The Roman Inheritance in British and Spanish America During the Age of Revolution

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Abstract
"If any one cultural source lay behind the republican revolutions of the eighteenth century", writes United States historian Gordon Wood, "it was ancient Rome -- republican Rome -- and the values that flowed from its history. It was ancient Rome's legacy that helped to make the late eighteenth century's apparently sudden transition to republicanism possible". Wood is speaking primarily about the revolutions in British America and France, although his observations are also applicable, at least to some extent, to Spanish America, where the fight for independence lasted into the 1820s.

While a number of scholars have studied the influence of the Roman legacy in British America and the early United States around the time of independence, few have examined its influence in Spanish America, and no sustained comparative study on the topic in the two regions has been done. This essay begins the work of such a comparison by examining how and why Americans rhetorically availed themselves of the legend of Rome, in particular with regard to its territorial expansion. The issue of expansion played out quite differently in British and Spanish America and this, along with the political character of these societies, influenced the ways in which Rome was invoked in political discourse. Here I offer a general comparison of British and Spanish America and, with regard to the latter, I focus on the figure of Simón Bolívar, the architect of independence and several of the new governments of South America.

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common language with them. Nevertheless, Caesar’s initial contact with the islanders went poorly, and he had to quickly reorganize his army to avoid defeat. During his second ‘invasion’ when he was accompanied by five legions, he pushed further northward across the Thames River to meet the Briton chieftain Cassivellaunus. The Romans with Julius Caesar at the head sailed to Britain in 55 B.C. & gave the land the name of Albion. Julius Caesar brought the army of 10,000 men. The Britons fought desperately, but they were much weaker than the well-trained Romans, and soon fled. After the victory Julius Caesar soon left Britain. The real invasion took place in 43 A.D. when the Roman Emperor Claudius decided to make Britain part of the Roman Empire. An army of 40,000 Roman soldiers landed in Britain (Kent). Many Britons had to accept the Roman way of life, but some of them tried to resist the enemies for about 20