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Alexander Hamilton's Notes on Plutarch in His Pay Book

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Abstract: Alexander Hamilton's notes to his reading of two pairs of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*, *Theseus-Romulus* and *Lycurgus-Numa*, probably made in the winter of 1777–1778 at Valley Forge, reveal his early attention to the rewards of founding a new state, the natures and advantages of different political institutions, and economic, social, military, and cultural practices. They furnish a valuable testament to Hamilton's early intellectual development. He focuses on monarchy and the danger of tyranny and on the institutions by which states had limited the power of monarchs and of the popular will: the senate at Rome and the *gerousia* and later the ephors at Sparta. Hamilton admires Numa's use of religion to nourish civil society, while his interest in the Spartans' treatment of their helots is a testimony to his early concern about the problem of slavery.

During the cold winter of 1777–1778, perhaps the darkest moment of the American Revolutionary War, the Continental Army commanded by George Washington huddled around campfires and in makeshift huts at Valley Forge while the British army wined and dined in occupied Philadelphia. Even the army's headquarters were cramped and cold. General Washington had the use of a small farmhouse, in which he lived together with his staff of aides. The army was at its weakest, Britain seemed in the ascendancy, and Congress could deliver neither men nor money. Nevertheless, one of Washington's aides, Alexander Hamilton, found time to read four of Plutarch's *Lives*, and to make notes on them that reveal his early attention to the founding of a new state, the natures and advantages of different constitutions, and the customs and practices that might serve or hinder his country.[1]

It is well known that Plutarch was frequently read and referred to at the end of the eighteenth century.[2] Benjamin Franklin wrote of the advantage he found in reading Plutarch, and John Adams while in New York asked his

[1]For recent work on Hamilton's life, see Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004) and Richard Brookhiser, *Alexander Hamilton, American* (New York: Free Press, 1999). I am grateful to Prof. Michael Lienesch and the anonymous referees for many constructive suggestions.

[2]See in general Meyer Reinhold, ed., *The Classick Pages: Classical Reading of Eighteenth-Century Americans* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1975), chap. 3 ("The Incomparable Plutarch"), and, more generally, Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

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wife to send him Plutarch's *Lives*, along with other books.[3] Alexander Hamilton himself refers several times to Plutarch, notably when referring to Pericles's initiating wars as a result of private resentment in *Federalist*, No. 6.[4] Many writers used pseudonyms taken from Plutarch for their polemic essays.[5] The most famous, perhaps, was the collective pseudonym Publius used by Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay for their essays in *The Federalist* (1787–88).[6] However, it has always been hard to see what precisely these men took away from their Plutarchan reading.[7] The notes in Hamilton's

[3]Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography, and Other Writings*, ed. L. Jesse Lemisch (New York: New American Library, 1961), 26; John Adams to Abigail Adams, May 24, 1789, Adams Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, quoted in David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 409. In a letter from The Hague Adams lamented, "my breakfasts don't relish, for want of a little Plutarch, with the coffee" (John Adams to John Quincy Adams, May 28, 1784, in *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 5, ed. R. A. Ryerson et al. [Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1993], 334). Abigail Adams was reading Plutarch in Leiden in 1786: "I tarried at home and read Plutarch's *Lives*." She may have been reading *Galba* and *Otho*, as she complains of reading the lives of the Roman emperors, "most of which exhibit tyranny, cruelty, devastation, and horror," unless she is thinking either of the civil war lives or of Suetonius (Abigail Adams to Abigail Smith, August 15, 1786, in *Adams Family Correspondence*, vol. 7, ed. M. A. Hogan et al. [Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2005], 319). John Adams's library contained a five-volume set of the *Lives* in Greek and Latin (London, 1723–29) and the French translation of the *Lives* by Dacier (Paris, 1778).

[4]Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist*, ed. T. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20. Plutarch is not cited, but the story comes from him.

[5]See Douglass Adair, "A Note on Certain of Hamilton's Pseudonyms," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 12 (April 1955): 282–97. Adair lists the Plutarchan pseudonyms Phocion (1784), Tully (1794), Camillus (1795), and Pericles (1803) in addition to the Publius of *The Federalist*. The 1787 letters signed "Caesar" once attributed to Hamilton were written by John Lamb (see Brookhiser, *Alexander Hamilton*, 191).

[6]Brookhiser, *Alexander Hamilton*, 40, calls attention to Hamilton's polemic attacks on Samuel Chase in fall 1778, signed "Publius." The name Publius derives from Publius Valerius Publicola, celebrated in a life by Plutarch (found in the same volume as the four annotated in the pay book) for resistance to the return of the tyrant Tarquin, for setting the new republic on a firm foundation, and for his goodwill toward the populace. The letters against Chase are the earliest evidence that Hamilton continued reading beyond the four lives recorded in the pay book. The lives of Solon and Publicola immediately followed upon those four in the edition Hamilton was reading.

[7]The popularity of Addison's Cato, based on Plutarch's *Life of Cato of Utica*, is perhaps the clearest indication of how one life could stimulate antityrannical fervor. As Caesar stood for every irresponsible monarch, Cato could represent the ideal republican, despite Plutarch's own criticisms of his policies. Benezet's letter to Franklin (see note 51 below) is another. Adair, "Hamilton's Pseudonyms," gives a strongly psychological reading of Hamilton's pseudonyms Phocion, Tully (Cicero),

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pay book are especially valuable because they allow us to see with the eyes and mind of a revolutionary and future Founder. We can read along with Hamilton, and learn what attracted his attention in these four biographies of Plutarch's, what he merely noted, what he excerpted at length, and what he passed over without remark.

As a captain of the New York Artillery, Hamilton had kept a pay book, listing the payments to the soldiers and other expenses, until May 1777. Thereafter, he used the blank pages of this pay book, almost certainly during that hard winter of 1777–1778 in Valley Forge, to enter notes on his own reading, which have been preserved among his papers.[8] The notes fall into five sections, of which the fourth contains a remarkable record of Hamilton's systematic reading of two pairs of Plutarch's *Lives*, *Theseus* and *Romulus*, the founders of Athens and Rome, and *Lycurgus* and *Numa*, lawgivers for Sparta and Rome, respectively. These notes are the focus of this article.[9]

The first three sections are largely drawn from Postlethwayt's recent encyclopedia on commerce:[10] first, extensive economic analyses of some

Camillus, and Pericles. He thinks that they reflect Hamilton's idea of himself, noting that they were all men who despised the mob that they dedicated their lives to save and who suffered at the hands of the populace, although their value was recognized afterwards. Hamilton's assertion, reported in a letter by Jefferson, that Julius Caesar was "the greatest man who ever lived," leads Adair to see a relentless ambition as the explanation of his later policy. This view is challenged by Mackubin T. Owens Jr. ("A Further Note on Certain of Hamilton's Pseudonyms: The 'Love of Fame' and the Uses of Plutarch," *Journal of the Early Republic* 4, no. 3 [1984]: 275–86), who notes two further pseudonyms taken from Plutarch's *Marius*, Catullus and Metellus, used in essays of 1792. These men defended the republic against Marius's populist maneuvers, without any desire for monarchical power.

[8]Hamilton's writings are collected in *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrett et al., 27 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961–87) (hereafter *PAH*). The pay book notes are found at *PAH* 1:373–412, the notes on Plutarch at 1:391–407. The editor's notes give the pages of the Plutarch edition referred to by Hamilton. See also E. P. Panagopoulos, *Alexander Hamilton's Pay Book* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961), an edition with notes that especially treat the first three sections; Panagopoulos, "Hamilton's Notes in his Pay Book of the New York State Artillery Company," *American Historical Review* 62 (1957): 310–25; Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 110–12; and Gerald Stourzh, *Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), 179, 261 nn. 20–21, 267 n. 112.

[9]Hamilton's notes on *Theseus* are at *PAH* 1:391–93, on *Romulus* at 393–96, on *Lycurgus* at 396–404, and on *Numa* at 404–7. The notes on *Numa* are truncated at *Numa* 17, nine chapters from the end of the life and the Comparison that follows.

[10]Malachy Postlethwayt, *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, Translated from the French . . . with Large Additions and Improvements . . . to Which All Traders Are Subject*, 2 vols. (London: John and Paul Knapton, 1751–55).

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twenty-seven countries; second, various other notes on economic subjects; third, notes on "political arithmetic," that is, on questions of population as related to government. The fifth contains miscellaneous jottings on diverse topics. A coda after the third section demonstrates Hamilton's active desire to connect these analyses with his reading in classical authors: he quotes two passages from Demosthenes's *First Philippic*, the first insisting that politicians should act to produce events, not wait on them, the second that "war itself will discover to you [the enemy's] weak sides, if you seek them."[11] Hamilton then asks, as stimulus to his own thinking,

> Are the limits of the several states and the acts on which they are founded ascertained and are our ministers provided with them? What intelligence has been given to Congress by our ministers of the designs, strength by sea and land, actual interests and views of the different powers of Europe? (391)[12]

These are exactly the questions that Demosthenes suggests are appropriate, and that the preceding notes have endeavored to answer.

The fourth section documents a new direction in his political education: Hamilton's reading in the first volume of the Dryden translation of Plutarch as found in the London edition of 1758, with the translated notes of the French classical scholar André Dacier (1651–1722) and other scholars.[13] As he set out to record what caught his attention, Hamilton wrote a heading for his notes that perhaps marks his initial reaction after a glance at the beginning of the life of Theseus, but slights their actual importance: "These notes are selected more for their singularity than use—though some important

[11]*PAH* 1:390, citing Demosthenes, *Philippic* 1.39 and 44.

[12]Throughout, parenthetical references in the text should be understood to be to *PAH*, vol. 1, unless otherwise indicated. In quotations of Hamilton's notes, the spelling is that of *PAH*, as are the line counts for Hamilton's excerpts, when given.

[13]John Dryden, *Plutarch's Lives, in six volumes: translated from the Greek. With Notes, Explanatory and Critical, from Dacier and others. To which is prefix'd the Life of Plutarch, Written by Dryden* (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1758). The first volume contained the lives of Theseus, Romulus, Lycurgus, Numa, Solon, Publicola, Camillus, and Themistocles, with a Comparison for each pair except the last, for which Dacier wrote a substitute (370–82). For convenience's sake, I ascribe all the notes in the commentary to Dacier. André Dacier was elected to both the Academy of Inscriptions and the Académie française in 1695; he produced editions of Pompeius Festus and Valerius Flaccus as well as translations of Horace, Sophocles's *Electra* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, Aristotle's *Poetics*, Epictetus, and Hippocrates, in addition to Plutarch's *Lives*. His wife, Anne Lefèvre Dacier, was a scholar and translator in her own right. For André, see Fern Farnham, *Madame Dacier: Scholar and Humanist* (Monterey, CA: Angel Press, 1976) and Giovanni Saverio Santangelo, *Madame Dacier, una filologa nella "crisi" (1672–1720)* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1984), 55–76, 140–76 and the index, s.v. "Dacier, André."

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facts are comprehended" (391).[14] In fact, alongside curious mythological notices, such as that of Procrustes's bed,[15] Hamilton draws from Plutarch significant statements on the role of founders and lawgivers, on different kinds of governmental institutions, and on economic, social, military, and cultural practices.

Foundation legends and the origins of later political and religious institutions, not historical events, fill the four lives treated in the pay book, as Plutarch admitted and Hamilton recognized.[16] For exactly this reason, these lives of founders and lawgivers surely had a special appeal to Hamilton, for he was living during the foundation of a new country, and was actively involved in forming the institutions that he hoped would guarantee the success of the fledgling nation.[17] The founders Theseus and Romulus established the initial orientation of their cities, the one toward democracy, the other toward war and expansion. Of the lawgivers, Lycurgus was able to establish political and educational institutions at Sparta that would endure for centuries, whereas Numa's success at bringing peace to Rome through religious practices, despite its nobility, endured only for his lifetime.

Given Hamilton's intense involvement in and deep commitment to the establishment of a new American state, independent of any ties to Great Britain, in the very period when he was making these notes, his attention to the divine honors that these four figures received is hardly surprising. He notes that "the Athenians sacrificed to Theseus the eighth day of every month" and notes the special honors accorded his tomb (392; *Thes*. 36). Although he does not directly note Romulus's deification, he quotes at length Plutarch's discussion of the possibility that the souls of virtuous men might be "raised to consummate felicity and enrolled amongst the gods" (395–96; *Rom*. 28). He quotes the oracle calling Lycurgus "rather a god than

[14]Despite this casual heading, Hamilton frequently enters the page numbers of his Plutarch edition in the margins of the pay book, an indication that he expected to return to these lives.

[15]His entry on Procrustes (*PAH* 1:391) seems to be the only one in the section on *Theseus* that draws upon Dacier's full but rather abstruse notes on the many figures named in the life (for Procrustes, see Dryden, *Plutarch's Lives* 1:11 n. 2). Other "singular" items that he notes from the *Theseus*, the most mythological life, are the oracle that speaks of a pregnant woman as a "mystic vessel," the Athenian payment of tribute to Minos, Theseus's institution of the Delian and Isthmian games, Castor and Pollux at Athens, and the Athenian sacrifice to Neptune.

[16]Note the uncertainty expressed at Plut. *Thes*. 1–2, *Rom*. 1–3, *Lyc*. 1–2, *Num*. 1, and elsewhere.

[17]On the importance of the two categories of founder and lawgiver in this period, see Stourzh, *Alexander Hamilton*, 178–79. The emphasis is already present in Francis Bacon, *Essay* 55, "On honor and reputation." See also James Madison's references in *Federalist*, No. 38.

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a man" and notes the promise that "the laws he should establish would make the commonwealth which observed them the most famous in the world" (397; *Lyc*. 5) as well as the further oracle, delivered at the end of his life, that "his laws were excellent and that the city should continue in the highest renown while it observed the polity of Lycurgus" (404; *Lyc*. 29)—oracles that expressed his own ambition for America. The five-hundred-year duration of Lycurgus's constitution (404; *Lyc*. 29) offered a splendid confirmation of the legislator's work, and perhaps suggested the hope that Hamilton held for the new country that was being founded by the American revolutionaries.[18]

Monarchy and the institutions that limited it were a major focus of Hamilton's attention. Plutarch's presentation of the four kings who are the subjects of these lives explores four different types of monarchy, from democratic to absolute, from martial to peaceable, and reviews their achievements and flaws. Hamilton picks out the diverse threads. The ancient biographer had stressed that Theseus had democratic tendencies, making him a precursor to the Athenian democracy of the classical period. In his notes on the *Life of Theseus*, Hamilton quotes Plutarch's remark that Theseus "was the first, as Aristotle says, who out of inclination to popular government parted with regal power" (392; *Thes*. 25). From the location of the Athenian king's tomb near the gymnasium and the fact that it was "a sanctuary for servants and others in distress" he infers that "while living, he was the patron of the poor and afflicted" (392; *Thes*. 36). Hamilton records Romulus's contrasting turn toward autocratic rule (he "grew haughty and affected absolute government"), demonstrated by his institution of lictors bearing rods and leather thongs (395; *Rom*. 26). For Plutarch, Romulus's turn toward absolute monarchy and the stories of his assassination by the senate could be seen as a warning of Caesar's assumption of power and assassination. It is not clear that Hamilton sees this parallel between Romulus and Caesar, though Caesar was regularly portrayed as a tyrant in this period.[19] However, Hamilton is particularly struck by Plutarch's words in the Comparison between the two men on the falling off of both Romulus and Theseus from the ideal of kingship, the one toward tyranny, the other toward popular rule. The biographer had insisted that the good ruler neither yield too much, like Theseus, nor extend his prerogatives too far, like Romulus (*Comp. Thes. Rom*. 2). Hamilton quotes that passage, then spiritedly attacks its first part, that the king who yields his rights is a "slave to the people," and suffers from the "fault of easiness and good nature":

[18]Hamilton does not remark the extraordinary honors that Plutarch records were paid to Lycurgus at Sparta after his death (*Lyc*. 31), which might have been expected to interest him.

[19]Notably in Addison's *Cato*, which was often read and performed—even at Valley Forge (see n. 7 above and Reinhold, *The Classick Pages*, 147–48).

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> A false sentiment; it would often be praise worthy in a prince to relinquish a part of an excessive prerogative to establish a more moderate government, better adapted to the happiness or temper of his people. (396)

It is clear that Hamilton, struggling in a war with the "tyrant" George III, has read into Plutarch's words a defense of arbitrary rule.[20]

Hamilton finds the style of Lycurgus's rule more congenial, especially the story of his conversion of one of his fiercest opponents. Wealthy landowners so violently opposed his reforms that in one tempestuous encounter a young man, carried away with emotion, knocked out one of Lycurgus's eyes. Hamilton summarizes Lycurgus's response:

> He carried the young man home with him and instead of punishing him as he was authorised to do made him one of his most zealous partizans by kindness. (399)

This gentle response to a youthful political opponent reminds one of Hamilton's support for leniency toward the British agent John André in 1780 and his support of presidential power to pardon offenders in *Federalist*, No. 74.[21]

Hamilton clearly admires the figure of Numa that Plutarch presents. "He was a wise Prince," he writes, "and went a great way in civilizing the Romans" (405). Just before, he had noted that Numa's answer to the Roman ambassadors when asked to become king "is full of very sensible reflections," and he records the page number (p. 160) where it is found (405; *Num*. 5). Numa's reply had maintained that no sane man would exchange a tranquil life for one full of uncertainties, and moreover that his quiet, studious ways, love of peace, and service of the gods were diametrically opposed to the Romans' delight in war, eager as they were for war and conquest. In Plutarch's words, "their ambition of increasing their power and extending their conquests is apparent to all" (*Num*. 5, trans. Dryden). Numa had concluded with the assertion that Rome "requires rather a martial captain than a peaceable King." Hamilton may also have been thinking of the speech a few lines later responding to Numa, in which his father argued that a just man had a responsibility to govern. "Government itself is truly a service of the Gods," he argued, and "affords a wise man so large a field for great and honorable actions" (*Num*. 6, trans. Dryden). The need for a martial captain in America in the winter of 1777–78 was crucial, yet even then Hamilton was thinking of the peaceable times that might follow, which would require a man of outstanding virtue, who could guide the citizens of the new state. We naturally think of Washington, and no doubt

[20]It is unlikely that Plutarch intended this interpretation. Even though writing under the shadow of the Roman emperor, Plutarch always insisted on the responsibilities of the monarch toward his people. Note that a part of Hamilton's quote from Plutarch has been lost with a missing page or pages, so the full extent of this quote is uncertain.

[21]See Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 142–45, 259.

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Hamilton did too, but also, just as surely, he would have thought of his own ambitions and of the ideals he brought to public life.

The order of the excerpts concerning the accession of Numa reveal Hamilton's eager pursuit of Plutarch's ideas here. His notes do not follow the text in orderly succession, as they usually do, but as his reading moved far ahead, he jotted excerpts that continued his trend of thought, leaping first to Numa's just-mentioned speech on the incompatibility of his own way of life with that of the Romans, then to Numa's political use of religion. After copying these, he returned to the question of divine intercourse with or inspiration of men, which Plutarch had raised when he first introduced Numa. Only when he turns to Pythagoras and his religion does he resume his customary sequential notes with page 165, as indicated in the margin (406; *Num*. 8).[22]

Hamilton's interest in the institutional features which could limit monarchy are most apparent in his notes to the *Lycurgus*. The major features of Spartan government indicated by Plutarch were the dual kingship, the *gerousia* or senate of elders, the citizen assembly, and the committee of five ephors. Hamilton summarily rejected the idea of dual kingship. After reporting the information from Dacier's commentary that Aristotle considered the kings, the senate, and the ephors the causes of the long duration of the Spartan constitution, he challenges the philosopher on one point: "The first circumstance [i.e., the dual kingship] would be in modern times a source of endless confusion and distraction" (397; *Lyc*. 5).[23] The historical record shows that it was in antiquity as well: the Spartan kings frequently opposed each other. Despite the models of the dual consulship in Rome and the dual kingship at Sparta, Hamilton does not find a shared executive practical, and in his later writings and speeches always supported a strong single executive.

Just before, Hamilton had copied out fifteen lines of a passage highlighting the role of the senate (*gerousia*) in constraining "the imperious and fiery genius of Monarchy … within the bounds of equity and moderation."

[22]Hamilton's margin records that he began his notes on *Numa* at pp. 155–56 of Dryden (i.e., from the end of *Num*. 2 to the first part of 4), that is, the interregnum after Romulus's death, followed by popular outcry for a king and the embassy that persuaded Numa to accept the kingship. The notes then leap ahead to Numa's response on p. 160 (*Num*. 5) and his use of religion to civilize the Romans (*Num*. 8). Although a new marginal note indicates p. 157, the excerpt on the subject, "Numa (says Plutarch) … submissive by superstition" (*PAH* 1:405) is in fact from p. 164 (*Num*. 8). The immediately following excerpt, "It is not improbable … a mutual communication," returns to pp. 157–58. (This excerpt is not distinguished from the preceding one in *PAH*. Hamilton alters the first words slightly from the 1758 edition's "Nor is it improbable.") A third excerpt follows on divine inspiration of lawgivers (pp. 159–60).

[23]Aristotle seems a mistake for Plato here. The 1758 commentary on this passage (Dryden, *Lives* 1:110 n. 7) is quite long, beginning with Plato and the three branches of government and ending with Aristotle faulting the rules governing the *gerousia*. Hamilton's mistake may have arisen from a hasty reading of this note.

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Quoting Plutarch's words, he writes, "the state before had no firm basis to stand upon, leaning sometimes toward an absolute monarchy and sometimes toward a pure demockracy; but this establishment of the senate was to the commonwealth what the ballast is to a ship and preserved the whole in a just equilibrium. For they always adhered to the Kings so far as to oppose a democracy, and on the other side assisted the people to prevent tyranny" (397; *Lyc*. 5). He then goes on to transcribe the so-called Great Rhetra or foundation law of Sparta that established the *gerousia* or senate ("a council of thirty senators in number of which the two Kings shall be comprised") and the assembly of the people as supplements to the kings. He notes further the superior role of the senate, as confirmed by another rhetra: "The senate proposed and the people adopted or rejected; they could not alter or add. Finding they departed from this rule, a Rhetra was procured decreeing, 'That if the peop[l]e should alter or pervert any law, then the senate and Kings should reject it'" (397; *Lyc*. 6). This need for restrictions on the popular will as well as on the executive were an important aspect of Hamilton's thinking at the time of the Constitutional Convention and throughout his life.[24] His ongoing fear of power in the hands of an unreasoning populace contributed to his quarrel with Jefferson. Here he notes that a monarch could offer a necessary check to popular enthusiasm.

Further on, Hamilton remarks that the senators were chosen for life and describes the unusual election procedure for the *gerousia*, in which the shouts supporting each candidate are heard and recorded by judges set apart from the scene. The newly elected member also had the honor of an extra portion of food assigned him, which the elder would award "to the woman he esteemed most" (403; *Lyc*. 26). Romulus's establishment of a senate of wealthy nobles, distinguished from the populace, also drew his attention.[25] The formation of the Roman senate merits a three-line extract, which is followed by a lengthy paraphrase of Plutarch's discussion of the distinctive patron-client relationship, giving the reciprocal obligations of each party (394; *Rom*. 13). Hamilton later at the Constitutional Convention recommended election of senators to lifetime service, as was the case in Sparta.[26] At the same convention he supported life tenure for the president, "on good behavior," but later, in *Federalist*, No. 72, he supported a renewable four-year term, as another limit on the power of the monarch.

Apparently the Spartan ephorate did not attract Hamilton's fancy to the same degree. He makes a note of its establishment under King Theopompus, and includes Plutarch's anecdote of the king's reply to his wife's complaint that he had weakened his children's heritage: rather,

[24]See the account of his speech at the Constitutional Convention at Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 233–34.

[25]Roman senators also served for life, although Plutarch does not mention it.

[26]See Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 232.

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Theopompus prophesied, "he would leave it greater because more durable" (398; *Lyc*. 7). Again, the focus is on the restriction of a monarch's power. However, he gives no further details on the ephors' activity or sphere of authority beyond a short paraphrase of Dacier's note, stating that there were five ephors and their authority was "extensive."[27] We may surmise that Hamilton saw no way the ephorate could model any feature of the new government, whereas the *gerousia*, like the Roman senate, could be imitated in some fashion.

Hamilton's passion for political economy, manifested in the extensive excerpts in the earlier sections of the pay book and his later history as a dynamic secretary of the treasury, is apparent in his comment on Lycurgus's division of property. He called it "the most arduous and dangerous thing attempted by Lycurgus" and excerpted some thirteen lines describing Lycurgus's effort to achieve "perfect equality." Moreover, taking Plutarch's figure that there were 39,000 shares of land in total, he made his own calculation and concluded, "The whole population this ground could support could not much exceed 600,000" (398–99; *Lyc*. 8). The same kinds of calculations occur in the economic section of the pay book.[28] It is perhaps worth noting that the figure indicates that Sparta was much smaller than the united American colonies: an estimate of their population from the US Bureau of the Census gives a figure for 1780 of close to three million, with the largest, Virginia, having 538,000.[29]

Other economic issues are remarked without comment. Thus he notes that Lycurgus replaced gold and silver as currency with iron (399; *Lyc*. 9), but does not explore the implications of such a radical change for the Spartan economy, either from the economic perspective or from the moral perspective discussed by Plutarch. The same is true of the institution of the common mess, which he notices but whose importance to Spartan life he does not consider, though Plutarch explores it at some length (*Lyc*. 10). He does, however, mention the disaffection of the wealthy that led to Lycurgus losing an eye in a street demonstration (399; *Lyc*. 11),[30] and he records some of the anecdotes that

[27]*PAH* 1:398. At another point, Hamilton quoted Dacier's commentary (Dryden, *Lives* 1:140 n. 8) reporting that Xenophon (at *Lac. Pol*. 4.3) had said that the ephors regularly appointed three men to choose the three hundred best in the city, as prelude to Plutarch's anecdote of Pedaritus (Padaretus in Hamilton) (*PAH* 1:402; *Lyc*. 25). The ephors are also mentioned in passing in the long excerpt on the *krypteia* (*PAH* 1:403; *Lyc*. 28).

[28]Compare the observations that twenty-five workers were required to support one hundred people "in all the necessities of life," and that it took three acres to feed one man, cited by Brookhiser, *Alexander Hamilton*, 43, referring to *PAH* 1:385.

[29]Data available at http://merrill.olm.net/mdocs/pop/colonies/colonies.htm.

[30]Hamilton himself had famously faced down a mob in New York in 1775, at the beginning of the Revolution (see Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 63–64; Brookhiser, *Alexander Hamilton*, 25).

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Plutarch used to demonstrate the simplicity of Spartan life (399; *Lyc*. 13). It would seem that while the distribution of farm land struck Hamilton as something closely related to his own day, iron currency and public messes appeared too alien to be of much use. In the same way, when he comes to Plutarch's chapter on Spartan disparagement of farm labor and the manual arts, he excerpts the anecdote of the Spartan at Athens who marveled at the punishment of someone "condemned for living like a Gentleman," but does not comment on the practical implications of this practice for the development of trade or accumulation of capital (402; *Lyc*. 24). Lycurgus's policy, of course, was strongly opposed to Hamilton's own position, as seen in his later career, which was strongly in favor of manufacturing and commerce, although he recognized that agriculture was the basis of the American economy.[31] Hamilton notes that the Roman Numa took a different tack, giving attention to agriculture, distribution of land, and division of the populace into "companies," that is, associations of workers by trades—potters, metalworkers, and so on, reflecting a willingness to combine agriculture and trades not found in Lycurgan Sparta (406–407; *Num*. 9–17). A final comment on the destructiveness of greed comes at the very end of his reading of the *Lycurgus*. It does not arise from the corresponding passage in Plutarch, but is based on a general knowledge of Greek history and human nature.[32] He writes:

> a thirst of empire tempted the Spartans to entertain foreign troops and introduce Persian gold to maintain them; then the institutions of Lycurgus fell at once and avarice and luxury were introduced. (404)

Even in his early twenties, he realized that not all men had the restraint shown by George Washington regarding money.[33]

On occasion Hamilton makes astute comments on practical politics, such as Lycurgus's leniency toward his attacker, noted above, which not only demonstrated his own virtue, but also won a supporter from among his opponents, and presumably made it easier to pursue his reforms. On another occasion, speaking of Romulus's use of the *lituus*, the special curved rod used in augury, he recognizes a leader's political trick, not mentioned by either Plutarch or Dacier's commentary. When Romulus's *lituus* was lost many

[31]See notably his *Report on Manufactures* of 1791, with Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 374–79.

[32]This entry is not from Dacier's commentary at Dryden, *Lives* 1:147 n. 3, which speaks of Lysander's victories and their effect, but does not mention the Persian gold, avarice, and luxury found in Hamilton's entry. Plutarch expresses a criticism of Lysander's introduction of money into Sparta similar to Hamilton's at *Lysander* 17.

[33]Later, as treasury secretary, Hamilton was to be bedeviled by greedy friends eager to profit from inside knowledge, especially William Duer, and he himself would be accused of profiting from his post, although he died insolvent (see Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 293–94, 358–61, 379–84, 425–28, 488–89, 724).

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years later in the sack of Rome by the Gauls, Plutarch writes, it was rediscovered miraculously preserved. In his life of Camillus Plutarch adds that the rediscovery was perceived by the priests as an omen of the city's future safety. Hamilton asserts with no apparent source that this discovery was a demagogic trick of Camillus's to persuade the populace, many of whom wished to abandon the site, to rebuild the city (395; *Rom*. 22).[34] His interpretation combines rationalization of a miracle story with a keen sense of pragmatic politics.

Hamilton often made notes on social practices. He was impressed by Plutarch's harsh censure of Theseus's forgetfulness, which caused his father's death, remarking, "This shows in how high veneration the commands of a father were held" (396; *Comp. Thes. Rom*. 5). He found the Spartans' distinctive customs regarding women and marriage fascinating, as Plutarch had, since they differed so widely from both ancient and modern practice. He notes that men who did not marry by the proper time were dishonored and humiliated, and the strange practice of marriage by simulated rape and secret intercourse. Finally, he excerpts the entire passage on sharing wives. Where Plutarch relates that "a worthy man, who was in love with a married woman, on account of her modesty and the beauty of her children, was at liberty to beg of her husband admission to her" to beget children, he highlights the paradoxical words *on account of her modesty* (399–400; *Lyc*. 14–15). One can only imagine how Hamilton, so defensive of his honor, would have felt if some gentleman had suggested borrowing his own wife "on account of her modesty."[35] However, he omits Plutarch's attempts to explain why these customs might be beneficial. As is usually the case in these notes, it is the custom, not the explanation, that interests him.

It is sometimes asserted that Hamilton had a particular interest in love themes and irregular sexuality,[36] but he seems no more interested in these

[34]Plutarch, *Camillus* 32, in the same first volume of the 1758 edition that Hamilton was reading (Dryden, *Lives* 1:357). Plutarch does not suggest a trick or deception by Camillus, and Dacier has no note. Nor is the point discussed by Dacier in his "Comparison of Themistocles and Camillus" (370–82), or in the notice of Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.30. The rediscovery is not mentioned in Livy's account of the restoration of Rome in book 5 or other historical sources.

[35]Some years later, in 1791, Hamilton himself would have a scandalous affair with a younger married woman, Maria Reynolds, though that relationship had nothing to do with begetting children, but highlights the abyss between sexual mores in ancient Sparta and eighteenth-century Philadelphia (see Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 364–70).

[36]Panagopoulos, "Hamilton's Notes," 318; Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 112. Chernow refers to Hamilton's notes on the Lupercalia (*PAH* 1:395) and on Lycurgus's rules on women's education and marriage (*PAH* 1:399–400), connecting them, rather gratuitously, with Hamilton's later involvement in "the first great sex scandal in American politics."

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than other customs. He shows little interest in Theseus's many amatory adventures. Although he mentions Ariadne, Helen, and Phaedra, his attention is on other aspects of the stories, and he ignores the stories of other marriages or rapes in *Theseus* 26–27 and 29 and the wars that they spawned. Plutarch's reference to Phaedra's love for Hippolytus prompts Hamilton to a literary, not amatory, observation. He recalls the *Hippolytus* of Euripides and the adaptation by Racine, of which he notes, "the conduct and execution of which piece are as admirable as the subject is monstrous and disgusting" (392).[37] His curiosity concerning religious ritual or tradition, much of which had a sexual component, is more that of an anthropologist observing the variety of human behavior.[38]

Another note records at length the Spartan practice of exposing sickly children and the principle behind it, but concludes in disgust, "A horrid practice mentioned with no marke of disapprobation" (400; *Lyc*. 16). In general, however, he preserves an anthropologist's neutrality. He notes without comment that homosexual relationships were part of the Spartan educational system[39] and that theft was encouraged as training in courage and initiative (400–401; *Lyc*. 17–18). A sarcastic disdain for superstition, however, is apparent in his comment on the ritual whipping of boys at the altar of Artemis: "Her Goddessship was obliged to content herself with the blood of the boys [rather than their sacrifice]."[40] On the subject of the Spartans' "laconic" speech, Hamilton reports five of Plutarch's choice anecdotes, but not his admiration of them as true philosophy, and he reduces Plutarch's fulsome praise of their poetry to a brief note (401–2; *Lyc*. 19–21).

Hamilton finds an analogue to slavery in America in Plutarch's description of Spartan treatment of the helots. The account impressed him deeply, although he makes no direct comment on it. He carefully copied the entire passage into the pay book, some thirty-three lines, his longest direct extract (403–4; *Lyc*. 28). The entry recorded all the abuse of the helots, including the infamous *krypteia* (hidden time), in which young Spartans were sent out to kill helots at random. Hamilton copied only Plutarch's description of their treatment, not the biographer's confirmation of the saying that "there is no one more free than a free man in Sparta, and no one more of a slave than a slave there," or his condemnation of the *krypteia* and his disassociation of both helotry and the *krypteia* from Lycurgus. The bare facts were enough. Hamilton knew from his time in the West Indies of the worst aspects of the

[37]There is no note on the Phaedra story in the 1758 edition, nor any mention of Euripides's *Hippolytus* or Racine's *Phèdre*.

[38]E.g., the whipping of young matrons at the Roman Lupercalia to encourage fertility or the naked dances of the Spartan girls (*PAH* 1:395 and 399; *Rom*. 21 and *Lyc*. 14).

[39]Dacier's commentary recalls that Xenophon had defended the practice as being nonsexual—like a father or brother (Dryden, *Lives* 1:128 n. 5).

[40]Hamilton's entry naming the goddess Diana Taurica, not Orthia, and speaking of human sacrifice, is derived from Dacier's note (ibid., 130 n. 7).

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slave trade, and this passage would have confirmed his view that it demeaned not only the slave but his owner as well. When in later years he fiercely opposed slavery, as a member of the New York Manumission Society and in debates at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, his mind must have gone back to this passage.[41] Indeed, he most probably copied it precisely for later use in debating the slavery issue.

The religious practices that undergirded ancient civic life were of particular interest to Hamilton. Although various elements of myth and ritual had attracted Hamilton's attention while he was reading the *Theseus* and *Romulus*,[42] he finds the *Numa* most interesting in this regard, since there Plutarch presents Numa as consciously establishing a civil religion. Hamilton notes that religion was the chief means Numa used to civilize the Romans, "a barbarous and warlike people," and copies a long extract on the religious practices—sacrifices, processions, and dances—that he introduced and the superstitious terrors with which he subdued the people (405; *Num*. 8). A bit further on, he excerpts a passage on Pythagoras's methods of inspiring awe in the populace and another on Numa's aniconic religion. Notably, Numa did not allow representations of the deity, considering that men could only know the deity through their intellect, a notion that found an echo in Enlightenment philosophical discussions (406; *Num*. 8).[43] He also makes entries for two awe-inspiring actions of Numa, his preservation of the sacred *ancylia*, a shield supposedly fallen from heaven and its copies, and the visit of his goddess-mistress during a dinner (407; *Num*. 13, 15).[44] Finally, among religious institutions, Hamilton makes notes on Numa's establishment of the Pontifices or Chief Priests, of the Vestals' sacred fire, of the Fetiales, and of the temples to Faith and Terminus (406–7; *Num*. 9, 12, 13,

[41]For Hamilton's strong antislavery beliefs, see Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 32–33, 121, 210–16, 238–39, 580. In 1796 he attacked Jefferson as a slaveowner in his Phocion essays (ibid., 512–13).

[42]For *Theseus*, see note 15 above; those in *Romulus* focus on the peculiar traditions and rituals of Roman mythical history and religion. One set of entries (*PAH* 1:393; *Rom*. 2, 4, 5, and 9) refers to the phallus in Tarchetius's hearth, milk libations to Rumilia, Hercules, and Larentia (quoting six lines), and Plutarch's praise of the vulture (quoting another three lines). They are supplemented further on by notes on the feasts of the Matronalia, Carmentalia, and Lupercalia (including its odd ritual whipping of young married women), the Vestals, Roman augury and the *lituus*, and the justifications for divorce (*PAH* 1:394–95; *Rom*. 21 and 22).

[43]On Hamilton's own religion, which combined a rejection of superstition and much organized religion with a horror of atheism, see Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 659–60 and index, s.v. "Hamilton, Alexander, religious beliefs and behavior of," and Brookhiser, *Alexander Hamilton*, 203–4. After the death of his son Philip in 1801, he seems to have become more devout, if only to ward off melancholy.

[44]Hamilton states that targets were "deposited in different temples, the true one in that of Minerva near her statue." This information is neither in Plutarch nor in Dacier's notes.

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and 15).[45] He notes that the Fetiales, the priests responsible for dealing with grievances with neighboring states, would seek a fair redress, and if they received no satisfaction, would declare war. He comments, going rather beyond Plutarch's words, that their decisions "were very consistent with unbiassed justice." Faith and Terminus were honored as guarding the sanctity of oaths and of the boundaries, both private and civic. In all this Hamilton seems to have recognized that Numa was establishing the moral basis for the Roman state, the civic religion necessary for societal cohesion. Similarly the new American republic would need a religious underpinning. Much later, when he felt his principles attacked by Jefferson and other "atheists," he would try to establish a Christian Constitutional Society, with the avowed purpose of supporting both Christian religion and the Constitution.[46]

Hamilton gives little attention to military matters, despite his role in the army at the time of his reading. He comments briefly on elements of the Roman military reported by Plutarch (393–94; *Rom*. 13), noting the size of the legions and their doubling after the union with the Sabines, as well as the contrasting information supplied by the "commentator" Dacier from Livy.[47] He also makes some brief notes on Spartan practices in wartime. He finds most worth recording the custom of not pursuing a defeated enemy and excerpts Plutarch's rationale: the enemy would more readily seek safety in flight (402; *Lyc*. 22). Did he think this tactic would be useful in the present war, or did he record it as a curiosity?

Hamilton's notes reveal the unusual breadth of his curiosity and his readiness to introduce his own thoughts. His attention to scientific and philosophic questions represents a significant but unnoticed aspect of his notes. He is attracted by such speculative questions as why the Athenians sacrifice to Neptune on the eighth day of every month. On this point he quotes four lines of Plutarch's explanation, "because the number 8 being both the first cube of an even number and the double of the first square, seemed to be an emblem of the immoveable power of this god," and so on (392–93; *Thes*. 36). Again, while reading of the death of Romulus, Hamilton becomes interested in Plutarch's speculation on the immortality of the body and the possibility of deification after death, and quotes both the lines of Pindar that Plutarch cites and eight lines of the biographer's argument on levels of virtue leading to corresponding levels of divinity: men, heroes, demigods, and gods. Hamilton continues in his notes to this passage with references to Hesiod, Plato, Shaftesbury, and Pope (who, he writes, "has erected a delightful poem on

[45]Hamilton incorporates information from Dacier's notes (Dryden, *Lives* 1:180 nn. 3–4) on the purpose of the two last-named cults.

[46]See his letter to James Bayard, April 1802, in *PAH* 25:605, and Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 659, who denounces it as "an execrable idea."

[47]Dryden, *Lives* 1:78 n. 4.

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this foundation").[48] Hamilton himself, at a later date, hoped that noble men would find in the afterlife "far more substantial bliss than can ever be found in this checkered, this ever varying scene."[49] On the other hand, Plutarch's hypothesis in the *Lycurgus* concerning the relation of the vital spirits to growth merits only his contempt: after copying out the offending passage, he rejoins, "—a kind of jargon which only shows the ignorance of the times in the science of the human frame" (401; *Lyc*. 17). Hamilton has no doubt that modern science has outstripped ancient theories.

Two more speculations in the life of Numa attract this restless intellect's attention. First he excerpts two passages discussing the lawmaker's relation to the divine: one on the intimacy between God and virtuous men, considering the possibility of divine sexual intercourse with men or women, and the other considering whether lawgivers might be inspired by the gods (403–4; *Num*. 4). Both passages are clearly tied to his own awareness of the need for some kind of divine inspiration for the country currently being established, as well as his own hopes for lasting honor. Further on, Hamilton becomes intrigued with the interpretation of the circular temple of Vesta (which had the sacred fire in the center) as a model of the universe and copies out the whole passage, with its explanation that the Pythagoreans had held that the earth revolves around the central fire (406–7; *Num*. 11).[50] This attention to abstract questions indicates an active mind and a general curiosity not limited to constitutional—or sexual—questions.

Finally, it is useful to review what Hamilton passes over in these lives. Plutarch in the preface to each life had indicated that the stories he was presenting had little claim to historical accuracy. Hamilton does not mention these disclaimers, but regularly shows no interest in the heroes' early years, mythical and legendary events, or wars. In *Theseus*, after a short summary of the Minos episode he skips through to the honors after Theseus's death, with only short

[48]*PAH* 1:395–96; *Rom*. 28. The notice on Hesiod is taken from the 1758 edition (Dryden, *Lives* 1:92 n. 7), but the references to Plato, Shaftesbury, and Pope reflect Hamilton's own reading. Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671–1713), wrote a number of philosophical works on morals and religion. Alexander Pope's poem *Essay on Man* (1732), which was influenced by Shaftesbury's *The Moralist*, contains the lines, "Vast chain of being! which from God began; / Natures ethereal, human, angel, man, / Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see" (Epistle 1.8). Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 24, 34, and 38 gives evidence of Hamilton's having read and imitated Pope before leaving St. Croix for America.

[49]Hamilton to John Dickinson, March 29, 1802, in *PAH* 25:583, cited by Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, 660.

[50]Hamilton was also on the lookout for basic factual information. The marginal note "Every generation consists of thirty years an olympiad of forty" at *PAH* 1:405 n. 101 derives from Dacier's commentary (Dryden, *Lives* 1:153 n. 1): "Every age or generation consisted of thirty years." Dacier goes on to discuss Olympiads, giving the equation 34 Olympiads equals 136 years. Clearly Hamilton's "forty" is a slip for "four."

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notices on semihistorical facts and on the honors given to Castor and Pollux at Athens. He omits Theseus's voyage to the Black Sea, his encounter with the Amazons, his journey to the underworld, and much else, even the appearance of Menestheus, the first demagogue (*Thes*. 32). He skips rapidly through *Romulus*, consciously abridging familiar stories (e.g., "Romulus and Remus &c. &c.," "the story of the vestal virgin, well known &c." (393; *Rom*. 2) and omitting the legend of the brothers' early years and founding of the city, the union with the Sabines, and the wars that followed. He must have known the story of Romulus and Remus and the foundation of Rome from earlier reading, in Livy, say, or Rollin's *Roman History*. His notes from *Lycurgus* on Spartan practice, though fuller than in the other lives, are still sparse, apart from the marriage customs and the *krypteia*. On *Numa* he notes only a few of the many rituals the king instituted and the stories associated with them. Overall, he shows little interest in the myths and legends connected to Plutarch's subjects, preferring to note rather the occasional "singularity" and "important facts," as he had indicated in his heading.

Hamilton's notes on the life of Numa stop abruptly with chapter 17, omitting the last five chapters, which included such topics as the slavery of sons, the establishment of the calendar, and Numa's death. Apparently his reading of the *Lives* was interrupted, and if and when he resumed it, the pay book was not at hand. Significantly, Hamilton thus left no record of his thoughts on Plutarch's comparison of the two legislators, Lycurgus and Numa. Plutarch there had called particular attention to two points: first, that Lycurgus's constitution had endured for five hundred years because he radically restructured both Spartan society and the educational system, whereas Numa's peaceful rule died with him; and second, that Numa's policy of favoring peace, wisdom, and justice rather than warfare, the abandonment of which had enabled Rome to win battles and conquer its empire, might in fact have been the preferable course.[51] Both of these topics were of great potential interest to Hamilton.[52]

Alexander Hamilton was in many ways the ideal reader that Plutarch might have imagined: an extremely talented and ambitious young man, eager to win honor as a soldier and statesman.[53] Hamilton could accept the

[51]*Comp. Lyc. Num*. 4.1. Plutarch's account of Numa is reflected in an unpublished letter by Anthony Benezet, a Quaker in Philadelphia, to Benjamin Franklin, May 8, 1783, which urges that he work for peace, citing the wonderful effect of Numa's peaceful disposition on Rome and Italy, and hoping for the same and more so (since we have Christianity) if the Germans and French would be peaceful. This letter is in the digital edition of the Franklin papers, available at www.franklinpapers.org.

[52]I have not directly inspected the pay book to ascertain whether a missing page is responsible for this truncated record. Neither *PAH* nor Panagopoulos's edition mentions the possibility of a missing page.

[53]Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* were dedicated to his younger friend Sosius Senecio, a close associate of the emperor Trajan, twice consul, and a commander on the Dacian

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mythical and legendary aspect of these biographies, while learning from their factual content and relishing their vivid personal anecdotes. He focuses especially on governmental issues. First of all, monarchy and the danger of tyranny, as exemplified by Romulus, then the institutions by which states had limited the power of monarchs: the senate at Rome, the *gerousia*, and later the ephors at Sparta. Plutarch's statements on Spartan and Roman political institutions represent one strand of ancient political thought that would combine with many others in the eighteenth century to weave the theory of separation of counterbalancing powers that emerged as a major factor in shaping the American Constitution. Although Hamilton throughout his life argued for a strong executive, his notes here insist on a restrained use of power. He admires Theseus for renouncing the prerogatives of monarchy, contrary to Plutarch's admonition, and is appreciative of Lycurgus's gentleness in winning over the agitated young partisan who had put out his eye. Reflecting his abhorrence of mob rule, Hamilton notes as well institutions that limit the popular will, such as the *gerousia* at Sparta. Social and educational practices also shaped the behavior of the populace in Sparta and Rome. Many of the religious practices he finds strange or superstitious, but he agrees with Plutarch's Numa on the value of religion to help create a civil society in a young nation. The numerous social and religious oddities that Hamilton remarks indicate his curiosity about other lands and other manners, a trait noticeable also in his earlier notes on political economy in the pay book. Lycurgus's land distribution and other problems in civic relations, both political and economic, capture his attention and provoke a personal reaction. His long excerpt on the Spartans' treatment of their helots is a testimony to his early concern about the problem of slavery, which would lead to his enthusiastic support of the causes of manumission and abolition.

If we try to put this all together, we recognize two major factors at work. First, Plutarch understands his audience, whether ancient or modern.[54] Hamilton, like his original readers and like those of the present day, enjoyed the anecdotes and curious bits of lore that fill Plutarch's pages. Hamilton could see that many of the anecdotes held important lessons for leaders and recognized that these lives offered a summary of the principal political and social institutions of the leading cities of the ancient world.

frontier, while his *Rules for Politicians* was dedicated to an ambitious young aristocrat, eager to begin a career in politics. See C. P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 43 and 54–57.

[54]Plutarch addressed an educated and politically active audience of both Romans and Greeks, many of whom were in the upper ranks of the imperial administration. See Philip A. Stadter, "Plutarch's Lives and Their Roman Readers," in *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks: Studies in Cultural Interaction*, ed. E. N. Ostenfeld (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2002), 123–35.

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Second, Hamilton understood Plutarch. He responded readily to the biographer's focus on leaders and their exercise of power. Plutarch's account of and admiration for the political regimes of Lycurgus and Numa, diverse as they were, and of the policies that brought them success, furnished important material for Hamilton's thinking on political issues. Plutarch had not intended that his readers should imitate the subjects of his *Lives* directly, nor did Hamilton expect to do so. Rather the *Lives* encouraged the reader to explore how the values and institutions of those founders and lawgivers could be put into practice in their own day.[55] Hamilton, intellectually brilliant and thoroughly committed to the foundation of the new republic, found these *Lives* a rich quarry from which he could draw for ideas and facts. We can only regret that Hamilton's notes in his pay book were truncated before he could annotate more of the *Lives*, and especially those dealing with more historical and controversial figures, such as Marius and Sulla or Cato and Caesar. As it is, Hamilton has left us in these scraps a valuable testament to his early intellectual development.

[55]On Plutarch's purposes see T. Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Christopher Pelling, "The Moralism of Plutarch's Lives," in *Plutarch and History* (London: Classical Press of Wales, 2002), 237–51.

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