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Braving the Batavians: Classical Models and Countering Rebellion in the Spanish Empire

Lisa Kattenberg

Identifying with the ancient Batavians as fierce and liberty-loving ancestors was part of the Dutch republican tradition from the late sixteenth century onwards. The “Batavian myth” gained momentum in the newly established Dutch Republic as an anchor of national identity and legitimacy, with the Batavian uprising against the Roman Empire in the first century CE being hailed as an event foreshadowing the Revolt against Spain.¹ Hugo Grotius famously argued in *Treatise of the Antiquity of the Batavian now Hollandish Republic* (1610) that the Batavians had been the first to embrace true republican liberty, which the States had subsequently safeguarded against the (foreign) pretensions of kings, counts, and military commanders.² For Grotius and his followers, monarchy was the direct opposite of Batavian or republican liberty. Yet the Batavian myth was also present in writings from the monarchy of Spain. “The Dutch are those Batavians about whom Cornelius Tacitus makes so much mention in his books,” Fernando Alvía de Castro wrote in 1629.³ Far from championing republican liberty, Alvía de Castro embedded the Batavian ancestry in a memorandum for his master, King Philip IV of Spain, about how to finally defeat the Dutch.

This chapter explores the various ways in which authors from the Spanish monarchy used classical analogies to characterize their rebellious enemies.

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- 1 Ivo Schöffer, “The Batavian Myth during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Britain and the Netherlands: Some Political Mythologies*, ed. by J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossmann (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974), 78–101; Sergio González Sánchez, “Roman-Barbarian Interactions and the Creation of Dutch National Identity: The Many Faces of a Myth,” in *The Edges of the Roman World*, ed. by Staša Babić and Vladimir Mihajlović (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 5–18; David Onnekink, “The Body Politic,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. by Geert Janssen and Helmer Helmers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 120–21.
 - 2 Martin van Gelderen, *The Political Thought of the Dutch Revolt 1555–1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 206–07; Arthur Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism in the Dutch Golden Age. The Political Thought of Johan and Pieter de la Court* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 42.
 - 3 Fernando Alvía de Castro, “Oraciones y discursos políticos contra los Olandeses,” *Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona*, MsA.72, f. 5.

Inverting the Batavian origin myth into a model of a drawn-out and destructive rebellion, the Spanish employed it to represent the Dutch as opponents and to accordingly devise suitable policies for the war in the Netherlands. Moreover, during the same period they were facing resistance on the northern borders of the empire, the Spanish were involved in a conflict of comparable duration and tenacity on its southern frontier. In the Chilean region Araucanía, what had begun as a war of conquest had turned into a protracted conflict with the native Mapuche. In the Spanish imagination, this Arauco War was a rebellion that seemed impossible to suppress, and because of its similarity to the war in the Netherlands in terms of longevity, cost, and character of the opponents, during the seventeenth century it came to be known as “American Flanders.” I will show that beyond this general metaphor, the Spanish described the Mapuche in terms that were strikingly similar to those used to characterize the Batavians in the Dutch republican tradition: they were indomitable warriors with a great love of liberty, who would not suffer the yoke of monarchy or foreign domination.⁴

The use of classical parallels in early modern (colonial) Spanish writing about the “New World” of the Americas has received much attention over the past few decades, with monographs focusing on literary sources, histories, legal and ethnological texts, and soldiers’ writing.⁵ This body of scholarship has demonstrated the relevance of ancient models for coming to terms with the New World, and has revealed that this process was far from static or one-sided. Classical ideas and motifs travelled back and forth across oceans and enemy lines, carried by printed works and agents that moved between and within Europe, the Americas, and the wider world. Building on these insights, this chapter first outlines the background and implications of the analogy of

4 It should be noted that the Spanish rhetoric of Mapuche liberty stands in sharp contrast with practices of indigenous enslavement, which were widespread in colonial Chilean society. The insistence on the bellicose and rebellious nature of the Mapuche is, moreover, reminiscent of the ethnonyms that were often purposefully given to Americans by colonial powers in order to turn them into natural enemies who were subject to slavery. Classical models are only one of several contexts within which the Spanish characterizations of the Mapuche can be understood, but they are central to the analogy of “*Flandes indiano*”. See Nancy Van Deusen, “Indigenous Slavery’s Archive in Seventeenth-Century Chile,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 101, no. 1 (2021): 1–33.

5 David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); David Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003); Miguel Martínez, *Front Lines: Soldiers’ Writing in the Early Modern Hispanic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

the Arauco War as a “second Flanders.” Next, I analyze how Spanish authors projected onto the Mapuche a set of key characteristics which were familiar as a prototype of the Dutch rebels, and associated with their identity as Batavians: most prominently their great love of liberty. Finally, I show how the Batavian model helped shape Spanish ideas about moving forward in the wars both in Chile and the Netherlands. As Spanish authors projected neo-Roman republican principles of liberty and self-government onto both the Dutch and Mapuche, they experimented with incorporating ancient republican models into a political language of Christian monarchy and empire. Tracing the ways in which the Batavian model was inverted outside the Dutch republican context, this chapter deepens the understanding of the versatility of classical models and their ability to help conceive of, and turn into practice, countering rebellion and preserving monarchical traditions in the seventeenth-century world.

1 Second Flanders

The lands south of the Inca empire made a distinctly favorable impression on the first *conquistadors* when they arrived there in the first half of the sixteenth century, and this still resonated in later sixteenth- and seventeenth-century descriptions. Chile was fertile and fresh, with a temperate climate, and “both in the fruits of the land, and in the ability of the natives, it more closely resembled the lands and peoples of Europe than any other in the Americas.”⁶ The Jesuit chronicler Diego de Rosales (1601–77) described the Biobío River, which would roughly demarcate the border between Spanish and Mapuche territories, as “equally renowned as the Rhine and the Scheldt in Flanders.”⁷ Chile’s favorable climate was often connected to the reputed physical strength and resilience of its native inhabitants. It was because of this superiority that the mighty Inca empire had never managed to incorporate the Mapuche territory, a fact often dwelled upon in both Spanish and Dutch sources.⁸ As the Augustinian chronicler Antonio de Calancha (1584–1654) observed in 1633, Chile had thus been for the Inca empire what the Netherlands were for the Spanish monarchy.⁹ About a decade later, the Jesuit Alonso de Ovalle (1603–51) marveled at the fact that

6 Johannes de Laet, *Nieuwe wereldt, ofte beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (Leiden: Elsevier, 1625), 357. De Laet based this description on the work of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas.

7 Diego de Rosales, *Historia general del reino de Chile, Flandes indiano*, vol. 1, ed. by Benjamin Mackenna (Valparaiso: Mercurio, 1877), 265.

8 Laet, *Nieuwe wereldt*, 364.

9 Álvaro Baraibar Echeverría, “Chile como un ‘Flandes indiano’ en las crónicas de los siglos XVI y XVII,” *Revista chilena de literatura* 85 (2013): 165.

the Spanish, “after having so swiftly conquered the powerful empires of Montezuma in Mexico and the Inca in Peru, have never been able to subject the brave warriors of Chile.” For Ovalle, this was proof of their “invincible spirit.”¹⁰

Viewed from the vantage point of the Hispanic world, the Arauco War and the war in the Netherlands were two border conflicts that were connected on both practical and intellectual levels. In reality the differences between them were obviously numerous. The Spanish Habsburgs had acquired the rule over the Netherlands through dynastic union, for example, whereas their involvement in Chile was essentially a war of conquest. Yet in every contemporary Spanish text, the Arauco War was characterized as a rebellion (*rebellion*).¹¹ Authors generally emphasized that the *conquistadors* had subjected the native Mapuche to royal authority and the Catholic Faith, and that they had subsequently, in the words of the soldier and chronicler Santiago de Tesillo (born 1607), gone “from Christians to apostates, and from vassals to rebels.” The Spanish now needed to guide them back “to the Church as children, and to the king as vassals.”¹² This depiction, however far removed from reality, encouraged the association of Chile with the Netherlands. Spanish authors had already been known to express fear of a “new” or “second Flanders” during episodes of unrest or revolt in Spanish dominions in Europe, for example in Aragon in 1591, in Catalonia in 1643, and in Messina in 1673.¹³ “Flanders” had come to signify a rebellion impossible to suppress, which had turned into a lengthy and costly war, and which was complicated by the distance from the Iberian Peninsula. It was the place where many soldiers lost their lives, or as the seventeenth-century Spanish saying went, “Spain is my nature, Italy my fortune, and Flanders my graveyard.”¹⁴

Many decades before Diego de Rosales in 1674 coined the association with this traumatic Flanders, Santiago de Tesillo already referred to Chile as “the new Flanders,” where the wars seemed “irremediable.”¹⁵ The report of the censor in another of Tesillo’s pamphlets referred to “that new Flanders,” which was

10 Alonso de Ovalle, *Historica relacion del Reyno de Chile y de las misiones y ministerios que exercita en él la Compañía de Jesus* (Rome: Francesco Cavalli, 1646), 83–84. Ovalle based his account of the Mapuche history prior to the arrival of the Spanish on Garcilaso de la Vega’s *Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (1616).

11 For example Antonio de Herrera, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos en las islas y Tierra Firme del Mar Oceano*, vol. VIII (Madrid: Imprenta Real, 1615), 193.

12 Santiago de Tesillo, *Epítome chileno o ideas contra la paz* (Lima: Jorge Lopez de Herrera, 1648), f. 12r-v (quotes); f. 22v.

13 Baraibar, “Chile como un ‘Flandes indiano,’” 160.

14 *Ibid.*, 161.

15 Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 17v.

troubled by “bitter and tenacious” wars.¹⁶ The comparisons between Chile and Flanders did not cease after the signing of the peace treaty between the Dutch Republic and the Spanish monarchy in 1648. In 1651 the Franciscan chronicler Diego de Salinas y Córdoba (1591–1684) noted that the “uprising” in Chile “lasts until today, and this nation has become so bold and unassailable, that today Chile has become for America what Flanders was for the noble house of Austria.”¹⁷ Thus the analogy of “American Flanders” had been established when Rosales fully explored it in *Historia General del Reino de Chile, Flandes Indiano* (1674). “The Spaniards who have discovered and populated this realm of Chile,” Rosales wrote, “have had the chance to exercise their courage, for what they found there was an Indian Flanders, a bloody war, a brave opposition and bold resistance in the natives of those lands.”¹⁸

It was not just the Spanish who saw Chile as a “second Flanders.” In the Dutch imagination a special affiliation existed with peoples across the Atlantic who, like them, had suffered the yoke of Spanish dominion. Benjamin Schmidt has pointed out that Chile occupied a special position in this cultural geography. In the early 1600s a Dutch sailor reported an uprising of the “valiant warriors” of Chile who “raised their cups to avenging the tyranny and slavery under which Spain would have them suffer.” Reports like this presented the native Chileans as a militant people who bravely continued to fight for their freedom and who would be pleased to learn of the Dutch war against the Spanish, “as they were enemies of the same.”¹⁹ Some Dutch authors even extended the notion of their Batavian ancestry to the native peoples of the Americas. In his history of Brazil Caspar Barlaeus (1584–1648) suggested a vague affiliation between the American and Teutonic races, and inferred a descent of these Americans from the ancient Batavians. Grotius spelled out the Batavian-American connection even more clearly. Based on presumed common customs and imagined linguistic affinities, he argued that sea-faring Germanic peoples had migrated to North America, perhaps by way of Iceland and Greenland.²⁰

16 Santiago de Tesillo, *Restauración del Estado de Arauco y otros progresos militares conseguidos por las armas de S.M.* (Lima: Juan de Quevedo, 1665), aprobación.

17 Diego de Salinas y Córdoba, *Crónica franciscana de las provincias del Perú*, ed. by Lino Gómez Canedo (Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1957), 1100.

18 Rosales, *Historia general*, vol. I, 18–19.

19 Olivier van Noort quoted in Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad: The Dutch Imagination and the New World, 1570–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 205; Laet, *Nieuwe wereldt*, 364.

20 Grotius's claims were based on presumed common customs and imagined linguistic affinities. They were challenged by fellow scholar Johannes de Laet, which led to a neo-Latin pamphlet war. Benjamin Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 388 and idem, “Space, Time,

This idea of the native Chileans as the fellow-suffering “Batavians of the New World” was enforced by the appearance of a Dutch translation of the epic poem *La Araucana* by the Spanish soldier-poet Alonso de Ercilla in 1619, which became an instant publishing success.²¹ Originally published between 1569 and 1589, *La Araucana* celebrated the Spanish conquest of Chile and the first confrontations with the Mapuche. Even though they were the enemies of Spain, Ercilla had championed the “Araucanian” love of freedom and invincible spirit in verses such as:

Never has a king subjected
Such fierce people proud of freedom,
Nor has alien nation boasted
E'er of having trod their borders.²²

The Dutch translation, moreover, was tailored to a domestic audience. Several cantos that celebrated Spanish bravery were removed, and the Dutch editor added special praise for the love of “patria” among the Chileans. These exemplary warriors were zealous enough to avenge the death of their fathers in carrying on a war which by 1619 had already lasted over seventy years.²³

2 Anatomy of a Rebel

From the perspective of the Spanish empire, the Arauco War had been the first conflict in the New World which no amount of war effort seemed able to bring to a satisfying conclusion. This confronted authors, administrators, and soldiers with pressing questions. Who were the native Chileans and what motivated them to resist Spanish dominion so fiercely? Why had a mighty power such as the Spanish empire not been able to subdue what was in Spain's eyes but a small nation of pagan natives? The imagined connection between Chile and the Netherlands aided in approaching some of these quandaries. The translation of the Arauco War into an “Old World” conflict embedded it in

Travel: Hugo de Groot, Johannes de Laet, and the Advancement of Geographic Learning,” *LIAS* 25, no. 2 (1998): 177–99.

21 For Ercilla, see Martínez, *Front Lines*, 29–31.

22 Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, *The Araucaniad*, trans. Charles Lancaster and Paul Manchester (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1945), 37.

23 Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, *Historiale beschrijvinghe der goudtrijcke landen in Chile ende Arauco, ende andere provincien in Chile ghelegen*, trans. by Isaac Jansz. Bijl (Rotterdam: Jan van Waesberghe, 1619).

a familiar discourse on empire and rebellion, which was based to an important extent on classical comparisons. The ancient analogies which Spanish authors selected for the Arauco War always featured a minority taking a stand against a much more powerful opponent, usually the Roman Empire. Authors who admired the Mapuche tended to liken Araucanía to ancient Numantia, a Celtiberian stronghold that rose up against the Romans in the second century CE (“Today Chile has become for America what Numantia was against the power of Rome”).²⁴ The Numantian Celts, renowned for their valor and fighting skills, have sometimes been presented as the earliest ancestors of the modern Spanish, and like the Batavians for the Dutch, they featured in nationalist discourses from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.²⁵ Authors who were more hostile to the Mapuche, on the other hand, believed that they were inconstant in their valor. Santiago de Tesillo likened them to the ancient Gauls or the modern French: keen to fight, and quick to give up. Quoting Julius Caesar, Tesillo observed that like the Gauls, the Mapuche were “in the first instance more than men, and in the end less than women.”²⁶

Despite their varied identities, all these minority opponents were ascribed a common set of characteristics, which were similar to how Tacitus had described the Batavians. In Tacitus’s writings the Batavians appear as a fierce and brave people, who were accustomed to self-rule and did not suffer oppression by foreigners; according to Tacitus, the self-proclaimed reason for Julius Civilis to start his rebellion was that the Batavians were now “treated like slaves.”²⁷ Because the Batavians valued their freedom above everything else, they were prone to conspire against anyone who tried to impose dominion over them. Spanish authors used Tacitus as a source when they compared the Dutch to the ancient Batavians. The agent and counsellor Fernando Alvía de Castro, who in his unpublished *Political Discourses Against the Dutch* had called the Dutch “those Batavians,” vowed to present his advice “only with authorities of Cornelius Tacitus, the inexhaustible ocean of politics.”²⁸ Alvía explained

24 Salinas y Córdoba, *Crónica franciscana*, 1100.

25 See Francisco Gracia-Alonso, “The Invention of Numantia and Emporion: Archaeology and the Regeneration of Spanish and Catalan Nationalisms after the Crisis of 1898,” in *In Search of Pre-Classical Antiquity: Rediscovering Ancient Peoples in Mediterranean Europe (19th and 20th c.)*, ed. by Antonio de Francesco (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 64–95; and Barbara Simerka, *Discourses of Empire: Counter-Epic Literature in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 77–78.

26 Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 13v.

27 Tacitus, *Histories* 4.14. See also Fernando Martínez Luna, *Een ondraaglijk juk. Nederlandse beeldvorming van Spanje en de Spanjaarden ten tijde van de Opstand, 1566–1609* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2018), 31.

28 Alvía de Castro, “Oraciones y discursos,” f. iv and see above, note 3.

the motivations of the Dutch to rebel in terms of the Batavians. They were bold and audacious, and according to Alvía, the “old and natural ambition” of Civilis had led the Batavians to conspire against the Romans as the Dutch had done against the Spanish. Most of all, the “Batavian liberty” in the Dutch corrupted them into resisting foreign dominion.²⁹ This image was largely a negative version of the seventeenth-century Dutch imagination of their own Batavian ancestry. However, whereas Alvía characterized decision-making among the Batavians mostly as “conspiring,” Dutch authors tended to give them more credit for political organization. Grotius had even argued that the Batavians had possessed constitutional arrangements similar to those of the Dutch Republic.³⁰ Their love of liberty here became a specifically republican asset, the polar opposite of monarchy. Thus from the early modern Spanish and Dutch readings of Tacitus, a set of “Batavian” characteristics emerges: people who were fierce and brave; governed themselves through an assembly of equals and were apt to conspire against any foreign dominion; and had a great love of liberty, refusing to suffer monarchical rule.

Spanish authors projected these “Batavian” characteristics not just on the Dutch, but also on the Mapuche. Firstly, in every Spanish text the Mapuche are described as brave and resilient. Even Santiago de Tesillo had to admit that although they were “undoubtedly barbarians,” they were also “undoubtedly brave.”³¹ Other authors distinguished their martial spirit and their great endurance in the face of personal discomfort.³² According to Diego de Rosales, the valor and warlike nature of the Mapuche were unrivalled. No Spanish governor or general should underestimate them, for “even among the great captains of Flanders, who have seen them fight, they have caused admiration.”³³

Secondly, Spanish authors depicted the Mapuche resistance as conspiracies organized by a general assembly of warriors.³⁴ Dominant accounts of their political organization portrayed the Mapuche as having developed a basic yet effective system of decision-making. It was clear that they would not submit to the permanent authority of a king, but if the preservation of their freedom was at stake, the Mapuche were able to unite behind a temporary leader elected by an assembly of commoners. Once this leader and the assembly had decided on a proper course, they selected “the means that appear most effective for the

29 Ibid., f. 7v, 41v.

30 Weststeijn, *Commercial Republicanism*, 42.

31 Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 3v-4.

32 Ovalle, *Historica relacion*, 86, 88; Salinas y Córdoba, *Crónica franciscana*, 1100, 1094.

33 Diego de Rosales, *Historia general del reino de Chile, Flandes indiano*, vol. III, ed. by Benjamin Mackenna (Valparaiso: Mercurio, 1878), 248.

34 For example Ovalle, *Historica relacion*, 85 and Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 9v.

purpose.”³⁵ Similarly, the royal chronicler of the Americas Antonio de Herrera (1549–1625) acknowledged that “the rebels wage war with judgment and reason,” and that their generals governed with prudence.³⁶ Herrera also observed that the Chileans had in no way accepted the presence of the Spanish, and that they “lost no time in convening and conspiring” to expel them from their territory.³⁷ This description was copied by the Dutch geographer and director of the Dutch West India Company Johannes de Laet (1581–1649) in his own account, but De Laet depicted the assemblies more strongly as secret and conspiratorial (*onderlinghe ende secrete by-een-rottinghen*). De Laet also emphasized that the Spanish were foreigners (*dese vreemde natie van Spaegniaerden*) and intent on imposing their dominion or yoke (*jock*).³⁸ Diego de Rosales echoed this rendition of the Mapuche conspiring to resist foreign oppression, like the Batavians:

The Indians were disgruntled and united into secret gatherings in order to shake off the yoke which the Spanish had imposed upon them. And because they considered themselves free by nature and they had never been subjected to a king, lord or any other form of dominion, they took this [dominion] by a foreign nation very badly.³⁹

Finally and most importantly, what distinguished the native Chileans in the eyes of both the Spanish and the Dutch was their all-overriding love of liberty. This went hand in hand with their inability to suffer a yoke of (foreign) dominion. “They despise subjection,” Tesillo wrote, “as much as they love freedom.”⁴⁰ In de words of Diego de Salinas, the Mapuche “put all their happiness and reputation in defending their liberty, without yoke or other dominion.”⁴¹ This was love of liberty of the kind Grotius had ascribed to the Batavians: it signified a refusal or inability to accept monarchical rule, and a yearning to rule the *patria* without being subjected to foreign dominion. José de Acosta argued in his *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (1590) that of all the native inhabitants of the Americas, the Chileans are the best example of a people that “do not suffer kings or absolute lords.”⁴² Alonso de Ovalle explained that this was the very reason the Mapuche had always resisted the Inca, for “they never wanted to

35 Ovalle, *Historica relacion*, 85–86 (quote).

36 Herrera, *Historia general*, vol. 8, 199.

37 *Ibid.*, 197.

38 Laet, *Nieuwe wereldt*, 364. See also Schmidt, *Innocence Abroad*, 206.

39 Rosales, *Historia general*, vol. 1, 476.

40 Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 9v. See also Tesillo, *Restauración del Estado de Arauco*, f. 3.

41 Salinas y Córdoba, *Crónica franciscana*, 1100.

42 José de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, vol. 2 (Madrid: Ramon Anglés, 1894), 172.

admit a king from their own nation nor from another, because the love and regard for their own liberty always prevailed over reasons of state.”⁴³

This liberty-loving spirit provided excellent literary opportunities. The soldier-poet Alonso de Ercilla praised the brave “Araucanians” in moving verses that were often quoted by subsequent authors, including Diego de Rosales.⁴⁴ Ovalle even dramatically imagined the speech a Mapuche leader could have delivered before going to battle, to energize his comrades and remind them of what they held most dear:

Are you not all sons and descendants of those brave captains and soldiers who won so many battles, risking and disregarding their lives for the defense of the same fatherland and liberty that we defend? [...] We all have to die, and in this equality in fortune there is no other advantage than that of a glorious death, for the beloved liberty of the fatherland, our children and descendants. Remember [...] that in your veins runs the blood you have inherited from those who have never allowed the shameful yoke of servitude to be placed on their necks.⁴⁵

3 War or Peace?

The “Batavian” model was thus present in Spanish discourse both on the “first” and the “second Flanders” because of the identification of the Dutch as Batavians, and the established parallel between the Dutch and Chilean wars. In the Dutch imagination, the “special relationship” with the fellow-suffering Chileans came with a moral obligation and political motivation to seek an actual alliance, and in 1641, an expedition was mounted to establish contact with the people south of the River Biobio.⁴⁶ Although the expedition ended in failure and the alliance never materialized, Benjamin Schmidt has pointed out that the Araucanian reputation persisted in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century. From the perspective of the Spanish, the Batavian frame was instrumental in situating these unfamiliar opponents, and explaining the difficulty in subduing them. For most authors who wrote about Chile these

43 Ovalle, *Historica relacion*, 85.

44 Rosales, *Historia general*, vol. 1, 478.

45 Ovalle, *Historica relacion*, 87–88.

46 See Hendrik den Heijer, *Goud en indianen: het journaal van Hendrick Brouwers expeditie naar Chili in 1643* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2015); Benjamin Schmidt, “Exotic Allies: The Dutch-Chilean Encounter and the (Failed) Conquest of America,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (1999): 441–73.

concerns were not just theoretical: many were actively involved in the wars with the Mapuche. Alonso de Ercilla and Santiago de Tesillo were soldiers, Alonso de Ovalle worked as a missionary and Diego de Rosales spent years on the front line as an army chaplain. How did their ideas about the nature of this conflict and the enemy translate into opinions about if, or how, the war should be continued?

A parallel which contemporary authors did not tend to discuss is that both the war in the Netherlands and the Arauco War were interrupted by several stretches of peace and truce. Both in Flanders and in Chile, negotiations or *parlamentos* were frequently held parallel to the fighting. Many of these talks were unsuccessful, but some led to treaties such as the Twelve Years' Truce of 1609–21 in the Netherlands or the short-lived truce in Arauco in 1611. This meant that Spanish administrators, soldiers, and counsellors, including the chroniclers of the Arauco War, regularly reflected upon the potential harm or benefit of a truce, or debated the shape it should take. Diego de Rosales, for example, was present at peace talks with the Mapuche as a counsellor and interpreter around 1640.⁴⁷ An important argument in favor of a truce was that the cause of the Catholic faith might be better served in peacetime. Also during the war in Netherlands, theologians who acted as counsellors pointed out that, for the sake of the religion, the King should not allow a desperate military position to deteriorate. If the Spanish were to continue the war effort without being able to raise enough money to do this effectively, they ran the risk of also losing the provinces that were still obedient, and “the day we lose the loyal provinces, the Catholic religion will be lost in them.”⁴⁸ In the case of Chile, especially the counsellors who were trained as theologians pleaded for a ceasefire, mostly because this would allow missionaries to act more effectively in Mapuche territory. Both in Flanders and Chile theologian-counsellors assured the king that accepting the continuation of some paganism or heresy was not incompatible with his duties regarding the Faith: doing his utmost for the Catholic cause would clear his conscience.⁴⁹

The most frequently discussed concern and argument for a peaceful settlement in both wars was their long duration. What was the point in continuing if the experience of many years of warfare had yielded so little gain? Defending the 1607 armistice with the Dutch Republic, the soldier-banker Ambrogio

47 See the notes by Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna in Rosales, *Historia general*, vol. III, 159.

48 “Voto Obispo de Segovia,” in Consulta Consejo de Estado, 1 August 1628, Archivo General de Simancas (AGS) Estado Leg. 2042, f. 97.

49 See also Diego de Rosales, *Historia general del reino de Chile, Flandes indiano*, vol. II, ed. Benjamin Mackenna (Valparaíso: Mercurio, 1878), 527.

Spinola declared that “considering that in 41 years of costly warfare we do not have any more than on the first day,” a truce now seemed the more convenient solution.⁵⁰ In 1628, another counsellor observed about the Netherlands that “the experience of sixty years of warfare” had proved the war in Flanders to be so “lengthy, costly, bloody, and interminable” that the Spanish had “lost all hope of ending it by way of arms.”⁵¹ The reasoning and vocabulary applied to Chile is strikingly similar. According to Diego de Rosales, King Philip III’s counsellors reasoned in 1611 that

It is now seventy years that we have been fighting this war in one way or another and the royal coffers have been spared no cost, yet we see how little yield and how much damage there has been in the loss of many men and cities; and there is no prudent hope that with many more years and with many more men and with many more millions it will be brought to an end.⁵²

It was only prudent to at least try another, more promising, approach, “and to abandon the one we have followed so far with little benefit and much damage.”⁵³ Over three decades later, Diego de Salinas observed that the wars in Chile “have dragged on so much that they have lasted about a hundred years,” and the result of all this investment and loss of life was that “the Indians have remained free and masters of the best lands in the Americas, and the Spanish have conquered no more than a disastrous graveyard for their lives.”⁵⁴ These considerations were vital, because as Tesillo argued, “the examples of the past predict the events of the future: nothing can deceive us, because time is an honest counsellor.”⁵⁵

The idea of the nature of the Mapuche and the Dutch as rebels with a “Batavian” spirit was at the heart of considering ways to end both wars, in particular their great love of liberty and inability to suffer foreign rule. In the case of the Netherlands, according to Alvía de Castro, the conflict needed to be resolved as swiftly as possible, for “the Dutch will grow stronger every day” and “the more time is wasted discoursing about it, the more the Batavian liberty will corrupt

50 Summary of a letter from Spínola dated 19 May 1607, in Consulta Consejo de Estado, 6 June 1607, AGS Estado Leg. 2138, f. 73.

51 “Voto Don Fernando de Girón,” in Consulta Consejo de Estado, 1 August 1628, AGS Estado Leg. 2042, f. 97.

52 Rosales, *Historia general*, vol. II, 523.

53 *Ibid.*, 524. See also 527.

54 Salinas y Córdoba, *Crónica franciscana*, 1100.

55 Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 11v.

them, and their extravagances and powers will grow, as Tacitus observes.”⁵⁶ As we have seen, many authors believed that the nature of a people was closely connected to the land they inhabited, and was therefore considered unlikely to change. This had serious consequences for the hopes of ever ending these rebellions. “Neither the climate of a land, nor the nature of its inhabitants ever change,” observed the third Duke of Lerma in 1635, and because the Dutch were treacherous and liberty-loving, the Spanish should seriously doubt “the utility of this war.”⁵⁷ The love of liberty was perhaps even greater in the Mapuche, who had been fighting for their freedom since long before the arrival of the Spanish. If the chief objective of a society was to maintain their own liberty, and if liberty was understood as having no permanent head of state and least of all a king, how could the Spanish ever hope to keep the Mapuche subjected to royal authority? In the words of Diego de Rosales:

Because they have not been subjected in the sixty years of warfare that happened before nor in the sixty years of warfare that happened next, they will not subject themselves for many centuries [...], because the Indians are warlike, [...] they are offended by the Spanish and they do not forget their grievances. They fight for liberty and for their homeland, and they have more to gain by war than by peace, because with war they keep themselves free, masters of their own lands, without servitude nor subjection, and they have none who harm them. And so by way of war they will never be subjected.⁵⁸

4 Conclusion

As Wyger Velema has demonstrated throughout his oeuvre, ancient models were crucial for early modern republican writers to help clarify and legitimate the republican form of government in a world where they were surrounded by much larger monarchies.⁵⁹ For the Dutch Republic, the Batavian model naturally figured as the local variant of an ancient republican past. The ideal of Batavian liberty and virtue persisted well into the eighteenth century

⁵⁶ Alvia de Castro, “Oraciones y discursos,” f. 41 and 41v.

⁵⁷ “Voto del Duque de Lerma sobre la tregua con Holanda,” 2 October 1635, AGS Estado Leg. 2050, f. 87.

⁵⁸ Rosales, *Historia general*, vol. II, 618.

⁵⁹ See Wyger Velema and Arthur Weststeijn, “Introduction: Classical Republicanism and Ancient Republican Models,” in *Ancient Models in the Early Modern Republican Imagination*, ed. by Wyger Velema and Arthur Weststeijn (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 7–8, 13.

and culminated in Patriot republican writing, even though contemporaries increasingly started to point out the anachronisms of championing the “sav- age” Batavians as a model of orderly democracy and virtuous citizen militia.⁶⁰ This chapter has provided a first exploration of the presence of classical republican models in the seventeenth-century conflict and interaction between the Dutch, Spanish, and Mapuche. Evidence strongly suggests that in the patch- work of rhetorical connections, the model of Batavian liberty is a leading and unifying theme. This classical frame can thus be added to the considerable number of parallels between the Arauco War and the Dutch Revolt, noted by contemporary authors but less frequently by present-day scholars.

In Spanish discourse the Batavian myth was inverted and adjusted, and it helped frame rebellions in the Spanish empire on both sides of the Atlantic. Here it inevitably touched on questions about the nature of liberty and its rela- tionship to monarchy. Santiago de Tesillo hinted at this when he suggested that as far as he was concerned, true liberty was possible only in the next life, and man could attain it exclusively by practicing prudence, justice, and obedience to God and the king.⁶¹ This was directly opposite to the Dutch and Mapuche conception of liberty, which emphasized self-rule and rejected foreign domin- ion as a form of slavery. Both by Spanish authors and by the Dutch themselves, the ancient Batavian nation as well as the contemporary Mapuche were repre- sented as self-governing in the purest form: they were ruled by a general assem- bly of armed men, upon whom the elected leader was never allowed to impose his will and act like a monarch.⁶² This emphasis resonates with what Quentin Skinner has characterized as neo-Roman republicanism, which depended on a Roman distinction between liberty and slavery and emphasized a nation’s capacity for self-government.⁶³

It should not surprise us that the Dutch projected a Batavian variant of neo-Roman republicanism on the native Chileans, as self-ruling warriors threatened with subjection to the slavery of the Spanish monarchy. The sense of shared identity derived from the ancient past underlined the idea of a natu- ral alliance and strengthened the claim to potentially lucrative ties. But why did writers in the monarchical tradition employ this neo-Roman republican vocabulary when reflecting on the Dutch and the Mapuche, and thus appear

60 Wyger Velema, *Enlightenment and Conservatism in the Dutch Republic: The Political Thought of Elie Luzac (1721–1796)* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1993), 168.

61 Tesillo, *Epítome chileno*, f. 15v.

62 Eco Haitsma Mulier, “De Bataafse mythe opnieuw bekeken,” *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (1996): 355, 359–63.

63 Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018 [1998]), 25–32.

to willingly adopt the role of the Roman antagonist? The Chilean case implies that Spanish authors acknowledged and incorporated, but did not necessarily appreciate neo-Roman republican principles. Compared with the rational, civilized, and Christian monarchy which the Spanish empire embodied, republican self-rule was considered chaotic, barbaric, and ultimately ineffective. Many authors in fact believed that in the Netherlands, self-governance would ultimately descend into chaos. This led Justus Lipsius in 1595 to argue in favor of seeking a truce with the Dutch Republic in an open letter to the king of Spain: once bereft of an external enemy, Lipsius predicted, the liberty-loving Dutch would fall out amongst themselves and soon be ready for re-incorporation into the imperial fold.⁶⁴ Especially across the Atlantic, Christian monarchy was considered a powerful civilizing force, which would bring true and civilized liberty to the brave yet primitive warriors on the fringes of empire.

The case of Chile as "*Flandes indiano*" speaks to a broader tradition within imperial political discourse of comparing European conflicts to colonial ones. A prominent example is the analogy established after 1793 between the French war in the Vendée and the slave revolution in Saint-Domingue. Not only did the Vendée exert a lasting influence over the contemporaneous understanding of colonial events but, over time, the analogy also came to have concrete impact on French strategies for "pacifying" the Haitian Revolution.⁶⁵ In the case of the deliberations of Spanish agents who were involved in both the Arauco War and the war in the Netherlands, the Batavian model helped shape arguments in favor of peace on both sides of the Atlantic. Although these debates engaged with principles of obedience, conscience, and religion, reasoning was deeply pragmatic. If logic dictates that people with such an indomitable and liberty-loving character can never be subjected, what is the use in trying? In the end, the gloomiest of the Spanish predictions turned out to be correct. The peace treaty of Münster acknowledged the Dutch Republic to be a free and independent state, and the Araucanía was never durably pacified. Thus from the perspective of the Spanish empire, imagining the Mapuche as "Batavians of the New World" might have explained the nature and tenacity of their "rebellion," but the analogy did not appear to yield any solutions towards winning the war. Rather, it provided arguments that helped accept defeat.

64 Nicolette Mout, "Justus Lipsius Between War and Peace. His Public Letter on Spanish Foreign Policy and the Respective Merits of War, Peace or Truce (1595)," in *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke*, ed. by Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 141–62.

65 See Malick W. Ghachem, "The Colonial Vendée," in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, ed. by David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 158–59.