

Learning to Walk (and Talk) the "Silk Roads": World Historical Training for Graduate Students in Ancient Mediterranean History¹

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I must also fulfill the requirements of those who do not believe anything written in the chronicles of barbarians, but hold that only the writings of Greeks are to be believed [Josephus, *Contra Apion*, 1.161 (quoted in Potter 95)].

Josephus' quandary resonates not only with the general problem this panel seeks to confront, namely "how best to train the "ancient historian"; but also with the particular problem my paper addresses, namely how and to what extent we should incorporate world historical training into the preparation of graduate students.² Last year at this same session, on a panel entitled "Ancient Mediterranean and World History: An Ideological and Pedagogical Confluence," Stanley Burstein pointed out that "ancient historians increasingly will have to teach material for which their graduate training has not prepared them."³ How can we as a discipline address Burstein's well-documented concern? A world historical approach to training the "ancient historian" demands an immediate redefinition of terms, both geographically and temporally. To begin with, the audacious and largely unexamined presumption of many Classicists that "ancient history" means the history of the Mediterranean basin from ca. 1000 BCE up until ca. 300 CE must be discarded in exchange for an Afroeurasian *oecumene* characterized by trans-regional interconnectedness. This broader world historical context of space and time dramatically benefits the graduate studies of future ancient Mediterranean historians not only in terms of the quality and 21st century relevance of their research but also in terms of their subsequent success on the job market and their ability to teach Greco-Roman history in a world

¹This article is a revised version of a paper presented on a panel entitled "Graduate Training for the Ancient Historian: Or How Best to Study Ancient History in the 21st Century?," sponsored by the Committee on Ancient History at the annual meeting of the American Philological Association, which met in Chicago, Illinois in January 2008.

² In accordance with the 2008 Committee on Ancient History's call for papers, this paper responds directly to many of the ideas introduced by David Potter in *Literary Texts and the Roman Historian* (Routledge, 1999).

³ See Stanley Burstein, "Ancient History and the Challenge of World History," *Syllecta Classica* 18 (2007) for the revised version of the paper he presented to the Committee on Ancient History at the annual meeting of the APA in January 2007.

historical context. This paper addresses the issue at hand in four parts: periodization, texts, jobs, and paradigm.

Part One: Which Periodization and Whose World History?

A brief review of the varying models of world history from "Big History" to trans-regional world history emphasizes the differences between a broad comparative approach and one that seeks to understand genuine interconnections among ancient civilizations.⁴ Such a review also helps to illuminate the potential of a well-chosen world historical approach for our graduate students' training. Starting with the least favorable for Greco-Roman historians, to my mind, is the widest lens for studying world history --- the Big History model offered by my colleague at San Diego State University, David Christian. Christian's model for world history, which has its benefits for contextualizing human development as a whole, begins with the Big Bang nearly fourteen billion years ago. In this model, Greco-Roman antiquity loses all distinctiveness as compared to other world civilizations when it falls in his Era IV, The Holocene Era of Human History (the last 10,000 Years).⁵ A slightly narrower scope is offered by AP Central's influential model, in which Greece and Rome fall within its first subdivision "Foundations: c. 8000 BCE to 600 CE."⁶ While AP Central places some emphasis on cross-cultural interactions, Greece and Rome are primarily lined up with India and China to illustrate the comparative developments within each society. A third model, by the *National Center for History in the Schools*, locates Greece and Rome in its "Era 3: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE – 300 CE"⁷ and uses them to

⁴ For a more detailed discussion of these models and their impact on conceptualizations of Greco-Roman history, see my article, "Greco-Roman History and World History: Periodization, History Content Standards, and the AP," forthcoming in *Classical World*.

⁵ David Christian, *Maps of Time* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004): Era I, History of the Universe before our Sun (13 Billion Years Ago - 4.5 Billion Years Ago); Era II, History of Earth and Life on Earth (from 4.5 Billion Years Ago); Era III, Paleolithic Era of Human History (from 5 Million to 10,000 Years Ago); **Era IV, The Holocene Era of Human History (the last 10,000 Years)**; and Era V, The Modern Era (the last 500 Years).

⁶ The AP Central model <<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>> includes **Foundations: c. 8000 BCE to 600 CE**; 600 CE – 1450 CE; 1450 – 1750 CE; 1750 – 1914 CE; 1914 – Present.

⁷ *National Center for History in the Schools* <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards>>: Era 1, The Beginnings of Human History; Era 2, Early Civilizations and the Emergence of Pastoral Peoples, 4000 – 1000 BCE; **Era 3**,

examine and illustrate a definition for classical civilizations, the advent of major world religions, and the development of giant empires. While the *National Center for History in the Schools* does have some sense of trans-regional connectedness and a more thematic approach, Ross Dunn's *World History for Us All* model places Greece and Rome within its "Big Era Four: Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter (1200 BCE - 500 CE)" and truly emphasizes the genuine interconnectedness of the various civilizations in the Afroeurasian *oecumene*.⁸ It is Dunn's model that I have found most fruitful for exploring Greco-Roman history with a world historical emphasis. It allows scholars of Greco-Roman history to track developments in the Mediterranean while contextualizing them within the broader world of which the Mediterranean was a part.

These ways of thinking about world history should not surprise Greco-Roman historians, given the examples set by many of the texts that we study. Ephorus' *Universal History*⁹ (and the work of Diodorus Siculus and Strabo who drew heavily on Ephorus' writings), Hecataeus of Miletus' *Description of the World* (ca. 500 BCE),¹⁰ and the work of Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 BCE)¹¹ sought to

Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE – 300 CE; Era 4, Expanding Zones of Exchange and Encounter, 300 – 1000 CE; Era 5, Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 1000 – 1500 CE; Era 6, The Emergence of the First Global Age, 1450 – 1770 CE; Era 7, Age of Revolutions, 1750 – 1914 CE; Era 8, Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900 – 1945 CE; and Era 9, The Twentieth Century since 1945: Promises and Paradoxes.

⁸ *World History for Us All* (Ross Dunn et al., <<http://worldhistoryforusall.sdsu.edu>>): Big Era One, Humans in the Universe (13,000,000,000 – 200,000 Years Ago); Big Era Two, Human Beings Almost Everywhere (200,000 – 10,000 Years Ago); Big Era Three, Farming and the Emergence of Complex Societies (10,000 – 1000 BCE); ***Big Era Four, Expanding Networks of Exchange and Encounter (1200 BCE – 500 CE)***; Big Era Five, Patterns of Interregional Unity (300 – 1500 CE); Big Era Six, The Great Global Convergence (1400 – 1800 CE); Big Era Seven, Industrialization and its Consequences (1750 – 1914 CE); Big Era Eight, A Half Century of Crisis (1900 – 1950 CE); and Big Era Nine, Paradoxes of Global Acceleration (1945 – present CE).

⁹ For Ephorus, see *FGrH* 70; particularly useful to note for world historical purposes is F 30b, which is preserved in the sixth-century CE writings of Cosmas Indicopleustes, a traveling monk with a world historical perspective. For non-specialists, *FGrH* is the standard abbreviation for F. Jacoby's *Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker* (Brill, 1954-69), which gathers fragments of lost Greek historians. It was originally intended to be divided into five parts, the first three of which were completed by Jacoby: part one (authors 1-63) collecting the mythographers and the oldest historians, part two (authors 64-261) containing "proper" historians, and part three (authors 262-856) collecting local histories. For our purposes, it is interesting to note where each of these Greek writers with world historical scope falls in Jacoby's classification.

¹⁰ Hecataeus of Miletus (*FGrH* 1) includes, for instance, treatments of the European Causasus (F 191-192), the Black Sea area (F 196-216), Ethiopia (F 325-328), and Libya (F 329-357).

¹¹ Hecataeus of Abdera (*FGrH* 264) includes discussion of the Hyperboreans (F 7-14).

contextualize the history of the Greeks (and later Romans, in the case of Diodorus and Strabo) within the history of the world as they understood it. Hippias of Elis' "comparative chronology of the states of the Greek world" in the fifth century BCE (Potter 64), Castor of Rhodes' first-century BCE attempt to synchronize the Assyrian king lists with Roman history (Potter 142), and Eusebius' *Hexapla*-like attempts in the early fourth century CE (Potter 143) at synchronizing the history of different places and peoples are not unlike modern world historical models that attempt to line up the chronologies of ancient cultures through vast spans of time. The classical development of the schema of world empires --- Assyrian-Mede-Persian-Macedonian-Roman --- and its debt to Hesiod's Ages of Man illustrates how "the scheme of successive world empires then became a topos, useful for organizing world history" in antiquity (Potter 99). Hesiod's Golden-Silver-Bronze-Heroic-Iron (Hesiod, *Works and Days* 109-201 and later Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.89-150) is not dissimilar from the Early-Classical-Post Classical-Cross Cultural Interaction model, developed by modern world historians to align world cultures not by date but by their point on a developmental pattern through particular stages.¹² While the Early-Classical-Post Classical-Cross Cultural Interaction model can be done quite well and with good result, especially for teaching, the Greco-Roman "successive world empire" model sadly has left an indelible mark on the worst of modern world historical thinking that mistakenly construes world history as a civilization by civilization endeavor (starting with pre-history in Africa, then moving civilization by civilization through China, India, Europe, then the Americas) with the "rise of civilization" telescoping to the North American continent and climaxing in a "west is best" finale. We can train our graduate students to do better than to buy into such a teleological model.

To sum up this brief look at world historical periodization and its value for training Greco-Roman historians, we should emphasize to our graduate students that good world history: 1) has roots in Greco-

¹² An example of this done well, is found in J. Bentley and H. Ziegler, *Traditions and Encounters*, 3rd Edition, 2006 (similar to that by P. Stearns et al., *Encyclopedia of World History*, 6th Edition, 2001): Prehistoric Times; ***Ancient and Classical Periods, 3500 BCE – 500 CE*** [*Subdivided in Bentley and Ziegler into Early Complex (3500 BCE – 500 BCE) and Classical Societies (500 BCE – 500 CE)*]; Postclassical Period, 500 CE – 1500 CE; Early Modern Period, 1500 – 1800 CE; The Modern Period, 1789 – 1914 CE; The World Wars and the Interwar Period, 1914 – 1945 CE; and The Contemporary Period, 1945 – 2000 CE.

Roman historiography, 2) can be comparative, looking at similar developments in comparable societies (for example, Greece, Rome, Persia, India, China and Meso-America in their “classical phase” of development, regardless of when that falls temporally) and 3) can be trans-regional, widening the traditional Greco-Roman Mediterranean lens and examining developments in societies contemporaneous with and in contact with one another, where the contact is central to the development under examination.

Part Two: Which Texts and Languages?

To turn to a different but related point, Potter's focus on literary texts not only raises the question of "which texts?" but also introduces the question of “which languages?” World historical focus requires looking at the traditional classical canon with a new lens, adjusting the canon of Greco-Roman sources, and even examining sources from other cultures not for naïve, superficial similarities, but for evidence of the genuine interconnectedness of Afroeurasia in the Greco-Roman period. While there will always be a need for detailed analysis of the Greco-Roman “classical canon” focused inward on the Mediterranean, with world history the canonical Greco-Roman authors and texts become important in new ways. As hinted already, fragmentary Greek historians Ephorus and Hecataeus become important as proto-world historians and much could be written to claim them as such.¹³ Through a world historical lens, Herodotus becomes less important for what he can tell us about Greek city-states and their interactions with one another in the late sixth and early fifth century BCE and more important for what he can tell us about so-called *barbaroi* or even how his methods compare with the Chinese historian Sima Qian (145-90 BCE).¹⁴

¹³ Another promising line of inquiry is that which was discussed at the “New Work On The 'Minor' Greek Geographers” panel at the 2008 APA; for instance, the work by Graham Shipley on Pseudo-Skylax and James Ermatinger’s study of the *Stadiasmus Maris Magni*. The presenters on this panel frequently mentioned the style, or lack thereof, of their geographers --- perhaps a reason that these authors are not a part of the traditional canon taught to graduate students. This is a sad omission from the perspective of world history, given that these Greek geographers offer some of the most astounding evidence for the wide world as the Greeks thought of it. The final publication of the *Selected Greek Geographers* project will hopefully bring these texts into the mainstream and will no doubt allow for world historians outside the field of Greco-Roman antiquity to incorporate these Greek worldviews.

¹⁴ Such comparisons are already well underway, e.g. David Schaberg, “Travel, Geography, and the Imperial Imagination in Fifth-Century Athens and Han China,” *Comparative Literature* 51, no. 2 (1999), 152-191 and (for comparisons with Polybius) Robert Bonnaud, *Victoires sur le temps: Essais comparatistes Polybe le Grec et Sima Qian le Chinois* (2007).

Tacitus becomes less interesting for his detailed recounting of Rome-centered politics, and more interesting for what he reveals about Rome's neighbors to the north, east, and south. Each of us here could no doubt continue this list of new ways to think about the Greco-Roman canon, based on our own expertise. Other texts might become more central to the questions a trans-regional world historian might ask. For example, Pliny's discussion of trade goods in his *Natural History*, the *Periplus Maris Erythraei* as a guide to trade with the east, Isidore of Charax's *Parthian Stations*, and the Peutinger Table with its map of the Roman known world extending to India are just a few of the texts that could be more thoroughly integrated into thinking on the Mediterranean economy of goods and ideas.¹⁵ We should encourage our students to think about the traditionally canonical Greek and Roman sources in world historical ways and to do the work necessary to integrate into a new canon sources with world historical potential.

At my home institution, graduate students studying Greco-Roman History in the History department of which I am a part, are encouraged to think world historically from the start of their studies. Our department includes a graduate course on "Topics in World History;" most of the 601 "Methods courses" discuss at least one world historical monograph; and graduate students interested in pre-modern Europe "TA" for large-lecture world history surveys. These TA positions frequently include a seminar in upper-level readings in world history, led by the faculty member teaching the large lecture. This programmatic approach has led several graduate students in Greco-Roman history to construct theses with world historical scope; one case in point being a student focusing on women writers in imperial Rome as compared with those in contemporary Han Dynasty China --- particularly interesting given that Pan Chao, the female court historian of the Han, was writing at roughly the same time as Tacitus.¹⁶ Such world

¹⁵ Examples of scholarship attempting to explore Rome's trade as a larger-than-Mediterranean phenomenon and what that signifies include Elizabeth Pollard, "Pliny's *Natural History* and the Flavian *Templum Pacis*: Botanical Imperialism in First Century CE Rome," forthcoming in the *Journal of World History* and recent work by Grant Parker, such as: "*Ex Oriente Luxuria*: Indian Commodities and Roman Experience," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45, no. 1 (2002): 40-95; *The Making of Roman India* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); and (edited with Carla Sinopoli) *Ancient India in Its Wider World* (University of Michigan, 2008).

¹⁶ Watch for the forthcoming SDSU MA thesis by Emily Pace.

historical work can offer a challenge to, or at least a hermeneutic for thinking about, Potter's comment "that it is virtually inevitable that the ancient historical aspirant would be male" (Potter 2).¹⁷

This kind of graduate research brings us to a related point, namely language training. Placing Mediterranean developments into an Afroeurasian context requires our students to deal with languages beyond the usual Greek, Latin, German, and French. Relevant texts might be preserved in Sanskrit or in Chinese or not even in traditional "text" at all --- for instance, in the archaeological record or in stories of African culture contemporary with later Roman period that may be preserved only orally, through the art of African griots.¹⁸ In fact, such a demand might encourage the student of Greco-Roman history not to be so philologically text-bound at all and instead to work in translation with these texts. Indeed, some historical arguments worth making are not philological or text-bound, and equipped with good translations of relevant Chinese, Sanskrit, Arabic, or African texts, a Greco-Roman historian can make good world historical arguments that better help us to understand what was going on in the Mediterranean.¹⁹

¹⁷ For women authors in Greco-Roman antiquity, see Holt Parker, "Love's Body Anatomized," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. by Amy Richlin (Oxford University Press, 1992) and J.M. Snyder, *The Woman and the Lyre* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1989). Contrary to Potter's assumption that women would not write history in the Greco-Roman world are the writings of Cornelia, Laelia, Hortensia, Sulpicia, Proba, and Egeria, all discussed by Snyder and --- I would add to her list --- Perpetua, whose first-person prison diary is preserved in the account of her martyrdom. While none of these women writers are historians, Holt Parker points more specifically to a woman writer named Pamphile, who is mentioned in the *Suda* (10th century CE lexicon). According to the *Suda*, Pamphile wrote historical commentaries in thirty-three books, an epitome of Ctesias in three books, and many other epitomes of historical works (*Suda* IV.139, p. 15-16 in volume 4 of the 1971 Teubner edition, edited by A. Adler).

¹⁸ The Garamantes, a population group that thrived in the Sahara ca. 500 BCE – 500 CE, appear in Herodotus, Tacitus and Pliny the Elder, but also wrote in their own Lybico-Berber script and have left some trace in the archaeological record.

¹⁹ An alternative to working in translation could be collaborative endeavors, with scholars from other fields who have the language training in the materials important for these comparative efforts. Such collaborative work, however, is unlikely to be undertaken at the graduate level, which is the focus of this panel's conversation. Nevertheless, it may be a good idea to prepare graduate students to begin thinking in terms of collaboration in their future work.

Part Three: Which Jobs and What Funding?

As for the implications for success on the job market, a review of recent job advertisements demonstrates how incorporating world history improves a graduate student's employability, in terms of 1) where many of the jobs are, namely in History departments, 2) meeting teaching expectations which increasingly demand familiarity with world history as opposed to western civilization models, and 3) connecting with potential colleagues in the broader field of History. An unscientific survey of job advertisements in the American Historical Association's *Perspectives* reveals a distinct trend towards hiring scholars who can put their own research into world historical perspective as well as teach world history surveys.²⁰ Phrases emphasizing world history as a component to employment abound in job ads. These phrases include: "interest in participating in the department's world history program is expected,"²¹ "ability to teach the first half of a world history survey and a course on Greek and Roman civilization necessary,"²² "applicants will be expected to teach the required world history survey and upper level courses in their field of specialization,"²³ or "[department] invites applicants for a tenure track assistant professorship in the ancient world with the ability to teach world history survey courses."²⁴ Note with this last advertisement, "ancient world" need not mean Greco-Roman at all. Our Greco-Roman students will compete with scholars of ancient China, India, Africa, and even Meso-America. With the growing emphasis on world history in scholarship and teaching, our students need to know that they no longer can expect to own the category of "ancient" on the job market.²⁵

²⁰ Burstein (forthcoming in *Syllecta Classica*) has studied this trend as well and writes that in 2006 "out of 107 non-United States history positions advertised in the November 2006 *Perspectives* 36% asked for world history as a teaching field as opposed to just 6.5% that asked for Western Civilization."

²¹ Late Antiquity advertisement by the history department at the University of California at Irvine in *Perspectives* (November 2007): 89.

²² Ancient/Medieval advertisement by the history department at Manhattan College in *Perspectives* (January 2007): 47.

²³ Ancient/Medieval advertisement by the Brooklyn Campus of Long Island University in *Perspectives* (November 2007): 71.

²⁴ Ancient World advertisement by the history department at West Chester University in *Perspectives* (November 2007): 74.

This hiring trend may come as a shock to those of us attending the annual meeting of American Philological Association --- not the annual meetings of American Historical Association (holding its 122nd meeting in Washington, DC as we meet here in Chicago) or the World Historical Association (which meets each June around the world --- Ifrane, Morocco and London, being recent venues). Here at the APA and even on this “Committee on Ancient History,” there has long been a sense that good “ancient historians” are trained in philological methods within a Classics department or in an ancient world graduate group. While this training results in students who are well-equipped to navigate the idiosyncrasies of classical texts --- of the sort so well described by Potter when he explains the complicated manuscript redaction of Cassius Dio (Potter 74-78) --- this training does not put graduate students in touch with what is going on in the rest of the world at the time that historians like Herodotus or Tacitus are writing. Students in graduate Classics departments rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to take advanced courses in the history of other places and times; they are not exposed to broader discussions of historical method; much less do they have the opportunity to gain teaching experience (as a grader, T.A., or lecturer) in History courses. The dissonance between the locus of training and that of employment requires that those of us preparing Greco-Roman historians in Classics departments or ancient history graduate groups develop closer relationships with History departments, not just so that our students will be exposed to the History of other places but also so that they will have the practical job experience of grading or TA’ing for large-lecture world history courses.

Finally, ancient Mediterranean historians must be able to locate their topics within the broader context of world history, not only to improve their research and teaching and to gain employment but also to make scholarship on ancient Mediterranean history more relevant to the larger community of academia in which global perspectives are increasingly valued by administrators and grantors of research funds. One prodigious example of such funding is, of course, the Leon Levy Foundation’s recent and much-publicized \$200 million funding of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, which explicitly

²⁵ For other job ads emphasizing world historical skills for ancient and ancient Mediterranean positions, see Middle Tennessee State’s Ancient Mediterranean World position and Kansas State’s Ancient position [*Perspectives* (Nov 2007): 79 and 84].

seeks to explore “cross traditional geographic and cultural boundaries... incorporating not only Europe and the entire Mediterranean basin, but also Central and East Asia.”²⁶ If we train our graduate students in world historical methods, we open up an avenue of funding to their research.

Part Four: Which Questions and What Paradigm?

To conclude, David Potter reminds us that “one of the greatest problems connected with the use of literature to reconstruct the mentality and imagination of an age... is the selection of the appropriate paradigm” (Potter 45). One could critique the world historical paradigm for instruction of Classics graduate students advocated in this paper as a presentist trend in response to the globalization of our current age,²⁷ but I would suggest that from elite to slave there was a much broader pan-Afroeurasian mindset in the Greco-Roman world than we usually assume. In Greco-Roman antiquity, not only were there historians constructing what they thought of as universal histories, but there were Indian spices on elite tables and Chinese silks on elite bodies, merchants traveling portions of the trade routes connecting the Mediterranean with sub-Saharan Africa and India, and slaves living at the heart of Empire who had come from the ends of the Afroeurasian *oecumene*.

Given this reality, in parallel to Eric Hobsbawm’s Marxian or “vulgar-Marxist” principles for doing history (Potter 46) and to Potter’s own rules for doing history (Potter 18-19), I offer here some “vulgar” world historical principles that we might impart to the graduate students we train:

²⁶ New York University, Office of Public Affairs, “Institute for the Study of the Ancient World to be Created at NYU with \$200 Million Gift,” March 21, 2006 <<http://www.nyu.edu/public.affairs/releases/detail/1001>>.

²⁷ Burstein (forthcoming in *Syllecta Classica*) has noted the historiographic trend that “interest in world history ... was particularly strong during periods of intense United States involvement in international affairs” [e.g. the 1960s, ‘80s, and ‘90s]. In my own work on Romano-Indian trade relations, I have noticed a similar interest in world history in early-mid 20th century Britain, just prior to Britain’s loss of control of India. Only the period of British rule in India could produce the kind of scholarship on Roman India put forth by Mortimer Wheeler (*Rome Beyond the Imperial Frontiers*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), E.H. Warmington (*The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India*. New York: Octagon Books, [1928] 1974) and M.P. Charlesworth (*Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire*. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, [1926] 1970 and “Roman Trade with India: A Resurvey,” in *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson*, edited by P.R. Coleman-Norton. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951).

1) Avoid using the term “ancient history” when what you mean is “classical” *Greco-Roman* history.²⁸

Never assume when others say “ancient” that Greco-Roman is what they mean.

2) Consider what is going on in the rest of the world contemporary with the development you are describing. This includes thinking about the models of world historical periodization and choosing one, recognizing the scope and limits that choice places on the questions you can ask and answer.

3) Recognize the distinction between comparative history and trans-regional history. Which are you doing and which is best for the world historical question at hand? This includes questioning whether or not there is any connectedness between the development you are investigating in the Mediterranean and the other cultures that were in real contact with the Greco-Roman world.

4) Consider whether some of the methods of world historians, for example, world systems theories, might have potential hermeneutical value for the questions you are considering.

Potter rightly warns that “[q]uestions define the sort of evidence that will be used in answering them, but they should not, in and of themselves, dictate the answer” (Potter 18). This admonition is a useful reminder that not all questions need be, or ought to be, answered with world historical approaches. Nevertheless, these world historical questions are worth posing more often than Greco-Roman historians do.²⁹ Consequently, for the loftier goal of advancing our discipline and for the more mundane goal of

²⁸ This paper has set aside (for now!) the related problem, lodged by feminist critics against the field of Classics, of just what we mean when we title this field “Classics” and the texts it studies “classical.” For a trenchant discussion of the feminist critique of “the application of the ‘c’ adjective to periods of Greco-Roman political activity and literary production,” see Judith Hallett, “Feminist Theory, Historical Periods, Literary Canons, and the Study of Greco-Roman Antiquity,” in *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, ed. by Nancy Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin (Routledge, 1993), 48 *et passim*.

²⁹ This is not to overlook that some good world historical research has been, and is being, done by Greco-Roman historians --- just to say that we should be doing more and training our graduate students to do the same. Apart from the excellent work by Parker, Charlesworth, Warmington, Wheeler and others, already cited in this paper, see e.g.: (for India) A.J Arkell, “Meroe and India,” in *Aspects of Archeology in Britain and Beyond: Essays Presented to OGS Crawford*, ed. by W.F. Grimes (London: H.J. Edwards, 1951), A.H.M. Jones, “Asian Trade in

helping graduate students get jobs, we should endeavor to give our graduate students the tools for walking and talking the “silk roads.”

Antiquity,” in *Roman Economy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), J.I. Miller, *The Spice Trade of the Roman Empire, 29 B.C. to A.D. 641* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), M.G. Raschke, “New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.9.2 (1978): 604-1361, W. Schmitthenner, “Rome and India: Aspects of Universal History During the Principate,” *JRS* 69 (1979): 90-106, R. Stoneman, *Palmyra and its Empire: Zenobia's Revolt against Rome* (University of Michigan Press, 1992), and J. Thorley, “The Development of Trade Between the Roman Empire and the East under Augustus,” *Greece & Rome* 16 (1969): 209-23; (for China) J. Ferguson, “China and Rome,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II.9.2 (1978): 581-603, F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient* (New York: Paragon Books [1885] 1966), C.G. Seligman, “The Roman Orient and the Far East,” *Antiquity* 11 (1937): 5-30, S. Lieberman, “Who Were Pliny’s Blue-Eyed Chinese,” *Classical Philology* 52 (1957): 174-77, F. Teggart, *Rome and China: A Study of Correlations in Historical Events* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), J. Thorley, “The Silk Trade Between China and the Roman Empire at its Height, circa A.D. 90-130,” *Greece & Rome* 18 (1971): 71-80; and (for Africa) S. Burstein, *Ancient African Civilizations: Kush and Axum* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998), P.L. Shinnie, *Meroe: A Civilization of the Sudan* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1967), and J. Thorley, “The Roman Empire and the Kushans,” *Greece & Rome* 26 (1979): 181-90.