]othing can be more dreadful to a thinking mind than the government of Rome from this period, till it found refuge under the protection of Augustus."[93] Still, it was considered impossible to stop fully the prevalence of luxury, once it made its entrance to the society. In this sense, despite the Augustan recovery of manners and politics, luxury would have revived anyway and had its role in the fall of Rome. At that time, interestingly enough, the barbaric nations against which the Romans fought were the virtuous, uncontaminated by luxury:

> The character of the people with whom the Romans had to contend was, in all respects, the reverse of theirs…Simple and severe in their manners, they were unacquainted with the word luxury; anything was sufficient for their extreme frugality; hardened by exercise and toil, their bodies seemed inaccessible to disease or pain.[94]

3.6 Expansion

Beside luxury, territorial expansion greatly preoccupied the British historians. What methods were, and of course ought to be employed to pursue an expansion successfully? On what basis could this expansion be justified and how were the new acquisitions to be presented? These were among the imperial issues on which the British historians put particular emphasis in their Roman histories, as these were also

---

[93] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 330.
[94] Anon., Nobleman's *History of Modern Europe*, I, 9.

some of the most debated political topics of the eighteenth century despite the lack of a "consistent ideology around which to gather and by which to be identified."[95] However, the Roman history promised a limitless analogy, as an alternative.

According to Echard, it was crucial to recognize the point that the Romans at the outset engaged only in the wars that were "all defensive, or at least, not begun without just grounds and provocations."[96] And expansion was simply the inevitable outcome of the victories at the end of these just defensive wars. With this, Echard aimed to leave out the negative implications of spatial expansion and vindicate the acquisition of the territories belonged to other peoples. For expansion did surely involve the usurpation of the sovereign rights of the conquered and never ceased to be a delicate and controversial matter, which caused imperial affairs to be treated in Britain with considerable reserve.

Once the distance between the centre and periphery undeniably increased, it was not sufficient to refer to defensive, just wars. Such was the case for the Roman Empire in its heyday and the British historians had to confront the problem. Hooke, for instance, stressed that the Roman Empire, following the banishment of the Tarquins, "put the Romans in a condition of usurping an authority over other nations, the most inconsiderable of which had an extent of country far exceeding theirs."[97] Ferguson too asserted that "no state has a right to make the submission of mankind a necessary condition to its own preservation." Then what was so glorious about the history of Roman Empire and what possible lessons could be deducted from it if Rome was a usurper state? At this point, again Ferguson sought to elucidate the problematic of expanding without usurping by claiming that "some part of this political character, however, is necessary to the safety, as well as to the advancement

---

[95] Bunn, 'Tory View,' 162.
[96] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 154.
[97] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 128.

of nations." Therefore, a state, though not "many states qualified to support such pretensions," could, for its safety and advancement, pursue expansionist policies. At least, in order to be safe, it could not allow "any ally to suffer by having espoused its cause."[98]

This framework, under what circumstances the idea of expansion and conquest as well as the Roman experience could be justified, appeared as one of the significant themes that were extensively treated in the Roman histories of the eighteenth century. The starting point was commonly the smallness of Rome. Rome "had always been confined to a very narrow circuit" and had to grow both territorially and demographically. Particularly, the demographic growth, superceding the territorial, was underlined as the future "main strength of the state" by Hooke.[99] As a matter of fact, Hooke's argument on the smallness of Rome bears certain similarities to eighteenth-century concerns about the demographic weakness of Britain, which, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is discussed in Colley's *Captives*. The possibility of the depopulation of Britain as a consequence of territorial expansion considerably troubled those eighteenth-century minds, who viewed the depopulation of the motherland as the main reason behind the decline of the Portuguese and Spanish empires. Besides, there had already existed deep worries about the smallness of the British population which was only 5.1 million in 1701.[100] Therefore, it is understandable that the prospect of increasing "the nation's stock of manpower" was among the contemporary topics discussed widely.[101] Hooke's above comments should be considered as a reflection of these apprehensions. Depopulation

---

[98] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 275-276.
[99] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 127.
[100] Robert Allan Houston, 'British Society in the Eighteenth Century,' *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (October 1986), 440.
[101] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 615.

should be prevented and the strength of the Roman state was embedded in its ability to reverse the flow from periphery to center.

Undoubtedly, smallness was not always accepted as the legitimate ground to initiate such an unprecedented expansion. 'Nobleman,' for instance, emphasized that, in the case of Rome,

> …their country, although small, was fertile, and able to have satisfied all their wants, especially such as were of a reasonable nature; but such was their ambition, or rather such was the design of providence that they first extended their conquests over the neighboring states of Italy, and then throughout every part of the known world.[102]

The Roman ambition of conquest and the motives behind it had always been issues of great importance in the eyes of the British historians and the smallness of Rome was counted as one among many. Also, arriving at a definition of the ideal type of conquest appeared to be equally crucial, for, though being an inevitable aspect of expansion, not all types of conquest were desirable. While recounting the reign of Servius Tullus, Hooke, in this respect, particularly underlined that the ideal conquest was not the one pursued "for the sake of glory." Inspired by Livy, Hooke contended that Servius Tullus "rated the value of his conquests only by their tendency to the public good" and that should be the criterion for all rulers who dreamed of expanding their territories. In the early Hanoverian era, the political men of Tory origin and some court Whigs were extremely disturbed by the thought that in their plans of war and expansion the Hanoverian monarchs did not take the public good as a matter of importance. As a Jacobite, Hooke elaborated on this point as a chance to extend his criticism to the king. Again in the same context he argued that during the reign of this good prince Servius "one triumph did not beget the ambition of obtaining another."[103] Therefore, the definition of ideal conquest appeared in Hooke's history

---

[102] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 299-300.
[103] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 102.

as the one that would better the situation in the motherland. Expanding was not to be a priority but improving certainly was.

During its rise when, in Ferguson's words, the Romans "had not hitherto relaxed the industry, nor cooled in the ardor with which the prosperous nations advance," their conquests were far from being complete and there was an undeniable urge to proceed. As they conquered new kingdoms and annexed other empires to their own, they remained cautious not to set a foot wrong as well as not to expand for the sake of expansion. They acted within the limits of their constitution, above all, for the common benefit of the Roman people.[104] At this point Blackwell agreed with Ferguson that the Romans were more than "brutal bloody conquerors" and their dominion not being of short duration was the most ample proof of that. In other words, in their conquests they followed a certain pattern which was neither arbitrary nor accidental. On the contrary, as commonly argued by the British historians, these were ventures in which the Romans took into consideration not only the welfare of the Roman people but the differing conditions of the conquered and acted accordingly. Thus, as Blackwell concluded,

> …joining unfeigned clemency to the vanquished, and raising themselves as it were above the power of fortune, by asking no other terms in their highest prosperity than those they had demanded before they were victors; and disdaining to accept of any in their lowest state but those they had proposed in their most flourishing condition, they became at once the wonder and dread of all the nations that heard the name of Rome.[105]

Of course, not all British historians of Rome were impressed by the Roman strategy of conquest, among whom 'Nobleman' was the foremost critic. He held that "the means by which the Romans conquered the world" did not serve to "promote their interests" but to "destroy their city." What these means were, as argued by other historians, will be discussed below in detail. However, the 'Nobleman' contended

---

[104] Ferguson, *Roman Republic*, I, 276.
[105] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 100.

that the Romans first conquered the neighboring cities, kingdoms and empires and then, in order to integrate them into the Roman empire, enslaved them through the Agrarian and Licinian laws which, "rather colored over with the most plausible appearances, were a species of slavery under the name of freedom." This "improper manner" would consequently "excel the vulgar in their actions."[106] Hardly surprisingly, in every eighteenth-century history of Rome, the final stages of the Roman expansion were viewed with disapproval, for Rome had by far exceeded its economic and military resources while expanding its territories, particularly towards the east. Ferguson offers one among many examples of the prevailing view.

> But the enlargement of their territory and the success of their arms abroad, became the sources of a ruinous corruption at home. The wealth of provinces began to flow into the city, and filled the coffers of private citizens, as well as those in the commonwealth.[107]

Nevertheless, with the exception of the 'Nobleman,' no historian adopted a critical approach to that Roman way of conquering or of governing the newly acquired territories, which was established in the early days of the empire. In fact, one of the principal motives in writing Roman history was to pin down the most characteristic features of the colonial system of Rome and exhibit these to the British reader for his instruction. In what Armitage calls "the absence of incorporating union for the provinces of the empire, direct Parliamentary representation for the colonies or ecclesiastical unity," the British statesmen stood indecisive in front of the ways of unifying their empire. On this account, throughout most of the eighteenth century "[t]he imperial constitution" remained "even more informal, unsystematic and contested than the British constitution itself." [108] Still, during the inconsistent attempts at creating a legal identity for the first British empire, there was a constant

---

[106] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 296.
[107] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* I, 276.
[108] Armitage, 'The British Conception of Empire,' 97-99.

search for the right imperial governance and many legal and historical sources, among which Roman history held a prominent place, were examined in this search. As P.A. Brunt contends, the maxim *Divide et impera* could not have been Roman, for "the tendency of Roman policy was normally to unite her subjects."[109]

The British historians of Rome treated the topics of making conquests and keeping acquisitions permanently within the Roman borders separately. More emphasis was laid on the means to preserve the newly acquired lands incorporated to the empire for there was "nothing so slippery as a new conquest."[110] Through their restless and successful attempts at conquest and colonization, the Romans rightfully gained the name "the masters of the world". One point frequently stressed by the British historians of Rome was that the Roman rise to greatness was neither accidental nor sudden. Blackwell, for example, stated that

> …Rome was no upstart state –no favorite of fortune, of a sudden growth, and as sudden decay. It owed its grandeur to no sudden run of felicity, nor acquired its dominion by a career of victories obtained without a check.[111]

Similarly, the 'Nobleman' too argued that "the utmost point of grandeur" for Rome "cannot be easily ascertained" as "the Romans rose to the sovereignty of the world gradually."[112] One might relate this gradual rise of Rome with its differing methods of colonial government designed to accommodate the acquisitions of differing character and thus to hold them permanently. Needless to say, an upstart state with no clever strategy of expansion could not be expected to last, but Rome, it was held, by wisely implementing a flexible colonial policy gradually grew and successfully incorporated the newly acquired lands into its own empire. Such policies of Rome were those needed most by British statesmen.

---

[109] P.A. Brunt, *Roman Imperial Themes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 127.
[110] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 105.
[111] *Ibid.,* 96.
[112] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 298.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Kennet's Roman history was published earlier than the other books with which this dissertation is concerned. Nevertheless, because the assessments of the feasible possibilities for the unification of the English colonies in North America with the metropolis had been in progress since 1643,[113] Kennet also devoted a considerable part of his history to the means through which the Romans attached their colonies to Rome. In his work, Kennet, believing they had been neglected, stressed the importance of "the several forms of government which the Romans established in their conquests." They were "very well worth our knowledge," but were "seldom rightly distinguished."[114] Nevertheless, in the successive histories of Rome although this topic was perceptively treated, the categorization of the varying methods of colonial government failed to reach to the advanced level set forth by Kennet. While the others examined this system without taking the pain to name the differing forms, Kennet elaborated on five types of government: colonies, *municipiae*, the prefecture, federate *civitates* and provinces. Thus he aimed to cast a light on the possible variations of settlement on the conquered lands and the relations between the conqueror and the conquered.

The type of government to be implemented was determined by the attitude of the native people towards the Romans. Stronger measures were taken against the agitated communities which were likely to trouble Rome in the future, whereas remarkable favors were granted to the more docile ones which seemed to get along with the center obediently. Of the five forms, colonies, *municipiae*, the prefecture and the federate *civitates* were modeled on the acquisitions in Italy. Provinces were to govern the distant foreign countries of larger extent.

Colonies, as Kennet's argument begins, were the

---

[113] Armitage, 'The British Conception of Empire,' 97.
[114] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 225.

states, or communities, where the chief part of the inhabitants had been transplanted from Rome; and though mingled with the natives who had been left in the conquered place, yet obtained the whole power and authority in the administration of the affairs.[115]

The foremost advantage of this type of acquisition seemed to be the point that it would serve as "a very agreeable reward" to the invincible commanders of the army who had fought for the glory of the empire by letting them govern these large territories in Italy. In such a government dominated by the people of Rome themselves, the possibility of an upheaval was considered as minor. In the *municipia* too, there was a rather relaxed form of government in which certain political rights were bestowed on the native peoples. In Kennet's words, they were

properly corporations, or enfranchised places, where the natives were allowed the use of their old laws and constitutions, and at the same time honored with the privilege of Roman citizens.[116]

There were clearly exceptions to this, as in the case of the Cerites, a people who lived in Tuscany. Though Roman citizens, they were denied some of the political rights enjoyed by other *municipia* such as taking part in the public administration. The prefectures, on the other hand, were the places which were suspected as likely to cause disquiet to Rome and faced "the hardest condition that was imposed on any people of Italy:"

The prefecture[s] were certain towns of Italy whose inhabitants had the name of Roman citizens; but were neither allowed to enjoy their own laws nor magistrates, being governed by annual prefects sent from Rome.

Then there were federate *civitates* which stood as the most lenient governing system established by the Romans in Italy. These cities or states, as Kennet stated, retained "entirely their own customs and forms of government without the least alterations"

---

[115] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 225-6.
[116] *Ibid.,* 226.

and "joined in confederacy with the Romans upon such terms had been adjusted between them."[117]

Concerning the acquisitions out of Italy, Rome made these provinces "upon the entire reducing them under the Roman dominion."[118] Nevertheless, in the provinces which consisted of multiple communities that inhabited extensive territories it was impossible to encounter one single attitude towards the conqueror. Some of these communities were on more friendly terms and had "a desire of union and agreement," while, naturally, others were troublesome and "unwilling to part with their liberty." These latter were punished by heavy taxes and finally subdued under strict governors, who were appointed annually by Rome. Meanwhile, the cooperative provinces enjoyed a more flexible system of taxation to which, in some cases, no additional burden had been added since their conquest. Such a government in which the degree of subjection of the provinces was determined by their degree of loyalty enabled the Roman rulers to focus their attention and the military and financial resources of Rome on the problematic areas only. [119]

Undoubtedly, taxation was a crucial instrument in connecting the colonies to the motherland and defining mutual rights and obligations. On this account, it had a prominent place in the discussions of empire. George I and George II, however, did not appreciate how crucial a well-regulated tax system was to the full integration of empire and thus "showed little interest in proposals to impose new taxes on their more distant subjects." For that reason, particularly the reign of George II came to be known as an age of neglect in terms of the fiscal policies implemented in the colonies. George III, on the other hand, pursued an aggressively persistent policy

---

[117] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 226.
[118] *Ibid.*
[119] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 227.

which resulted in the loss of the American colonies.[120] In the first British empire, the government failed to create a wise system of taxation that would serve well to the imperial designs.

Though not as systematic as Kennet's, Hooke's approach also offered useful insight into the Roman method of expansion and called the attention of the British reader to the delicate balance to be maintained between the conqueror and conquered. He too highlighted the point that not all subdued nations enjoyed the same privileges as the most important. On the basis of "the fidelity of the several cities and nations and the services they did the republic," some were awarded a wide range of privileges, from retaining customs and laws of their own to the right of suffrage and citizenship.[121] On the same principle, some, on the other hand, were totally subjected to the center. The lesson to be deduced from this aspect of Roman history was that a nation aiming at territorial expansion ought to maintain flexibility in terms of governing the conquered lands. A single uniform attitude towards the subdued nations of differing character, living in differing environments and governed by varying regimes would not work.

What the apt behavior towards the colonies should become remained as an issue unresolved for the agents of the first British empire. Ideally, they desired to "conceive of themselves as partners in a single polity" in full cooperation with the colonies. However, they succeeded in creating neither a single coherent imperial policy nor a more sophisticated plan in which different comportments towards the colonies in compliance with their peculiarities were regarded. A full commitment to arrive at "a mutually-acceptable ideology of empire" would have meant to utter *the* method to deal with "the resolution of contradictions as well as the necessary

---

[120] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 170.
[121] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 604.

reforms" which would officially declare whether London allowed autonomy to the colonies or exercised strict control over them.[122] The British government deliberately avoided such a declaration, formulated in the form of a binding clause. Nevertheless, this attitude on the official level did not discourage our historians from offering examples of ideal colonization from Roman history. In doing that, the historians' political identities, which visibly clashed over other issues such as the Augustan empire or the definition of the good prince, seemed to converge within this context. Preserving the territorial acquisitions was a subject dear to all.

Without assessing the differences between the varying modes of governing acquisitions, Hooke examined them under the common name of colony. The early Roman attempts at colonization, in which the Romans did not tend to settle in the newly conquered lands, had taught them that to maintain such an attitude, would have cost them dearly. In order to hold their acquisitions permanently and to prevent "the ill consequences of that independence," they began to send permanent colonists.[123] This time, however, another problem arose which was pointed to, not by Hooke, but by Ferguson. According to him, the departure of the colonists from Rome for good resulted in the undesired outcome of "losing the people," for it was possible for the colonists to attach themselves to causes detrimental to their mother country and become "parties with the vanquished in the quarrel with the victors." Therefore, it was necessary to acknowledge that the mingling of the two groups, despite securing the subjection of the conquered, was not always in favor of the conqueror. Luckily, in the case of the Romans "the memory of their descent and the ties of

---

[122] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 99.
[123] Hooke, *Roman History,* I, 291 and 500.

consanguinity" preserved their loyalty to the interests of Rome.[124] Still, the danger of losing the people was present in all attempts at colonization in history.

Both Hooke and Ferguson took an interest in the characteristics of two phases of Roman expansion, within and beyond Italy. To Ferguson, "mere colonization" was sufficient to regulate the expansion within Italy, as was the case in the republican era. He held that colonization was a means to sustain the wellbeing of "the indigent citizens" by providing them with land to settle on. Nevertheless, after having acquired the whole of Italy and left no place unsettled, by building seventy colonies, it was proven impossible for the Romans to better the condition of these people further within the borders of Italy.[125] Therefore, the argument continued, overseas expansion became essential at this point, as colonization within failed to fulfill its primary purpose. What appeared significant from Hooke's perspective was the criterion on which the Romans decided where to expand. He asserted that the Romans cleverly sought for "cheaper and easier" acquisitions in the first place, rather than the subjugation of the nations "brave and warlike and independent of each other." This would require the expenditure of much money and blood.[126] In this respect, expansion towards the east was commonsense.

Blackwell too was preoccupied with the issue of permanently keeping the acquisitions, although his approach remained rather superficial and simplistic, when compared to that of Kennet, Hooke and Ferguson. He argued that among the three existing methods, the Romans had most wisely chosen to "win the hearts of the vanquished by bettering their condition," instead of the more warlike options such as to "extirpate the conquered nation" or to "keep constantly an armed force in the country, superior to the natives." Still, he argued for the necessity of "a body of

---

[124] Ferguson, *Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic,* I, 12.
[125] *Ibid.*, 281.
[126] Hooke, *Roman History,* II, 300.

140

troops quartered in the utmost province" which, in the Roman case, "made a revolt among so many subdued nations next to a miracle." [127] He made no reference to the flexible character of the Roman expansionist policy which was a central matter for other writers.

The main reason for Blackwell's inadequate discussion of Roman colonial policy was in fact his concentration on "a modern instance," which was, in his eyes, "more striking and persuasive than abstract arguments."[128] Because he dedicated so many pages to eighteenth-century overseas competition between Britain and other major European powers, such as France, Spain and the Dutch Republic, in order to pin down the varying and contesting perceptions of empire, the volumes of the *Court of Augustus* published in his lifetime failed to include his comments on the Augustan methods of governing, which was obviously Blackwell's main motive of writing a Roman history. The task of compiling his notes on Augustus fell into the hands of John Mills who skillfully fulfilled this duty in the third volume. Clearly, not only Blackwell's, but all eighteenth-century British historians' views of Augustus carry significant importance for this study, as they serve well the purpose of understanding British ideas of empire. For that reason, the lines below will show how the reign of Augustus was treated in the eighteenth-century British histories of Rome.

3.7 The Augustan Empire

As mentioned in the first chapter, a very influential Augustan cult was created in eighteenth-century Britain hailing Augustus as the exemplary ruler for contemporary monarchs, as well as identifying the Georges with this Roman emperor. In this context, volumes of poetry, political pamphlets and history books

---

[127] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 104-105.
[128] *Ibid*, 113.

were published, each seeking to support the conviction that Britain was on the eve of an Augustan era. Of course, an equal amount of literature particularly in the second half of the eighteenth century, if not more, appeared also to dispute the undeserved glorification of Augustus or the Georges' identification with him. All these made Augustus and his reign one of the fashionable topics of the age and it was inevitable that analyses of the Augustan way of governing had an extensive place in the Roman history texts.

When used in the positive sense, the word Augustan implied a "stable government, the arts of peace, protection by heaven, refinement of style and patronage of great authors." At the utmost, it connoted a state of perfection in which the "civilizing forces of permanent achievements" emerged. In its negative sense, the Augustan regime was perceived as inducing a "nascent despotism" that would eventually destroy all the republican virtues.[129] The pro-Augustan reading of Roman history was common among the historians of Tory tendency, whereas the negative reading was associated with the republican Whig camp. Nevertheless, although such categorization generally holds, it should be stated that it is also "liquid, not solid."[130] Hooke, for example, who sought to challenge the republican interpretation of Roman history, exhibited an anti-Augustan stance, because the emperor was the murderer of Cicero.

Tory camp of historians such as Goldsmith, Echard and Mills offered the reign of Augustus to their readers as a period of a miraculous convergence of all the ideal political, social and economic conditions whereas the republican camp including Ferguson and Wotton, severely condemned the same period as absolutist and tyrannical. There is no doubt that these contradicting opinions on the Augustan

---

[129] Weinbrot, 'History,' 391-395.
[130] Northrop Frye, 'Eighteenth-Century Sensibility,' 160.

era were the reflections of the parallel comments of the ancient historians alongside the contemporary political ideologies. In this sense, the account of Augustus by Echard and Goldsmith, for instance, was no different than that by Paterculus. Although in his eighteenth-century translation of Paterculus's Roman history James Paterson claimed that "Paterculus is generally censured, for his excessive and gross flattery of Augustus,"[131] his and others' pro-Augustan views commonly prevailed in the British texts of Roman history. Nevertheless, the negative depiction of this first Roman emperor had an undeniable impact on even the attempts at glorifying him. For that reason, the phrase borrowed from the ancient historians saying Augustus "did so much hurt to the Roman republic, and to mankind that he ought never to have been born; and so much good that he ought never to have died"[132] was frequently cited by British historians such as Blackwell who was noted for his affirmative approach to Augustus. Goldsmith remained alone to leave out any degrading comments, even the slightest.

Although it was under Trajan that the Roman empire reached its largest extent, became most "formidable to the rest of the world"[133] and thus spread "the Roman fame to a larger extent than ever,"[134] he was never considered in the eighteenth century as an emperor equal to Augustus in greatness. The cardinal reason of this was that Trajan exceeded the optimum point fixed by Augustus in terms of expansion. As history had taught, territorial expansion was such a delicate issue, and nations were to note the point at which to stop, rather than to pursue a limitless, uncontrolled acquisition of new lands. Trajan neglected this golden rule and thus after his death the Roman empire gradually began "to sink by the unwieldiness of its

---

[131] James Paterson (trn), *Roman History of C. Velleius Paterculus* (Edinburgh: John Mosman, 1722), ii.
[132] Mills, *Augustus,* III, 573.
[133] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 336 and Echard, *Roman History,* II, 284.
[134] Echard, *Roman History,* II, 263.

bulk and the vastness of its own weight."[135] Augustus, on the other hand, was exceptionally competent and wise in imperial affairs, as he limited his scheme of expansion to the optimum point where the emperor could keep up peace, quiet, wealth and happiness equally everywhere from the centre to the remotest corner of the empire. When Augustus lost three legions in Germany in 9 AD, he took this as a warning not to pursue further expansion in Europe and stopped exactly where he should have. Trajan, on the other hand, ignored his predecessor's wise move and engaged in risky campaigns such as in Dacia in 106 AD.[136] Although the campaign ended in victory, he overextended the imperial territory beyond control. Although under his rule the empire came to be seen as an embracing, coherent entity instead of "an alien dominion imposed on unwilling subjects by force,"[137], at the same time, it became too fragile to endure. That was why in the first place Augustus deserved much praise or at least was considered as a subject very worthy of examination by the imperial historians.

One of the issues around which heated debates took place was the title of Augustus. In his fifth consulship Octavius, on the advice of Macaenas, declared that he had become the *imperator* of Rome and later taken upon the title of Augustus. Augustus, as a title, was derived from the word *augusta* used "for sacred places and temples consecrated by Augurs"[138] and hence meant there was "something…more than mortal" about the emperor.[139] All the historians informed us that although previously he had considered having the title of Romulus, seen as the founder of the empire, he settled for Augustus which was, in Hooke's words, a "more venerable

---

[135] Echard, *Roman History,* II, 284.
[136] Michale Fulford, 'Territorial Expansion and the Roman Empire,' *World Archaeology*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (February, 1992), 295.
[137] Brunt, *Themes*, 118.
[138] Hooke, *Roman History,* IV, 446.
[139] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 449.

name and less invidious one."[140] According to Goldsmith, this title "served to confirm him in the empire and the hearts of the people."[141] It was not this spiritual feature of the title which evoked discussions but its embrace of another concept within which was *imperator* – a title implying authoritarianism. For that reason, unlike the French, the British people shared deep reservations about the title.

Originally, *imperator* was "the title of the general of the Roman armies" which was afterwards acquired by the prince to be used also in peace in order to enforce his authority throughout his *imperium*.[142] In the course of time, this authority came to be associated with absolutism and tyranny which would sooner or later result in the silencing of the Senate. According to Echard, Octavius attached the title of *imperator* to his other titles in the sense of "the chief command or authority."[143] Still, as he continued, by the virtue of becoming Augustus which was more than an *imperator*, Octavius got hold of "a title expressing more dignity and reverence than authority."[144] Besides, according to Goldsmith's attempt at justifying Augustus's titles, it should have been considered as a proof of his good faith that Augustus did not acquire "new titles" but "resolved to conceal his new power under usual names and ordinary dignities." *Imperator* was definitely not an unusual title to assume, yet it was sufficient to impose on the people the magnanimity of the ruler.[145]

In the other camp of historians, however, the *imperator* character of Augustus was not so easily justified. As Wotton stated, the *imperator* was the prince who

> lifted men, raised money, declared war, made peace, commanded all the forces of empire, legionary or auxiliary, at all times and in all places, and could put any senators to death, even within the city upon occasion, as the dictators could formerly.[146]

[140] Hooke, *Roman History,* IV, 446.
[141] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 104.
[142] Wotton, *History of Rome,* 117.
[143] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 444.
[144] *Ibid.,* 449.
[145] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 99 and 102.
[146] Wotton, *History of Rome,* 117.

What was more disturbing than these was his "tribunitial" and "censorial" power over the Senate, as Augustus "had a negative vote upon any resolutions of the Senate which he did not like." Also the authority of the *imperator* included the "high priesthood" which made him the sole "master of the religion of the empire" who could arbitrary add or remove the rituals and ceremonies to or from the religion.[147] Hooke too, though not belonging to the anti-Augustan Whig party, acknowledged that Octavius made himself the "perpetual master of manners" of Rome. Although he himself was not despotic, for he acquired this power gradually step by step, his legacy was:

> Thus the prince got into his hands all the jurisdiction and privileges of the several offices of the state; and what was granted to Augustus by degrees afterwards conferred upon his successors at once by one single instrument, and despotic monarchy established by a law, called afterwards *lex regia…*[148]

Lex Regia which was the law issued to transfer the legislative power of the Senate to the hands of Augustus, received severe criticism from the British historians. From the early modern era, *Lex Regia* came to be associated with absolute monarchy and as in the example of the Danish King Frederick III (1648-1670) and the era of Kongeloven provided a basis for absolutist constitutions. In the eyes of our anti-Augustan historians too, *Lex Regia* represented the archetype of the legal code that created one of the most despicable governments on earth -an absolutist monarchy. Montague, for instance, viewed Augustus on this ground as the man who "riveted beyond a possibility of removal" the chains put on the Romans by Julius Caesar.[149] Nevertheless, the fiercest opponent of Augustus and his governance in eighteenth-century Britain was most definitely Ferguson who considered all sorts of absolutism equally intolerable. He fervently argued that *lex regia* which distorted the

---

[147] Wotton, *History of Rome,* 117.
[148] Hooke, *Roman History,* IV, 446.
[149] Montague, *Reflections,* 263.

actual principle of laws as having replaced the people with Augustus simply aimed "to guard *his* person, not only *his* safety and the authority of *his* government, but *his* most private concerns."[150] Additionally, he deceived his people by the illusion he created around this new code, as if it would serve to restore the ancient rights of the Romans lost in the corrupted republic. Ferguson also grieved over the point that through *lex regia* and the absolutist government "all the interesting exertions of the national, political, and the military spirit over great parts of the earth were suppressed." Although the Roman empire stretching from Britain to Mesopotamia was populated with different "races of men the most famed for activity and vigor," the homogenizing effect of absolutism silenced "every difference of opinion" in this cosmopolitan empire and public affairs, unusually, began to be conducted in quiet. On this account, in the Roman empire "the materials of history became less frequent and less interesting than they had been in the times of the republic."[151] In other words, he accused Augustus of suppressing the Roman people to the degree that they became dull. This view of Ferguson should remind us of the renowned words by John Stuart Mill saying

> A state which dwarfs its men, in order that they may be more docile instruments in its hands even for beneficial purposes will find that with small men no great thing can really be accomplished.[152]

Sixty years before Mill's *On Liberty*, Ferguson was discussing similar ideas by reflecting the Roman experience on the British.

Still, as Ferguson continues, even though it was the story of the usurpation of people's rights by an absolutist monarch and turning them into a dull people, the reign of Augustus was to be studied carefully on the grounds that it offered invaluable lessons to those "who need to be told under what disguise the most

---

[150] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* III, 509. Italics are mine.
[151] *Ibid.,* 378.
[152] John-Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (New York: The Liberal Arts, 1956), 78.

detestable tyranny will sometimes approach mankind."[153] Thus he in fact criticized the Augustan historians of his age who, as will be noted below, sought to clean up Augustus's name from the accusations of absolutism and tyranny. Ferguson attempted to prove that Rome was governed according to the passions and caprices of one individual. In doing that he also intended to prevent the Augustan way from being noted in history as "a model for those, who wish to govern with the least possible option or obstruction to their power."[154] Augustus was an absolutist monarch and caused a recession in the empire with his conduct of imperial affairs. Absolutism had nothing to offer to a people then, not only in terms of civil rights but in terms of empire also. In that sense, the British empire emerged as a proof of this assertion of Ferguson. Britain without employing absolutist measures managed to "combine an enormous empire with a minimalist state." It had, "uniquely among the empires of world history," shown that "*libertas* at home" would also bring on "*imperium* abroad."[155]

The pro-Augustan historians, on the other hand, did not deny the absolutist features of the Augustan government nor contradict the argument that after him these features caused Rome to slowly and irretrievably sink into the worst form of tyranny. At the same time, however, they collectively aimed to justify Augustan absolutism as a measure necessary to rule the Roman empire efficiently. In doing that, they highlighted the necessity of separating Augustus from Octavius and claimed that all the alleged evils, including the first implantation of absolutism, took place during the time of Octavius.[156] It could be admitted that Octavius may have had some flaws but once he became Augustus, he stayed as "one of the most faultless princes in history,"

---

[153] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* III, 511.
[154] *Ibid.*, 563.
[155] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 96.
[156] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 452, Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 119 and Mills, *Augustus,* III, 573.

while exercising his peculiar understanding of absolutism. In this respect, Echard, for instance, argued that Augustan rule was more than the reign of an absolutist monarch and it was important to notice the point that "Augustus Caesar became supreme governor of the Roman people, neither by inheritance, nor usurpation, nor conquest, nor election, yet by means of them all."[157] According to Goldsmith, his severe conduct in the triumvirate was "in some measure, necessary to restore public tranquility:"

> He gave the government an air suited to the disposition of the times, he indulged his subjects in the pride of seeing the appearance of a republic while he made them really happy in the effects of a most absolute monarchy, guided by the most consummate prudence.[158]

It was also noteworthy to Goldsmith that throughout his reign, Augustus's interests were always unmistakably compatible with those of the people. In this respect while he was governing, so were the people. Based on this he argued that "the Romans, by such a government, lost nothing of the happiness that liberty could produce and were exempt from all the misfortunes it could occasion."[159] In fact, it was his successor Tiberius who corrupted Augustus's legacy and separated the will of the emperor from that of the people. Similarly, Mills asserted that although the Roman people compromised on their liberties to a certain degree, Augustus "omitted no pains to make them really satisfied and happy."[160] Under the circumstances the authoritarian government of Augustus did not appear as despicable as it might have been. At this point, taking sides with Goldsmith, Mills and Echard, 'Nobleman' too offered an explanation of his own to the problematic of liberties under authoritarian government. As the following words will demonstrate, he argued that people's

---

[157] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 450.
[158] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 119.
[159] *Ibid.,* 100.
[160] Mills, *Augustus,* III, 439.

liberties began to be fully exercised only after they were reconciled to the Augustan regime:

> The Romans were now arrived at a state of maturity, they were united under one head and instead of nominal liberty, for which they had so long contended, they enjoyed that which was real, even under a prince clothed with sovereign authority.[161]

Besides, the Augustan government had never been absolutist in the proper sense of the term. It was true that he had declared himself emperor, exercised military authority over the Roman territories and cause the senate to fall "from their ancient splendor," but Goldsmith at the same time, rather sarcastically contended that under Augustus the senate retained some of its former freedom "except in the capacity of promoting sedition" and restored some power of the senators except "their tendency to injustice."[162] The rights granted to the senate became more significant, when it came to imperial affairs. At this point, Mills too agreed with Echard as well as with Goldsmith and highlighted that the colonial administration that Augustus adopted was "a mixed form of government," which was "a form useful to the prince, and, at last, not less so to the nation." If nothing had "palliated" the alleged misgovernments of Augustus, this should absolutely have.[163] In this mixed government, "Augustus's mildness, his moderation, his beneficence" and "his virtues" embraced "every order of the state, public communities, as well as private persons, cities protected by the empire and the kings in the alliance of the Romans."[164]

There is no doubt that the way Augustus governed his empire was meticulously examined by all eighteenth-century British historians of Rome with the purpose of formulizing the ideal imperial governance. What Ferguson called 'dull'

---

[161] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* II, 67.
[162] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 99-100.
[163] Mills, *Augustus,* III, 555.
[164] *Ibid*, 447.

was considered by pro-Augustan historians as peace and that appeared as the most striking success of this emperor. Therefore the matter of interest was delimited to how he attained peace in a gigantic empire comprising Italy, Spain, Greece, Illyricum, Panonnia, some parts of Britain, Gaul, Syria and Egypt as well as numerous islands of various extent. His monarchy was "so well fixed, and firmly settled" that the Romans were convinced that their empire was "indissoluble and immortal."[165] What could have been the recipe of achieving such a miraculous peace? Among the normative lessons to be reached, the British historians put particular emphasis on issues such as leaving religion untouched in the colonies, repeopling Italy, being cautious about expansion, building mutual intercourse between the center and periphery, uniting the colonies by alliances and finally permitting the senate to govern the weak internal provinces of the empire.

In Echard's comparison of the republic and the empire, the empire was evaluated as

> …something more polite and sociable and never were more glorious, or at least, or more pleasant times than now, all wars and contests ceasing, all arts and sciences flourishing, and all riches and pleasures increasing.[166]

In like manner, 'Nobleman' declared how wealthy and refined the empire was:

> The revenues of the empire were equal to its extent, for as we are able to judge at this distance of time, near forty millions of our money was yearly paid into the treasury. No period ever produced a greater number of learned men, witness the immortal writings of Horace, Virgil, Livy, Ovid and many others, whose names will be celebrated as long as the Latin language is taught.[167]

The reason why the Roman empire turned out to be such a glorious empire, the most exemplary in history, was in the first place Augustus's concern to keep the religion intact, in the exact form he had found it. Although, aside with Augustus and

---

[165] Echard, *Roman History,* I, 450-1.
[166] *Ibid.,* 451.
[167] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* II, 67.

imperator, Octavius took upon himself the title of high priest and therefore was entitled to interfere with the established rites, ceremonies and prayers of Rome and its colonies, he deliberately avoided that. Augustus, still in Echard's words, appreciated "how tender a point that was, and how dangerous such alterations might prove in an unsettled empire."[168] Thus the preservation of religion in its original form, no matter how offensive its components could be, emerged as an imperative measure to be taken in building an empire. Interestingly enough, the British, in their territories in the Indian sub-continent, acted in this exact way, pursuing a strict policy of non-interference in matters of religion till the early nineteenth century.[169] Here one can assume that the British statesmen may well have developed such a policy from their acquaintance with Roman history as well as on their own experiences.

Secondly, Augustus, by establishing twenty-eight colonies in Italy, prevented the depopulation of the motherland which had been "much enfeebled and exhausted" by endless wars.[170] As noted in the previous chapter, the British viewed the possibility of the motherland's depopulation as one of the worst case scenarios that could have happened when they thought of the problem of expansion. However, the imperial governance of Augustus had demonstrated that expansion did not necessarily lead to an emptied motherland. Even if it did, 'repeopling' it would always be a possibility. In fact, what the pro-Augustan historians of the eighteenth century argued is today an established fact for the archaeologists and contemporary historians. Augustus maintained a world empire through "a paradoxically modest scale of exploitation of resources."[171] Human resources should be included in this category. Augustus firstly kept his army small and prevented his men from scattering

---

[168] Echard, *Roman History,* II, 3.
[169] Susan E.P. Carson, *Soldiers of Christ: Evangelicals and India, 1780-1833,* Unpublished Thesis, University of London, 1988.
[170] Echard, *Roman History,* II, 6. Also see Mills, *Memoirs of the Courts of Augustus,* III, p. 560.
[171] Fulford, 'Territorial Expansion,' 294.

around the empire and settling in new places. The periphery was not "annexed to provide Romans with new homes."[172] This attitude of the emperor, therefore, could be considered as an important factor explaining why Rome was not depopulated.

Thirdly, it was argued that his cautious attitude towards acquiring new territories played a crucial role in rendering the empire of Augustus stable and peaceful. Goldsmith, putting into words this common belief, pointed that "he had made it a rule to carry on no operations, in which ambition, and not the safety of the state was concerned." This naturally made him "the first Roman…who aimed at gaining a character by the arts of peace alone."[173] Augustus did not set a foot wrong in terms of acquisition which could have jeopardized the atmosphere of quiet prevailing throughout the empire and here the British historians came across another important instruction on the imperial affairs. Imperial power was not enshrined in the limitless extent of the territory. Instead of ambitiously stretching the boundaries, the ruler should have concentrated on lands only whose acquisition would improve the empire, in terms of security or wealth. This feature of the Augustan reign was, however, not equally appreciated by Ferguson who studied Roman history from a progressive perspective and believed that "[u]nder the establishment now made by Augustus, conquests were discontinued or become less frequent."[174] To him this appeared as recession rather than stability.

Even though he had a reputation as anti-Augustan, it is still interesting to find Ferguson defying the virtue of such an imperial policy, which was only commonsense. Besides, in the following pages of the same volume he not only warned his reader of "the troubles to which so extensive a territory was still

[172] Brunt, *Themes*, 110.
[173] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 110.
[174] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* III, 373.

exposed"[175] but praised "the fabric of the empire"[176] which secured its existence long after Augustus's death. The truth of the matter is that Ferguson, never ceasing to be critical of Augustus for what he did to the perfect Roman republic, did not employ so severe a language on imperial issues. As mentioned above, Ferguson distinguished between empire as regime and empire as entity. Thus, while he on one hand despised Octavius's title of *imperator* as well as his imperial regime, the Roman empire on the other was reflected in an extremely positive light in his history. He believed that the way Augustus managed the growing empire was "a conduct so popular, and in many particulars so worthy of empire."[177] What is more, it was Ferguson who called attention to the requisite of building mutual alliance and support between the provinces, colonies and the center.[178] The exceptionally long duration of the Roman empire owed much to this connection established by Augustus. It was crucial to create an awareness of belonging to a greater entity among the provinces and colonies through intercourse and alliances. In short, Ferguson was against Augustan but not against his empire.

Building alliances in particular was commonly accepted by the British historians as the key to an enduring empire. Mills, for example, highlighted among the principal characteristics of Augustan rule that he treated even the rulers of the friendly kingdoms "as a sort of members of the empire" and sought "to unite them by alliances and to preserve peace in their families."[179] Goldsmith too underlined a similar idea of binding the empire together by the "invigorating principle of patriotism to inspire its subjects in its defence."[180] Nevertheless, efficiently and

---

[175] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* III, 409.
[176] *Ibid*, 570.
[177] *Ibid*, 511.
[178] *Ibid.,* 570.
[179] Mills, *Augustus,* III, 561.
[180] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 336.

peacefully governing an expanding empire as well as generating a feeling of patriotism among its components was a task, in Augustus's own words, "which…none but the immortal Gods were equal to."[181] In fulfilling this task, Augustus aimed at designing an imperial governance in which he shared this burden with the senate to a limited degree.

In the overseas venture, the role to be played by the Parliament had increasingly preoccupied the political nation, starting from Hugh Chamberlen's proposal in 1702 suggesting the union of England, Scotland, and Ireland with the American colonies "under the same liberties and legislative, as well as executive power."[182] For that reason, much attention was devoted to this aspect of the Roman empire by our historians. It was noted that the senate was allowed to govern the internal provinces which were not likely to pose a threat to the safety of the empire, whereas the administration of the provinces which required the permanent presence of the Roman army, remained under the direct power of Augustus. This point was stressed by Goldsmith, not only as a feature of successful imperial administration, but as the disproof of Augustus's absolutism.[183]

All in all, Augustus's empire was an invaluable case study for the British historians of the eighteenth century who were preoccupied with pinning down the characteristics of an enduring and stable empire. What made this entity so glorious and successful in their eyes was its capacity of bringing peace to the territories it comprised. Under Augustus, as Echard concluded,

> [a]ll the provinces of the Roman empire were now in a profound peace and quiet, and as much as we know, all the nations in the world were in the same state; and Augustus at present had but small employment besides his daily receiving those honors and acknowledgements paid

---

[181] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 102.
[182] [Hugh Chamberlen,] *The Great Advantage to Both Kingdoms of Scotland and England by an Union* (1702), 7 quoted in Armitage, 'The British Conception of Empire,' 97.
[183] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 104.

him by foreign nations, and by the greatest monarchs and potentates upon earth.[184]

In this atmosphere of peace, in the twenty-fifth year of the Augustan rule, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlelem of Judea within the boundaries of the Roman empire. This divine birth led to the conviction that once peace was established in the empire, the divine grace would eternally be upon it. Here was added reason for understanding the ways of achieving peace everywhere in the empire. For as the Bible foretold, the Second Advent of Christ, as his birth did, would take place in the empire of peace-when "the greatest part of mankind" would once again be "possessing obedience to one monarch, and in perfect harmony with each other."[185]

For all these reasons cited above, the empire of Augustus was meticulously dissected by the British historians of the eighteenth century who enthusiastically aimed at discovering his secret of perfect imperial governance. The rise of this empire to greatness and the means deployed to preserve it that way as long as possible were considered as two of the most instructive topics included in the Roman history. Undoubtedly, to these topics it should be added the factors bringing on the demise of the empire, which was obviously a subject that deserved equal attention with the other two. As 'Nobleman' stated, "the rise and fall of empires, if the causes are properly attended to, are among the most important lessons that can be learned." Nevertheless, the events, particularly those leading to the end of an empire "happen in so imperceptible a manner, that we seldom discover them till it is too late to repair the loss."[186] Therefore, it was not an easy task to completely name the causes of the fall; but the historians arrived at certain normative rules which appeared as recurrent themes in the eighteenth-century histories of Rome.

---

[184] Echard, *Roman History,* II, 36.
[185] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* I, 119-20.
[186] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* I, 295.

3.8 The Decline

The reasons behind the decline of empires, governments and regimes have much concerned political thinkers since antiquity. In her 'Uncertain Inevitability of Decline in Montesquieu,' Sharon Krause distinguishes the ancient and modern approaches to decline with the point that the modern philosophers argue for the permanency of a state or regime and rule out the inevitability of decline, whereas the ancients excluded the possibility of permanent political entities and embraced the prospects of "decline and revolution" as "intractable aspects of political life." Seeking normative rules "based on universal rules of human nature, natural right and reason," the moderns are committed to arrive at the prescription of enduring states and regimes. To the ancient philosophers, on the other hand, decline in politics was a natural and inescapable phenomenon. In the eighteenth century, the shift from the ancient understanding of decline to the modern one was already in progress.[187] Nevertheless, our historians, who were much acquainted with the ancient tradition, dwelt only on the inevitability of decline and made use of ancient "morals for survival of their own empire."[188] In doing that they considered luxury as one of its most significant causes. To them, once peace, prosperity and an advanced level of civilization was achieved, man's tendency of indulgence emerged.

Luxury, as previously stated, was the main factor that brought the end of the Roman empire. The inescapable corruptive power of luxury could ruin any state and in the Roman case it was the Carthaginian luxury that destroyed the virtuous manners of the Romans irreversibly. In order to avoid repetition, the role of luxury in the ruin

---

[187] Sharon R. Krause, 'The Uncertain Inevitably of Decline in Montesquieu,' *Political Theory*, Vol. 30, No: 5 (October, 2002), 702.
[188] Richard Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 2.

of Rome will not be further assessed here, but other destructive factors will be noted and examined. In this respect, the revolutionary changes implemented by the emperors, without perceptively considering all possible outcomes, appeared as another issue which in the eyes of historians also had a disastrous effect on the stability of the empire. Throughout his short reign, Helvius Petrinax, for example, labored with good faith to undo the disastrous reign of Commodus. In doing that, however, he set out "too hasty a reformation" which eventually proved that such precautions could not work as desired in a "corrupted state."[189] Aiming at improving all the deteriorating components of the empire at once may have very well resulted in a situation opposite to that planned. Similarly, Constantine's change of the imperial seat from Rome to Constantinople was a measure with serious implications, which should by no means have been taken without finding permanent solutions to the problematic issues of the empire.

Although Constantine succeeded in sustaining peace and stability in the Roman empire to a certain degree and earned "the surname of great, an honor unknown to former emperors,"[190] he failed to revive that perfect political mechanism which worked to regulate automatically all aspects of imperial affairs. Convinced that the eastern territories would be more tightly integrated into the Roman empire with his presence there and thus eliminating the Persian threat, he declared Constantinople to be the new imperial seat as "nature seemed to have formed it with all the conveniences, and all the beauties, which might induce power to make it the seat of residence."[191] This alteration caused no violent reactions over the short term, in which the Romans silently, though reluctantly, submitted to the fact that Rome was no longer the seat of the empire. Nevertheless, within a few years, when the

---

[189] Echard, *Roman History,* II, 362.
[190] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 25.
[191] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 488-9.

Goths first harassed then ravaged the western empire, this had been proven to be the most unwise decision taken by any Roman emperor. On this account, according to the historians of Rome, "the removal of the imperial seat" was considered as "a principal cause of its ruin."[192]

Thus having diagnosed the principal cause of the fall, it was now necessary to suggest what should have ideally been done to save the empire and keep Rome as the imperial residence. To this end, the historians focused on the reason which led Constantine to reside in the east in the first place. According to Echard, the overstretched empire trapped the emperor in "laboring under so vast a bulk and plethora as nature could not govern"[193] and forced him to take the decision. Here the problematic of territorial expansion was once again stressed as the issue to be tackled. Under Augustus, the Roman empire reached its optimum point in terms of spatial expansion. It has been sometimes asked by scholars of our day why Augustus did not seek "further major territorial expansion" through "a larger army and a slightly increased level of expenditure."[194] Roman manpower and the treasury could have allowed that. Nevertheless, it has also been contended that only by the abondment of ambitious designs such as the conquest of the whole of Germany and by the toleration of "the existence of such weak and disunited, or distant 'neighbors,' " Rome found a way to become "a workable approximation" of a world empire.[195] Our historians too seemed collectively to appreciate this point.

The expansion pursued after Augustus' death, however, weakened the imperial structure and slowly exterminated the empire itself. The lesson to be deduced from this episode addressed all the nations aiming at universal empire. If

---

[192] Echard, *Roman History,* II, unpaginated preface. Also see Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 25.
[193] *Ibid.,* 558.
[194] Fulford, 'Territorial Expansion,' 295.
[195] George H. Quester, *Offence and Defence in the International System in the International System* (New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction, 1988), 21.

they did not possess "a genius as extensive as their dominions,"[196] their empire would be doomed to end. Thus, changing the seat of the empire was not ingenious, but implementing a perceptively assessed expansionist policy which also set an optimum point most definitely was. This, then, "ought to remain as a striking lesson to all those sovereigns or commanders who want to extend their conquests beyond proper bounds."[197]

Apart from limiting the burden of governance, limiting the extent of expansion was imperative to determine whom the empire would have borders with. Bordering with the barbarians in the east led to the degeneration of the Romans, including the emperors, with Asian softness, indolence and luxury.[198] With the switching of the center to the periphery by Constantine, the manners of the center were also replaced by those of the periphery. Among the Roman manners which were thus relaxed and softened, the military discipline was proven to be the most fatal in terms of imperial endurance. Henceforth, the Romans, inadequate to maintain security, adopted the Carthaginian way of hiring foreign troops, a method despised in the glorious days of the Roman empire. In ideal imperial governance, the borders should have never extended eastwards toward Persia, whose corruptive power had already been displayed in Greek history.

Obviously, the foreign troops also should by no means have been hired in an empire aiming to survive. The loss of the Roman military virtue was superceded by the admittance of the Gothic barbarian troops into the empire as military aid which was, in Echard's words, "the greatest piece of madness" in the history of Rome.[199] Receiving the Gothic tribes so many in number at the heart of the empire, as all

---

[196] Echard, *Roman History,* III, 380.
[197] Anon., Nobleman's *Roman History,* II, 261.
[198] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 493, Anon., Nobleman's *History of Modern Europe*, I, 5 and Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 137.
[199] Echard, *Roman History,* III, 171.

British historians would agree, only served to "complete the empire's destruction."[200] The barbarians grew to be formidable, destructive and corruptive no longer on the other side of the border but within the empire. Thus, according to Echard again, the end of the Roman empire came as "a violent subversion" rather than "a natural dissolution."[201] Echard particularly underlined that the Roman empire did not fall because of the inevitable destiny of the empires. It was because the Romans committed simple errors with devastating consequences, ending the Roman empire long before its actual lifetime. However, not many historians took sides with Echard on the issue, for they almost unanimously viewed the decline of the Roman empire as what inevitably happened when the original virtues and principles of a mighty nation were exhausted. That was the typical explanation of the fall of the empires-incompetent princes committing simple errors. Among many remarks, Ferguson's words can be quoted, reflecting this point of view:

> The military and political virtues, which had been exerted in forming this empire, having finished their course, a general relaxation ensued, under which, the very forms that were necessary for its preservation were in process of time neglected. As the spirit which gave rise to those forms was gradually spent, human nature fell into a retrograde motion, which the virtues of individuals could not suspend; and men, in the application of their faculties even to the most ordinary purposes of life suffered a slow and insensible, but almost continual decline.[202]

Therefore, similar to Montesquieu's perception of decline, the fall of the Roman empire was presented by Ferguson as a natural phenomenon.[203] Still, it was crucial to be able to name the factors bringing on the inevitable end in order to delay its arrival as long as possible.

To Goldsmith, another reason that played an important role in the fall of the Roman empire appeared to be religion. He argued that it was a breaching of the

---

[200] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 493.
[201] Echard, *Roman History,* III, 171.
[202] Ferguson, *Roman Republic,* III, 574.
[203] Sharon R. Krause, 'Decline,' 702.

Augustan rule of religious non-interference, when Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the empire. Although in this way he "established a religion that continues the blessing of mankind,"[204] the Roman empire "lost a great deal of its strength and coherence," for "that enormous fabric had been built and guided upon pagan principles."[205] Undoubtedly, this was the reflection of a much wider eighteenth-century discussion on Christianity's possible negative impacts on the progressive dynamics of a state. In the Roman case, it was argued that the Christian doctrines inherently hindered the flourishing Roman manners of courage, vigor and dynamism, which were the legacy of Romulus, and subsequently replaced them with passiveness and inactiveness. Christianity, by teaching non-aggression to the Romans, "introduced a poorness of spirit that made them careless and insensible of their ancient glory."[206] It was widely accepted that the Romans owed their greatness to pagan virtue and principles. Even Kennet, despite his religious title, admitted that the pagan "virtue and fortune were engaged in a sort of noble contention for the advancement of the grandeur and happiness of the people" and repeated the words of St. Augustine saying "God would not give heaven to the Romans because they were heathens; but he gave them the empire of the world because they were virtuous."[207] Nevertheless, Goldsmith remained alone in relating the fall of the Roman empire to the adoption of Christianity. To the rest, the Roman history was designed to prove "that both principles and practices, very opposite to those enjoined by the Gospel, occasioned its ruin."[208] It was not that Christianity was incompatible with the Roman virtues but in the reign of Constantine the Romans had already irretrievably lost their virtuous and moral character, and were brought low by

---

[204] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 491.
[205] *Ibid*, 483.
[206] Echard, *Roman History,* III, unpaginated preface.
[207] Kennet, *Roma Antique,* 61.
[208] Echard, *Roman History,* III, unpaginated preface.

luxury, excessive expansion, close contact with the east and the conduct of inadequate princes. As Blackwell opined, "virtue is the sole guardian of the dearest and most precious treasure of a happy nation."[209]

As the readers of Cassius Dio's 80-volume *Roman History*, it was customary among our historians to point to the end of Marcus Aurelius's reign as the beginning of decline in the Roman empire. Because the Roman history was assessed by British historians of the eighteenth century in terms of good and bad princes, the period following Aurelius would be the display of bad princes mostly and the harm they did to the Roman empire. This period was considered to demonstrate "how much the welfare of a nation depends upon the dispositions of its prince."[210] As the decline of the Roman empire was unfolded, the British reader would reach to the definition of the bad prince as well as a sort of imperial code prescribing the ways to prevent the fall of empires and acknowledge that, in Goldsmith's words,

> [s]uch was the end of this great empire that had conquered the world with its arms and instructed them with its wisdom that had risen by temperance and fell by luxury that had been established by a spirit of patriotism and that fell into ruin when the empire was become so extensive that a Roman citizen was but an empty name.[211]

Europeans have acquired from the Romans a "continuing aspiration" for unity.[212] Rome's history has been read as the ultimate guide to a unified, coherent empire, although the definition of the word empire has been considerably modified throughout history. This chapter has sought to study the attempt of the British historians to reach the normative rules of governing an empire in the Roman sense, keeping it at the peak and delaying its inevitable fall as long as possible, through their meticulous scrutiny of Roman history. In the next chapter an attempt will be

---

[209] Blackwell, *Augustus,* I, 376.
[210] Echard, *Roman History,* III, 381.
[211] Goldsmith, *Roman History,* II, 501.
[212] Brunt, *Themes*, 133.

made to unveil the similar scheme of their contemporaries, this time focusing on the

histories of Greece.

CHAPTER 4

EMPIRES OF ANCIENT GREECE: SPARTA AND ATHENS

Ancient Greek history-writing in eighteenth-century Britain, except for a few scattered treatments, has not received much attention from observers of it, who noted the poor quality of scholarship that the texts contained, when compared to the masterly level attained in the following century by George Grote and Connop Thirlwall in their histories of ancient Greece. Also, for the reason that the contemporary English and Roman histories, such as Hume's *History of England* and, obviously, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, enjoyed more fame and success than the ancient Greek histories, ancient Greece did not seem to catch the attention of the political nation. In the studies of eighteenth-century British historiography, ancient Greek history-writing is considered as a discipline not yet fully formed, whose accomplished examples belonging to the subsequent centuries. Still, ancient Greek history texts by eighteenth-century British historians have not gone completely unnoticed and have been briefly assessed in the books devoted to larger topics such as historiography and neo-classicism. Clarke's *Greek* Studies, Ogilvie's *Latin and Greek* and Johnson's *Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought* are the pre-eminent examples of this sort. The topic has also been treated in more recent articles as an issue of secondary importance. The analyses of these texts in these articles are merely confined to making the point that the historians favoured

Sparta on grounds of being a monarchy and employed Athens to exhibit the evils of democracy.[1]

Nevertheless, we should not dismiss the ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain altogether as works of no significant value. Grounded in the conviction that ancient history offers universal rules to establish balance and enduring order under varying political circumstances, ancient Greek histories cover a wide range of topics from party politics and elections to the ideal governance of empire. Additionally, according to the theme selected, the tone of assessments switch alternately from pro-Spartan to pro-Athenian. Therefore, to concentrate only on one single aspect and classify ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain altogether as simply monarchical and pro-Spartan would do them an injustice. Although these texts, when judged by present criteria, contain insufficient, sometimes inaccurate, historical information, they nonetheless provide useful insight into how some lively political issues, including empire, were discussed in eighteenth-century Britain. Having reflected on the ancient Greek experience in dealing with the political challenges that were also troubling the British statesmen in the eighteenth century, the historians, in effect, aimed to fulfil their duty of guiding the political nation through turbulent times.

This chapter will pick the issue of empire from the political debates which permeated the ancient Greek histories and show that when discussions of the understandings of empire are taken into account, Athens, not Sparta, comes to the fore as the source of emulation. Eighteenth-century British historians contributed to the quest for ideal imperial governance by proposing the Athenian model. Sparta, on

---

[1] Paul Carthledge, 'Ancient Greeks and Modern Britons,' *History Today*, April 1994, Kyriacos Demetriou, 'In Defence of the British Constitution: Theoretical Implications of the Debate over Athenian democrcay in Britain, 1770-1850,' *History of Political Thought,* Vol. XVII, No. 2 Summer 1996, 280-97 and Arlene W. Saxonhouse, 'Athenian Democracy: Modern Mythmakers and Ancient Theorists,' *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Sep., 1993), 488.

the other hand, was identified with the undesirable empires of the eighteenth century, namely France and Spain. David Armitage contends that the British empire

> deploys resources from a wider tradition of political thought, stretching back to classical sources in ancient Greece and, especially Rome, but also encompassing contemporary Spain and the United Provinces, as a part of a wider European dialogue within which the various empires were defined and defended.[2]

It will here be argued that though not occupying a place as prominant as the history of Rome, ancient Greek history was accepted as a viable source to refer to in the eighteenth-century quest for empire. It was employed to comprehend not only the empire of Britain but those of other European states also. Consequent to a scrutiny of ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain, one should replace 'the United Provinces' with France in the above statement of Armitage and add contested next to defined and defended.

4.1 Politics of the Historians

The works of Mitford and Gillies are the most widely discussed examples of ancient Greek history in eighteenth-century Britain, but they were by no means the only ones. The popularity of these texts has resulted in the categorization of eighteenth-century ancient Greek historiography as pro-Spartan. They were unmistakably so. Nevertheless, when other texts are also taken into consideration and all studied together from the perspective of empire, the outcome is quite the contrary. Potter, Stanyan, Leland, Goldsmith, Mitford, Gillies and Gast were collectively concerned with the topic of empire, alongside other political issues, particularly with the optimum ways of building and preserving one. In discussing empire, although, except for Mitford and Goldsmith, they did not exhibit an explicit commitment to the Tory standpoint, these historians presented two kinds of empire, one desirable and

---

[2] Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, 5.

the other undesirable, in a fashion greatly resembling the Tory political discourse on imperial affairs.

It should here be stated that the publication of some of our texts may not coincide with the days when Tory opposition ideas were most fervently expressed. Nevertheless, these views evolved through a long period of time before they were fully formulated and they endured as political traditions long after they had been overtaken by other items on the immediate political agenda. For that reason, although it has been established that "Tory is not usually a helpful word"[3] in many eighteenth-century contexts and that in the period between 1760 and 1812 the dichotomy of Whig and Tory faded away a great deal, the historians explicitly and constantly referred to the political tradition originating in early eighteenth-century Tory argumentation. For instance, echoing the Tory opposition to the constant engagement in land war, they criticised approached to the military attitude of the Spartan empire which produced an insatiable search for new opportunities of land war. Also, the appreciation of the commercial maritime empire of Athens was in harmony with the Tory understanding of empire, which matured through the implementation of the 'Blue Water' strategy.

In addition to the contemporary political tradition, while treating the topic of empire, the historians of ancient Greece also turned to some notions which deeply concerned the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment. Therefore, the ancient Greek histories of eighteenth-century Britain, were not just founded on party political discourse, but rather were a blend of parliamentary politics and extra-parliamentary discussions of the ideal, through reflections on politics, society and civilisation. The historians brought the discussion about empire with reference to the contemporary

---

[3] Sack, *From Jacobite to Conservative,* 4.

168

problematic of commercial vs. militaristic into their works. The Whig understanding of balance of power also resonated in the texts of ancient Greek history. However, the result of elaborating on this concept was not agreement with the Whig standpoint. Anyway, the balance of power had grown in eighteenth-century Britain into a topic too common to be peculiar to the whiggish camp.

As will be seen below, the notion of balance of power was rather utilised to emphasise that ancient Greece consisted of similarly formed and governed states and therefore resembled a civilisation not inherently different from modern Europe. Ancient Greece as a whole represented a civilisation of high refinement and depicted in the way that the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment understood modern Europe. As to the treatments of individual Greek states, when the understandings of empire are taken into account, Athens, with the exception of Pericles's rule, was analysed as similar to the eighteenth-century British empire or how it ought to be. Sparta, on the other hand was the anti-empire.

4.2 Ancient Greece as Inspiration: non-despotic, precursor of modern Europe, inventor of the balance of power and small

Roman history-writing in eighteenth-century Britain chiefly sought to associate Rome with Britain. The emphasis laid on Rome, perceived as Britain, was so solid that a shift of interest rarely did happen even in the most voluminous works. The focus remained on Rome which was viewed as one gigantic entity tangled with the problem –beside many others- of managing the vast territories, comprised of colonies stretching from Europe to Asia and to Africa. This was the representation of what Britain was to become. The periphery was never considered equal to Rome, nor the conquered nations believed to be the victims of the Roman expansionist policy, jeopardising the balance of power. One of the tasks of the historians was to expose

the optimum way of governing the empire. The evaluation of the entire Roman history from the perspective of good prince-bad prince was the most ample proof of that. In the Greek case, on the other hand, the method to be followed appeared as the comparison of not individuals, but the characteristics of the eminent states constituting Greece.

In ancient Greek history-writing in eighteenth-century Britain, despite some generalisations about ancient Greece common to all historians, the focus did not rest on Greece as a whole, but obviously shifted from Sparta to Athens, from Athens to Macedonia and from Macedonia to Persia. As Goldsmith stated, ancient Greek history was "not so much the history of any particular kingdom, as of a number of petty independent states, sometimes at war, and sometimes in alliance with one another."[4] Still, the innumerable accounts of these states allowed for some safe generalisations on the Greeks and Greece. Despite the differing tones in the individual treatments of the Greek states, generalisations were all unequivocal in recommending ancient Greek history to the political nation. Ancient Greece was presented as a source for teaching invaluable lessons on the grounds that it promoted the spirit of liberty, and a stance against despotism. It further exemplified one civilisation shared by similarly sovereign states and of course the rules of preserving the balance of power among these states.

Since they were praising ancient Greece, the deployment of excessively romantic language inevitably made its way to the ancient Greek history texts written by the British historians, who occasionally replicated verbatim the ancient historians' idioms. Even the land where ancient Greece was geographically located received admiration in an unusual degree, for being "the spot peculiarly chosen by heaven as

---

[4] [Goldsmith], *History of Greece Abridged,* 1.

the scene, on which mankind were destined to display in the utmost perfection, all the superior faculties that distinguish them so highly above the other animals on this earth."[5] Such was the claim of the ancient Greeks about themselves, alongside other pretensions, that "their origin was from the land which they inhabited" or "their antiquity [was] co-equal with the sun."[6] Such sentiments recurred throughout the ancient Greek histories of eighteenth-century Britain. In his *Archaeologia Graeca*, Potter stressed the point that because, "of families, cities, countries the most ancient have always been accounted the most honourable" throughout history, there "arose one of the first and most universal disputes that ever troubled mankind, almost every nation, whose first original was not very manifest, pretending to have been of an equal duration with the earth itself."[7] For that reason, the Greeks together with the other peoples of antiquity such as the Egyptians, Scythians and Phyrigians competed for being the first race of mankind on earth.

Though they perpetuated some of the mythical stories of the ancients, the British historians of ancient Greece distinguished "times *unknown*" and "times *fabulous*" from "times *historical*"[8] and, unlike those of Rome, made no claims about the knowability of the entire Greek history. The possible defectiveness of Greek history, particularly the chronology, was well-known fact. In his *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms* Sir Isaac Newton maintained that through a comparison of the writings of "the Greeks of those times" and the accounts of Plutarch it appeared "how uncertain [was] their chronology and how doubtful it was reputed."[9] On this account, the historians did not aim, in Goldsmith's words, "to give an historical air to

---

[5] William Robertson's Preface to Pons Augustin Alletz, *History of Ancient Greece: From the Earliest Times till it became a Roman Province* (Edinburgh, 1768), iii.
[6] Richard Chandler, *Travels in Greece or an Account of a Tour made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1776), 27.
[7] John Potter, *Archaeologia Graeca, or, the Antiquities of Greece* (London, 1706), I, p. 1.
[8] Gast, *History of Greece,* I, pp. 539-40. Italics by the author.
[9] Isaac Newton, *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms* (London: J. Tonson, 1728), 3.

accounts which were never meant to be transmitted as true." [10] Instead, acknowledging the limits of their sources, they sought to arrive at truth of a certain degree "through the mist of fables"[11] and speak of the emerging of the Greeks from rudeness to civility. The historical times of ancient Greece sufficiently provided the emulative lessons required for the guidance of British statesmen. In spite of the fact that their degree of admiration varied with regard to the individual experiences of the Greek states, ancient Greece was thus commonly eulogized. In this context, the Greeks were hailed as "men of excellent genius and great application" and believed "not to have been alone superior to other nations, but to have arrived very near the summit of perfection in every art and science."[12] Their commitment to the ideal of liberty they shared as a people. Even in the early times when absolutist monarchies ruled the Greek states, they were unlike their Persian neighbour, never governed by "an oriental system of oppression."[13] Having been uniquely gifted with the spirit of liberty, the ancient Greeks gloriously stood up against any attempts, both internal and external, of despots, particularly against those of Darius and Xerxes. One of the attributes of ancient Greece commended wholeheartedly by the British historians was therefore its non-despotic character which drew ancient Greek and eighteenth-century western civilisations closer.

As a natural consequence of the liberal spirit prevailing in ancient Greece, the ancient Greek governments remained immune to "the inflexible rigour of despotism."[14] The historians echoed the ancient dislike of Persian despotism and the contemporary views of oriental despotism articulated by the Scottish Enlightenment

---

[10] Oliver Goldsmith, *Grecian History from the Earliest State to the Death of Alexander the Great* (London, 1785), I, 2.
[11] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, p. 128.
[12] Jackson, *Literatura Graeca,* xi-xii.
[13] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 11.
[14] *Ibid.*, n. 35.

thinkers in their theories of civilisation and progress. The first and foremost reason why the ancient Greeks had never known despotic government was, it was claimed, the existence of the Amphictyonic council. As Gast put it, the council was "the first institution that seems to have given check to barbarous manners."[15] In this way, the ancient Greeks made themselves heard, even under the oppressive rule of the kings. Then, following the foundation of "larger and well-modelled states,"[16] they rejoiced in having free government and equal laws in the proper sense. In the eyes of the historians, the Greeks thus distinguished themselves from the eastern nations until their surrender to the Ottomans. Before that, Greek history suggested, despotism had prevailed only on the other side of the eastern border of ancient Greece.

With the exception of Mitford's association of Athens with Ottoman despotism in the volumes of his history published subsequent to the French Revolution, ancient Greek histories of eighteenth-century Britain highlighted the non-despotic character of the Greek states as one of the pillars on which the Greek civilization rose to refinement. The political and property rights of the Greek citizens were enshrined in justly designed legal codes. Despite their rivalry for supremacy, the petty states of ancient Greece had similar understandings of civic rights, as the cultivators of the same civilisation. The language employed by the historians in this general assessment and appreciation of ancient Greece, discussed below, has a marked resemblance to the depiction of Europe in the contemporary theories of civilisation and progress. Thus ancient Greece was made to reflect the way Europe was contemporarily perceived in terms of civilisation. To the historians, ancient Greece also paralleled Britain in terms of size and rise to greatness. Before

---

[15] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 45.
[16] *Ibid.*, 129.

proceeding with this point, the affiliation of ancient Greek civilisation with that of Europe, however, requires further elaboration.

The historians commonly perceived ancient Greece as a whole as the possessor of one polished civilisation. In this they resembled the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, speaking of Europe as a coherent solid force advancing towards the most far-reaching extension of commerce, respecting the law and standing in contrast to the despotic governments of the East. As Pocok contends, the image of Europe which emerged subsequent to the War of the Spanish Succession was of "a 'confederation' of independent sovereign states held together in a permanent association by a *jus gentium*," "by the ties of a common commerce" and "by the shared civilisation of 'manners,' which flourished in a commercial culture."[17] This image of Europe completely overlaps with how ancient Greece was contemporarily perceived. Ancient Greece represented the precedent, which had first attained the superior level of civilisation that Europe finally acquired in the eighteenth century. And 'the empire of ancient Greece,' in contrast to the empires of Sparta and Athens, was employed as a term signifying an abstract confederation of commerce and civilisation rather than a political entity with defined borders.

Ancient Greece rose on the refining and non-aggressive power of commerce, promoted political liberty and resisted the despotic government of Persia. One might assume that ancient Greek history texts published from the 1740s on were written under the influence of the theories of civilisation and progress, which were skilfully articulated within the Scottish Enlightenment later in the century. The renowned thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, namely Adam Ferguson, David Hume, William Robertson and Adam Smith, invested significant labour in the study of

---

[17] Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion,* 109.

civilisations by monitoring a wide range of them, both ancient and contemporary, and figuring the patterns of progress. To them, Europe consisted of similarly sovereign states in which individuality and liberty could flourish. Despite certain differences, the states of Europe, as William Robertson stated in his *History of the Reign of Charles the Fifth*, were all "formed" through the same "system" based on "a proper distribution of power"[18] which evidently distinguished them from the despotic powers. Similarly, Adam Ferguson in his *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* contended that the nations of Europe shared "the happy system of policy" which "does honour to mankind."[19]

How the British historians treated ancient Greece as a general category bears significant resemblance to the way the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers understood and appreciated contemporary Europe. Thomas Leland's approach to ancient Greece was noteworthy in that sense. While pointing out the varying characters of the Greek states, he at the same time underlined their essential common character, which separated them from the barbarians dwelling on the other side of the border.

> Ancient Greece was inhabited by people whose origin and language were the same, but their manners, customs, institutions and forms of government, in many respects, totally different. Yet, amidst this diversity, their general principles were also the same, an ardour for liberty, and a strict regard to the public good.[20]

The neighbouring Greek states developed the sense of belonging to a wider community, as they stood "all united and connected together by interest and affection." What came out of this affiliation was, as Leland went on, "a similar species of civility" solidly committed to the Greek laws and commonwealth.[21] Such admiration of ancient Greece was common to all historians. From smallness to

---

[18] William Robertson, *History of the Reign of Charles the Fifth* (London: Routledge, 1856), I, 15-6.
[19] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Dublin: Boulter Grierson, 1767), 198.
[20] Leland, *Philip*, I, xxxv.
[21] *Ibid.,* xxxvii. Also, Goldsmith emphasised that the Greek states, "though seemingly different," shared "one common language, one religion and a national pride." Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 9.

grandeur, the Greeks established a non-despotic, "just and wise government" and ruled to promote "security and felicity."[22] According to Gillies, prior to its decline, ancient Greece had promised its inhabitants "the equality of private fortune" and "the absence of habitual luxury" and was ideal in that sense also.[23] To Gast, the principles of ancient Greece acted as "a moral governor over human things," governing "a people, in their beginnings mean and inconsiderable, advanced by virtue and wisdom to the greatest height of empire."[24] Underpinned by this morality and martial skills, which was an equally important element, the states of ancient Greece built a system of alliance to eliminate not only foreign threats but the oppressive plottings of an internal ruler. Despotism could not have endured in ancient Greece.

Of course, sharing the same civilisation did not mean that the states coexisted peacefully without any major clash, as Greek history taught quite the contrary. Having elaborated on this point, Gast underlined that ancient Greece, alongside the normative rules of civilisation, harboured "endless jealousies and contests," for the stronger state unceasingly sought to dominate the weaker.[25] As Leland stated, the possibility that one state could "extend its power beyond the just and equitable bonds" had never been ruled out in ancient Greece.[26] Again, the historians' presentation of ancient Greece are analogous to the views of Europe in eighteenth-century Britain. The rivalry between the ancient Greek states seemed to be an especially informative topic for the reader of Greek history, as it shed light on the problematic issue of the balance of power, the Whig priority in foreign policy.

---

[22] Claude Etiénne Savary, *Letters on Greece: Being a Sequel to Letters on Egypt and containing Travels through Rhodes, Crete and other islands of Archipelago with Comparative Remarks on their Ancient and Present State and Observations on the Government, Character and Manners of the Turks and Modern Greeks* (Dublin, 1788), 36.

[23] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 620.

[24] John Gast, *The Rudiments of the Grecian History from the First establishment of the States of Greece to the Overthrow of their Liberties in the Days of Philip the Macedonian* (Dublin: S. Powell, 1753), unpaginated preface.

[25] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 568.

[26] Leland, *Philip,* I, xxxvii.

Therefore, the imperial issues of ancient Greece were also treated in the context of attempts at domination over each other by states with a common geography and culture.

This matter of the balance of power was central. The idealised version of Greece depicted a "really united body, happy in itself and formidable to its enemies."[27] And the secret of this Greek solidarity was seemingly embedded in the balance of power preserved among the major Greek states –and thus, this concept became one of the recurrent themes that imbued the Greek history texts. In his preface to Pons Augustin Alloetz's *History of Ancient Greece,* William Robertson maintained that

> [t]he country of Greece, though of less extent than that of England was inhabited by a great variety of different states, perfectly independent of one another, remarkably opposite in their manners and dispositions but all actuated by the most ardent spirit of valour and liberty. As all these states were pretty nearly of equal force, it became absolutely necessary for them to be extremely attentive to keep the balance of power properly poised and to prevent any one state from acquiring such an increase of strength as might enable it to enslave the rest.[28]

The eighteenth-century fascination with ancient histories was undoubtedly partly inspired by the fact that these texts showed ways of preserving the balance among states. Walter Moyle's words, "from modern politics we have been taught the name of the balance of power, but it was ancient prudence taught us the thing"[29] are noteworthy in that sense. Subsequent to the increased interest in Greek studies, ancient Greek history appeared to be the most suitable source to teach the matter. Hume, for instance, underlined how beneficial the history of ancient Greece should be in establishing the rules of a balance of power, for "[i]n all the politics of Greece,

---

[27]Leland, *Philip,* I p.xxxvii.

[28] Robertson's Preface to [Pons Augustine Alletz,] *The History of Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh, 1768), iv.

[29] Walter Moyle, 'An Essay upon the Constitution of the Roman Government' (1699) in Caroline Robbins (ed), *Two English Republican Tracts: Plato Redivius or a Dialogue concerning Government* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 51.

the anxiety, with regard to the balance of power, is apparent and is expressly pointed out to us, even by the ancient historians." In this sense, the Greeks experienced a harsher struggle for the balance, because "the Romans never met with any such general combination or confederacy against them, as might naturally have been expected from the rapid conquests and declared ambition." [30]

In the eyes of the historians, the rivalry between Sparta and Athens, and later Macedonia, set the normative rules of hindering one state's design of expanding its borders at the expense of its neighbours. Nevertheless, the most valuable lesson learned on this topic, according to Leland, ought to be that "the balance of power" was "a romantic consideration." No matter how much one state strove only "to attend to her domestic affairs and to secure and improve the advantage of commerce," there had always been and would ever be another one to pose threat to security, wealth and happiness of that state. Then although "a war was burthensome and expensive," as long as the state possessed courage and a sense of liberty there would be no doubt that "armies were to be raised and navies sent abroad."[31] Ancient Greek history thus vindicated the Whig concern with the European balance of power, but refuted the prospect of establishing "the peace of all Europe."[32]

Ancient Greece as a general category therefore bore a resemblance to what eighteenth-century Europe meant for the British political nation. Ancient Greek history therefore served the purpose of stimulating a guide through contemporary political crises. Nevertheless, as a scrutiny of ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain makes clear, ancient Greece also paralleled Britain itself in the eyes of the historians and hence appeared fit, from this aspect too, to teach the

---

[30] Hume, 'Of the Balance of Power' in *Selected Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 349-51.
[31] Leland, *Philip,* I, 84.
[32] Jeremy Black, *A System of Ambition: British Foreign Policy 1660-1793* (London and New York: Longman, 1991), 141.

British. First and foremost, ancient Greece had surmounted the problems posed by its smallness in terms of both territory and population. As Linda Colley states, smallness was a predominant theme in the British discourse of empire as it was one of the enduring apprehensions. To understand the British empire perceptively, she claims, "the proper place to begin is with the smallness of Britain itself." Although through their imperial experience the British acted as "ubiquitous intruders," the smallness of the motherland at the same time rendered them "inherently and sometimes desperately vulnerable."[33] A country of small extent, once it aimed at imperial ventures, would be exposed to foreign invasions and unlikely to sustain the armed force required to eradicate such a threat. Demographic considerations also perpetuated this fear of smallness. The previous Spanish experience of empire had proven to the British that empires, when over-extended, resulted in the depopulation of the motherland. The demographic deficit was already an issue in Britain and empire could worsen it. As Langford underlines, the mortality rate was significantly high in the first half of the eighteenth century and the reign of George II witnessed a major demographic crisis.[34] Under such circumstances, the degree to which the political nation was concerned with the influence of the imperial ventures on the metropolitan population was only natural.

Britain was "self-consciously small."[35] For that reason, similarly small states in history drew particular attention. The greatest source of admiration in this respect was ancient Greece's outstanding growth into grandeur from its exceptional smallness in the very beginning, "being scarcely half so large as England."[36] In the early phases of their history, the Greeks were a people "inconsiderable in numbers, in

---

[33] Colley, *Captives*, 5.
[34] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 146.
[35] Colley, *Captives,* 11.
[36] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 7.

riches, and in the extent or fertility of territory."[37] Nevertheless, in Mitford's words, ancient Greece possessed "natural peculiarities" that shaped the national character and the political institutions of all states within it.[38] These peculiarities were pinpointed by Gast in his *Rudiments* as "wisdom of government, upright manners, arts, eloquence, fortitude of soul" and "martial achievements."[39] Thus gifted, ancient Greece overcame the disadvantages of its smallness and, as Gast conveyed again in his *History of Ancient Greece,* "disputed the prize of empire with the great powers of Asia and bore away the palm of arts as well as arms from the nations of the East, who for ages had possessed it unrivalled and uncontrolled."[40] Ancient Greece was then the ample proof that the problem of smallness could be solved and smallness in terms of territory and population did not necessarily impede the state's imperial enterprise.

4.3 Ancient Greece as a Source for Understanding the Ideal Empire

One indication of the particular attention paid by the British political nation to ancient Greece in their quest for the ideal pattern of empire-building was the existence of non-history texts which treated the topic in a manner similar to the contemporary history texts but with no claim to completeness, historical accuracy and mastery of scholarship. What makes these texts significant to this study is the authors' explicit attempt at understanding eighteenth-century political issues with reference to ancient Greek experiences, including the problem of empire. This attitude prevalent in non-history texts about ancient Greece in effect encourages the

---

[37] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, xxv.
[38] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 7.
[39] Gast, *Rudiments*, 1.
[40] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, xxv-vi. Goldsmith too emphasised the same point by using almost the same words with Mitford and Gast, in fact echoing the ancient Greek historians and philosophers. Goldsmith, *History of Greece Abridged*, 4.

scrutiny of rather indirect expressions of imperial lessons embedded in ancient Greek histories. Baron's *History of the Colonisation*, which appraised the Greek venture of empire as the pursuit of one single nation, is the quintessential example of this sort of literature. It openly pointed to the question of population and the connection between the motherland and colonies as the matters of particular importance in Greek imperial history. To Baron, the Greek method of colonisation was inspired by concerns over population in the first place. Relating these imperial designs to the smallness of the motherland and demographic necessity, but this time viewing smallness as desirable, he contended that the main purpose of the Greek colonisation was "to discharge supernumerary members or to preserve the constitution of the present state."[41] In doing this, Baron sought to understand the British experience of colonisation through ancient Greek history and highlighted the British colonies of North America as the indispensable means that could preserve the size of the motherland and its population. Thus, he explicitly argued against the conviction that colonisation drained the human resources of the state. Overseas colonisation was exactly what ought to happen before a small state like Britain became utterly ungovernable as a result of overpopulation.

On the same subject, the historians of ancient Greece provided similar, but hinted, explanations. Gillies asserted that the Greeks, "when any of their communities seemed inconveniently numerous," sent away the excess people and "occupied and peopled the surrounding territories." He also stressed, together with Baron, the point that in order to establish "the gentle but powerful operation of regular government," the extent of the state should be preserved in its original

---

[41] Baron, *History of the Colonisation,* 31.

smallness.[42] Both the history and non-history texts on ancient Greece offered similar sorts of imperial lessons to the eighteenth-century British reader. Nevertheless, these lessons are unveiled and clearly highlighted in non-history texts, whereas the ancient Greek histories, in the name of cohesiveness, remained in the context of antiquity and did not comment on contemporary events. In studying the pattern of Greek colonisation, Baron very explicitly stated that this would cast light over his inquiry into how the relationship between Britain and its North American colonies ought to be.[43] The historians, on the other hand, transmitted their message on the same issue through a more subtle approach. They depicted the Greek policies of empire in such a way as to unmistakably remind the reader of eighteenth-century Britain and its imperial questions. It should here be underlined that whereas the political thinkers and historians were growingly preoccupied with what the ideal governance might be for the empire, the executive branch of ministers adopted first the policy of "salutary neglect" towards empire and then a "self-defeating interventionism," which resulted in the loss of the first British empire.[44]

4.4 Empire as Embedded in the Individual Treatments of the Greek States

When it came to the treatments of the individual Greek states, the object of the appreciative remarks of the historians varied according to the topic assessed. As to democracy, Athens was commonly despised for having espoused this corruptive

---

[42] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece,* I, 9-10. Also, Mitford suggested that such scheme of colonisation was common particularly among the Asian nations, for "[i]n Asia extensive empires seem almost to have grown as population extended," but they were not concerned with preserving the size of the motherland. Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 63.

[43] The conclusion Baron arrived at was that the relationship between Greece and colonies in terms of rights and obligations had remained "extremely undetermined." He continued in a highly disappointed tone, "[h]ad the connection between the mother-country and the colony involved matter not of mere ceremony but important civil rights and privileges the discussion must have excited the attention of society, the principles of decision would have been expected to be more satisfactory and conclusive." Baron's observation was atypical. Baron, *History of Colonisation,* 64-5.

[44] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 170.

regime, whereas Sparta was glorified for clinging to monarchy and resisting the malevolence of democracy. This viewpoint was responsible alone for the labelling of eighteenth-century ancient Greek historiography as pro-Spartan by the coming generations. The issue of empire, on the other hand, was discussed in an entirely different light. Within this context, because the Spartan enterprise of empire represented the undesirable empire, the admiration shifted from Sparta to Athens. Given its small scale, legal structure, non-military means of empire-building, such as widespread commerce, and finally its naval strength, the Athenian empire seemed to bear undeniable similarities to the British view of an ideal empire. In contrast to the commended notion of the British empire, the imperial practice of Sparta was grounded in belligerent policies aiming at unwise expansion. Sparta appeared in the ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain as the empire of the undesired sort –the ancient model of the contemporary Spanish and French empires.

Along with their aggressive policies, pursued at the expense of "the general tranquillity of Europe,"[45] Spain and France also carried out unwise imperial designs outside of Europe, which rendered them the undesirable models. The unpleasant consequences of the Spanish imperial venture were widely assessed in eighteenth-century Britain. The general conviction was that the Spanish overseas enterprise, initiated supposedly to enrich the motherland, had in fact exhausted the financial and human sources of Spain. The unprecedented flow of wealth from the colonies subsequent to the discovery of America, as one anonymous pamphlet on the Spanish settlements in America argued, was spent on the "vain pursuit after universal monarchy." Spain failed to transform its imperial assets into a profitable investment, as its governors "[i]nstead of considering the *West Indies* as an estate they were to

---

[45] Hume, 'Of the Balance of Power,' *Essays,* I, 354.

improve and receive an annual profit always from" hastily "squandered" this vast territory. In the rise and fall of the Spanish empire, the British found once again the lesson taught by empires of old. In order to reduce the cost and sustain the profitability of the imperial designs, the motherland should delicately attach the colonies to itself through the civilising and mutually enriching bond of commerce. As the pamphlet maintained, "[i]f the Spaniards, as soon as they had acquired such extensive dominion in the new world, had diligently applied to the cultivation of trade and manufacture, it would necessarily have given them the supreme direction of the affairs of Europe."[46] The Spanish empire was "extraction-oriented"[47] and thus, became the quintessential example of the undesirable empire for the British. The reasons why Sparta was understood by the historians of eighteenth-century Britain in the same way will be discussed below.

France, on the other hand, which seemed to share the same "spirit of industry and enterprise"[48] possessed by Britain was not completely ignorant of this crucial role to be played by commerce in the growth of empires. The French empire was in character "commercial."[49] Nevertheless, the rise of the French overseas followed an aggressive pattern of expansion and menaced Britain both in North America and Europe. Due to its authoritarian and warlike policies, the Bourbon scheme of empire instructed the British that they "ought to use every method to repress them to prevent them from extending their territories, their trade or their influence."[50] As the potentially aggressive interest of France in the imperial endeavour of Britain kept growing, the British acquired the impression that "[a]n empire desired by France

---

[46] *A Description of the Spanish Islands and Settlements on the Coast of the West Indies, compiled from Authentic Memoirs* (2nd edition) (London: Faden and Jeffreys, 1774), xvii-xviii.
[47] Hancock, 'World of Business, 4.
[48] [Burke,] *Account of the European Settlements*, II, 16.
[49] Hancock, 'World of Business,' 4.
[50] [Burke], *Account of the European Settlements*, II, 287.

must be an empire worth keeping British."[51] For that reason they closely monitored the French model of colonisation and remained guarded while the French transferred the revenue generated from the trade with colonies to their military designs and built an aggressive empire. Although the clash of the two empires in the Seven Years War rendered Britain a more powerful maritime power both in Europe and America, the military threat of France persisted.

Having emphasised the same points that the contemporary political pamphlets stressed as the features of an undesirable empire with reference to Spain and France, the British historians conveyed to their reader that the Spartan imperial enterprise had indeed brought territorial gain, but failed to endure. The Spartan example did not represent a viable option in the empire-building process. Antiquity suggested that the empire overstretching its territory and chasing incessantly after the prospects of war would not last. Spain and France were the illustrations of this political lesson in the eighteenth century. The Athenians, on the other hand, made all the right moves in heading to imperial grandeur, to the degree that the historians presented it as the template to be applied in all times. Choosing non-military methods, encouraging particularly widespread commerce, the ever-growing British empire seemed to proceed on the right track, which had been once taken by Athens and thus proved a success. In the coming pages it will be further elucidated how, in terms of empire, Sparta was associated with France and Spain, and Britain with Athens. Following a chronological order, treatment of Sparta will be assessed first.

---

[51] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 174.

4.5 Sparta vs. Athens, Military vs. Commerce

4.5.1 Sparta

In his *Sources of the Self,* Charles Taylor points to the existence of a "battle between two ethical outlooks" in eighteenth-century Britain. The outcome of this battle resulted in "the rise of new valuation of commercial life" and "the recession of the aristocratic honour ethic, which stressed glory won in military pursuits."[52] One of the fields in which this battle between the militaristic and commercial attitudes to civilisation was fought was in the ancient Greek history texts. The former approach was represented by Sparta, the latter by Athens. The nature of legislation and the choice of governments between those applying authoritarian policies and those safeguarding of public good, as will be seen below, also determined the contesting characters of these two approaches.

In *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History*, which was a contribution to the Battle of the Books mentioned in Chapter I, "the kingdom of Lacedemon" was highlighted as "the best established" among all Greek states on the grounds of it "being able to support itself with very little interruption," unlike Athens, "for more than eight hundred years."[53] Sparta enjoyed mixed government, which entailed the political principle of checks and balances and on that account was presented as vindicating the British constitution. As Demetriou maintains, Sparta was thus seen by political pamphlets and history texts designed to exercise "a formative effect" on the

---

[52] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989), 285.

[53] This praise of Sparta went on as such: "The chief of the institutions, which so long preserved this people, were, to observe an equality in the division of wealth, to practice a most severe and constant discipline, to exclude all strangers from their community; and above all things, to maintain an impartial distribution of power with the King, Senate and People, so that each part of the State might be dependent, and every one a heck upon the rest: the want of which care was one of the principal causes of many revolutions at Athens, and of the hasty ruin of that republic." *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History*, 11.

contemporary constitutional debate.[54] However, the constitution was not the only item on the political agenda and Greek history-writing was thus not dominated by pro-Spartan sentiments. When it came to the remarks on empire, the tone of the historians became pro-Athenian. Even in the *Reflections*, which is not one of the texts of particular interest to this study, the question of empire altered the previously positive approach to Sparta. The Spartan constitution, which dovetailed with the requisites of perfect civil government, was unfortunately "inconsistent with any increase of power" and "when the Spartans began to look for conquests abroad, the attempt soon turned to their destruction."[55] In terms of empire, Sparta was not fit to be emulated.

Assessment of the Spartan government, either by itself or in comparison with Athens, was pervasive in the political literature and ancient history-writing of eighteenth-century Britain.[56] In most of these texts, Sparta was depicted as the archetype of the ideal state. Nonetheless, in others with a specific interest in the idea of empire, such as Thomas Pownall's *Principles of Polity*, despite the generous praises for Lycurgos's legal code, Sparta was despised for being essentially authoritarian, a character of government "discongrous to human nature."[57] Such was also the general conviction of the historians of ancient Greece. Though being more preoccupied with Athens, they devoted considerable space to the history of Sparta. As Gast stated, the history of these two states "is the history of Greece in general, and whether in the achievements of war, or the arts of peace, it was usually either the one or the other of these that led the way to glory."[58] The glory of Sparta, however,

---

[54] Demetriou, 'In Defence of the British Constitution,' 281.
[55] *Reflections on Ancient and Modern History,* 12.
[56] See for example, Walter Moyle, *An Essay on the Lacedominian Government* (London, 1698) and William Drummond, *A Review of the Governments of Sparta and Athens* (London, 1794).
[57] Thomas Pownall, *Principles of Polity,* 73.
[58] Gast, *History of Greece,* I, 173.

was much tainted by its oppressive politics grounded on the armed force, which became more visible when consideration was given to the imperial issues.

This supposedly defective character of the Spartan empire owed a great deal to the legal code of Lycurgos. As their histories are unfolded, one inclination common to all of these historians was to stress that the inherent characteristics of a state's legal code determined the features of its imperial policy. As J. C. D. Clark points, "law, not party politics, was the synthesizing intellectual *genre* of the late-eighteenth century constitution."[59] The publication of the majority of the ancient Greek histories coincides with the shift to the appeal to law as the science of government. The concern with legal history among the philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment resulted in the conviction that the history and character of a state could be understood through its legislation, though Montesquieu had declared it before them. Conversely, the flaws in the character of a state could "account for the disparate and contradictory elements in its legal system."[60] This understanding of law in the late eighteenth century inevitably made its way into the Greek history texts. In the contemporary theories of civilisation and progress, a well-established and just legal system was viewed as essential for refinement, civilisation and commerce. Without this, there would emerge authoritarian, aggressive and, as the worst possible outcome, despotic states, with oppressive imperial policies.

Hume, for instance, devoted one of his essays, 'That Politics may be reduced to a Science,' to the discussion of the most suitable legal system, its importance and the difference it could make in the progress of societies. Obviously, the ideal legislation was the non-authoritarian, non-absolutist and non-aggressive one:

---

[59] J. C. D. Clark, 'A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, Issue 2 (June 1980), 303.
[60] David Lieberman, 'The Legal Needs of a Commercial Society: The Jurisprudence of Lord Kames,' in Istvan Hont and Michael Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 209.

> So that, in every respect, a gentle government is preferable and gives the greatest security to the sovereign as well as the subject. Legislators, therefore, ought not to trust the future government of a state entirely to chance, but ought to provide a system of laws to regulate the administration of public affairs to the latest posterity.[61]

Inevitably, the laws of Britain appeared, in the eyes of Hume and many others, as ideal, the sort which the British should "cherish and improve."[62] Of course, such a just and supremely well designed legal system, meant to be the protector of liberties could not possibly have had a negative effect on the imperial affairs of Britain. In his comparison of the British laws with the *pais conquis* of France, he praised the former for granting "so many rights and privileges."[63]

The fine regulation of commerce required a sophisticated legal system. As the British engagement in the global commercial network became more complicated and extensive so did law-making in Britain. In accordance with the maxim that "the empire of goods was also an empire of laws,"[64] the British empire depended a great deal on its imperial legislation to ensure the continuity of commercial activities between the metropolis and colonies. Although for the first British empire, imperial legislation remained rather "informal, unsystematic and contested,"[65] the British were convinced that their empire was governed, secured and justified through laws. These laws of the metropolis brought commerce, welfare and liberty to the colonies and thus distinguished itself from the contemporary rival empires.

By the same token, it appeared imperative to the historians of ancient Greece to explain to their readers, as they practiced philosophical history, the effect of the legislative tradition at home on the empire in the making. They examined the laws of Solon and Lycurgos from this viewpoint too, along with their concern with property

---

[61] Hume, 'That Politics may be reduced to a Science' in *Essays*, 105.
[62] Hume, 'Of the First Principles of Government' in *Essays*, 113.
[63] Hume, 'That Politics may be reduced to a Science' in *Essays*, 103.
[64] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 94.
[65] *Idem.*, 97.

and agricultural policies, for example. How the differing characters of these legal codes generated empires with differing, or rather incompatible, features considerably preoccupied them. In comparison with Athens, Sparta's authoritarian laws hardened its citizens as well as their attitude towards the colonies and neighbouring states. The laws of Lycurgos which underpinned the limited monarchy and prevented democracy in the Spartan realm, indeed aimed at the public good and promoted "love of virtue and moderation."[66] To that extent, the historiography of eighteenth-century Britain was pro-Spartan. From the perspective of empire, however, the legal code of Lycurgos was less than a source of inspiration.

Certainly, Lycurgos himself received approval from the historians. Among them, Goldsmith, who considered Lycurgos as "one of the first and most extraordinary legislators that ever appeared among mankind,"[67] gave him the most credit. Also, Stanyan called him a pagan who could occasionally "approach … near to Christian morality."[68] Nevertheless, because of what afterwards happened to the Spartan government built by this remarkable man, the historians, in truth, treated the era of Lycurgos with reserve. The negatively viewed empire which the Spartan state later grew into was in fact the product of Lycurgos's laws, although in his lifetime he attempted to "provide for the security of Sparta by excluding the pursuit of wealth and of extensive empire." [69] Thus, Lycurgos cautioned his people against the instability inherent in extensive territorial empires, but the Spartans, hardened by the laws of Lycurgos himself, acted otherwise. It is true that the kind of state envisaged in these laws was based on desirable features, such as complete equality and balance

---

[66] Demetriou, 'In Defence of the British Constitution,' 285.

[67] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 15.

[68] Stanyan, *Grecian History,* I, 85. Similarly, Hind praised the Spartan for referring to "the authority of religion" to secure the implementation of his laws. Hind, *History of Greece,* I, 99-100. Additionally, Gast uttered few appreciative sentences on Lycurgos's successful attempts "to establish a just temperature of government." Gast, *Rudiments*, 243.

[69] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 571.

in the administration. Yet, these were not easy goals to attain and sustain. In this respect, Lycurgos first encountered the problem of securing his establishment and then resolved to enhance the Spartan government through institutions whose "severity," according to Leland, transformed the Spartan people "into a robust, hardy valiant nation, made for war."[70] Therefore, not the laws themselves but the strict means to secure them, inescapably rendered the Spartan government authoritarian, oppressive and aggressive. Gillies, too stressed the same point, by arguing that Lycurgos's code of laws did not bring peace to Sparta at the outset. On the contrary, like "almost every city [it] was torn by a double conflict, dangers threatened on all sides."[71] For that reason, the task of priority for Lycurgos appeared to secure his commonwealth at any expense and so he did. The outcome was the transformation of Sparta into "the most warlike" among all Greek states.[72] Elaborating further on this issue, Leland asserted that it was this warlike spirit of the Spartans, which inspired "vast designs of power" and fuelled "an inordinate and violent ambition"[73] –the hallmarks of the Spartan imperial understanding.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the threat of ever-growing Bourbon strength disturbed "both ministers and the political nation in general" concerned "about the strength and intentions of other powers" and "about British vulnerability in face of them."[74] The British historians' understanding of the imperial growth of Sparta was made to resemble their perception of the French desire to challenge Britain both at home and in North America. In Goldsmith's words, through Lycurgos's "celebrated body of laws," Sparta emerged to be "at once the terror and

---

[70] Leland, *Life and Reign of Philip*, I, 22.
[71] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 89.
[72] *Ibid.,* 84.
[73] Leland, *Philip*, I, 22.
[74] Black, *System of Ambition*, 74.

the umpire of the neighbouring kingdoms."[75] Though being the author most sympathetic to Lycurgos, he laid emphasis on the word "terror," recalling France and "the weakness of Britain as a military power and her vulnerability to invasion."[76]

A military character, which was a feature never attributed to Athens specifically within the context of the imperial affairs, came to the fore as a common attitude of the historians in their assessments of Sparta. Needless to say, a constant quest for military solutions was not a policy held in high esteem in eighteenth-century Britain, for this was the French way of conducting foreign affairs. Britain gave priority to "naval power and colonial and commercial considerations."[77] The "interventionist foreign policy,"[78] similar to that of France, pursued during the Whig supremacy had very much annoyed the Tories and such discontent echoed in the later ancient history texts.

During the Spartan supremacy in the Amphictyonic council, the official discourse of Sparta was about being "the supreme umpire and general protector of the injured,"[79] but British historians did not pay much need to this. Their actual impression of Sparta was conveyed by Stanyan's words. The Spartans were "the only people in the world, to whom war gave repose," for their "the glory…was to be gained by dint of fighting and in the open field."[80] There was no doubt that their aggressive, hence 'interventionist,' imperial policies were the reflection of this warlike character. Their "strict discipline" acquired through Lycurgos's code of laws bestowed the Spartans with "moroseness of temper" and what they extended to their

---

[75] Goldsmith, *History of Greece Abridged*, 6.
[76] Black, *System of Ambition*, 74.
[77] *Ibid.*, 85.
[78] Jeremy Black, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole* (Hampshire: Gregg Revivals, 1985), 179.
[79] Leland, *Philip*, I, 24 and "protectress of liberty and guardian of the public peace" in Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 494.
[80] Stanyan, *Grecian History,* I, 87-8.

colonies as well as the neighbouring states was "the same harsh severity."[81] In the same way, Gast considered the Spartans with regard to empire, "the spoilers and ravagers of every neighbouring state." As Spain, and, above all, France harassed the states of modern Europe in the name of building a universal monarchy, Sparta sought expansion at the expense of its neighbours. Gast who wrote most straightforwardly on the issue of empire, maintained that the Spartans' "very virtues were the ruin of their unhappy neighbours." [82]

Also, unlike the Athenian empire which was firmly believed by the British historians to be founded on the ideal of mutual benefit between the motherland and the colonies, the Spartan empire gained the loyalty of the subordinate states and colonies through a scheme of suppression, which was "far from intending any benefit"[83] to them. Sparta, therefore, remained out of the empirical data collected by both the British historians and political writers to enhance their arguments on the necessity of a more refined policy of empire grounded in the principle of mutuality. It was not viewed as suited to teach lessons about widespread commerce, naval power or polite manners. Having thus been depicted as the antithesis of the ideal empire, prescribed by those such as Baron, which endowed the colonies with 'civil rights and privileges' and expected cooperation in return, Sparta seemed to offer no positive imperial lesson to British statesmen. The Spartans, no different than the Spanish and the French apparently, were simply the most despicable sort of conquerors "who wield the sword, not of *justice* but of *violence* and *oppression*."[84] It

---

[81] Stanyan, *Grecian History,* I*,* 89.
[82] Gast, *Rudiments*, 266.
[83] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 494.
[84] Gast, *Rudiments*, 266. Italics by the author.

was true that they too rejoiced in "a high degree of glory and empire,"[85] but not the sort eighteenth-century Britain was required to seek.

Given the contemporary dislike of engagement in constant land war, the Spartan empire appeared to be at odds with the British understanding of empire which was mercantile and sea-borne, rather than military and land-borne. As reflected by Goldsmith whose account of the Spartan empire was the most favourable one, the contemptible feature of this entity was that its "sovereignty was not to be maintained but by a constant course of action." In order to sustain the durability of their empire, the Spartans had always to chase after "fresh occasions of war,"[86] which stood as the ultimate source of their imperial power. All in all, they maintained an atmosphere of terror throughout the empire. The terror of war may have glued the Spartan empire together, but this insubstantial foundation of solidarity ended as soon as the motherland ceased to be formidable. According to Gast, it was their "pride and arrogance" which prevented the Spartans from coming to terms with this fact.[87] Although the support of arms was indispensable in the early phase of the empire-building, no state in history had successfully carried out an imperial scheme designed purely from a military perspective. Sparta failed to reform its imperial policies and consequently had to hand over the title of "the umpire of Greece" to Athens. To the British historians, this was the most obvious lesson from the history of Sparta.

Before concluding however, it should be noted here that there was one historian early in the century who found something to admire in the Spartan empire-building process. Potter made use of Lycurgos's ban on the free movement of the Spartans in raising his own argument about the degenerative effect of the interaction

---

[85] Gast, *Rudiments*, 182.
[86] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 334.
[87] Gast, *Rudiments*, 455.

with foreigners in imperial activity. In this context, he presented Lycurgos's determination to prevent his people from increasing acquaintance with other nations as the product of "a well-grounded fear." It was well-grounded because "the conversation of strangers" jeopardised the stability of "that excellent platform of government" of the Spartans.[88] In this fashion, Potter indeed prematurely voiced the concern rather pertinent to the Second British Empire phase of the country's imperial experience, the possible corrupting impact of civilisations essentially different from one's own. As Kathleen Wilson argues in her attempt at defining the empire in terms of race and gender in eighteenth-century Britain,

> [e]mpire was, in a very real sense, the frontier of the nation, the place where, under the pressure of contact and exchange, boundaries deemed crucial to national identity –white and black, civilised and savage, law and vengeance– blurred, dissolved or were rendered impossible to uphold.[89]

It was this problematic of frontier which Potter pointed to. Against the 'contact and exchange' which came with the expansion of the borders, he maintained that Lycurgos's ban on free movement was correct.

Of course, the apprehension of the 'other' emphasised within the context of the Greek encounter with Persians would not appear unusual to the reader of Greek history. In their accounts of the Persian empire, as will be seen in the next chapter, the historians were preoccupied with the issue why, in Goldsmith's words, "an admission of foreigners into Greece, was a measure that was always formidable to those who called themselves Grecians."[90] Nevertheless, the elaboration of the topic in discussion of the Spartan empire was not a common practice. Potter's approach, in that sense, was atypical.

---

[88] Potter, *Archaeologia Graeca*, I, 5-6.
[89] Wilson, *Island Race,* 17.
[90] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 447.

Potter's whiggish stance on politics may explain the reason why he brought up the matter of foreigners in his analysis of the Spartan empire-building, for he linked his argument to the possible negative effect of naval power. Because maritime success naturally brought about an encounter with hostile, incompatible or simply different civilisations, he held that the motherland should adjust its policies by taking the role of naval superiority as the accelerator of degeneration and decline into account.[91] In the histories of ancient Greece published later in the eighteenth century, as mentioned above, the old Tory opposition to land war was generally projected on the Spartan empire. Leaving aside Potter's unusual appreciation of its territorial strategies, it could safely be argued that the Spartan empire was depicted in a negative light in the texts considered here, as aggressive and warlike, hardened by adherence to the legal code of Lycurgos.

4.5.2 Athens

On the other side of what Taylor calls the 'battle' of two ethical viewpoints in eighteenth-century Britain, there was the commercial attitude which was, in considering historians of Greece, represented by the Athenian empire. Though having despised its commitment to democracy, the historians alternatively presented Athens, in contrast to Sparta, as the desirable empire. With the liberty enshrined in its legal code, its naval superiority, its excellence in commerce and its unwarlike character, the imperial experience of Athens offered them sufficient ground to build such an argument. Athens, on this account, received positive remarks of the sort that Sparta never did. The most explicit definition of ideal empire provided by the

---

[91] Potter, *Archaelogia Graeca,* I, 6.

eighteenth-century ancient Greek histories came up in the section on the Athenian empire and belonged to Gast.

Of all the Greeks states, British interest focused on Athens. Ancient Athens was put on a pedestal as "the seat of learning and eloquence, the school of arts and the centre of wit, gaiety and politeness."[92] On account of being the most refined people who rose most quickly "to the summit of glory,"[93] it was widely believed that the ancient Athenians had valuable knowledge to offer to the British nation about the arts, literature and of course politics. In the political sphere, the main attraction of Athenian history seemed to be party politics, elections, the functioning of the councils, the role of the army and the differing effects of monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy and democracy on the people of Athens. Nevertheless, as our topic is the conduct of Athens's imperial affairs, debates over other topics which have always been fashionable in the history of political thought, will be left out. It will be argued that how the historians understood the Athenian empire bears undeniable similarities with how the British political nation viewed their empire, being built in the eighteenth century.

If it was the belligerent character of the Spartans which determined their aggressive imperial policies, according to the historians, the Athenian spirit of liberty shaped the Athenian way of empire. Athens, it was believed, had many things in common with Britain, excluding its practice of democracy, and commitment to the cause of liberty was one of them. The notion of liberty in Athens was highly romanticised by the British historians. Gast's words that the Athenian "chose rather to fall with the commonwealth than to purchase life at the expense of liberty"[94] stood as the typical articulation of this. Athens was considered as unique among other

---

[92] Montagu, *Ancient Republics*, 74.
[93] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 272.
[94] Gast, *Rudiments*, 360.

Greek states in this respect. To Montagu, for instance, the Athenian allegiance to liberty had refined and polished the manners of the Athenians in such a distinctive way that Athens emerged as "a strong contrast to … Sparta."[95] Its promotion of freedom within that state gave the British one reason why Athens became a model of good manners and ideal governance.

Liberty was granted to the Athenians through their legal system. And, as already said, the ancient Greek histories conveyed to the reader that the domestic legal code set the imperial rules and the nature of the relationship between motherland and colonies. The Spartan empire which emerged under the influence of Lycurgos's legal code grew into a military and territorial empire at once expanding and suppressing. The Athenian empire on the other hand evolved into a commendable one due to its legal system introduced by Solon.[96] The first Athenian attempts of colonisation could be traced back to 600 BC and after, which in fact coincided with the age of Solon. This phase of Athenian history was regarded as the beginning of the historical era of the city and Solon's age was commonly stressed by all ancient Greek history texts of the eighteenth century as that of the rise of Athens. Once he acquired "the power of new-modelling the commonwealth of Athens,"[97] Solon reinforced reforms of an unprecedentedly broad scope, covering almost all areas. In this way, in Goldsmith's words, he put an end to "the inactive government" of the times of the kings, which lacked "the spirit of extensive dominion." Before Solon, "the citizens were too much employed in their private intrigues to attend to foreign concerns" and Athens therefore remained for "a long time incapable of enlarging her power."[98] It should be emphasised here that although the eighteenth-

---

[95] Montagu, *Ancient Republics*, 4.
[96] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 265, 453 and 455.
[97] Jackson, *Literature Graeca*, 39.
[98] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 43.

century Greek historiography has been labelled in recent scholarship as pro-Spartan and monarchical, traces of anti-monarchical discourse sporadically made its way into these texts. Overemphasising the works of Mitford and Gillies leads to a distortion of them. An author such as Goldsmith could thus praise the laws of Solon on the grounds that they brought about the reinvigoration which Athens had been lacking in the times of kings.

The historians agreed that under Solon's rule Athenian government underwent a remarkable transformation and Athens was blessed with improvement and progress that introduced a new understanding of empire –and Solon's greatness lay in his law code, chiefly.   With the purpose of emphasising the role of complete and perfect legislation played in the emergence of a mighty and glorious state, the laws of Solon were extensively treated. The enlargement of the national assembly to include all citizens of Athens, the division of the Athenians into different classes according to the extent of their estates, the prescription of commercial regulations and the standardization of the agricultural activities, were among his foremost achievements. Having looked at this picture, what struck the historians most, it seems, was the wide range of topics sorted out by Solon's codification. They called the reader's attention to that point and argued that comprehensive legislation brought wealth, greatness and eventually, imperial success. Through perfect government and complete legislation, similar to that of Solon, a state could attain polished manners, profitable commerce, self-sufficient agricultural production, security and wealth.[99]

---

[99] Mitford agreed with the rest on this issue but specified that the enforcement of extensive legislation was appropriate solely in the barbarous age of a nation. Prior to the laws of Solon, Athens had not yet been sufficiently refined and could have afforded much renovation and improvement. The constitution of the polished states, however, would not allow amendments on a large scale. To do otherwise, according to Mitford, obviously referring here to the contemporary French unrest could have very likely caused "some violent convulsion threatening subversion confounding all establishments and reducing things to the chaos of barbarism." Therefore, to improve, a state should implement progressive legislation of great extent only once at the outset. There was one polished state which state which was fortunate to experience constant but non-violent and gradual improvement of

Only Stanyan criticised the laws of Solon which were, be said, "more numerous and confused" than those of Lycurgos.[100] The rest concurred with Tacitus who declared these laws "more excellent and more complete" than the previous examples of the kind.[101]

From the perspective of the influence of law on imperial policy, Athens was superior to Sparta. On the grounds that the authoritarian language of the laws of Lycurgos generated a "hardy" but "unpolished"[102] people, one could easily surmise that so would have been their empire. If conquest, by definition, had always to cause pain to the conquered, the lands controlled by authoritarian Sparta, according to Gillies, "suffered still greater vexations under the Spartan, than they had done under the Athenian empire."[103] Additionally, in acquiring new territories Sparta, as Gast stated, did not give priority to "the welfare of Greece." Instead, the ideal which the Spartans remained fully committed to was "the advancement of their empire,"[104] -a purely military ambition likely to undermine the balance of power in Greece. On this point also, Sparta was utilised to enhance the old Tory argument against constant land war. Athens, on the other hand, moulded by the laws of Solon, grew into an "ambitious" but a "refined state."[105] Having been gifted with a complete legislative code similar to that of eighteenth-century Britain, it was in the power of the Athenians to offer substantial benefit to the colonies. Certainly, because no imperial design could have been accomplished without –though in varying degrees – the assistance of military, the Athenian empire did make use of its arms. The historians acknowledged this fact and elaborated on it. While exploring the Athenian

---

constitution. This was, as Mitford asserted, England, which was unique in modern Europe. Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 251.

[100] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, I, 181.

[101] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 257.

[102] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 235.

[103] Gillies, *History of Greece*, I, 398.

[104] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 398.

[105] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 169.

acquisition of the title of "Protector of Greece" from Sparta in the Amphictyonic council, Goldsmith, for instance, described Athens as "determine[d] to avenge the slightest affront by the edge of sword."[106] Still, there was a considerable number of other more pleasant adjectives than warlike to identify Athens with.

Concentrating on the remarks exclusively on Athens as an empire, they can be seen to dovetail with how the British political nation perceived their own empire. In addition to the histories, the non-history pamphlets spoke of the ideal features of the Athenian empire. The Athenian empire, as Pownall said in his analysis of ancient government, represented "domestic peace," "public prosperity," "security" and, of course, "liberty," at the times it resisted the degenerating effects of party factions or luxury.[107] Baron, similarly, expressed his high opinion of Athens, for it was an empire that had bettered the condition of its acquisitions in terms of politics, economy and civilisation with its "manners, customs and forms of government." Unlike Sparta which "derided" the Athenian virtues and won the loyalty of its colonies through force of arms, Athens took an interest in the prosperity of the subordinate states which were "destitute, in a great measure, of all the useful arts, particularly of agriculture and commerce."[108] The historians' view of the Athenian empire did not essentially differ from Pownall's and Baron's. Among many comments of the same sort, those by Gast emerge as most representative of the common point of view on why the Athenian empire was to be set as an example for the contemporary British reader. Instead of oppressive imperial policies, the Athenian rulers wisely pursued an imperial scheme to embrace "all confederates." It was not the politics of Pericles, as Gast did not mention him, but "the justice of Aristides" and "the candour and affability of Cimon" which connected other Greek

[106] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 199.
[107] Pownall, *Principles of Polity*, 99.
[108] Baron, *History of Colonisation*, 26-7.

states as well as the colonies to Athens.[109] Additionally, its "naval strength," "very manners and laws" and "love of liberty" ensured that this attachment was an enduring one.[110] Pericles' exclusion from this depiction of Athens as ideal will be spoken of below.

In this way, as the British historians understood it, the Athenian empire both maintained the balance of power among the Greek states, including Sparta, and expanded its area of influence to non-Greek territories. While Athens rejoiced at the flow of wealth as a result of the sustained commerce with the colonies and neighbouring states and the sense of security brought by the dominance over Sparta and Persia, the colonies and subordinate Greek states, in return, benefited not only from the trade with the motherland but the superior techniques introduced by the Athenians to increase the efficiency of production, as well as the peace their alliance with Athens provided. In this imperial network, the Athenians avoided the explicit language of empire that Rome used and contended with an undefined but robustly hierarchical relationship, in which they had only taken upon themselves the title of "protector." Evidently, such an understanding of empire could safely be associated with the eighteenth-century British notion as elucidated in Chapter II and the British historians of the age made implicit but frequent references to that.

Among the features of Athens which more resembled those of Britain, naval superiority was of particular interest to the British reader. The ideal of a maritime commercial empire and, as Armitage contends, "the diagnosis of England's fitness to capture it,"[111] which had evolved in the course of time to encompass all Britain, preoccupied the political nation for centuries. According to the perennial belief, originating in ancient Rome, Britain, by the virtue of being an island was pictured as

---

[109] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 351.
[110] *Ibid.,* 399.
[111] Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, 44.

isolated, by divine favour, from the continent and in the position to excel at maritime activities, in order to alternately maintain or overcome the isolation. One could detect the varying reflections of this belief on the imperial policies of different ages. In the sixteenth century, isolation was thought to be the reason why this kingdom did not possess any overseas territories.[112] In the eighteenth century, the Tories made great use of it as a part of their propaganda against the Whig engagement in continental affairs at the expense of maritime advancement. Investment in naval policies and sometimes warfare thus appeared to be a natural outcome of the isolated situation of Britain. The idea of a maritime *imperium* which had once stood for the sovereignty "solely over home waters" grew into something larger, to include the "conception of *mare liberum* on the oceans" which brought about the blue-water strategy in the eighteenth century.[113]

Looking at this picture, the traditional British notion of maritime dominion was reflected in the Athenian superiority on the seas, which was in effect shared with no other ancient Greek state. This can be stressed as one of the themes that fascinated the British in the ancient Greek history, as the source of political wisdom. In terms of security, for instance, the histories established that the Athenian maritime superiority eliminated the possibility of invasion by sea altogether. [114] Still, the benefits brought by a powerful navy and exceptional skills in maritime activities were to be greatly appreciated in imperial affairs. As Stanyan put it, Athens's "very fair title to command at sea" could not have been challenged by Sparta and this advantage of Athens, in fact, created one of the essential differences between the two empires.[115] On account of being a maritime empire, Athens secured "a closer connection" even

---

[112] Armitage, *Ideological Origins,* 41.
[113] *Ibid.*, 9.
[114] Leland, *Philip*, II, 218.
[115] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, I, 327.

with the most distant colonies and had never been "averse" to expeditions far away.[116] According to Gillies, Stanyan and Leland, naval strength was one of the requisites in connecting the motherland to its offspring and building a non-military, but robust empire, unlikely to dissolve easily.

In the eighteenth century, as Wilson argues, the "empire mattered" even "to ordinary people."[117] It would be wrong to suggest that British statesman had not already begun to seek for an ideal of imperial governance prior to or concurrent with the publication of these history texts. There was concentration on the prospects for the naval empire and a mutually beneficial relationship with colonies, as Pownall's pamphlets, for instance, demonstrate. Such interest coincided with the points emphasised by the historians of ancient Greece, who presented the Athenian empire as more united and successful than the Spartan empire by virtue of its sea-borne character. The emphasis implied that the same glory could eventually be Britain's.

In the complete association of Britain with Athens in terms of naval affairs, there was one small detail brought by Goldsmith to the attention of the reader as a point that deserved elaboration. What was striking, according to him, was that the Athenians did not originally possess the gift to become the masters of the seas and did not inherit such a merit from their ancestors. Therefore, they learned afterwards to be powerful on the seas as conditions demanded. Unlike the British they did not have this in their blood.[118] This petty detail in the full affiliation of Britain with Athens, however, did not concern any other historian than Goldsmith. They had already made their points while elaborating on the Egyptian impact on the Greek civilisation demonstrating that, in Mitford's words, the early Greeks "seem not yet to

---

[116] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 265.
[117] Wilson, *Island Race*, 15.
[118] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 262.

have excelled their neighbours in any circumstance of science, art or civilisation."[119]

As a matter of fact, the reason why Goldsmith dwellt on this point was not to discourage the British interest in Athens. He stressed that the naval knowledge of Athens was second-hand, because he believed that Britain was actually superior to Athens in naval affairs and could surpass it.

It became a truism in eighteenth-century Britain that naval superiority served to foster commerce and commerce bound the colonies tighter than the force of arms. As Armitage maintains, "commerce was the greatest bond of community"[120]-a point extensively accentuated by the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment. Though perhaps "not specific to the period,"[121] commerce was an important facet of the eighteenth-century imperial discourse. Also, the way the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment formulised it as the motor of civilisation added a new perspective to the British understanding of commerce. Adam Smith's renowned theory of stadialism prescribed four stages through which societies were to progress and a commercial state was the final stage to be achieved. Commerce was "the parent of politeness."[122] Therefore both the quality and quantity of commerce determined the level of civilisation into which modern Europe was expected to grow collectively. In his essay entitled 'Of the Jealousy of Trade' Hume expressed his desire to see "the flourishing [of the] commerce of Germany, Spain, Italy and even France itself."[123] To him, as to the other Scottish Enlightenment writers, commerce was the source of greatness, happiness, wealth and refinement. Despite their significant, sometimes unbridgeable differences, on this common ground the European states rose. As an

---

[119] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 77.
[120] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 93.
[121] Jeremy Black, 'British Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century: A Survey,' *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 26, No.1, (January 1987), 45.
[122] J.G.A. Pocock, 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: A Study of the Relations between the Civic Humanist and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Social Thought' in Hont and Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue,* 241.
[123] Hume, 'Of the Jealousy of Trade' in *Essays*, I, 348.

indicator of civilisation and stimulator of refined manners, the ancient Greek history texts put particular emphasis on the non-military and commercial characteristics of the Athenian empire.

According to Gillies, for example, the Athenians were the only people in history who "by the virtue of the mind alone, acquired an extensive dominion over men equally improved with themselves in the arts of war and government…an absolute authority in the islands of the Aegean, as well as in the cities of the Asiatic coast." Even the Romans, Gillies continued, who deserved much respect for their imperial enterprise, ruled their universal empire merely by means of arms and superior military discipline.[124] Undoubtedly, the Athenian policy of substituting military activity with commerce enabled this people to enjoy a secure and peaceful hegemony over the states incorporated in their empire. Instead of martial skill, the Athenians employed the "gentler arts of uprightness and clemency which," in Gast's words, "alone are the security of governors, and render empire amiable."[125] Of all the historians, Stanyan was the one who most explicitly stressed this non-military aspect of the Athenian empire as another common point between ancient Athens and contemporary Britain. He was convinced that commerce flourished remarkably in Athens due to a similar environment to that in Britain. Through its virtues, the Athenian government spread "the love of labour and husbandry," which "made way for commerce" and rendered the Athenians "rich at home and powerful abroad." In combination with Solon's laws of liberty, commerce at home helped "to tame and polish a people bred up in liberty." And in imperial affairs, based on the principle of profiting mutually, it stuck the motherland and its colonies together as a more

---

[124] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 4.
[125] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 357.

powerful glue than oppression, violence and force.[126] For that reason, above all others, Athens built up an empire inherently different from Sparta's which, in Gast's words, pursued imperial goals through a "tyrannical government" that "made use of empire only to oppress and subdue the rest of Greece."[127]

Beside naval superiority, utilitarian commerce and a non-military attitude, the history of Athens also called attention to the wisdom of limiting the government's area of interest at difficult times as another valuable lesson of imperial conduct. This will take us to the concept of *hêgemoniê* which was regarded as a major theme by historians, both ancient Greek and British. The accounts of the hegemonic rivalry between Sparta and Athens by Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon and Ephorus clearly set out at once the awards and burdens of being the hegemon and the British historians took particular interest in the latter. To them, discussion of the hegemony offered instruction: in order to sustain imperial strength the state should avoid any unnecessary engagements in the affairs of other states. According to the definition of John Wickersham, the hegemon is the state which "is nominally in control of strategy."[128] The term will be used in that sense below. Naturally, being in control of the strategy which will influence other states to operate in the way the hegemon desires, as a rule, requires remarkable financial and military effort. The cost of such effort is particularly high, as its investment in some other purpose, unconnected to the functioning of other states, could likely bring more success, welfare and prosperity to the hegemonic state.

From the turn of the eighteenth century on, Britain's quest to control continental strategy distressed the Tories, who were extremely concerned about this cost of being the strategy-setter. The concentration of resources on imperial interests

---

[126] Stanyan, *Grecian History,* I, 180.
[127] Gast, *Rudiments*, 597.
[128] John Wickersham, *Hegemony and Greek Historians* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994), 13.

and on naval power instead would have lead, it was believed, to more profitable outcomes. The hegemonic experience of Athens, for that reason, appeared to be a very informative episode in history. The heavy toll of entanglement in other states' affairs, a substantial issue in the politics of eighteenth-century Britain, could best be learned from ancient Greek histories. The topic was elaborated extensively by two historians particularly, Stanyan and Gillies. How Athens gradually sunk under the burden of its hegemonic relations, despite its wise conduct of strategy in the beginning was to dissuade the British state from making the same mistake.

During the Persian Wars, Sparta was the hegemon to which Athens was subordinate. Sparta's name was carved at the top of the Serpent Column erected at Delphi to commemorate the victory of Platea. Nevertheless, "a state with strong leverage" such as Athens did not remain long under the shadow of Sparta; hence the end of the Persian Wars marked the end of the Spartan hegemony.[129] However, from the moment it acquired the presidency of Amphictyonic council and surpassed Sparta, Athens, now the umpire of Greece, as Stanyan underlined, was encumbered with the problems of the "injured" states incorporated in the council. Sparta, on the other hand, was encouraging them to appeal to Athens for no good reason. This was, according to Stanyan, the Spartan method of exhausting and paralyzing the Athenian state, to the degree that it would fail to protect its own interests and imperial designs. The historian's emphasis on the high cost of being involved in the affairs of other states is understandable, for Stanyan wrote and enlarged his history reflecting on the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-13), the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20) and the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739). Regarding these endeavours of Britain to set the continental strategy, he was convinced that his history ought to stress the vital point

---

[129] Wickersham, *Hegemony*, 10 and 14.

that aiming at leadership served Athens in enhancing its authority for a limited time, but that eventually its welfare suffered.[130]

The Athenian experience in the Amphictyonic council, in which the Greek states were represented in proportion to their size, in effect acknowledged the price a superpower was to pay. Under Spartan supremacy, Athens was not sufficiently powerful to dominate the council, but, on the other hand, free from the heavy burden the hegemonic state had to carry. Gillies, another historian committed to emphasising the undesirable side of such political and military engagement, called attention to the early phases of Greek history, when the Athenians cleverly manoeuvred in council so as not to involve Athens further. In this way, "their arms had acquired great lustre."[131] Prior to the Persian Wars, Sparta was both gifted with all the benefits and glory brought by its hegemonic power and overwhelmed at the same time by the endless appeals of the petty states. In the course of time, the cost of maintaining hegemonic rule and dominance over Greece surpassed the profit of being the sole strategy-setter. Inevitably, the same fate would befall Athens when it acquired the leadership of the Greeks. The relationship of Athens with its allies in the Amphictyonic and Delian Leagues was also hegemonic and subsequent to the inclusion of non-Greek elements grew into the more costly imperial one.

The turning of *hêgemoniê* to *arkhê* in the reign of Pericles required a closer union among the components of the Athenian empire. In this very visible *arkhê*, the mutual responsibilities and obligations were well-defined. It was now that the subdued language of empire became more explicit. The power of Athens grew further but so did its responsibilities. In this context, Stanyan stressed the poisonous effect of ultimate imperial power. On one hand, such power allowed a state to realise

---

[130] Stanyan, *Grecian History,* I, 328-9.
[131] Gillies, *Grecian History*, II, 345-6.

any design, either political or economic. On the other, it trapped that state with precise responsibilities towards its subordinates, which would eventually suck the state dry of its real strength. Having possessed "the prerogative of rewards and punishments" and been "the sovereign umpire of Greece," Athens sought to eliminate this dilemma, which had previously exhausted the Spartan hegemony. Nevertheless, the later phase of Athenian supremacy disappointed Stanyan as, according to him, the Athenians "roughly treated the Grecian cities of which they called themselves the protectors."[132] In other words, struggling with the dilemma, Athens in the end chose not to protect its subordinates, contrary to its promise. Therefore, over the long term it was impossible to avoid the negative outcomes of an empire in which the rights and obligations of the centre and periphery were officially and clearly declared. Such a lesson might well have been welomed by the British statesmen who had been the agents of a rather vague and unpronounced imperial policy.

It was Pericles who redefined the imperial relations of Athens with the periphery. In his *Funeral Oration*, he brought the defence of *arkhê* in front of the Athenians and introduced it as the most honourable governance. Because the empire at that time stretched "from Euxine to the sea of Crete from the coasts of Asia to the Adriatic gulf,"[133] the era of Pericles was commonly accepted as the golden age of Athens. Nevertheless, the reader would not come across any generous praises of Pericles in the ancient Greek history texts of eighteenth-century Britain. Although Pericles's rule of forty years was the most flourishing time for Athens, it was at the same time, particularly according to Gast, the period in which the imperial principle of non-aggression was undermined. From then on, Athens lost its previously

---

[132] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, I, 328.
[133] Gast, *History of Greece,* I, 379.

amicable voice and became the "dread" of the colonies it possessed. What is more, while governing the empire, Pericles put into force new regulations in which public benefit was no longer a priority.[134] Obviously, his role in the Peloponnesian War, as the one who declared war, was the main reason why Pericles's imperial ventures did not receive much appreciation from the British historians. Through most of the eighteenth century, war was vindicated in Whig discourse as an efficient way of securing the British interest, whether against Spain or France. Apprehensive about the state of constant war, many pursued an opposition to such intense British engagement in the continental affairs. The historians discussed here clearly disapproved of overzealous military expeditions, which in fact meant the violation of the unofficial unwritten imperial code of Athens.

According to Stanyan, frequently pronounced phrases such as "preserving the balance and protecting confederates" issued by the Athenian side were only pretexts in the Peloponnesian War, which was really fought with Sparta for "the empire of Greece."[135] To Hind, who too despised the insufficiently justified wars, it was true that the Spartans were prepared to challenge the increasing influence of Athens over the other Greek states; but Pericles did not urge his people "to hearken to any proposals of peace," but instead "exhorted them to make all the necessary preparations of war, with the utmost expedition." For that reason, the war seemed "in a great measure, to owe its beginning to Pericles." Evidently, Hind, like Stanyan, was convinced that fighting a preventable war was a sign of mismanagement. Pericles dragged the Athenians into this "dangerous," "long and bloody war"[136] and this was the point emphasised.

[134] Gast, *History of Greece,* I, 379 and 377.
[135] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, I, 329.
[136] Hind, *History of Greece*, I, 413-14.

Throughout his reign, Pericles breached not only the unofficial rule of non-aggression but the rule of optimal expansion as well. It was he who acquired more territory than any other Athenian ruler, but it was his predecessor Cimon who was saluted for his efficiency, wisdom and imperial genius. The main reason for this was that Pericles overstretched Athenian borders beyond that ideal point, which did not permit the imperial governance to be free of oppressive policies, degeneration and mismanagement. The conviction that hasty and spontaneous, hence not well-planned, territorial expansion was to be dismissed as a vain pursuit in empire-building was commonly expressed in contemporary political literature. Davenant, for example, explained the decline of both the Spanish and Ottoman empires by the fact that they grew too fast, overstretched their boundaries and while doing that, they did not have "time to cement" the components of the empire "strongly together."[137] Therefore, expansion beyond the optimum point brought maladministration and the British, in learning from history, ought to resist the temptation of expansion. Ferguson too contended that "the plan of enlargement" and naturally of "pacification," because territory of inordinately large extent could only be governed by suppression, did not serve the well-being of empire, on the grounds that its "members can no longer apprehend the common ties of society nor be engaged by affection in the cause of their country." Such alienation would inevitably bring about "decay."[138] As Nancy F. Kohen contends, the fear of "abundance" also pervaded the imperial debate of the early 1760s.[139]

Overstretching the imperial borders was a concern collectively shared by the British historians. One should evaluate the treatments of Cimon and Pericles with similar condemnations of Roman overexpansion in mind. Although Pericles

---

[137] D'Avenant, *Universal Monarchy*, 52.
[138] Ferguson, *Civil Society*, 329.
[139] Kohen, *Power of Commerce,* 171.

gloriously ruled over the most extensive territory in the history of ancient Athens, his desire for expansion rendered it impossible to govern the empire according to the maxims set at the outset and enhanced by Cimon. As Gillies put it, what the times of Pericles should therefore teach was that consequent to his rule "[i]n the exercise of power the Athenians displayed principles totally different from those by which they had attained it."[140] This was what would happen when the imperial capacity of a state was exceeded or, in Gast's words, when it launched "the mad project of attempting the empire of the world." Unfortunately, the Greeks

> had rendered their yoke insupportable even to their Grecian neighbours: their confederates they treated as vassals, and the contributions which they received from them and which they were to have administered for the general good they wantonly lavished on the pride and magnificence of their own city, in the name of *protectors* of Greece, but in reality its *oppressors*. Amidst of all this insolence and bold show of enterprise, the Athenians nevertheless had nothing of their ancient vigour remaining.[141]

The British who were the reluctant imperialists of the eighteenth century had always had reservations about an overextended empire. These concerns were expressed at the beginning of the century by political economists such as Davenant and Reynell and reached a peak in the aftermath of the Seven Years War. Subsequent to the acquisition of Canada, Dominica, Florida and India, the ministers and MPs as well as political writers were alarmed as they faced a financial and political burden of an unprecedented sort. The pamphlet debate of the 1760s on the issue has previously been discussed. These pamphlets reflect the anxiety about the new commitments and burdensome imperial obligations, which required change in overseas administration. Of course, in the discussions of empire there was also another camp, which "took an inordinate pride in the extent of Britain's triumph, with victories in Europe, West Africa, India, Canada, the Caribbean and…the

---

[140] Gillies, *Grecian History*, I, 552.
[141] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 572.

Philippines." Nevertheless, such an attitude was dominated by "a countervailing set of concerns over the martial fantasies spawned by Britain's success."[142] Whether such a situation, as they found themselves in, was desirable or affordable greatly preoccupied British statesmen and evoked a substantial interest in the imperial experience of Athens and other ancient states. Thus they sought ways to surmount the problematic issues, through what Kohen calls the "collective knowledge of imperial history."[143]

All in all, in a scrutiny of ancient Greek historiography in eighteenth-century Britain, empire comes to the fore as a theme of equal importance to that of democracy. Taking only democracy into account, these texts may appear as pro-Spartan, written with the purpose of denouncing the evil forces of democracy and of course Athens. Nevertheless, ancient history-writing aimed to encompass as many topics which related to contemporary concerns as possible. Picking one theme and categorizing the entire historiography with regard to the study of that particular theme is to be regretted. Instead, it should be pointed out that the nature of the narratives differs according to the themes chosen. This chapter has argued that empire was one of the topics that much preoccupied the historians. And with reference to that notion, Athens appeared to be the commendable example, whereas Sparta decidedly was not. This does not imply that ancient Greek history-writing in eighteenth-century Britain was altogether pro-Athenian. Still, it was so on the matter of empire.

Although the historians attempted to produce a more accurate account of the imperial practices of Athens and Sparta, learning how contemporary Britain and its

---

[142] Eliga H. Gould, 'Fears of War, Fantasies of Peace: British Politics and the Coming of the American Revolution' in Eliga H. Gould and Peter S. Onuf (eds) *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 20-21.
[143] Kohen, *Power of Commerce,* 23.

imperial affairs should be conducted through ancient examples had always been their greater concern. In a comparison of legal systems, expansionist policies, methods of colonisation and imperial characters, Athens was associated with Britain. Despite disapproval of the reign of Pericles, Athens' smallness, its spirit of liberty, its non-aggressive imperial policies, its commercial bond with the colonies, its refined manners and its wise hegemonic practices rendered the Athenian experience of empire in the eyes of the British historians very impressive. Athens was the example of what the British Empire ought to evolve into in the future. Sparta, on the other hand, was viewed as the antithesis of both Athens and Britain and hence of the ideal sort of empire. On this account, the attempts at understanding the Spartan way of empire replicated not only the ancient historians' remarks, but also contemporary views of the Spanish and French empires. One might say that the accounts of Sparta and Athens by the eighteenth-century British historians were chiefly about vindicating the established or (being established) contemporary notions of empire, both the ideal and the disapproved. The historians consequently sought to provide grounds for commending the sea-borne commercial empire. In doing that, they made use of some of the topics extensively treated by the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment, such as the impact of its legal system on the nature of a given state and the mutually binding and beneficial effects of commerce.

Just as much as the concern with the features of the ideal empire and the ways of attaining it, the interest of eighteenth-century British historians of Greece in the decline of empires is notable. No earthly empires, including the most perfect, could resist the inevitable end, which was decline and fall; nor could Sparta and Athens. Ferguson voiced this well-established conviction of the eighteenth century.

> Mankind, in aspiring to national felicity, have substituted arts which increase their riches, instead of those which improve their nature. They have

entertained admiration of themselves, under the titles of civilised and of polished, where they should have been affected with shame, and even where they have for a while acted on maxims tending to raise, to invigorate, and to preserve the national character, they have, sooner or later, been diverted from their object and fallen a prey to misfortune, or to the neglects which prosperity itself had encouraged.[144]

Such was the inevitable fate of all states on earth, both polished and barbarous. To Gillies, because "the spirit of improvement is transient and demands perpetual efforts and the sources of degeneracy are permanent and innumerable,"[145] the decline was inevitable. Not even the ablest sovereigns could have defied the eventual degeneration. In their attempts at reaching the ideal of flawless imperial governance, the British historians in truth aspired to knowledge of delaying decline and fall to the latest possible moment. For that reason, they put particular emphasis on specific issues such as maritime superiority, clever and limited expansion, a capable monarch and non-military imperial policies, with the conviction that genuine commitment to these principles and the others mentioned above would create the empire of the longest duration on earth.

---

[144] Ferguson, *Civil Society*, 300.
[145] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 678.

CHAPTER 5

EMPIRES BEYOND GREECE

As Philip Lawson states, "comparison of the nascent British empire to those of history, usually coupled with sombre analyses of the rise and fall of some earlier imperium"[1] was a common practice in the political literature and history texts of eighteenth-century Britain. As to Greek history-writing, the empires employed for such comparison were those of Athens, Sparta, Macedonia and Persia. Nevertheless, in recent works, the entire attention of the scholars concerned with the use of Greek antiquity has been attracted only by the way Sparta and Athens were depicted –and their concern has never been empire. The concern has been with democracy and the historians' approach to Macedonia and Persia has remained out of the scope of the existing works on the eighteenth-century British histories of ancient Greece. Clearly here Macedonia and Persia, with reference to their imperial practices, must be included. Through their reflections on Macedonia and Persia, as through their assessments of Athens and Sparta, the historians sought to transmit imperial lessons that would teach the political nation what to do and what not to do. This chapter aims at the same time to reveal these lessons and to elaborate on the point that British neo-classicism of the eighteenth century was not solely about Rome, Athens and Sparta.

Macedonia and Persia are treated together since these two ancient states were clearly not considered by the historians as equals of Sparta and Athens in guiding contemporary Britain. Although Sparta was employed as a means of negative

---

[1] Lawson, *Taste for Empire*, 132.

exemplification in the quest for ideal empire, it was as Greek as Athens and hence both part and begetter of Greek civilisation. Nevertheless, the Macedonian and Persian empires, though always a part of the ancient Greek history, were outsiders to the Greek family and they, with the exception of the heyday of Alexander's empire, were approached by British historians in this light. For that reason, in our attempt at pinning down the eighteenth-century views of empire embedded in ancient history texts, Macedonia and Persia are categorised as the other empires of ancient Greece in a separate chapter, serving as a sequel to the previous one.

In the ancient Greek history-writing of eighteenth-century Britain, Macedonia and Persia, empires that did not point to the ideal, were definitely not associated with Britain. Still, in terms of building, managing and preserving an empire, they were believed to offer crucial lessons, lessons of avoidance mostly, to the British political nation. Before proceeding to examine these lessons, it should be stated at the outset that despite the low opinion of eighteenth-century British historians of early Macedonia and of the later years of the Alexandrian period, as will be seen below, Macedonia was not treated with as much hostiliy as Persia. First and foremost, Macedonia was not despotic. It might have been frequently called unpolished, warlike and authoritarian, but the historians particularly avoided drawing parallels between Macedonia and Persia. Any association with "the despotism of the east," in Gillies's words would "form a very erroneous notion of the Macedonian government."[2] The Macedonians were never been perceived as alien as the Persians customarily were.

Interestingly enough, after the Macedonian triumph over Persia, the tone of the assessments of the former shifted from critical to approving.[3] Having eliminated

---

[2] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 557.
[3] See Stanyan, *Grecian History*, I, 209.

the Persian threat, the Macedonians under Alexander were now commonly hailed as "a prosperous mighty people"[4] alongside the Athenians and Spartans. All allegations of authoritarianism and lack of refinement seemed to be put aside. The British reader was invited by Gast to appreciate how "by degrees they rose superior to all the difficulties that environed them, they repelled their enemies [and] enlarged their borders."[5] Thus, unlike Persia, Macedonia was occasionally included in the Greek family, though always as an odd member. Persia, on the other hand, remained consistently an alien entity.

5.1 Macedonia

As Eliga Gould maintains, the Seven Years' War brought along a period of "political retrenchment and moral self-scrutiny"[6] in Britain with regard to the affairs of the empire. On one hand, the common people and popular press seemed to be extremely content with the new extensive territorial acquisitions of Britain. On the other, in the intellectual milieu, apprehensions about the economic burden, the manageability, the morality and hence the overall desirability of expansion, as well as the territorialization of the British empire began to be voiced loudly. Some of the political pamphlets which appeared in the 1760s were preoccupied with the questions of finance and military and political strategy, disapproving of existing imperial policies. Further, the question of morality, the feasibility of commerce as an alternative to war and the prospects of spreading civilisation, politeness and prosperity to the periphery were topics elaborated within the Scottish Enlightenment. Such arguments suggested cautious steps towards the empire and they found considerable support among the British statesmen. Thus, in his address to the House

---

[4] Gast, *History of Greece,* I, 169.
[5] Gast, *Rudiments of the Grecian History,* 219.
[6] Gould, 'Fears of War,' 20.

219

of Commons during the discussions over the taxation of the North American colonies in 1775, Lord North laid particular emphasis on the point that the imperial policy of Britain on the issue had been a "moderate" one. Having avoided excess, Britain prudently sought to adopt "the best means for ensuring peace, prosperity and repose" which would not lead to "future hostilities."[7] Of course, the loss of the thirteen colonies proved this policy wrong.

Still, this approach to empire was the one dominant in eighteenth-century Britain and it resonated in the contemporary texts on Greek history. The historians offered imperial lessons that taught the reader to refrain from desiring extensive territory and fighting any avoidable battle, even if it might bring wealth, glory and land in return. Commendations of moderate strategies of empire were contemporary commonplaces, as Anthony Pagden emphasises. "Expansion, ungovernable once it had begun" was believed to be "an obvious threat to the stability and continued prosperity of the metropolis."[8] From the 1780s on, when the British imperial design was more about India and the British conception of empire was irreversibly territorialized, attaining the optimum size of expansion gained an even greater importance.[9]

The motherland, it was argued, should not pursue aggressive and authoritarian policies that would nurture hostile feelings in the colonies and expansion could not be secured without strict policies of this sort. As a viable alternative to arms, the bond connecting the motherland to its colonies was presented as the bond of mutual benefit and well-being. The relationship between the centre and the periphery ought to be profitable for both sides. The decision whether the outcome was successful and desirable was to be based on the degree of politeness,

---

[7] Gould, 'Fears of War,' 20.
[8] Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 103.
[9] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 619.

refinement and hence civilisation transferred to the colonies. In achieving this goal, the extent of territory was believed to be significant. The historians assessed the imperial design of Macedonia from this perspective and this understanding determined the features of the Macedonian empire that were presented to the reader of ancient Greek history as worthy of appreciation or the reverse.

The eighteenth-century literature on Macedonia has not yet been exhausted by scholars. Various books are left out of the analyses on the grounds that they do not bear the name 'Macedonia' in their titles. In his 'Alexander the Great and the Enlightenment,' Pierre Briant, for example, stresses that William Roberts' *Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge Which the Ancient Had of India* (1788) has not been included in the works on Alexander, "not even by allusion in a historiographic survey."[10] Yet, *Historical Disquisition* is by no means alone in the list of neglected sources in completing the knowledge of contemporary views of Macedonia. Our texts of Greek history too have not received the attention that they deserve within the same context. Furthermore, in eighteenth-century studies the way that Macedonia was treated by the period has always been considered of secondary importance, as the focus has remained on Sparta and Athens. This chapter aims to contribute to the completion of the history of the historiography of Macedonia and to incorporate the understandings of the Macedonian empire into the eighteenth-century studies of empire.

When compared to the Spartan and Athenian empires, the Macedonian empire, since it was the most extensive, was more specifically treated from an imperial perspective. With this territorial extent, in the ancient Greek histories, Macedonia appeared as a Greek equivalent of Rome. Gast even acknowledged the

---

[10] Pierre Briant, 'Alexander the Great and the Enlightenment: William Robertson (1721-1793), the Empire and the Road to India,' *Cromohs*, 10 (2005), 2.

grandeur of the later Macedonians by using words associated with the Romans, for example, the "Lords of the World" alongside with their usual title "masters of Greece."[11] The Macedonian empire encompassed "Asia up to the Indus river in the east and the borders of Arabia in the south, in Africa also Egypt and part of Libya (the Cyrenaica) and most of mainland Greece and the Aegean islands."[12] The impressive size of this empire of course did not go unnoticed by our historians. Leland observed that it was comprised of more than a hundred different peoples who were initially granted the liberty to keep the legislation and administration of their own.[13] Relying on that, Leland also argued that Macedonia was so founded on "the principles of equity, justice and moderation, in the prince and valour, and national loyalty in the people, as to promise happiness and stability."[14] This view, however, was not typical of how the Macedonian empire was perceived by the British historians. As a matter of fact, Leland stood alone in assessing the Macedonians as a people "who have ever appeared highly worthy of the attention of all ages."[15] After all, his main motive was to write a history of Macedonia, which was to oppose the unfavorable treatment it and its king, Philip, had received in the histories of ancient Greece.[16]

The perceptions of Macedonian empire displayed in the texts which are the concern of this study do not demonstrate a single uniform approach, sympathetic or not. Instead, there were certain periods in Macedonian history which commonly received either the approval or the criticism of the British historians. The early phases and the reign of Philip, for reasons explained below, were regarded as

---

[11] Gast, *Rudiments*, 220.
[12] Richard A. Billows, *Kings and Colonists: Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism* (Leiden, New York and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1995), xiv.
[13] Leland, *Philip*, I, 6.
[14] *Ibid.,* 9.
[15] *Ibid.,* 79.
[16] *Ibid.,* xii.

belonging to the history of a state disapproved of, and likely to grow into an empire disapproved of. The reign of Alexander, on the other hand, was believed to set the ideal imperial pattern. Under the influence of the Enlightenment, as Briant argues, "[a] conqueror" could then "only be ranked among the heroes of history if the war that he conducts spreads civilization."[17] Alexander was seen as that sort of conqueror. Of course, he was not exempt from negative comments either. The final state of his empire, overstretched and depopulated, according to the historians, ceased to facilitate "the prosperity of Greece."[18] In this respect, the early Macedonian government, Philip's empire and the late Alexandrian empire were understood in a similar light.

The historians, employing the same criteria by which they assessed the Spartan and the Athenian empires, presented the early Macedonian government as rude, pointing its lack of a navy; Philip's empire as authoritarian, deprived of the civilising touch of a proper and complete system of legislation; and finally the late Alexandrian empire as overwhelming and unmanageable because of its broad extent. As to the characteristics of the desirable kind of empire, that of Alexander at its zenith represented the success attained by a superior naval power. Also, in terms of relations with the colonies, this empire wisely established the bond of mutual benefit and well-being. Thus, the concerns of the historians voiced in their scrutiny of Macedonia as unwise imperial practices overlap with those that they highlighted in their analyses of Sparta and Athens. The same was true for their remarks about the desirable features of an empire. What they found commendable in the Athenian and Spartan experience of empire they looked for in the Macedonian empire. Again,

---

[17] Briant, 'Alexander the Great and the Enlightenment,' 5.
[18] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, xxx.

these apprehensions and recommendations about empire are represented, in the contemporary political pamphlets.

5.2 The Imperial Activities of Early Macedonia

In the eyes of the British historians, early Macedonia was not a focus of interest, as it had not expressly incorporated itself into the Greek confederacy of states. To Goldsmith, whose scorn was clearly reflected in his works, the Macedonians, prior to the reign of Philip, were a "semi-barbarous" people, who were deprived of the liberty of contemporary Greeks. Also, since it was not one of the sovereign states of Greece and did not possess "politeness," a significant phrase in eighteenth-century discussions of civilization representing "a logical consequence of commerce,"[19] this Macedonia could not be treated as Sparta and Athens were and hence identified with Britain. What is more, early Macedonia lacked a powerful navy and the refining effects of a naval culture. Regarding this lack of naval competency in its early phases –Macedonia clearly fell short of the Athenian standards- Gast observed that the Macedonian state had not shown the promise that "the greatest empire of Asia" was "to receive its overthrow" at its hands.[20] The reason why Macedonia failed to develop crucial maritime skills was its obstinacy and pride, which also prevented its integration into the Greek league of states. It was for long established in the eighteenth century that maritime skills brought not only military superiority on the seas but also advantages in political economy in terms of free circulation of goods.[21]

Cooperation in areas such as naval and military activities and commerce, if it had existed, would have bestowed on both Greeks and Macedonians considerable

---

[19] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 4.
[20] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 9-10.
[21] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 94.

benefits. Accepting eighteenth-century theories of civilisation and progress that laid particular emphasis on the extension of commercial cooperation as the motor of progress, the historians of ancient Greece linked the backwardness of Macedonia to its ignorance of the merits of such cooperation. Isolation inevitably resulted in making the Macedonians a "low and indigent"[22] people, who did not possess the necessary means to save them from "penury at home."[23] Still, their poverty and simplicity was counted by the British historians as a virtue. The Macedonians so excelled at the use of arms that their virtuous manners were overshadowed by their hardy warlike character. For all these reasons, until its virtues guided it to greatness, Macedonia remained among the Greek states an inconsiderable force which, furthermore, was not always regarded as being as Greek as the rest. All in all, in Potter's words, until the emergence of "this design," which "was projected and begun by Philip but achieved and perfected by his son, Alexander the Great"[24] Macedonia did not attract much attention from the historians and when it did, it usually received negative comment.

Last but not least, this non-naval, non-cooperative and non-Greek state had a very harmful practice with reference to empire, pointed out by Goldsmith. What rendered the early Macedonians unsuitable for imitation was their attitude towards conquered native populations. They acquired "the habits of the natives," but failed to earn their respect in return.[25] Once again the degree of the interaction with the conquered people appeared to be a problem for the conquerors. In the course of the eighteenth century, as especially the second British empire was "becoming more

[22] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, 170.
[23] Gast, *Rudiments*, 219.
[24] Potter, *Archaeologica Graeca*, I, 19.
[25] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 430-1.

self-consciously multiethnic multidenominational and cosmopolitan,"[26] the British were preoccupied with the prospects of handling interracial and interreligious relations. On this account, it was natural that the historians dig into the Greek history to search for answers to this question as well. The outcome of this probe was that in the early phases of its territorial growth, although they should have distanced themselves, Macedonians intermingled with the natives of the lands that they acquired. The colonies, particularly those of the second empire, came to be in eighteenth-century Britain, as Wilson contends, "an important test case for the examination and verification of national character,"[27] through the comparison of the level of civilization in the motherland and in the colonies. This was the means of underlining the differences and confirming the superiority of Britishness. Also, the colonies were supposed to be the places in which the virtue acquired at home should be spread, not foreign vices acquired.[28] The Macedonian example which reversed this practice of colonization and imported the traditions of the natives to the motherland, was not to be imitated.

In the first phase of the Macedonian history, Caranus, the first known king of Macedonia, attracted considerable attention, particularly from Goldsmith and Leland. The first and foremost motive of this focus was to assess more exactly the degree of 'Greekness' of the Macedonians. Both Goldsmith and Leland, repeating the words of Vellius, underlined that Caranus was an Argive by birth and said to be "the sixteenth in descent from Hercules." [29] Nonetheless they remained unable to conclude definitely on that point. Whether Macedonians were Greeks seems always to have been a flammable topic. As Robin L. Fox argues, the Macedonian kings "claimed to

---

[26] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 96.
[27] Wilson, *Island Race*, 13.
[28] Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 201.
[29] Leland, *Philip*, I, 6 and Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 431.

be of Greek descent" but Greeks seemed not to be "convinced by these northerners' insistence." When Philip conquered the Greek states, the claim to Greekness gained particular importance. Nevertheless, in European Greece "only to flatterers was Philip anything better than a foreign outsider"[30] and Macedonia another Greek state.

The matter of Greekness of Macedonians remained less than settled throughout the eighteenth century. Still for our historians, because it was believed to cast light on another equally important issue, the reign of Caranus did not cease to be a topic worthy of attention, as it offered one minor imperial lesson to the reader. According to Leland, a close look at the rule of Caranus would demonstrate what the real virtue was in a monarch who nourished imperial hopes. The maxim to be deduced here concerned the fair treatment of the vanquished. Very wisely, Caranus aimed to obtain the respect and admiration of the neighbouring states rather than suppress or humiliate them at the time of their defeat. Unfortunately, as Leland went on, this honourable principle was practised by neither Philip nor Alexander.[31] How, then, were the imperial policies of Philip and Alexander really seen in the eyes of the British historians?

5.3 The Imperial Design of Philip

Although the extraordinary might and greatness of Philip was acknowledged by all historians, Leland was the most generous to him. Having admitted that Philip should be viewed as "one of the greatest masters of intrigue in his or any other age;"[32] that "his ambition was vast;" and he was adept in making "the passions, interests and inclinations of every particular the instruments of his designs,"[33] Leland

---

[30] Robin Lane Fox, *Alexander the Great* (London: Penguin, 1986), 17.
[31] Leland, *Philip*, I, 7-8.
[32] Leland, *Philip*, II, 259.
[33] *Ibid.,* 79.

227

saluted Philip as "an artful, penetrating and sagacious prince,"[34] who was "the founder of the Macedonian greatness."[35] Nevertheless, Leland was an exception among the historians in this.[36] For the rest, Philip was a figure approached with much reserve. The undeniable "centrality of the army"[37] in Philip's government must be regarded as the reason behind the historians' dislike.

According to Goldsmith, Philip was "the most dangerous enemy of Greece,"[38] and that was exactly how the British reader should see him – the destroyer of the peace among the Greek states, which was grounded in the balance of power. Gillies argued that Philip was a monarch determined to acquire an absolutist power over his subjects throughout his empire by personally administering everything from religious to military affairs. Gillies conceded that Philip's imperial scheme did not parallel "the absolute dominion of many European monarchs" of the eighteenth century. However, what the historian here gave credit to was not the Macedonian empire founded and governed by Philip but the Macedonian state into which Philip was born. Macedonia in Philip's childhood, despite its backwardness in comparison with the Greek states, could not be compared with the absolutist and universalistic empires of modern Europe.[39] Philip's empire on the other hand clearly did tend in this direction.

The Wars of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) and the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), and of course the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), were the times in the eighteenth century when the perennial British fear of absolutist and

---

[34] Leland, *Philip*, I, xviii.
[35] Leland, *Philip*, I, 5.
[36] In the third volume of his history, Mitford too introduced Philip as an "enlightened despot" who ruled by authoritarian means but watched the welfare of his people. However, with the exception of the first volume, Mitford deliberately twisted the historical facts to fit into his opinions on contemporary politics and his views of Philip should be understood against this background. See Mitford, III, 226 for example.
[37] Billows, *Kings and Colonists,* 219.
[38] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 434.
[39] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 557-8.

universal monarchies was replaced on the top of their concerns.[40] Against this background, the contemporary historians examined ancient Greece with the hope of reaching a code of behavior for the absolutist and authoritarian governments too and in this context focused on Philip's Macedonia, though without being able to decide whether it was absolutist. Still, absolutist or not, Philip's ambition of imposing his will alone on Macedonia made him too authoritarian in the eyes of the British historians. Also, due to his authoritarian character, he concentrated only on how he ought to rule in his lifetime and thus failed to establish a regime to be adapted and developed by future rulers of Macedonia.

As we have seen in the examples of Lycurgos and Solon, a complete code of legislation was the indicator of proper governance and much appreciated by the minds preoccupied with the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment, which presented the business of governing as a science. Despotism then, under the influence of Montesquieu's ideas, was believed to be a regime of few "but strictly administered" laws. A voluminous legal code, on the other hand, suggested the ideal. The essence of the legislation varied from one lawmaker to another; but what mattered was existence of such extensive code, which legitimized government. In Britain, particularly from the mid-eighteenth century on, the practice of law-making accelerated and this was welcomed by the intellectual milieu as the sign of the country's advanced politics.[41]

Further, the large quantity of laws signified a non-despotic rule not only at home but throughout the empire also. The law of the metropolis was at the same time the legislation to be implemented in the colonies. Therefore, its completeness and character determined the nature and the scope of the imperial policy. Hence, as

---

[40] Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion,* 114.
[41] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 296- 8.

Thomas Pownall emphasized, the nucleus of the colonial administration was "the administration at home."[42] And in the case of Britain, as Armitage points out, "English law was the Law of the Empire."[43] Hardly surprisingly, the extension of these discussions on the desired sort of legislation which would serve the cause of empire best, made its way into the Greek histories. Macedonia, in this sense, was not presented as a role model. Philip, unlike Lycurgos and Solon, did not fix the rules of his administration in a code of law, through which the colonies were to be governed. On this account, Philip's imperial activity was not presented as a case study worthy of much close scrutiny.

It was not Philip, but those he conquered, who merited attention, particularly the Athenians. The historians of Greece held that the success of Philip and the imperial rise of Macedonia owed much to the political factions, military relaxation and degeneration that prevailed in the rest of Greece. How Philip attained the leadership of the Greek league of states and what sort of expansionist policies he pursued all remained secondary when compared to the emphasis on the claim that Philip could have never succeeded, if only the Greek states had preserved their integrity and coherence in the name of maintaining the balance of power. As Gast asserted, Greece "was weak only from disunion."[44] Therefore, the more instructive aspect of Philip's reign was the degraded condition of the Greek states, and the maxim to be highlighted here was that whenever states were too much entangled with domestic disputes, meaningless jealousies and groundless hostilities, another state would always rise to dominate them and more importantly overturn the existing delicate peace.

---

[42] Pownall, *Administration of the Colonies*, 12.
[43] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire,' 97.
[44] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 375.

Particularly in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Jacobite threat cast shadow over British political life. The period from the Revolution to the Seven Years War saw three domestic wars, and innumerable plots and disturbances. The political nation was always deeply and profoundly divided and most of the population was probably more inclined to the old dynasty than the ruling one. These riots kept the "question of succession"[45] always warm and reminded the British that the disunion of that country was not a weak possibility. For that reason, the historians laid particular emphasis on what happened to Greece once it sunk into the games of treason and petty conspiracy. The disintegration of Greece resulted in Greece falling into the hands of Philip. Such lesson was hoped to teach the British to be prudent and avoid falling, through Jacobitism, into the hands of Louis of France. The fear of disunion coexisted with the fear of decline.

The fear of decline was a recurrent theme in eighteenth-century texts about religion, morality, economics, commerce and politics. The assessment of the rise of Macedonia in ancient Greek history texts should be evaluated with this mind. Once the state in question declined, another, generally a rival state, rose. Within this framework, Macedonia was depicted as an outsider to the Greek world which benefited from the unfortunate but preventable fall of Sparta and Athens and took up arms "to decide the cause of liberty and the empire of Greece."[46] No parallels were drawn between Philip's Macedonia and eighteenth-century Britain. On the contrary, the aggressive and expanding Macedonian empire ruled by Philip, and its impact on ancient Greece, were pinpointed as a danger very likely to recur in modern Europe, given the Spanish and above all French attempts at dominating the continent.

---

[45] Clark, 'General Theory' 306.
[46] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 35-6.

231

In unfolding the rise of Macedonia, the British historians adopted an Athenian perspective, as they concentrated on the factors that led to "the loss of dominion."[47] Almost invariably they accused the Athenians of neglect, effeminacy and degeneration, as they failed to stop the march of the Macedonians when they could have. Gast, for example, asserted that

> [i]n the midst of a progress to empire which ought to have alarmed the Athenians, this inconsiderate people continued blind to the dangers that threatened them, nor could persuade themselves, that a king of Macedonia was capable of aspiring to the conquest of Greece.[48]

Without trying to conceal the angry tone in his assessment, Gast added that the Athenians, "instead of being animated with a generous zeal for the public happiness"[49] after all these glorious victories, indulged themselves in "ruinous dissipations," and only watched the growth of the Macedonian empire as one of "the natural calamities which a people might expect" under such degrading circumstances.[50] Philip crouched down "with pleasure" to see "Grecians doing his work."[51] Goldsmith shared this attitude and emphasized that Macedonia established its dominance in ancient Greece easily in the absence of the "natural balance" which alone could have challenged it. Such a balance should be understood as "a union between Athens and Sparta."[52] Ferguson, in his analysis of the decline of states asserted that the rise of a rival power "from abroad" could happen anytime "before [the state] gave any signs of internal decay, even in the midst of prosperity, and in the period of their greatest ardour for national objects" and Athens, "in the height of

---

[47] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, xxix.
[48] *Ibid.,* 512.
[49] *Ibid.,* xxix.
[50] *Ibid.*, xxx.
[51] *Ibid.,* 523.
[52] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 14.

her ambition and of her glory" and "in striving to extend her maritime power beyond the Grecian seas," [53] did not fully grasp the Macedonian threat.

Thus, Philip's Macedonia was a hostile power threatening not only the union among the Greek states but also the Athenian supremacy. In this episode of the Greek history too, Athens was identified with Britain. The British reader was to be instructed about what happened, when a state very similar to Britain let another in the same region acquire the power to dominate. The fate of the Athenians under Demosthenes taught this important lesson. Even Leland joined his colleagues in accentuating the Greek inadequacy as the key factor in Philip's success: "their own unreasonable ambition encouraged, enabled and taught their common enemy the means to gain an influence in Greece." [54] Although he offered a comprehensive analysis of Philip's imperial policies and the elements of his imperial power, in the end, his conclusion too was that it was the Greek "spirit of discord and contention for pre-eminence which were the great basis on which Philip founded his designs." [55]

There is no doubt that besides the Greek disintegration and negligence there were other points, though cited secondarily by the British historians, which brought Philip imperial success. On these issues too, Leland's account of Philip included more complete comments and for that reason will be referred to here more frequently than other historians' accounts. According to Leland, Philip owed his imperial greatness chiefly to "his own abilities alone." Unlike Pericles or his own son Alexander, he was not an emperor born into an empire but a monarch deprived of "the advantages of an illustrious country," "the opulence and force of splendid and extensive dominions" and "the achievements of a long train of renowned ancestry." [56]

---

[53] Ferguson, *Civil Society*, 310.
[54] Leland, *Philip*, II, 121.
[55] Leland, *Philip*, I, 79.
[56] *Ibid.,* 5.

Thus, Philip's gradual accession to greatness could only be understood by means of tracking down numerous inconsiderable events, which eventually turned out to be causes of "one of the greatest revolutions of power which the annals of the heathen world afford." Therefore, despite the attempts, through a scrutiny of Philip's reign one could not arrive at clear guide to direct empire building. What happened then in terms of imperial venture was peculiar to Macedonia and the replication of similar circumstances at the times of another monarch seemed not to be likely. A ruler might possess identical "patient resolution" to Philip, who unceasingly sought "to strengthen and to aggrandise his kingdom to incorporate with the illustrious nation of Greece to subdue that nation and to place himself at the head of its united powers."[57] Nevertheless, most probably the miraculous interplay of external factors would not recur.

Yet Leland put forward one maxim to be universally adopted, which was the importance of meticulously and cleverly uniting the new acquisitions to the motherland.[58] Implementing the best method of connecting the motherland to the colonies and confederate states was too delicate an issue to be left to take its own course. Philip had first appointed himself as leader and gained, not wholehearted, but nonetheless, the legal consent of the Greeks. Then he, as the head of the Greeks, levied taxes to build concrete bonds between his kingdom and new territorial acquisitions. Hence, taxation was offered as the explicit articulation of the motherland-colony relationship and recommended. Despite such arguments in favor of fully taxing the colonies, undoubtedly referring to America, the British government, particularly during the early Hanoverian period, "showed little interest" in this topic. With the exception of occasional attempts at imposing new taxes,

---

[57] Leland, *Philip,* I, xvii-xviii.
[58] Leland, *Philip*, II, 287.

British statesmen who failed to see taxation as a crucial instrument to glue the colonies to motherland and secure their subordination, let the thirteen colonies grow apart from the metropolis. When Parliament finally decided to "make threatening noises" as an imperial legislature keen to levy taxes on the colonies, it was too late. [59]

Although Leland's history included the most thorough account of Philip's imperial policies published in eighteenth-century Britain, other British historians made their own remarks on the same topic. According to Stanyan, the British reader needed to pay much attention to the basis on which the Macedonian empire was founded. Philip successfully acquired an empire as a result of his attempts at destroying the spirit of liberty among the Athenians, Spartans, Thebans and other non-Eastern peoples of his empire. He let them enjoy a merely slight taste of freedom, enough to convince them that they were virtually free, and hence they remained pliant. Maintaining this fragile balance throughout the Macedonian empire, Philip was able to exult in the rusting of the renowned Greek spirit of freedom.[60] On the whole, to Stanyan, a multinational empire could have lasted only if the components of the empire had been governed by a strict regime disguised as a liberal one. Obviously, although it was the ideal situation, such a delicate balance was not easy to establish. The governance of a territorially large and heterogeneously populated empire would have more likely ended up simply authoritarian. The ideal in real terms, therefore, seemed to be to avoid seeking what Philip had desired.

Gast also elaborated on the authoritarian character of Philip's imperial policies. The continuous military achievements of the Macedon, as his argument went, while supporting "the courage and discipline" of his soldiers on one hand, cast a shadow over the subjects of his empire on the other and deterred them from

[59] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 170.
[60] Stanyan, *Grecian History*, II, 342-3.

revolting. [61] It should be noted here that Gast, having adopted an Athenian perspective, did not praise this military power of Macedonia under Philip. As mentioned above, he held that the best means of both acquiring and preserving an empire were the "gentler arts of uprightness and clemency." Too ambitious an imperial design, as Macedonia's was, could only be held together by arms. Such was the rule with which the British intended to comply in their first empire. However, given their homogeneous and administratively manageable nature, it was easy to be non-authoritarian while governing the thirteen colonies. Following their loss, all imperial interest was concentrated on the second empire and hence the British crown was challenged by the necessity of ruling a vast heterogeneous entity, such Philip had acquired. Thus after 1783, as David Armitage holds, one witnesses "the increasing prominence of the army as the instrument of empire." Therefore, the second empire emerged as an empire redefined and, being "more self-consciously multiethnic, multidenominational and cosmopolitan," it could not escape from becoming "more paternalist and authoritarian."[62] In this aspect, the historians were apt to suggest that extensive and racially mixed empires required authoritarian rule; but the politicians would be wrong to desire an empire of this sort.

On the whole, being found too authoritarian and the enemy of the Greek spirit of liberty, Philip's imperial policies were not presented by the historians as commendable. The rare appreciative remarks about Philip mainly came from Leland. His willingness to find straightforward positive guidance in Philip's conduct, mentioned above, was not often found. It was in Goldsmith, the author of the most hostile account of Philip. In Goldsmith's view, one of the reasons why Philip succeeded in acquiring his empire, whether authoritarian or not, was his care "not to

---

[61] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 194.
[62] Armitage, 'The British Conception of Empire,' 96.

engage in a war by which he could not reap the least benefit."[63] In view of his vast ambition, this was definitely something to be acknowledged by the historians in his favor. Of course, such comment could at the same time be interpreted as Goldsmith's answer to the eighteenth-century debate about Britain's involvement in continental warfare. Coming from the Tory tradition, Goldsmith frequently demonstrated the Tory "horror of militarism."[64]

One could thus squeeze into a paragraph the insights into the question of empire that tended to depict Philip in a favourable light. The disapproval of Philip, on the other hand, was voluminous. It was Alexander's empire rather than that of Philip that was seen as worthy of attention and appreciation in the Greek history texts. Leland's claim that

> [i]f he was unjust, he was like Caesar, unjust for the sake of empire. If he gloried in the success acquired by his virtues, or his intellectual accomplishments, rather than in that which the force of arms could gain, the reason, which he himself assigned, points out his true principle,[65]

failed to create an atmosphere of sympathy for Philip's authoritarianism.

5.4 The Alexandrian Empire

In the way the Alexandrian era was recounted, what strikes the reader most is that Alexander, unlike Philip, was treated as a Greek, not a Macedonian, and his empire truly Greek: the "crown" of "the pyramid of Grecian glory"[66] or more simply, "the empire of the Greeks."[67] According to Gillies, he not only put an end to the humiliation of the Greeks, but "undertook and accomplished the most extraordinary enterprises in the history of the world."[68] Likewise, Goldsmith in his generous praise

---

[63] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 443-4.
[64] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 208.
[65] Leland, *Life and Reign of Philip*, II, 308.
[66] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 215.
[67] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, xxx.
[68] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 635.

of Alexander, argued that under him ancient Greece reached a state of perfection "by the arts of refinement, growing more than a match for the rest of the world united, and leaving mankind an example of the superiority of intellect over brutal force."[69] If Goldsmith was extreme in disapproval of Philip, he was equally the most enthusiastic in praising Alexander. His only reservation about him was the Macedonian king's attachment to religion. Given Goldsmith's aversion to mixing religion and political affairs, unlike Gillies and Gast, this stance is hardly surprising.[70]

Although the first British empire was overtly Protestant, this aspect was emphasized mostly with the purpose of differentiating the British from the Spanish and French.[71] Otherwise religion did not occupy a predominant place in the imperial discourse with respect to the American colonies and, it may be said, remained rather ineffective in the formation of imperial politics as well as in the cause of the imperial crisis. Nevertheless, this depiction of the first British empire, though a certain element of truth, could be deceptive, for J. C. D. Clark reminds us that alongside the disagreement over taxation and representation, the loss of the thirteen colonies could equally be explained through the contemporary religious tendencies. When the Church at home began to seek more pre-eminence in the colonies from the 1760s, the colonial Dissenters came to see this move as an instrument of pressure aiming at curtailing the liberties that they immensely treasured.[72] In this way, Goldsmith's commendation of keeping religion out of imperial politics was tested and confirmed as a valid prescription. The question of religion was to play an important role in the second British empire subsequent to the Evangelical Revival and the missionary raid on India. It should here, however, be stressed that the British government together

---

[69] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 215-6.
[70] *Ibid.,* 135.
[71] Armitage, 'British Conception of Empire', 94.
[72] J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1688-1832*: *Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 319.

with the directors of the East India Company mounted guard over their delicate supremacy with utmost care and resisted forcefully to the missionary attempts at adorning the imperial discourse with religious messages.

All our historians sought to indicate the superiority and glory of Alexander's empire. In their works, the episodes dedicated to Alexander aimed to demonstrate clearly how the Macedonian empire, with its regrettable character became the ideal of empire. Alexander's reign was viewed from that perspective. In terms of imperial venture, he completed what the Athenians had started. Thus, treatment of Alexander generated numerous imperial maxims, set forth by the British historians for their compatriots.

At the outset, Alexander embraced the rule of 'common enemy' by triggering the Greeks' "ancient hatred of Persians, their perpetual and irreconcilable enemies, whose destruction they had more than once sworn."[73] The Persian hatred was the only common ground on which the states of the Greek league and Macedonia could have stood together and Alexander made good use of this legacy of his father. It was Philip who first pursued this policy of making the common enemy of the confederate states of the empire his own.[74] The final pacification of Persia drew the Greeks and the Macedonians closer and enabled the latter to subdue the former. According to Gast, the overthrow of the Persian empire by the hands of the Macedonian king was an event destined to happen.[75]

If Goldsmith disliked Philip's authoritarian policies of empire, Alexander, in this respect, stood as the antithesis of everything Philip represented. He "applied

---

[73] Goldsmith, *Grecian History,* II, 79.
[74] See Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 48, 49 and 52. Interestingly enough, as Gast stressed, it was possible to see the reflection of the same rule on ancient Greece prior to Philip's triumph. Given the unstoppable spread of the Macedonian state, the Greeks hopelessly realised that "Persia was the only power that could balance the Macedonian." In other words, Macedonia was equally a threat to both the Persians and Greeks and thus was suffcent a reason to draw these two people closer. Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 119.
[75] Gast, *History of Greece*, I, xxx.

himself chiefly to morality which is properly the science of kings" and sought to acquire "the knowledge of mankind and of their duties." [76] Evidently, this characteristic of Alexander rendered his empire inherently different from that of his father. Instead of pursuing conquests that would have drained the motherland of its economic and military resources, he fixed his eyes on the Indian subcontinent whose inhabitants were rich and unwarlike. As he proceeded in India "with the rapidity rather of a traveller than a conqueror,"[77] this expedition appeared as the tangible result of Alexander's ingenious imperial policies, now unveiled by Goldsmith for the imitation of contemporary and future kings.

Philip represented the military aggression of empire which was increasingly frowned upon, or at least treated with reserve among eighteenth-century Britons reflecting on empire. Alexander was shaped to the image of the commended and non-aggressive ruler. Thus, Leland explained the greatness of Alexander's empire by means of his virtue and the intelligence of his actions, rather than the force of his arms,[78] and in this way his empire was dissociated from that of his father as well as from the Spanish and French empires. As a considerable part of Alexander's reign remained out of the scope of Leland's history, his assessment fell short of the comprehensiveness of those by others such as Gillies and Gast. Gillies grounded his arguments about Alexander's governance on the assertion that Alexander had never been a monarch driven by "the madness of ambition." He ruled only by "just views of policy" and consequently brought wealth and welfare wherever he marched.[79] In every state he acquired, by the implementation of his just and moral policies -unlike those of his predecessors, who preferred simply to oppress- he "encouraged useful

---

[76] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 62-1.
[77] *Ibid.*, 199.
[78] Leland, *Life and Reign of Philip*, I, 11-2.
[79] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 636.

industry and alleviated public burdens." During his reign, the periphery developed along with Macedonia through cooperation for their mutual benefit. Additionally, as one of his most distinctive policies of empire, he allowed the subjugated states to retain their original governments and rights to a certain degree, though at the same time keeping a very close eye on their dealings, both domestic and foreign, in order to be able immediately to interfere when necessary. In so doing, Alexander departed from Aristotle's teaching and, uniquely in antiquity, maintained an almost impossible balance among states of drastically varying character by considering "the barbarians, not as slaves, but as subjects, the Greeks, not as subjects but allies" and for that reason only, if not for the others, according to Gillies, Alexander's empire achieved a state of perfection which had been experienced by neither "the despotism of Persia" nor "the domineering ambition of Athens and Sparta."[80]

Alexander's moral conduct of imperial affairs thus singled him out as an ideal ruler in the eighteenth-century sense of the word. What the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers were preoccupied with in terms of "morality and human moral responsiveness,"[81] Alexander seemed to have discovered, two millennia earlier, and accordingly created an imperial system. Thus, the Athenian empire, Gillies held, which could have been evaluated in its own historical context as a superior, non-militaristic, well cohering entity, when compared with that of Alexander, was seen to be favoured did not achieve the perfection and emulation of the Macedonian empire under Alexander. As one of the attributes of moral government, the establishment of the rule of mutual benefit, associated with commercial activity. Once incorporated to the imperial governance could switch the category of an empire from disapproved to

---

[80] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 636.
[81] Tom L. Beauchamp, 'Editor's Introduction' in *David Hume. An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 24.

commended. Thus, Alexander was reflected as "an ideal form of the Enlightenment's Philosopher King."[82]

Gast, in arguments very similar to those of Gillies, laid great emphasis on Alexander's scheme of governing a significant variety of states through a very delicate balance which gave them a considerable degree of liberty. On account of the successful maintenance of this balance, the Greeks and Persians peacefully coexisted under one common rule.[83] Another sign of Alexander's imperial genius, Gast thought, was his aspiration to acquire superior naval power, which the Macedonian empire originally lacked. Having rightly judged that a land empire could neither sustain constant growth nor secure new conquests without the assistance of an exceptionally sturdy navy, and for "the prize of empire," Alexander annexed Syria, Phoenicia and the islands to Macedonia and made their navies Macedonian.[84] This action and the acceleration in the expansion of his empire afterwards proved to Gast once again that in the imperial ventures naval excellence was the decisive factor in endowing a nation with success, glory and greatness.

Alexander had never been simply another conqueror in history. He was understood as a singular, innovative ruler who considered the business of governing seriously as a science. In order to secure territorial acquisitions, he methodically acquired naval power, granted a certain degree of liberty to the colonies and cared much for their prosperity. Thus, he built and enhanced a tight link between the centre and periphery that permitted both parties to benefit. Under Alexander's rule, the states which composed the Macedonian empire now without apprehension of a foreign threat, happily and peacefully prospered. Nevertheless, Alexander committed an error that was fatal to his empire. As Gast put it, Alexander, "like all founders of a

---

[82] Briant, 'Alexander the Great and the Enlightenment,' 9.
[83] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 97.
[84] *Ibid.,* 29.

new empire," had indulged himself in "the fond idea that this vast fabric of power, which he was labouring to establish would last for ages."[85] But earthly empires were not meant to last forever, especially those which had violated the first maxim of empire –never overstretch the boundaries.

All historians agreed that Alexander in the end exceeded the optimum limits, previously foreseen by Philip. As Gast put it, Alexander's ambition, which brought Macedonia greatness in the early phases of his reign, brought its ruin in later days:

> And had Alexander *completed the plan* and no more which his father seems to have traced out, had he contented himself with driving the Persians out of the lower Asia and freeing the Macedonians on that side form all future dread of invasion had he taken care to confirm and render permanent that sovereignty over the Greek commonwealths which their fears or their affections had yielded to him, he probably had rendered Macedon flourishing and powerful.

Instead, having failed to tame his ambition, he exhausted his country's resources "in making conquests, not only useless but pernicious to her."[86] Thus, as Gast's argument continued, Alexandrian rule was in effect not to be viewed as "the area of glory," which blessed the Macedonians with "internal happiness and prosperity." Eventually, because the size of the imperial territory made it unmanageable, the peoples of the empire were stripped of their previous prosperity, welfare and comfort and thus denied the right of good government. Such decline was inevitable in an empire whose sovereign was absent from the imperial seat for "a season of life," travelling from the western to the eastern borders.[87]

Although Alexander, as the British historians believed, had built the most commendable empire of the ancient world, he was blinded by his ambition and did not know when to stop the process of conquest and expansion. A ruler who desired imperial might and glory needed to be capable of repressing his instinct for

---

[85] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 95.
[86] *Ibid.,* 194-5.
[87] *Ibid.*, 171-2.

expansion just for the sake of expansion. The historians laid particular emphasis on the importance of the well-being of the governed. No conquest that would put it in jeopardy was to be pursued. In speaking of the post-Alexandrian era of the Macedonian empire, this belief came to the fore to generate further lessons.

The fall of the Macedonian empire, just as its rise, would also "hold forth,"[88] according to Leland, maxims of empire. Once the boundaries were overstretched beyond the manageable in terms of distance, finances and military capacity, it was inevitable that, soon, domestic contentions would erupt and the states incorporated in the empire would compete for dominance and pre-eminence. The monarch who built such a vast entity may himself have succeeded in keeping it solidly together in his lifetime, but he was unlikely to leave a legacy of successful imperial governance. Alexander was the quintessential example of such a monarch, because, as Gillies stressed, during his reign "[t]he principles of royal succession were never accurately ascertained in Macedon."[89] When, with the hope of securing the endurance of his empire, Alexander said on his deathbed that he was leaving the Macedonian empire "to the most worthy," he neither assigned an heir to his imperial throne nor decided on an imperial code to be subsequently observed. On this account, in Goldsmith's words, "so few periods of history were ever left in greater darkness, doubt and confusion"[90] by misgovernment than the post-Alexandrian era of Greek history.

5.5 Persia

In comparison with Athens and Sparta, Macedonia and Persia both represented the lesser empires of ancient Greece which were not believed to offer a true pattern of imperial greatness. On the contrary, the imperial experience of

---

[88] Leland, *Life and Reign of Philip*, I, 79.
[89] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 678.
[90] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 216.

Macedonia and Persia encompassed everything that the eighteenth-century British political writers approached with reserve in their quest for normative rules of empire. These empires overextended their territories beyond the manageable, fought their battles imprudently and failed to create a complete legislative code even for the administration of the metropolis, let alone the colonies. Nevertheless, when the references to Athens and Sparta were put aside and Macedonia and Persia alone were assessed, the British historians clearly treated Macedonia in a positive light and considered it less unacceptable than Persia. Macedonia may have been the black sheep of the Greek family; but Persia was a complete stranger.

First of all, Persia was despotic and hence from the root, different from the city-states of ancient Greece. Of course, this emphasis on the despotism of Persia was not peculiar to the eighteenth-century British historians. The ancient Greeks themselves certainly regarded the Persians as alien and drew a line between Asia and Europe, distinguishing the inhabitants of the former from those of the latter.[91] Asia was depicted as having a much less favourable geography than Europe and its inhabitants depicted as less refined and more warlike. Furthermore, in this picture the Persian government did not resemble in any way those prevailing in Greece. In his *Politics*, Aristotle fervently emphasised that "the peoples of Asia" lived "in continuous subjection and slavery" and, unlike the Greeks, would "endure despotic rule without distaste."[92] Aristotle's judgement of the Persians became one of the most widely referred to, paraphrased and adopted views. Also, Xenophon's *Persian Expedition* associated the Persian territories with corruption and luxury. [93] Throughout the centuries, a view of the Persians, derived from Greek dealings with

---

[91] Aeschylus (tr Anthony J. Podlecki), *The Persians* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1991), 25 and Euripides (tr David Franklin), *Bacchae* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 3, 27 and 393.
[92] Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1285 a 15-29 and 1327 b 23-36.
[93] Xenophon (tr Rex Warner), *The Persian Expedition* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 153.

Persians from 545 to 330 BC, was repeated in works on Greece. Thus was drawn a border between east and west, Greeks and Persians.

The Greek encounter with the Persians helped to generate a sense of self-identity among ancient Greeks, creating an awareness of sharing one common language, geography and political culture. The Greeks, particularly the Athenians, developed their self-identity in thinking about the Persians, who were what they were not. Persia was a civilisation alien to their own, because, in the first place, the ruler of the state was not elected, never accountable to his people and could levy any sort of taxation without the obligation of legally justifying it. Then again, the Persians lacked the Greek love of freedom and were corrupted by luxury and effeminacy. For Greeks, the Persian Wars was the occasion for them to understand and note these differences.

Of course, the only accounts of the Greek-Persian conflict are those written by the triumphant Greeks and since the "victors rewrite history," they naturally reflect the Greek side of the story only. Thus, the perceptions contained in them remained extremely influential, creating "a false image still maintained and presented in scholarly works."[94] Moreover, as some have asserted, this image came to be applied to the civilisations alien to that of Europe in other historical periods. As Edward Said put it in his well-known *Orientalism*, what began as the ancient Greek views of the Persians did not remain limited to them or to a specific period of time.[95] From ancient Greek writings the word Persian was extracted to be replaced by the name of whichever eastern people was then considered by Europeans as the hostile other. The claim that the ancients' views of Persians served to assist the formation of

---

[94] Jack Martin Balcer, *The Persian Conquest of the Greeks 545-450 BC* (Konstanz: Univ.-Verl. Konstanz, 1995), 29 and 22.

[95] Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 56-7.

the later orientalisms has frequently been repeated since its first formulation by Said. Paul Cartledge's below words are one example of the many:

> …the process of 'othering' and indeed inventing 'the barbarian' as a homogenized stereotype was well underway in Greece, in an early version of the specific form of derogatory stereotyping known as 'orientalism.'[96]

Even if we choose not to side with those who accept Said's notion of orientalism, it must be acknowledged that the views of eighteenth-century British historians can be labelled as orientalist, though with acknowledgement of the need for commentary and qualification. Their attitude to Persia, ancient and modern, was by no means wholly negative. Certain chapters of the Persian history were in fact studied with considerable admiration. Still, ancient Persia was mostly presented to the reader in an unhidden disapproving tone as the antithesis of the Greek states. The historians aimed to emphasise that Athens and Sparta, and even Macedonia, stood as equal components of the solid Greek front and shared a perception of the Persians as a threat to civilisation and a source of degeneration. What the Persians stood against was not the Athenians, Spartans or Macedonians, but the Greeks as one people sharing the same civilisation.

5.6 Ancient Persia in Eighteenth-Century Britain

Interestingly enough, contemporary Persia did not repulse the British as much as ancient Persia generally did in the eighteenth century. The Ottoman empire instead represented the alien power menacing civilisation. Eighteenth-century Persians, despite dwelling in the east under a government very much like that of the Ottomans, were neither so alien nor reprobated as the latter. While the Ottoman Empire constituted the quintessential example of despotism in the eyes of British *literati*, Persia was hailed as one of the most ancient nations on earth and in many ways

---

[96] Paul Cartledge, *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others* (Oxford Univeristy Press, 1993), 39.

commended. Although it was still customary to refer mainly to Pedro Teixeira's *The History of Persia* of 1610 until the publication of John Malcolm's *The History of Persia* in 1815, the British gradually took more interest in Persian history, as well as in the country's culture and language throughout the eighteenth century. In his translation of Teixeira's history, John Stevens explained why he had undertaken this task in 1715, stressing the point that "Persia, is at this time, and has been for several ages, one of the greatest eastern monarchies" and the acquaintance of the English reader with it was unfortunately through accounts "no better than fragments."[97] Stevens' was one of the earliest examples of the eighteenth-century attempt to increase understanding of the Persians and their empire.

Towards the end of the century, the publication of Persian allegories, either merely invented or adapted from Persian classics, from which moral lessons could be derived, became fashionable. It is worth noting the content of such writing. In a pamphlet entitled *The Effects of Tyranny and Disobedience or the History of Persia*, for instance, the author, who used the pseudonym Lawrence Lovesense, recounted the story of a fifteenth-century Persian king "to inspire the minds of youth with ideas of real virtue." Here Persia is depicted as an empire adorned with "excellence, justice and virtue," its kings as "merciful, just and valiant" and the statesmen as wise men who made "the welfare of the country their chief study."[98] Thus, Persia was a source of moral instruction. The British were also becoming knowledgeable about a more real Persia. After the East India Company made a knowledge of Persian language mandatory for British officials and officers serving in India at the turn of the century, the British concern with Persian culture was also significantly boosted.

---

[97] John Stevens, *The History of Persia* (London: Jonas Brown, 1715), unpaginated preface.
[98] Lawrence Lovesense, *The Effects of Tyranny and Disobedience or the History of Persia: Calculated to Inspire the Minds of Youth with Ideas of Real Virtue* (London: R. Bassam, 1790), 64, 5 and 7.

Eighteenth-century Britain attributed much that was commendable to the Persian state, literature and culture, though knowledge of these things was not often well-founded. Certainly, of the two powerful eastern states, Persia was pictured as the one closer to the West in terms of political administration. It was the Ottoman empire to which was ascribed an undeniably despotic character. Hebisci's words suggesting that the Persian government was "not so tyrannical"[99] as that of the Ottomans echo to a similar general conviction in France at the time. Perhaps Europeans were predisposed to take a favourable view of Persia, for the Persian state had the capacity to check Ottoman power, which terrorised and repelled Europeans. Persia, sometimes having troubled the Ottoman empire on its southeastern border, might distract the Ottomans from the northwest. Ogier Ghiselin de Busbeq, the ambassador of the Holy Roman Empire to Constantinople in 1554-62, whose letters for long remained as one of the most significant accounts of the Ottomans by a European and were excessively referred to, even by Mitford in his history,[100] asserted that it was "only the Persian stands between us and ruin."[101]

In the eighteenth century, especially after the rise of theories of civilisation, the Ottoman empire came to represent the quintessential example of despotism in Britain. It was the Ottomans, rather than the Persians, who came into possession of the negative depiction of the east. Although the fear of Ottoman invasion was, particularly since the empires reversals in the late seventeenth century, much in decline, a new fear, reflecting moral concerns, came to the fore in thinking about a society perceived as wealthy, given to the cultivation of luxury, unrestrained by true

---

[99] Elias Hebisci, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire. Containing a more accurate...account of the religio, government, customs and amusements of the Turks* (London, 1784), 283.
[100] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 113.
[101] Busbeq Ogier Ghiselin, *Travels into Turkey* (first translation into English) (London, 1744), 138 quoted in Hugh Bucheno, *Crescent and Cross: The Battle of Lepanto 1571* (London: Casell, 2003), 100.

religion and despotic. Many among the western literati believed that any close contact with the Ottoman empire, especially cultural interaction, would result in the spread of a moral contagion to individuals and perhaps eventually a corruption and despotism which would be destructive of western societies and states. Particularly in the texts relating to Greece, both ancient and contemporary, this association of the Ottomans with despotism and corruption became more visible. Claude Etienne Savary's *Letters on Greece*, which was received with much interest by British readers, argued that "the whole Ottoman history" could offer only "lessons for all despots." The saddening proof of this was the Greeks' subjection to the Ottomans, intruding on civilised lands:

> At the sight of these melancholy spectacles my heart groans and is filled with indignation my blood boils in my veins, and I could wish to excite all Europe to combine against these Turks, who, descending from the mountains of Armenia, have crushed the nations in their passage, and waded through rivers of blood to the throne of Constantinople. Nor have the beautiful countries they inhabit been able to soften the ferocity of their character. Power is their law; their justice is the sabre.[102]

The histories of ancient Greece, particularly their introductory sections, often made remarks similar to those of Savary. Before plunging into the ancient phase of Greek history, the historians commonly called the reader's attention to the current state of the Greeks under Ottoman rule, which wholly lacked redeeming features. It was among fashionable topics at that time to mourn, in Adam Ferguson's words, for that "wretched race" the Ottoman conquerors "had vanquished."[103] And our texts too elaborated on the sufferings of modern Greeks.

5.7 Describing Ancient Persia

The British historians of ancient Greece understood the Persian empire with reference to despotism, as that was understood by the Scottish Enlightenment

---

[102] Savary, *Letters on Greece,* 202.
[103] Adam Ferguson, *Civil Society*, 3.

thinkers. In the theories of civilisation and progress put forward in the Scottish Enlightenment, particular emphasis was laid on despotism, prescribing the ideal by offering its contrast. It should here be noted that in the formation of these theories, especially in their treatment of despotism, Montesquieu had an undeniable impact and was repeatedly cited by the British philosophes.[104] It was when the contrast of despotism had been established that the writers of the Scottish Enlightenment sought to pin down the requisites for arriving at the ideal commercial state. The Scottish writers presented the most extreme contrast to underpin their arguments. In Ferguson's words,

> [d]espotism is a monarchy corrupted, in which a court and a prince in appearance remain, but in which every subordinate rank is destroyed; in which the subject is told, that he has no rights; that he can not possess any property, nor fill any station, independent of the momentary will of his prince. These doctrines are founded on the maxims of conquest, they must be incalculated with the whip and the sword, and are best received under the terror of chains and imprisonment.[105]

Hume too made a clear distinction between despotism and refined free governments in his essays, repeating many times that "refinements require curiosity, security and law" and therefore "can never be expected in despotic governments." The motor of civilisation was commerce and

> [t]he greatness of a state, and the happiness of its subjects, how independent so ever they may be supposed in some respects, are commonly allowed to be inseparable with regard to commerce; and as private men receive in greater security, in the possession of their trade and their riches, from power of the public, so the public becomes powerful in proportion to the opulence and extensive commerce of private men.[106]

All of this was impossible in a despotic state and therefore despotism was the exact opposite of civilisation. In this light, the British historians evaluated the Persian empire.

---

[104] See, for example, Ferguson, *Civil Society,* 96, 98, 123, 126 and Hume, *Essays*, I, 440 and II, 190.
[105] Adam Ferguson, *Civil Society* , 104.
[106] Hume, 'Of Commerce' in *Essays*, I, 288.

Almost as intensively and committedly as they dealt with Athens, Gast, Gillies, Goldsmith, Leland and Mitford concerned themselves with the Greek encounter with the Persians. In this phase of ancient Greek history, ancient Persia was held up as completely incompatible with the Greek states in terms of religion, culture, legal system and, more importantly, imperial structure. Having grown mighty and restless on the Asian side of the Greek border, the Persians threatened the well-being of the Greeks, the security and welfare of their states, the balance of power among them and the one civilisation that was shared by all Greeks. And, the historians attempted to understand and reflect on the Persian empire from the perspective of the ancient Greeks. They thus, together with the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers, depicted clearly the alien character of Persia. Persia was the despotic state, defined against the Greek states, built on respect for the lives and properties of their citizens.

However, as mentioned above, classifying ancient Greek histories of the prescribed age altogether as anti-Persian would do injustice to these texts. It should be stressed that Mitford's *History*, from the publication of the second volume on, which coincided with the troublesome aftermath of the French Revolution, argued that under the corrupting forces of democracy Athens had grown into a despotism, as late eighteenth-century France had just done. He even applied to Athens Montesquieu's definition of despotism, the customary use of which was to distinguish the Ottoman Empire from the European states. Thus Mitford claimed that "the essence of despotism" was embedded in "the assembled Athenian people"[107] in its full sense. Here the historian's dislike of democracy and republic took over from the common dislike of barbarian Persia. He borrowed the vocabulary of despotism

---

[107] Mitford, *History of Greece*, II, 88.

from the Athenians in a similar way to that of his colleagues, but, for the sake of revealing the evil nature of the majority's rule, atypically used it against its ancient inventors and reflected it on post-revolution France.

There are, certainly, elements of the tendency to emphasize the alien character of Persia in Mitford's history, as where he contended that ancient Persia was governed by "a despotic throne" and that Xerxes's palace sheltered many intrigues, in accordance with the maxim that palaces were "fully of horrors in despotic countries."[108] However, because Mitford intended his work to champion monarchy, he avoided building his arguments entirely on the condemnation of ancient Persia as the enemy of Greek civilisation. Ancient Persia was a monarchy and therefore deserved some credit simply on that account. In this atypical assessment of ancient Persia, without having completely disregarded the influence of Xenophon on the Greek history-writing tradition, Mitford conveniently constructed his pro-Persian argument on Herodotus's sympathy for the Persians, which had gained him the reputation of a barbarian-lover.[109] His reliance on Herodotus as "the impartial historian" and his pro-monarchist campaign led him to offer singular views of ancient Persia, remarking, for example, that "every authentic account marks the Persians for a people of liberal sentiments and polished manners beyond almost any other in all antiquity."[110] Still, he could not avoid altogether the general conviction that they were "a warlike and conquering people."[111] The effect of this feature of Persians was deeply and frequently felt by their Greek neighbours.

Another exception to our generalisation that Persia, in the eyes of the British historians, was an alien society, incompatible with the Greek civilisation, was the

---

[108] Mitford, *History of Greece,* III, 101 and II, 57.
[109] *Ibid.,* 138.
[110] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 335 and 387.
[111] *Ibid.,* 355.

way Cyrus was presented. Within their common approach to ancient Persia, the British historians treated Cyrus the Great exceptionally with significant veneration and did not depict him as a despot. For Gillies, he was the "extraordinary man who raised the Persian glory on the ruins of Medes and Babylonians." "[T]he extraordinary abilities" that helped him achieve this allowed him at the same time "soften" despotism "without endangering his authority."[112] It seemed crucial for the British historians to detach Cyrus completely from the slightest implication that he himself was a despot ruling a despotic kingdom.[113] This collective effort of the British historians to exempt Cyrus from any despotic practice was grounded in his positive depictions prevailing both in the ancient sources and, of course, the Old Testament. Of all the ancient sources covering the era of Cyrus the Great, Xenophon's *Education of Cyrus* contributed most to the establishment of the highly romanticised picture of the Persian king as the best sort of ruler that any state could ever have had.[114] As to the Old Testament, in the books of Isaiah, Ezra and Daniel, to Cyrus was ascribed the termination of the captivity of Jews in Babylonia. He was recounted as the king whose right hand was held by God. (Isaiah 45:1) Thus, in the form of an extension to this tradition Cyrus was depicted with reverence and admiration in eighteenth-century texts of ancient Greek history.

The reflection of such a view of Cyrus could also be seen in the prefaces of the eighteenth-century translations of Xenophon. Maurice Ashley, for instance, held in his translation of *Cyropedia* that praising Cyrus would not mean to take stance "in favor of tyranny" in ancient Persia, which appalled the contemporary Britain. It seemed crucial to make a clear distinction between the emperor and the later version

---

[112] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 227.
[113] See also Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 335 and Gast, *Rudiments*, 370.
[114] See also Herodotus's *History* (3.89) where he replicated the Persian proverb saying Cyrus was a 'father' to his subjects.

of his empire, for the Persian empire was later degenerated to a despicable regime which caused "a general defection from all virtue" in the people of Persia.[115] Still Ashley did not conceal his discomfort with speaking highly of someone of Persian origin, even if it was Cyrus. Nevertheless, because Cyrus was then commonly presented as the supranational ideal governor, Ashley's concern was not substantial. Cyrus the Great was, in a way, detached from his Persian identity and exempted from the disgrace of being a Persian. As a matter of fact, Cyrus represented the universality of governorship and law. In the Preface to the French author Alexander Ramsay's *The Travels of Cyrus*, he displayed his philosophical concerns and claimed that Cyrus could be seen as the evidence that

> all nations had originally the same fundamental principles that the duties of religion, morality and good policy flow from the same source, conspire to the same end and mutually support and fortify each other and in a word, that all the civil and human virtues, the laws of nature and nations are, so to speak, but consequences of the Love of Order, which is eternal and universal law of all intelligences.[116]

He argued that Cyrus built an empire in compliance with the universal rules and that ancient Persia at his time was essentially no different from the Greek states or eighteenth-century Britain.

Let us now put the exceptions aside and examine the views of the British historians to whom the Persians signified a barbarian people, in the derogatory sense of the term. In our quest for how the eighteenth-century British perceived ancient Persia from the perspective of empire, it appears that the attitude of dislike is predominant. At that time, the word 'barbarian' was already detached from its meaning of non-Greek speaking and had come to denote an inferior civilisation and hostile government. According to Ferguson, barbarian was the term "to characterize a people regardless of commercial arts; profuse of their own lives and not of those of

---

[115] Xenophon, Maurice Ashley trn, *Cyropedia: Or, the Institution of Cyrus* (London, 1752), 44.
[116] Alexander Ramsey, *The Travels of Cyrus* Fifth Edition (London: James Bottenhem, 1736), xxvii.

255

others; vehement in their attachment to one society and implacable in their antipathy to another."[117] It is noteworthy that in our texts of ancient Greek history, despite the negative remarks that they occasionally received, Athens, Sparta and Macedonia were never designated as barbarian and that was deliberate. For instance, in Gast's *Rudiments*, which reflected the author's unmistakable pro-Athenian line at the expense of Sparta, in the dialogue between the two imaginary characters, Palaemon forbade Cleanthes to call Sparta "barbarous."[118] Of course, in the very beginning, or in the fabulous age of world history, all peoples on earth, including the Greeks, were barbarians. The Greeks however uniquely evolved towards refinement and, in Mitford's words, became "the first country of Europe that emerged from barbarism."[119] Nevertheless, as acknowledged commonly by the British historians, there were forerunners of the Greeks, aiding them in this extraordinary achievement. The Phoenicians and Egyptians might be regarded as civilised according to the eighteenth-century criteria, because of their mastery of "commerce, navigation and several other valuable sciences,"[120] and through their communication with the Greeks transmitted to them this knowledge of civilisation. Strikingly, the Persians were expressly left out of the eastern nations through which civilisation was transmitted. Even Mitford's praise of the civilised nations of the East was limited to the Phoenicians and Egyptians.[121] Ancient Persia, as understood by both ancient and eighteenth-century British historians, was the antithesis of civilisation.

This had something to do with mere geography. Having been influenced by Aristotle's argument on climate, which was popularised in the eighteenth century by Montesquieu, Asia was believed to influence its peoples to accept slavery, the spread

---

[117] Ferguson, *Civil Society,* 290.
[118] Gast, *Rudiments*, 281.
[119] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 6. Also see Potter, *Archaeologia Graeca*, II, 1.
[120] Gast, *Rudiments*, 43.
[121] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 19, 65 and 77.

of which into Greece needed to be prevented at all costs. Gillies, having described Aristotle's suggestion that the country of the Greeks alone was possessed of a suitable climate as "too flattering," enlarged the favourable area to encompass Europe. And the decline of Europe came when "the sloth and servility of Asia gradually crept into Greece."[122] Thus, the British historians laid particular emphasis on the point that the Persian threat was located in Asia and threatened Europe. What was therefore suggested as geographical containment. This emphasis on geography and the argument that the Persians should have been confined to Asia clearly in a way resembles the eighteenth-century idea voiced by Burke and others that the Ottomans should be expelled from Europe and closed up in Asia.[123]

5.8 Persia as Empire

As an Asiatic empire, that of the Persians' did not offer the normative rules of ideal imperialism. Nor did it provide the lessons of avoidance as Macedonia did in the eyes of the historians. Persia was rather analysed to suggest an appropriate relationship with an empire with an alien, or maybe dangerous, culture. Goldsmith stressed the point that the Persian empire in Asia had stood as "the greatest at that time in the world" before its confrontation with the Greeks. Once it "offered itself" as the "opponent" of Greece and its civilisation, it gradually sank into "total subversion."[124] It is here implied that the Persians could have chosen to be allies of the Greeks, instead of being their 'terror.' Then they would not have declined in the way they did and both parties could have co-existed with mutual benefit, though in different geographies. Nevertheless, since the Persians acted otherwise and attempted to settle in the Greek homeland, the general tendency was to label them as *the* enemy.

---

[122] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, II, 680.
[123] Gillies conveyed to his reader that the Persians were an Asiatic nation who "threatened Europe with the terrors of Asiatic despotism." Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 226.
[124] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, p. 89.

Of course, on the other side of the coin, however docile the Persians could have become, the Greeks would have never been eager to incorporate this other people fully to their system of states, for these Greek states, "though seemingly different from each other" were historically connected to each other "by one common language, one religion and a national pride" which taught them to consider all other nations as barbarous and feeble.[125] Also, because ancient Greece was composed of similarly sovereign states with similar legislative systems, these states had developed a sense of togetherness. The Persian empire, which was inherently different from them, could at best choose between being a distant ally or an enemy to be destroyed.

In what ways the imperial designs of a despotic king could affect the advance of a commercial empire remained as the central focus of the British historians in studying the Persian imperial pattern. As always, the legal system was believed to be the crucial source to reveal the nature of government, not only at home but in the colonies also. The "wise legislation" of the motherland would create an imperial system of mutual prosperity and definitely serve to secure colonial achievements.[126] The Persian legislation seemed to work only one way, always for the benefit of the ruler and at the expense of the people. Among the ancient Persian kings, Cyrus the Great alone was favourably described as the father of his subjects. This was a name never attached either to past or contemporary eastern monarchs, but commonly used to speak of the European ones, particularly in comparing them with despotic rulers. The Persian empire completely rested on the person of the Persian king.[127] This fact set it as a contrast to the British empire in the first place. One of the reasons the Persian monarchs were disapproved of by the British historians was the 'unlawful'

---

[125] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 9-10.

[126] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 170.

[127] Amélie Khurt, 'The Achaemenid Persian Empire (c.550-330 BCE): Continuities, Adaptations, Transformations in Susan E. Alcock et.al. (eds), *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 103.

title which they assumed. The "King of Kings" was, according to Gillies, "a title expressive of the nature as well as the greatness of their power."[128] The Persian kings naming their subjects as 'slaves' appeared equally repulsive to the British historians.[129] Titles and terminology alone ensured that the ancient Persian monarchs came to be associated with absolutism, despotism and unlawfulness in the eighteenth century. The same was true for the contemporary Ottoman ruler who had been commonly named by the British the "Grand Seignior."[130] As we know from Harrington's *Oceana*, this was a title representing a monarch who was the sole proprietor of land or at best who would own the "three parts in four" and thus "overbalance the people."[131]

Although, as Gast stated, "the general policy" of the Greeks "was to consider the Persian monarch as a prince,"[132] they had taken notice of how the Persian monarchs thought of themselves and its implications for the imperial policies of the Persians. On the issue of the nature of the Persian kingship, Mitford emphasised that the Persians had to remain obedient to the kings' "right of inheritance" in the first place, which was a maxim rendering this rule unquestionable, fixed and absolute. Then came obeisance to the kings' "character as conquerors."[133] These were in fact the two pillars of the Persian legal system, held to mark the character of the Persian empire. In the Greek history texts there was no deep analysis of the Persian legal system on the grounds of both the absence of a code like those of Lycurgos and Solon and more crucially, the general belief that Persian law was simply the arbitrary

---

[128] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 227.
[129] Today it is clear that this conviction was derived from the mistranslation of the ancient Persian term *mana badaka* which stood for "my subject or vassal" into ancient Greek as *doûlos* which meant "slave." Paul A. Rahe, 'The Primacy of Politics in Classical Grece,' *American Historical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (April, 1984), 278.
[130] See, for example, Anon., Nobleman's *Modern Europe*, 10.
[131] Harrington, *Oceana*, 37.
[132] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 118.
[133] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 307.

will of the monarch. The British historians stressed that the ancient Persian empire was the empire of the king. Their kings' insatiable ambition rendered the Persians the "perpetual and irreconcilable enemies"[134] of the Greeks and the Persian empire was thus incapable of being a peaceful ally.

To our historians, the Persian legal system determined the character of the Persian empire also as the representative of an inferior civilisation. In comparison with the legal codes of Solon and Lycurgos, ancient Persian laws were, in Mitford's words, "few and simple more in the nature of fundamental maxims than a finished system of jurisprudence." Thus, even Mitford, who favored the Persians at the expense of Greeks, acknowledged the "inflexible rule that the laws were never in any point to be altered."[135] The inflexibility of the ancient Persian legal system did not allow any possibility of progress and change. The laws themselves seemed to guarantee the unchanging status of despotism. Constrained by the rigidity of the despotic legal system, there was no space for manoeuvre or to improve a system that proceeded towards corruption. Having pointed to this feature of despotic states in general, Gast argued that, due to the inflexible character of the regime, change did not happen in the form of "revolutions of government" but was a "change of masters" only.[136] For all these reasons, the common attitude, as expressed by Gast in his *History*, was to perceive the Persian empire as "corrupted and unwieldy."[137]

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the British historians sought to pin down the force that had kept the imperial entities of ancient Greece united, in parallel with their theories of civilisation and progress. They maintained that commerce was proven to be the most important link connecting the periphery to the centre. In this

---

[134] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, II, 217.
[135] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 304.
[136] Gast, *Rudiments*, 359.
[137] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 118.

regard, Athens came to the fore as the ideal empire subduing its colonies through the mutually beneficial bond of commerce. The Persian empire, on the other hand, with its despotic character signified an uncivilised entity or one that failed to become progressively civilised. As Goldsmith stated, all that ancient Persia could have promoted in the lands acquired was despotism.

> The Persian monarch, thus possessed of a very extensive territory placed governors over several cities that were subdued and as men bred up in a despotic court, were likely enough to imitate the example set them at home, it is probable that they abused their power.[138]

Such was also the ground on which the pro-Grecian arguments were built in eighteenth-century Britain, in reflecting on Ottoman rule. On this account, the Ottoman empire inherently fell short of the criterion of facilitating civilisation and refinement in the lands under its rule and offered only the scourge of despotism.

Having failed to establish commercial relations with the periphery and hence to fulfil a civilising mission, the imperial practices of the Persian kings forced their subjects to act slavishly. As Gillies stressed, the Persians "fought and conquered and plundered, only for the benefit of their prince whose slaves and property, they themselves were." After all individual rights had been willingly surrendered to the 'King of Kings,' this people conquered "as if they had been called to punish, not the enemies of their king, but their own personal foes; and as if each man had been entitled to reap the full fruits of his rapacious cruelty."[139]

Besides being despotic in nature, the Persian empire was also considered structurally unfit to sustain its stability, prosperity and the welfare of its people. Mostly because the Persians greedily aimed at expansion at the expense of sustainability, they exceeded the optimum level of territorial acquisition, as pointed out, one of the preoccupations of the British historians. The political nation invested

---

[138] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 81-2.
[139] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 239.

much time and effort in the discussions over the extent of the imperial territory. Particularly consequent to the Peace of Paris in 1763 when Britain acquired vast lands of Canada and Florida in return of leaving Guadeloupe to France and Havana to Spain, what the quantity and quality of expansion should be became one of the lively topics on the political agenda.[140] The cautious expansionists even clashed in a pamphlet war with the overzealous expansionists.[141] Within this context, our historians too were preoccupied with this question of expansion. In their scrutiny of the Greek states, they laid particular emphasis on the necessity of reaching to the optimum territorial size and never exceeding that, for the sake of preservation. Within the Persian empire, "[t]he different members of this unwieldy body were so feebly connected with each other that to secure their united submission required almost as much genius as to achieve their conquest."[142] Since the Persians lacked the required kind of genius they brought their empire, as Leland contended, to "the point of sinking under its own weight."[143]

Overstretching the imperial borders thus brought along the problem of managing this gigantic entity. Persians sought so rapid an expansion that the centre could not have kept up with this hasty empire-building.[144] Where the central administration was proven insufficient, the Persian kings made use of the local rulers as the administrative instruments of their ungovernably, hence unwisely, extensive empire. This policy appeared to be highly controversial among the British historians. The employment of the local princes, who had sworn "their universal dependence on the emperor," according to Gilles, might serve the temporary good of empires when

---

[140] For a detailed account of the discussion, see Cohen, *Power of Commerce*.
[141] *Five Letters Entitled Reasons for Keeping Guadaloupe at a Peace Preferable to Canada* and *A Detection of the False Reasons and Facts Contained in the Five Letters entitled Reasons for Keeping Guadaloupe at a Peace* (London: Thomas Hope, 1761).
[142] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 227.
[143] Leland, *Philip*, II, 288.
[144] Khurt, 'Achaemenid Persian Empire,' 103.

the colonies were out of reach of the centre. Nevertheless, this was a "system of government" which was proven to be "more favourable to the extent than the permanence of empire." [145] However, Mitford with his atypically pro-Persian attitude, maintained that this instrument of empire should not be dismissed altogether. Because this method of appointing "the son of the conquered country" [146] as the chief governor granted this tyrant the chance of retaining his supremacy over the local people, he remained loyal to his conquerors. Mitford's unusual view reflected neither those of his fellow historians nor those of others concerned with the notion of empire in eighteenth-century Britain.

In the eighteenth century, the degree of interaction with the peoples of the conquered lands and rulers was often reflected on. Encounter with the natives had at the outset resulted in discussions stressing "the white claims to distinctiveness, originality or superior understanding." Within this context, the prospects of "cultural mixing" with the natives and interaction with their rulers in the imperial administration, or in the system which is called by Wilson "the circuitry of empire," had not been welcomed.[147] In the course of the century, a notion of "the unity of man" was however developed and it coexisted with a conviction about "the diversity of mankind."[148] Nevertheless, the histories of ancient Greece rather endorsed the idea suggesting the superiority of one civilisation over another, hence one race over the other. For that reason, they excluded the sort of empire in which close cooperation with the natives of the acquired lands was established. What is more, openly subjecting and ruling nations with no ties of commerce and policies of mutual benefit involved was considered in the eighteenth century as an imperial way fit to "more

---

[145] Gillies, *History of Ancient Greece*, I, 227.
[146] Mitford, *History of Greece*, I, 313.
[147] Wilson, *Island Race*, 17.
[148] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 515.

degenerate societies and more despotic constitutions."[149] Therefore what the ancient Persian empire enforced as an apt instrument for colonial governance was not seen compatible with the contemporary British practices of empire.

The Persian empire earned disapproval in the eyes of the British historians also on account of its "opulence and luxury," which spread through the entire imperial structure, slowly corrupted it and made the empire's people effeminate and slavish. Though not as intensely as in the eighteenth-century Roman history texts, luxury inevitably appeared to be one of the predominant themes in texts dealing with Greece as well, for luxury was one of the most lively topics of the time and "a history of luxury and attitudes to luxury would come very close to being a history of the eighteenth century."[150] The source of wealth in the Persian empire was luxury goods. This was destructive of the character of its people into sluggishness and prevented them from engaging in more productive and profitable activities that would have promoted the liberating and refining effects of commerce.[151] With the Persian encounter with Greeks, luxury with all its unwanted effects leaked into the Greek civilisation and contaminated it.

Luxury, hence corruption, always poured into ancient Greece from the east. When they became acquainted with Persian wealth, as Goldsmith stated, the Greeks "began to lose their spirit of hardy and laborious virtue, and to adopt the refined indolence and captious petulance, and the boundless love of pleasure, which extreme wealth is ever known to produce."[152] Desiring the possession of the goods of great value seemed to be suitable for the slavish people of the despotic empires. Luxury

---

[149] Langford, *Polite and Commercial People*, 619.
[150] *Ibid.,* 3.
[151] Although ancient Greek history texts were written under the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment and within this stream of thought, as discussed in Chapter III, luxury was sometimes conceived as one of the stimulators of progress. The British historians treated the concept of luxury from the same perspective as the ancient Greeks and condemned it.
[152] Goldsmith, *Grecian History*, I, 168-9.

was a regime by which the barbarians sustained the existence of their government. The Greeks on the other hand, as the argument went, had stood as "a brave and refined people confederating against tyranny," therefore, unavoidably, encountering the flow of wealth from Asia into their country. Interaction with empires of luxury corrupted empires of virtue.

The prevalent British viewpoint on luxury for most of the eighteenth century was that "a 'luxurious' environment produced a weak character."[153] And contact with a society made up of persons of weak character would weaken the hardy and strong character of others. This concern about luxury that pervaded the ancient history texts may be related to concern about Britain's contemporary and increasing involvement in India. Luxury resided in the east and the British presence there exposed Britain to all the corruptive effects of Indian wealth. There was abundant evidence in ancient Greek history proving that luxury was "a retreat from order" and "the introduction of chaos into the cosmos."[154] Consequently, texts about ancient Greece were written and referred to with the aim of dealing with this question. The common base on which the Greek states rose was intolerant of the infusion of luxurious habits into economic, political and other areas of society. Thus, when the Persian invasion introduced the Greeks to effeminacy and corruption, which were the natural outcomes of luxury, they began, in Richard Jackson's words, "to sink from the zealous spirit of honour and integrity, concord and unanimity."[155] British historians measured the Persian invasion as obviously destructive, by virtue of the nature of the Persian empire's economic practices. Such was the outcome of luxury being

---

[153] Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 75.
[154] Sekora, *Luxury,* 29.
[155] Jackson, *Literatura Graeca,* 68.

commonly understood in the eighteenth century as a phenomenon with "disquieting implications for the future of civilisation."[156]

Although in the analyses of the Greek states, the issues of commerce were extensively elaborated, ancient Persia was not so investigated. Even the pro-Persian Mitford declined to praise this aspect of the Persian civilisation. Persia had an economy conducive to "all the refinements of the table, the bath and every circumstance of Asiatic luxury." [157] A final implication of eastern luxury seemed to be the possibility that a despotic ruler could intervene in the affairs of western states. The importation of the luxurious goods of the east could result in the flow of money from the western states, hence their financial ruin. [158] The eastern ruler in the meantime might acquire the wealth to attack and subdue the west.

Another point recurrently stressed by the British historians of ancient Greece was the role of the Persian empire in the Greek balance of power. The balance of power was clearly a predominant theme in the conduct of British foreign affairs and a matter of particular interest among the British statesman throughout the eighteenth century as "a worthy end of itself."[159] It inevitably made its way into our texts on ancient Greek history. Nevertheless, not all of its aspects attracted the attention of the British historians. In other words, our historians of Tory tendency did not treat the topic of balance of power as the Whig apologists did. In their assessments of ancient Greek states, the allegory of balance of power was employed to stress the similarity between the states of ancient Greece in terms of civilization and hence to draw attention to the resemblance between ancient Greece and eighteenth-century Europe.

---

[156] Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, 'The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debates' in Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 24.
[157] Mitford, *History of Greece*, II, 52.
[158] Berg and Eger, 'Luxury Debates,' 8.
[159] Gould, *Persistence of Empire,* 7.

There was no glorification of it as a foreign policy instrument. As Gould contends, although the British nursed "little affection" for the neighbouring European states, "few were willing to deny that they belonged to a European nation."[160] By means of reference to the Greekness embedded in the ancient version of the balance of power, the British historians sought to emphasize the Europeanness that lay at the heart of the concert of states in eighteenth-century Europe.

When dealing with the Persian empire also, the balance of power was a subject for consideration. This time, nevertheless, the difficulty of including a hostile empire into the system to avert the rise of another more hostile power. How to coexist with a civilization incompatible with that of the main participants of the balance of power and how to use this outside element most wisely were among the few concerns to which consideration of the Greek balance of power was looked to provide answers. The Persian empire verified that when desperate times called for desperate measures, a despised, if menacing, outsider could be welcomed to save the system. Such was the lesson acquired from this episode of ancient Greek history and it had some practical usage at that time in guiding the British statesmen through their fine policy adjustments towards the Ottoman empire. Once again, the ancient Persian empire was treated as the predecessor of the sort of empire whose quintessential example was the Ottoman empire in the eighteenth century.

In his history of East Central Europe, Oscar Halecki discussed the topic of the eighteenth-century balance of power and how the positions of eastern elements in this game of balance were shifted.[161] Thus, he explains how the Ottoman empire, once a formidable enemy aiming at the destruction of the European balance of power, was later included into that very system to counterbalance a perceived Russian

---

[160] Gould, *Persistence of Empire,* 4.
[161] Oscar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: History of East Central Europe*, 2nd Edition (Phoenix: Simon Publications, 2001).

menace. The balance of power was grounded in the individual states' will of forming alliances and changing the components of these alliances as the current situation required. For part of the eighteenth century, as the pamphlet entitled *Modern Europe* stated it was "the interest of Great Britain to be closely united with Austria, Russia and Sardinia, to the balance of power of France, Turkey, Sweden and Prussia."[162] When the tides turned, however, Britain adjusted its foreign policy accordingly to admit the Ottomans into this game of power. As is known well, from the late eighteenth century on, because of its growing internal and external weakness the Ottoman empire allied with Britain to prevent the hastened access of Russia to Mediterranean.

In our history texts, one may detect an echo of the British desire to include the Ottomans in the European balance of power as a check to France and Russia. The Spartans and Athenians, facing the formidable rise of Macedonia, froze their interminable hatred towards the Persians and incorporated them to the dynamics of the balance of power. Preserving the Greek balance of power intact was crucial, as Gast rather dramatically articulated, for "Persia was the only power that could balance the Macedonian; and if the former was once overthrown, their liberties must soon share the same fate." Unexpectedly, "[t]he cause of Persia was become the cause of Greece."[163]

In their quest for the ideal empire, the British historians of the eighteenth century carefully investigated the imperial structures of Athens, Sparta and even Macedonia with the hope of arriving at some normative rules for their own empire. On account of being perceived as despotic, effeminate and non-commercial, Persia was not included into this probe. The interest in the empire of the Persians was not

---

[162] Anon., Nobleman's *Modern Europe*, 21.
[163] Gast, *History of Greece*, II, 119. Also see Gast, *Rudiments,* 531 and Mitford, *History of Greece,* I, 293 and III, 314.

intended to contribute to the making of the British empire. Instead, in the eyes of the British, the ancient Persian empire was seen as fit to provide answers for a possible relationship with an empire of alien, if not hostile, civilization, such as that of the Ottomans.

CONCLUSION

James William Johnson complained in 1967 that "[i]n the last two hundred years, theories of historiography have taken the work of Gibbon as a starting point."[1] Despite the appearance of a few studies partially treating the eighteenth-century historiography of the pre-Gibbon era since then, such a tendency persists even today. This study has sought to break this tendency, provide the complete list of ancient Roman and Greek histories of eighteenth-century Britain and elaborate on them, with the exception of Gibbon's work, from the perspective of the historians' politics. To understand the aspirations of ancient history-writing, the contemporary political environment must be taken into account.

This study has also striven to establish the importance of ancient Roman and Greek histories within the eighteenth-century literature on empire. The few scattered available analyses of these texts have concentrated only on the historians' views on civic humanism, republican values and democracy. Nevertheless, "history's lofty ethical and instructive purpose"[2] was not confined to these topics and ancient history-writing was concerned with a much wider range of subjects, which were related to contemporary discussions, political and non-political. Empire was a recurrent theme that appeared in our texts of ancient Greek and Roman history. The historians approached the topic with the aim of participating in the ongoing debates over the empire, but in a more subtle way than the political pamphleteers. The historians' mission was twofold: first to produce a well-researched and well-written

---

[1] Johnson, *Neo-classical Thought*, 31.
[2] Okie, *Augustan Historical Writing*, 8.

philosophical ancient history and then to extend to the political nation their opinions on critical contemporary issues through the related experiences of the ancients. In the fulfilment of this mission, they avoided being explicit about the instructions which they saw fit to transmit.

The impact of these histories on contemporary imperial policy is not certain, as the politicians did not use direct quotes from our historians while expressing their views on imperial affairs, though they made numerous references to the imperial experiences of ancient Greece and Rome. Nevertheless, the close contact between the historians and statesmen was an established fact. Most of them belonged to the same circle of friends. Furthermore, eighteenth-century histories were published for the attention of prominent statesmen. Also, given that the study of ancient history was considered imperative for statecraft and our texts of ancient history went through several editions, we have sufficient ground to argue that the insights of the British historians of Greece and Rome into the ideal sort of empire did reach contemporary politicians. Ancient history-writing therefore did play a certain role in shaping the imperial convictions.

To the British, empire had never been "a monochrome, predictable entity."[3] Thus, they looked into a multitude of sources with the hope of finding guidance in the unknown path to imperial greatness. Eighteenth-century ancient history writing offered insights into imperial matters such as expansion, colonial governance, the role of commerce as a substitute for military action, the desirable degree of interaction with natives and the fight against decline. Under the influence of Plutarch and a venerable literary genre, the 'mirror of princes,' ancient Roman histories elucidated those subjects. Most strikingly, the historians of Rome made a clear

---

[3] Colley, *Captives,* 377.

distinction between empire as a constitutional arrangement and empire as a territorially extended state. A general distaste for empire as a constitutional arrangement permeated the history texts, whereas empire as a territorially extended state was commonly considered as desirable, even by those who wrote Roman history to glorify the republican virtue. Interestingly enough, although all historians elaborated on the imperial practices of Rome, only Kennet and Ferguson seemed to attempt at understanding the Roman empire in the way it actually was. Kennet, the first historian of Rome in eighteenth-century Britain, and Ferguson, the last, examined meticulously the nature of Rome's imperial governance and all administrative divisions. The historians in between failed to exhibit the same degree of scholarship while authentically reconstructing the Roman empire.

As for ancient Greek histories — the publication of which mostly coincided with the rise of the discussions about civilisation — they sought to deliver their remarks on empire through comparisons of the states and civilisations that ancient Greece sheltered. Athens and Sparta were the quintessential representatives of the refined Greek civilisation. Nevertheless, they were depicted as inherently different states within the contexts of democracy and empire. On one hand, when democracy was discussed, Athens was severely criticised for entrusting limitless power to the common people and Sparta was commonly commended for its commitment to monarchy. On the other, when the topic was empire, commercial Athens became the model to be emulated and militaristic Sparta stood for the negative example to be avoided.

Historians of ancient Greece also took particular interest in the empires beyond Greece. They sought to understand the Macedonian and Persian empires too and depicted them as the undesirable manifestations of the phenomenon of empire.

272

Of course, unlike Persia, Macedonia was not completely viewed as non-Greek. To the historians, the Greekness of Alexander, in particular, was unquestionable and the Alexandrian empire was a world empire founded by the Greeks. The glory of this extraordinary empire and the wise imperial policies of Alexander were believed to inspire the British then creating an empire of their own. The rest of the imperial history of Macedonia was labelled unfit for British emulation. Ancient Persia, however, was entirely alien. For that reason, it was left out of the probe carried out by the historians to arrive at normative rules for the ideal empire. The interest in the empire of the Persians was fuelled by the interest in figuring out how to handle a vast empire, full of culturally alien elements.

The historians dealt with here put particular emphasis on the imperial topics in the conviction that genuine commitment to lessons learned from ancient history would create the most durable empire on earth for the British nation. In doing so, they were often constrained by their sources. A superficial examination of our historians may often suggest simply a reworking of ancient statements. However, although sometimes they had little or no choice of ancient sources, sometimes they had and the one they actually made is informative. In any case, the revelation of their own political and other concerns, never explicitly stated, render the historians spoken of in this study constantly interesting.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Aeschylus (tr Anthony J. Podlecki) *The Persians* London: Bristol Classical Press, 1991.

Baron, William. *History of the Colonisation of the Free States of Antiquity applied to the Present Contest between Great Britain and her American Colonies with Reflections concerning the Future Settlement of these Colonies*. London: T. Cadell, 1777.

[Berkley, G.] *An Essay Towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*. London: J. Roberts, 1721.

Beauchamp, Tom L. (ed) *David Hume. An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals.* Oxford University Press, 1998.

Blackwell, Thomas. *Memoirs of the Courts of Augustus.* Edinburgh: Hamilton, Balfour and Neill, 1753.

Bland, Richard. *An Enquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies.* London: J. Almon, 1769.

Bolingbroke, Henry St John. *Letters on the Study and Use of History.* London: T. Cadell, 1779.

[Burke, Edmund]. *An Account of European Settlements in two Volumes.* London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1756.

Chandler, Richard. *Travels in Greece or an Account of a Tour made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1776.

D'Avenant, Charles. *An Essay upon Universal Monarchy.* London, 1701.

Dent, J.C. (ed) *The Citizen of the World*. London and Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1928.

A Detection of the False Reasons and Facts Contained in the Five Letters Entitled Reasons for Keeping Guadaloupe at a Peace. London: Thomas Hope, 1761.

A Discourse upon the Uniting Scotland with England. London, 1702.

A Dissertation Upon the Uncertainty of the Roman History During the First Five Hundred Years, Translated from French. London: T. Waller, 1760.

Echard, Laurence. *The Roman History from the Building of the City to the Perfect Settlement of the Empire by Augustus Caesar.* London: R. Bonwick, J. Tonfon, W. Freeman, Tim Goodwin, J. Walthoe, M. Wotton, J. Nicholson, T. Newborough, B. Tooke, S. Manship and R. Parker, 1707.

The English Realm a Perfect Sovereignty and Empire, and the King a Complete and Imperial Sovereign. London, 1717.

An Essay on the Constitutional Power of Great Britain over the Colonies in America, (Philadelphia: William and Thomas Bradford, 1774.

Euripides (tr David Franklin), *Bacchae.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Fawconer, S. *An Essay on Modern Luxury: Or, an Attempt to Delineate its Nature, Causes and Effects.* London: James Fletcher, 1765.

Felton, Henry. *A Dissertation Reading the Classics and Forming a Just Style: Written in the Year 1709 and Addressed to the Right Honourable John Lord Roos, the Present Marquis of Granby.* London: Jonah Bowyer, 1715.

Ferguson, Adam. *An Essay on the History of Civil Society.* Dublin: Boulter Grierson, 1767.

--------------------- *The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic.* London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1783.

Flecknoe, Richard. *An Essay on Wit: To which is Annexed, a Dissertation on Ancient and Modern History.* London: T. Lownds, 1748.

Fletcher, Andrew. *The Political Works.* London: A. Bettesworth, C. Hitch and J. Clarke, 1732.

Gast, John. *The History of Greece.* Dublin: John Exshaw, 1793.

----------------- *The Rudiments of the Grecian History from the First establishment of the States of Greece to the Overthrow of their Liberties in the Days of Philip the Macedonian.* Dublin: S. Powell, 1753.

Gillies, John. *The History of Ancient Greece, Its Colonies and Conquests from the Earliest Accounts till the Division of the Macedonian Empire in the East.* London, 1786.

Goldsmith, Oliver. 'The Benefits of Luxury' in J. C. Dent (ed) *The Citizen of the World.* London and Toronto: J. M. Dent, 1928.

[Goldsmith, Oliver]. *Dr. Goldsmith's History of Greece, Abridged, for the Use of the Schools.* London: J.F. & C. Rivington, 1787.

---------------------- *The Grecian History from the Earliest State to the Death of Alexander Great.* London: J.F. & C. Rivington, 1785.

---------------------- *The Roman History: From the Foundation of the City of Rome to the Destruction of the Western Empire.* London: S. Baker and G. Leigh, 1769.

Hearne, Thomas. *Ductor Historicus: Or, a Short System of Universal History, and an Introduction to the Study of It.* London: Tim. Childe, 1705.

Hebisci, Elias. *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire. Containing a more accurate…account of the religio, government, customs and amusments of the Turks.* London, 1784.

[Hervey, John Hervey] *Ancient and Modern Liberty Stated and Compared.* London: J. Roberts, 1734.

The History of Modern Europe with an Account of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire and a View of the Progress of Society from the Fifth to the Eighteenth Century in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son. Dublin: S. Price, W. Whiteson et al., 1779.

Hind, Thomas. *The History of Greece Volume I: Containing the Space of About 1660 Years, From the First Plantation of Greece to the Peloponnesian War.* London: S. and J. Sprint, A. and J. Churchill, Tim. Childe and Rob. Knaplock, 1707.

Hooke, Nathaniel. *The Roman History from the Building of Rome to the Ruin of the Commonwealth.* London: James Bettenham, 1738.

Hutchinson, Francis. *A Defence of the Ancient Historians: With a Particular Application of it to the History of Ireland.* Dublin: Printed by George Grierson, 1733.

Hume, David. *Selected Essays.* Oxford University Press, 1993.

Jackson, Richard. *Literatura Graeca: Containing I. Geography of Ancient Greece and its Islands II. The History of Greece, from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time; With Memoirs of Its Greatest Statesmen, Generals, Orators, Historians, Poets and Artists III. Potter's Antiquities of Greece, Abridged or a View of the Civil Government, Religion, laws and Customs of the Ancient Greeks.* London: F. Newbery, 1769.

Jones, Erasmus. *Luxury, Pride and Vanity, the Bane of the British Nation*, London: E. Withers, 1736.

Kennet, Basil. *Roma Antique Notitia: Or, the Antiquities of Rome.* London: A. Swall and T. Child, 1696.

[Knox, William] *The Controversy Between Great Britain and Her Colonies Reviewed; the Several Pleas of the Colonies, In Support of their Right to all the Liberties and Privileges of British Subjects.* London: J. Almon, 1769.

Leland, Thomas. *The History of the Life and Reign of Philip King of Macedon, The Father of Alexander.* London: Thomas Harrison, 1758.

A Letter to a Member of Parliament on the Importance of the American Colonies and the Best Means of Making them Most useful to the Mother Country. London: J. Scott, 1757.

LeMoyen, Pierre. *Of the Art both of Writing and Judging of History.* London, 1695.

[Lockman, John] *A New Roman History by Question and Answer in a Method Much More Comprehensive Than Any of the Kind Extant.* London: T. Astley, 1760.

Lovesense, Lawrence. *The Effects of Tyranny and Disobedience or the History of Persia: Calculated to Inspire the Minds of Youth with Ideas of Real Virtue.* London: R. Bassam, 1790.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty.* New York: The Liberal Arts, 1956.

Mitford, William. *The History of Greece.* London: J. Murray and J. Robson, 1784.

A Modest Enquiry into the State of Foreign Affairs;Founded on facts and Intended to Open the Eyes of the Nation to their True Interest. London: M. Cooper, 1745.

Montagu, Edward Wortley. *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Republics: Adapted to the Present State of Great Britain.* London: A. Millar, 1759.

Moyle, Walter. 'An Essay upon the Constitution of the Roman Government' (1699) in Robbins (ed), *Two English Republican Tracts.*

Newton, Issac. *The Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms.* London: J. Tonson, 1728.

Observations on the Conduct of Great Britain in Respect to Foreign Affairs in which all the Objections that have been. London: T. Cooper, 1742.

Oldmixon, John. *The British Empire in America.* London: John Nicholson, Benjamin Tooke and Richard Parker, 1708.

Ozell, John. *Mr Ozell's Defence Against the Remarks Published by Peele and Woodward, Under the Name of the Translators on his Translation of the Roman History.* London: T. Edlin, 1725.

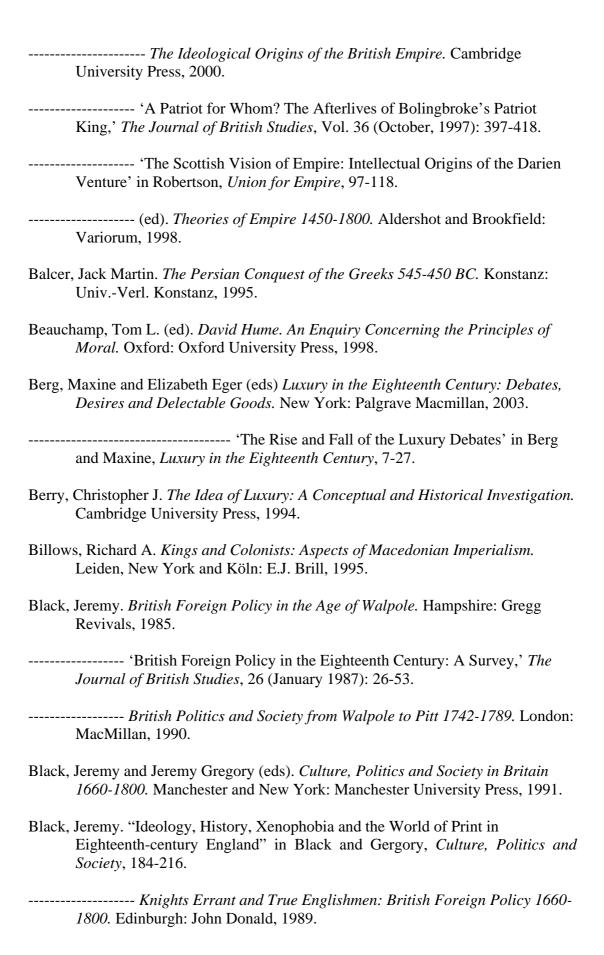Paterson, James (trn). *Roman History of C. Velleius Paterculus.* Edinburgh: John Mosman, 1722.

Potter, John. *Archaeologia Graeca, or, the Antiquities of Greece.* London: 1706.

Pownall, Thomas. *The Administration of the Colonies.* London: J. Dodsley and J. Walter, 1765.

---------------------- *Principles of Polity being the Grounds and Reasons of Civil Empire in Three Parts*. London: Edward Owen, 1752.

Proposals for Uniting the English Colonies on the Continent of America. London: J. Wilkie, 1757.

Pufendorf, Samuel. *An Introduction to the History of the Principal Kingdoms and States of Europe.* London, 1702.

Ramsey, Chevalier. *The Travels of Cyrus,* Fifth Edition. London: James Bottenhem, 1736.

Rawlinson, Richard (trn). *A New Method of Studying History, Geography and Chronology with a Catalogue of the Chief Historians of all Nations, the Best Edition of their Works and Characters of them: Written originally in French by M. Languet du Fresnoy.* London: Cha. Davis, 1730.

Reflections on Ancient and Modern History. Oxford: James Fletcher, 1746.

Robertson, William. *History of the Reign of Charles the Fifth.* London: Routledge, 1856.

Robbins, Caroline (ed). *Two English Republican Tracts: Plato Redivius or a Dialogue concerning Government.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969

Rollin, Charles. *De la Manier d'enseigner et d'etudier les Belles-Lettres.* Paris, 1726-28.

The Roman History in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to His Son. London: R. Snagg, 1774.

Savary, Claude Etiénne. *Letters on Greece: Being a Sequel to Letters on Egypt and containing Travels through Rhodes, Crete and other islands of Archipelago with Comparative Remarks on their Ancient and Present State and Observations on the Government, Character and Manners of the Turks and Modern Greeks.* Dublin: L. White,etc., 1788.

Spingard, J. E. (ed). *Sir William Temple's Essays on Ancient and Modern Learning and on Poetry.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909.

Stanyan, Temple. *The Grecian History: From the Original of Greece, to the Death of Philip of Macedon.* London: J. and R. Tonson, 1766.

Stevens, John. *The History of Persia.* London: Jonas Brown, 1715.

Stratford, Edward. *An Essay on the True Interests and Resources of the Empire of the King of Great Britain and Ireland.* Dublin: P. Byrne, 1783.

[T. W.] *The Natural Interest of Great Britain in Its Present Circumstances Demonstrated in a Discourse in Two Parts.* London: Printed for the Author, 1749.

[Well-wisher to Great Britain], *Ten Plagues of England, or Worse Consequence than Those of Egypt*. London: R. Withy, 1757.

[Whalley, Peter] *An Essay on the Manner of Writing History.* London: M. Cooper, 1746.

Wotton, William. *A Defence of the Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning in Answer to the Objections of Sir William Temple, and Others, with Observations upon the Tale of Tub.* London: Tim Goodwin, 1705.

---------------------- *The History of Rome from the Death of Antonious Pius to the Death of Severus Alexander.* London: Tim Goodwin, 1701.

---------------------- *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning.* London: J. Leake, 1694.

Xenophon, (Maurice Ashley trn.) *Cyropedia: Or, the Institution of Cyrus.* London, 1752.

Xenophon (Rex Warner trn), *The Persian Expedition.* London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Secondary Sources

Alcock, Susan E. et.al. (eds), *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Armitage, David. 'The British Conception of Empire in the Eighteenth Century' in Armitage, *Greater Britain*, 91-107.

---------------------- 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Language of Empire', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 35 (September 1992): 531-555.

---------------------- 'The Darien Venture' in Fry, *Scotland and the Americas*, 3-14.

---------------------- 'Greater Britain: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, (April 1999).

---------------------- *Greater Britain 1516-1776: Essays in Atlantic History.* Aldershot&Vermont: Ashgate Variorum, 2004.

--------------------- *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire.* Cambridge University Press, 2000.

-------------------- 'A Patriot for Whom? The Afterlives of Bolingbroke's Patriot King,' *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 36 (October, 1997): 397-418.

-------------------- 'The Scottish Vision of Empire: Intellectual Origins of the Darien Venture' in Robertson, *Union for Empire*, 97-118.

-------------------- (ed). *Theories of Empire 1450-1800.* Aldershot and Brookfield: Variorum, 1998.

Balcer, Jack Martin. *The Persian Conquest of the Greeks 545-450 BC.* Konstanz: Univ.-Verl. Konstanz, 1995.

Beauchamp, Tom L. (ed). *David Hume. An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Moral.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Berg, Maxine and Elizabeth Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

-------------------------------------- 'The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debates' in Berg and Maxine, *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century*, 7-27.

Berry, Christopher J. *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation.* Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Billows, Richard A. *Kings and Colonists: Aspects of Macedonian Imperialism.* Leiden, New York and Köln: E.J. Brill, 1995.

Black, Jeremy. *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole.* Hampshire: Gregg Revivals, 1985.

------------------ 'British Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century: A Survey,' *The Journal of British Studies*, 26 (January 1987): 26-53.

------------------ *British Politics and Society from Walpole to Pitt 1742-1789.* London: MacMillan, 1990.

Black, Jeremy and Jeremy Gregory (eds). *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain 1660-1800.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1991.

Black, Jeremy. "Ideology, History, Xenophobia and the World of Print in Eighteenth-century England" in Black and Gergory, *Culture, Politics and Society*, 184-216.

-------------------- *Knights Errant and True Englishmen: British Foreign Policy 1660-1800.* Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989.

-------------------- *A System of Ambition: British Foreign Policy 1660-1793.* London and New York: Longman, 1991.

Bosbach, Franz. 'The European Debate on Universal Monarchy' in Armitage, *Theories of Empire*, 81-98.

Brewer, John D. 'Adam Ferguson and the Theme of Expolitation,' *The British Journal of Sociology,* Vol. 37 (December, 1986): 461-478.

Briant, Pierre. 'Alexander the Great and the Enlightenment: William Robertson (1721-1793), the Empire and the Road to India,' *Cromohs*, 10 (2005): 1-9.

Browning, Reed. *Political and Constitutional Ideas of the Court Whigs.* Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University, 1982

Brunt, P.A. *Roman Imperial Themes.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Bucheno, Hugh. *Crescent and Cross: The Battle of Lepanto 1571.* London: Casell, 2003.

Bunn, James H. 'The Tory View of Geography,' *boundary 2*, Vol. 7 (Winter 1979): 149-168.

Carson, Susan E.P. *Soldiers of Christ: Evangelicals and India, 1780-1833,* Unpublished Thesis, University of London, 1988.

Cartledge, Paul. *The Greeks: A Portrait of Self and Others.* Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1993.

Cartledge, Paul. 'Ancient Greeks and Modern Britons,' *History Today*, April 1994.

Clark, J. C. D. 'A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 23 (June 1980): 295-325.

------------------ *English Society 1688-1832*: *Ideology, Social Structure and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

------------------ *Samuel Johnson: Literature, Religion and English Cultural Politics from the Restoration to Romanticism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Clarke, M. L. *Greek Studies in England 1700-1830.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945.

Colley, Linda. 'The Apothesis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation,' *Past and Present*, No. 102 (February 1984): 94-129.

------------------- *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850.* London: Jonathan Cape, 2002.

Conwoy, Stephen. 'The Politics of British Military and Naval Mobilisation, 1775-83,' *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 112, No. 449 (November, 1997), 24-36.

Demetriou, Kyriacos. 'In Defence of the British Constitution: Theoretical Implications of the Debate over Athenian Democracy in Britain, 1770-1850,' *History of Political Thought,* Vol. 17 (Summer 1996): 280-97.

Doolittle, James. 'From Hack to Editor-Diderot and the Booksellers,' *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 75 (February, 1960): 133-139.

Drayton, Richard. *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain and the Improvement of the World.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000.

Erskine-Hill, Howard. *The Augustan Idea in English Literature.* London: Edward Arnold, 1983.

Fergusson, Nial. *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World.* London: Allen Lane, 2003.

Fox, Robin Lane. *Alexander the Great.* London: Penguin, 1986.

Fry, Michael (ed). *Scotland and the Americas 1600 to 1800.* Providence, Rhode Island: John Carter Brown Library, 1995.

Frye, Northrop. 'Varieties of Eighteenth-Century Sensibility,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 24 (Winter 1990-1991): 157-172.

Fulford, Michale. 'Territorial Expansion and the Roman Empire,' *World Archaeology*, Vol. 23 (February, 1992): 294-305.

Garside, Peter D. 'Scott and the "Philosophical" Historians,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 36 (July-September 1975) 497-512.

Gay, Peter. *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, 2 vols. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967-1970.

Gould, Eliga H. and Peter S. Onuf (eds) *Empire and Nation: The American Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005)

Gould, Eliga H. 'Fears of War, Fantasies of Peace: British Politics and the Coming of the American Revolution' in Gould and Onuf (eds) *Empire and Nation*, 19-34.

-------------------- *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution.* London: The University of North Carolina, 2000.

-------------------- 'To Strengthen the King's Hands: Dynastic Legitimacy, Militia Reform and Ideas of National Unity in England 1745-1760,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 34 (June 1991): 329-348.

Gunn, J.A.W. *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self-Recognition in Eighteenth-Century Political Thought.* Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983.

Halecki, Oscar. *Borderlands of Western Civilization: History of East Central Europe*, 2nd Edition (Phoenix: Simon Publications, 2001

Hancock, David. ' "World of Business to Do": William Freeman and the Foundation of England's Commercial Empire', *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 57 (January 2000): 3-34.

Hicks, Derek. 'The English Republic and the Meaning of Britain', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol 66 (September, 1994): 460-472.

Hicks, Philip. *Neoclassical History and English Culture: From Clarendon to Hume.* London: Macmillan Press, 1996.

----------------- 'Bolingbroke, Clarendon, and the Role of Classical Historian,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol. 20 (Summer, 1987) 445-471.

Hingley, Richard. *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Hollister, C. Warren and Keefe, Thomas K. 'The Making the Angevin Empire', *Journal of British Studies,* Vol. 12 (May 1973): 1-25.

Hont, Istvan and Michael Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue: The Shaping of Political Economy in the Scottish Enlightenment.* Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Houston, Robert Allan. 'British Society in the Eighteenth Century,' *The Journal of British Studies* Vol. 25 (October 1986): 436-466.

Jenkyns, Richard. *The Victorians and Ancient Greece.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980.

Johnson, James William. *The Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967.

----------------------------- 'What was Neo-Classicism?,' *Journal of British Studies,* Vol. 9 (November 1969): 49-70.

Kenyon, John. *The History Men: The Classic Work on Historians and Their History.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993.

Khurt, Amélie. 'The Achaemenid Persian Empire (c.550-330 BCE): Continuities, Adaptations, Transformations in Alcock et.al. (eds), *Empires: Perspectives from Archaeology and History,* 96-108.

Kirk, Linda. 'The Matter of Enlightenment,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 43 (December 2000): 1129-1143.

Koebner, Richard. *Empire.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961.

Kohen, Nancy F. *The Power of Commerce: Economy and Governance in the First British Empire.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Kramnick, Isaac. *Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Krause, Sharon R. 'The Uncertain Inevitably of Decline in Montesquieu,' *Political Theory*, Vol. 30 (October, 2002): 702-727.

Langford, Paul. *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Lawson, Philip. ' "Arts and Empire Equally Extend": Tradition, prejudice and Assumption in the Eighteenth Century Press Coverage of Empire' in Philip Lawson (ed), *A Taste for Empire*, 119-146.

Lawson, Philip (ed). *A Taste for Empire and Glory: Studies in British Overseas Expansion*, *1660-1800.* Aldesrshot, Hampshire: Variorum, 1997.

Lenman, Bruce P. 'Colonial Warfare and Imperial Identity' in Fry, *Scotland and the Americas.*

Levine, Joseph. "Ancients and Moderns Reconsidered" in *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol. 15, (1981): 72-89.

------------------- *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Lieven, Dominic. *Empire: The Russian Empire and its Rivals*. London: Pimlico, 2003.

Lieberman, David. 'The Legal Needs of a Commercial Society: The Jurisprudence of Lord Kames,' in Hont and Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue*.

Madden, Frederick and Fieldhouse, David. *The Foundations of a Colonial System of Government Select Documents on the Constitutional History of the British Empire and the Commonwealth.* 3 Volumes. New York, Westport, London: Greenwood Press, 1985.

Marshall, Tristan. *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI and I.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000.

McKitterick, Rosamund. *Edward Gibbon and Empire.* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Muldoon, James. *Empire and Order: The Concept of Empire, 800-1800.* London: Macmillan, 1999.

O'Connor, Thomas. *An Irish Theologian in Enlightenment France: Luke Joseph Hooke 1714-96.* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995.

Ogilvie, R. M. *Latin and Greek: A History of the Influence of the Classics on English Life from 1600 to 1918.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964.

Okie, Laird. *Augustan Historical Writing: Histories of England in the English Enlightenment.* Maryland: University Press of America, 1991.

------------------ 'Ideology and Partiality in David Hume's *History of England,*' Vol. 11, No: 1 (April, 1985).

Pagden, Anthony. *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France 1500-1800.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995.

Parry, Graham. *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century.* Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Pfeiffer, Rudolf. *History of Classical Scholarship: From 1300 to 1850.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

Phillips, Mark Salber. 'Reconsiderations on History and Antiquarianism: Arnaldo Momigliano and the Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 57 (1996): 297-316.

Pocock, J.G.A. *Barbarism and Religion. Volume One: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon 1734-1764* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

-------------------- 'Cambridge Paradigms and Scotch Philosophers: A Study of the Relations between the Civic Humanist and the Civil Jurisprudential Interpretation of Eighteenth-Century Social Thought' in Hont and Ignatieff (eds), *Wealth and Virtue.*

--------------------- 'Empire, State and Confederation: The War of Independence as a Crisis in Multiple Monarchy' in Robertson, *Union for Empire*, 318-348.

--------------------- *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Potts, E.D. *British Baptist Missionaries in India 1793-1837: The History of Serampore and Its Missions.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967.

Quester, George H. *Offence and Defence in the International System in the International System.* New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction, 1988.

Rahe, Paul A. 'The Primacy of Politics in Classical Grece,' *American Historical Review*, Vol. 89 (April, 1984): 265-293.

Reill, Peter Hanns. 'Narration and Structure in Late Eighteenth-Century Historical Thought,' *History and Theory*, Vol. 25 (October 1986): 286-298.

Richardson, J. S. '*Imperium Romanum:* Empire and the Language of Power' in Armitage, *Theories of Empire*, 1-9.

Rigby, John Hale. *The Evolution of British Historiography: From Bacon to Namier.* Cleveland, New York: World Publishing Co., 1964.

Robertson, John. 'Union and Empire' in John Robertson(ed), *A Union for Empire*, 3-37.

John Robertson(ed), *A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the British Union of 1707.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Sack, James J. *From Jacobite to Conservative: Reaction and Orthodoxy in Britain 1760-1832.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient.* London: Penguin Books, 1995.

Saxonhouse, Arlene W. 'Athenian Democracy: Modern Mythmakers and Ancient Theorists,' *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 26 (September, 1993): 486-490.

Scardigli Barbara (ed). *Essays on Plutarch's Lives.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Scott, H.M. ' 'The True Principles of the Revolution:' The Duke of Newcastle and the Idea of the Old System' in Jeremy Black, *Knights Errant and True Englishmen: British Foreign Policy 1660-1800.* Edinburgh: John Donald, 1989, 55-91.

Sekora, John. *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollet.* Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.

Sher, Richard B. 'Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith and the Problem of National Defense,' *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 61 (June 1989): 240-268.

Stephan, Deborah. 'Laurence Echard- Whig Historian,' *The Historical Journal* Vol. 32 (December, 1989): 843-866.

Stone, Lawrence (ed). *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689 to 1815.* London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989.

Thomson, Janice E. 'State Practices, International Norms, and the Decline of Mercenarism,' *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34 (March 1990) 23-47.

Turner, Frank M. 'British Politics and the Demise of the Roman Republic,' *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 29 (September, 1986): 577-599.

Yates, Frances. *Astrae: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century*. London: Pimlico, 1975.

Vance, 'Imperial Rome and Britain's Language of Empire,' *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 26 (2000): 211-224.

Venning, Timothy. *Cromwellian Foreign Policy.* London: St Martin's Press, 1995.

Von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf V. 'Plutarch as Biographer,' in Scardigli (ed), *Essays on Plutarch's Lives*, pp. 47-74.

Ward, Addison. 'The Tory View of Roman History,' *Studies in English Literature*, Vol. 4 (1964): 413-456.

Weinbrot, Howard D. 'History, Horace and Augustus Caesar: Some Implications for Eighteenth-Century Studies,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 7 (Summer, 1974): 391-414.

Wickersham, John. *Hegemony and Greek Historians.* London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994.

Wilson, Kathleen. 'Empire of Virtue: The Imperial Project and Hanoverian Culture 1720-1785' in Stone, *An Imperial State at War*, 128-164.

Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Wilson, Kathleen. *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Witschi-Bernz, Astrid. *"Main Trends in Historical-Method Literature: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries"* in *History and Theory*, Vol. 12 (1972) 51-90.