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Not All Theories Work: The Dorian Invasion as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Failure

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Greek and Roman Studies in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement for the degree of

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Apollo, Heracles, Dorian, Spartan, German: The Legacy of Karl Ottfried Muller

Cezar Tort, a Spanish white nationalist, claims “a white nationalist has no idea of what Nordicism is.”<sup>1</sup> There is not much to his claim: most readers probably have little idea of what it is either. Even so, Tort is not the only white nationalist in his writings to demonstrate that he can use the term or the ideology behind it comfortably and with a purpose. Since the ideology of Nordicism is predicated on a belief that a superior, Nordic people from northern Europe once ruled the most powerful civilizations of the Mediterranean world, the ideology of this people does not pair naturally with the history of that part of the ancient world.<sup>2</sup> The most frequent pairing of Nordicism and the ancient historical record is the former to the Dorian Invasion of Greece, the historicity of which has been debunked but its evidence, based largely in myth and speculation, has made it well suited to appropriation. Moreover, the Dorian Invasion is a porous model but Nordicism fills in its gaps, thereby making both more palatable to an audience who will not be familiar with either.

As Swain observes in her survey of contemporary American white nationalists, something has caused the movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to intensify in strength via mass demonstrations of white pride and consciousness.<sup>3</sup> Though the general Euroamerican population

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<sup>1</sup> Cezar Tort, “Nordish Hellenes: The Aristocracy of Ancient Greece,” *The West’s Darkest Hour*, trans. Cezar Tort, June 8, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the history of Nordicism and its associations with the ancient world, consult Johann Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans: How the Nazis Usurped Europe’s Classical Past* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2016). For its general history, consult also Ivan Hannaford, *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (Washington D. C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996); J. P. Spiro, *Defending the master race: Conservation, eugenics, and the legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington, Vermont: University of Vermont Press, 2009); Mark B. Adams, ed., *The wellborn science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Edwin Black, *War against the weak: Eugenics & America’s campaign to create a master race* (Washington D. C.: Dialog Press, 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Carol Swain, “Forging a Common Identity,” in *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America*, ed. Carol N. Swain and Russell Neili (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5. For discussions on the American white nationalist movement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, consult also George Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017); George Hawley, *Right-Wing Critics of American*

has been prone to dismiss the white nationalist threat in the past, its considerable growth has been sparked by media coverage of these demonstrations, recruitment via social media, and a reframing of white nationalist rhetoric in websites, magazines, and publications to build an intellectual image. It is this last point, the intellectual grounding of the movement, that has made use of both the Dorian Invasion theory and the ideology of Nordicism, two products of the 19<sup>th</sup> century German academy that were intersected not long after the publication of classicist and philodorian Karl Otfried Muller's 1824 landmark work on everything Dorian and Spartan, *Die Dorier*. It will henceforth be the focus of this thesis to analyze what contemporary white nationalists say about the Dorian Invasion and why they have chosen this theory over myriad other appropriate ancient material. As will be shown, they do not always adhere to the theory as laid out by Muller, which reflects in part the respective audiences for which they were writing. More significant is their lack of adherence to Muller's purpose behind substantiating the vague Dorian myth into an invasion theory, a purpose that, as Chapoutot notes, was twofold. The primary purpose was to "flatter German national identity by extolling the virtues of its racial origins," and secondly to "feed Germans' expansionist and annexationist imagination."<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that Muller, his admiration for the Dorian-turned-Spartan aside, chose to substantiate the Dorian myth because he could connect it with the modern German state in a way that would be unparalleled with anything else the ancient world had to offer. He could then use that connection to convey his twofold agenda to other German intellectuals, and by 1830 with the translation of his *Die Dorier*, or *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, into English,

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*Conservatism* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2016); Mark J. Sedgwick, *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019); Shane Burley, *Fascism Today: What It Is and How to End It* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017).

<sup>4</sup> Johann Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans*, 49 – 50.

like-minded Euroamerican intellectuals more broadly. As will be argued, contemporary white nationalists are similarly invoking the Dorian Invasion theory as a way to teach their Euroamerican white nationalist base Nordicist ideology while adding as much intellectual layering as possible. Their agenda, however, is neither to extol German identity nor advocate for imperialism, but rather to ensure the survival of the white race in a 21<sup>st</sup> century multicultural world by gaining support for the establishment of a white ethnostate.<sup>5</sup> While Muller was writing in a discipline and institution that were complicit with and enjoyed influence over white supremacy, contemporary white nationalists, living in increasingly diverse and politically correct communities, are not writing from positions of like power. Moreover, they see themselves not as a threat but under threat, and so must temper their goal of enjoying racial superiority and sovereignty to first securing the preservation of white people. The key issue they face is that their audience can be racist, or at least find white preservation, consciousness, and power palatable, yet know nothing of Nordicism, as Tort observes, or the white ethnostate it is being used to help further along. As such, they must convince their readership that a white ethnostate is a worthy goal and, in so doing, that there is power in sharing it. To this end, the Dorian Invasion becomes an ancient exemplar of what Nordic power can achieve: the subjugation of early Greece and its classical period success.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> It will become evident in the following chapters, and especially “They Came from the North: Where the Dorian Invasion Went Wrong,” that white nationalists’ visions of the white ethnostate are often not identical. At times they are even incompatible, but moving forward the general definitions of ethnostate, and white ethnostate, as given by Shane Burley, *Fascism Today: What It Is and How to End It* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017), “Glossary of Key Terms:” “Ethnostate,” will be understood: an ethnostate is a “governing state whose criteria for citizenship is determined by the ethnicity/race of the dominant race. An example of this would be a pan-European, white nationalist ethnostate, where the criteria for citizenship would be being a member of the white race.” Notice that Burley’s example is “pan-European,” open (excluded) to the white race as a whole; this will be a key point of contention amongst the white nationalists that follow and, as such, the criteria for citizenship that each implicitly sets in their discussions on the Dorian Invasion theory will make up their own visions of the white ethnostate.

<sup>6</sup> As will be evidenced in the following chapters, not all white nationalists interpret Nordicism in exactly the same way.

The white nationalists selected for this survey, William L. Pierce, Jon Harrison Sims, and Cezar Tort, and the media platforms on which their content is published vary in social stature both within the white nationalist movement and the general public, but as their respective chapters will attest, all invoke the Dorian Invasion to propagate the same goal. Although they do not always make the theory's connection to Nordicism explicit, its presence will make itself known through a close reading of each of their versions of the Dorian Invasion theory. The association of white nationalists and the invasion theory also raises an important, if not self-evident, reminder: not everyone who invokes the theory or believes in it is a white nationalist. There is no consensus amongst classical scholars that Muller was a white supremacist, but the theory's champion aside, descriptions of the Dorian Invasion as an ancient historical process are not uncommon in outdated reference works like the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1911.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, up-to-date works, especially on the ancient world, are not always easily accessible.

Before it is shown how and why Pierce, Harrison, and Tort recount the Dorian Invasion theory, the version of the theory as it was first substantiated from myth will be established. To do this, the 1839 English translation (revision of 1830 edition) of Muller's *Die Dorier* will be referenced. From Muller's work, the connection he draws between the Dorians and his twofold agenda will shine through, setting the stage for the Nordicist connection and white ethnostate agenda that will later be teased out from white nationalist versions.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> J. L. Meyers, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> ed., s.v. "Dorians," (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 425 – 8.

<sup>8</sup> Some treatments of the Dorian Invasion after Muller are discussed by Chapoutot, but there are many. A comprehensive close reading and comparison of these treatments, or a selection thereof, between Muller and contemporary white nationalists is beyond the page space of this thesis. For those interested in these works, Chapoutot and then the following are recommended as starting points: Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916); H. F. K. Gunther, *The Racial Elements of European History*

Muller's first order of business is to establish the Dorians as northern wanderers. He situates them on an ambiguous, fine line between Greek and non-Greek land:

The Dorians derived their origin from those districts in which the Grecian nation bordered towards the north upon numerous and dissimilar races of barbarians ... according to ancient tradition, Dorus dwelt at the foot of Olympus and Ossa. Here then the real fact presents itself to us. The chain of Olympus, the divider of nations, whose lofty summit is still called by the inhabitants the celestial mansion, is the place in which the Dorians first appear in the history of Greece.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to their arrival at the foot of Olympus, Muller details a series of migrations as a result of which the Dorians undergo identity transformations; one of these migrations leads them to the land that would later become ancient Macedonia, and thus at this stage the Dorians are referred to as the "Macedonian nation."<sup>10</sup> It is only when they come to the Doric Tetrapolis that the name of Dorian is derived, yet Muller marks the beginning of their history, insomuch as history can be gleaned by founding myth, further north at Olympus, implicitly singling them out for greatness by associating them with the "celestial mansion." Though a small move and before the ideology's time, Nordicism stipulates that superior peoples move from north to south, not vice versa, as Bernal notes.<sup>11</sup> The ideology also puts forth that the original homeland of Nordic, Germanic peoples rests in the north of the Eurasian landmass, but naturally myth, let alone history, can only trace migrations so far back. So what really matters is not that a Nordic people come from northern Eurasia, but that they come from north of wherever they are going. Thus,

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(London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1927); Bertrand Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945).

<sup>9</sup> K. O. Muller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race, Vol. 1* (London: John Murray, 1839), 1, 23. For this paper, the 1839 translation is used, published after making revisions to the original 1830 translation. The 1839 edition, for those interested, is more readily accessible.

<sup>10</sup> Muller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 21.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 311.

Muller's synthesis satisfies that ambiguous condition and starts their history at Olympus to extol a northern, Dorian identity.

From Olympus, the privileged nature of Muller's Dorian movement south only grows. He correctly notes that the Dorian myth is connected with the return of the children of Heracles into the Peloponnese:

The most important, and the most fertile in consequences of all the migrations of Grecian races, and which continued even to the latest periods to exert its influence upon the Greek character, was the expedition of the Dorians into the Peloponnese ... The traditional name of this expedition is 'the Return of the descendants of Hercules' ... The heroic life of Hercules was therefore the fabulous title, through which the Dorians were made to appear not as unjustly invading, but merely as reconquering a country which had belonged to their princes in former times.<sup>12</sup>

Although Muller makes an attempt at objectivity in that he says the Dorian Invasion was only a "just invasion" because they were doing the dirty work of their Heraclid leaders, he in no way intends to diminish the importance of the invasion. As a migration with the "most fertile" results, one whose people long influenced the "Greek character," Muller begins to build the case for Dorian superiority. According to Nordicism, northern people are conquerors with a distinct, warrior-like spirit. Muller similarly instills in the Dorian nomads a martial prowess on which the Heraclids could rely, molding them into a conquering people with echoes of the "expansionist imagination" that Muller assigns to Germanic peoples. Their influence on the "Greek character" must therefore reflect this, which is a clear move to place the stereotypes of the Spartan character further back, rolling Spartan, Dorian, and Germanic all into one. This Germanic continuity is what he works for so as to extol 19<sup>th</sup> century German identity, though he must also work to dismiss the places in Dorian myth that detract from his ideal continuity. Kennell points out that

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<sup>12</sup> Muller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 52 – 3.

the Spartan kings claimed themselves as descendants not of the Heraclids, but the Achaeans, those whom the Dorians conquered.<sup>13</sup> Muller explains the inconvenience away, speculating that it is possible that the Heraclids originally expelled from the Peloponnese could have identified as Achaeans. In any case, he does not linger on name choices but instead brings in the Spartan poet Tyrtaeus, who in an extant poem fragment calls the Spartans the children of Heracles.<sup>14</sup> Wallace suggests that it is from Tyrtaeus that the whole association of Dorian and Heraclid gains traction, but it matters little to Muller who first makes the link.<sup>15</sup> Tyrtaeus is enough of an ancient authority to link Dorians to their idealized, mythical leaders.

So as to erase the line between Heraclids and Dorians, Muller settles the distinction between the two groups via intermarriage:

“we should be obliged to suppose that long before their irruption into the Peloponnese, these Heraclidae had been so intermixed with the Dorians, that their traditions were formed entirely according to the disposition of that race, since Hercules in Thessaly is represented as a complete Dorian.”<sup>16</sup>

Muller moreover argues that during the migratory process the Heraclids became Dorian, adding yet another worthy member to the chain of Germanic continuity up to 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany. But despite the Dorians’ portrayal as northern, nomadic conquerors, otherwise fitting the later Nordic image very well, Muller claims there is something else driving this people besides a warrior spirit. In a move with several implications, he asserts that the “worship of Apollo ... can in

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<sup>13</sup> Nigel M. Kennell, *Spartans: A New History* (West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 95.

<sup>14</sup> Muller uses *Fragment 2* of Tyrtaeus’ *Fragments*, in which Tyrtaeus does appear to suggest that the Spartan kings are descendants of Heracles.

<sup>15</sup> Saro Wallace, *Travellers in Time: Imagining Movement in the Ancient Aegean World* (London, UK: Routledge, 2018), 311 – 2. Unlike Muller, Wallace draws from Tyrtaeus’ *Fragment 11*, which does not limit the Heraclid connection to the Spartan kings.

<sup>16</sup> Muller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 57.

almost every case be shewn to have been the real motive which actuated the Dorians.”<sup>17</sup> Bernal calls attention to Muller’s emphasis on “tracing cultic and mythological patterns that had spread with conquering races.”<sup>18</sup> Since an element of the invasion theory is a general north-south movement, Muller in turn implicitly argues that the Apollo cult spread by means of Dorian conquest. The presence of the cult to the south of their northern homeland thus marks everywhere that Dorians, or their descendants, conquered or else exercised their influence over. Of all Greek gods, however, the religious association of Apollo to the Dorians is also significant due to his aesthetic. Relevant to Nordicism as well, the ideology puts forth the ideal image of a Nordic people as tall and athletic with fair skin, light hair, and blue eyes. The latter two traits are harder to find on Apollo statuary both because colored paint has long since faded from statues sculpted in antiquity (assuming the right colors were painted on to begin with) and modern replicas are often whitewashed. As for a tall, athletic build with whitewashed skin, the Apollo Belvedere, thought to have been made ca. 120 – 40 CE, is a perfect example. Among its most famous admirers was Johann Joachim Winckelmann, an 18<sup>th</sup> century art historian and archeologist who is often regarded as the founder of art history as a discipline.<sup>19</sup> Winckelmann was a fan of Greek statuary in general, but especially of the Apollo Belvedere, praising its aesthetic as the epitome of sculpture. It is thus unsurprising that Muller would want to associate that aesthetic with the Dorians, as if to say that their own ideal aesthetic was not only strong but physically

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 56.

<sup>18</sup> Bernal, *Black Athena*, 311.

<sup>19</sup> Johann Winckelmann, *The History of the Art of Antiquity*, trans. Harry Mallgrave (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, (1764) 2006), 332. Vinzenz Brinkmann, Renee Dreyfus, Ulrike Koch-Brinkmann, *Gods in Color: Polychromy in the Ancient World* (New York: Prestel, 2017), 71ff also discusses Winckelmann’s admiration for Greek statuary more generally with an emphasis on Artemis.

beautiful. In this way, Muller accomplishes a great deal for Germanic identity by claiming Apollo as sole religious property of the Dorians.

As for the culminating act in the Dorian Invasion, the conquering of the Peloponnese, Muller elaborates on two strategies he surmises that the Dorians must have taken. He observes that the Dorian myth speaks of a victory over Achaean forces led by Prince Tisamenus, grandson of Agamemnon, in some sort of large battle. To complement their skill in direct combat, Muller also asserts that they possessed a savviness for hit-and-run tactics in order to draw their Peloponnesian enemies out from their fortifications. Though he believes the Dorians were lacking in besieging tactics, he leaves no doubt about their martial superiority:

It would have been less difficult to explain by what superiority the Dorians conquered the Peloponnese, had they gained it in open battle. For, since it appears that Homer describes the mode of combat in use among the ancient Achaeans, the method of fighting with lines of heavy armed men, drawn up in close and regular order, must have been introduced into the Peloponnese by the Dorians; amongst whom Tyrtaeus describes it as established. And it is evident that the chariots and darts of the Homeric heroes could never have prevailed against the charge of a deep and compact body armed with long lances.<sup>20</sup>

Combined with their unparalleled influence over “Greek character,” their association with Heraclids, and Apollonian aesthetic, their martial dominance over the Achaeans marks the Dorians as a people completely superior to the former. At its simplest, this is Muller’s commentary on the Dorians: the quintessential Germanic people who make their descendants proud of their German identity and whose utter superiority should inspire the “expansionist imagination.” Though Homer records that it is the Achaeans who possess the military power Muller attributes to the Dorians, again he invokes Tyrtaeus as a trump card. And so with the invasion settled and the Dorians firmly settled into the Peloponnese, Muller continues in his

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<sup>20</sup> Muller, *The History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 88 – 9. It appears this reference to Tyrtaeus is also from his *Fragment 11*.

massive work to trace the transformation of Dorian into Spartan, thus carrying on his chain of continuity.

Furthermore, as Chapoutot sums up, Muller's Dorians, the "*die Preußen der Antike*— 'the Prussians of antiquity'—were ahead of their time as paragons of Nordicism for their racial purity and martial valor."<sup>21</sup> Owing in large part to Muller's work, an entire body of historiographical and anthropological literature adopted Nordicist ideas on the origins of Greek civilization to further and expand on the agenda that Muller did not fully realize. Almost two centuries later, this discussion has changed dramatically, often leaving the academy and now involving fringe rather than mainstream institutions. But fringe groups do not always stay that way, and the evolution of the current white nationalist movement is no less a testament to its unrelenting attempts to break through to varying degrees of relevance. Whether this relevance is geared towards their own base or to the general public does not diminish their many appropriations made of Greco-Roman antiquity; the repurposing of Muller's innovation for 21<sup>st</sup> century goals is not a victimless act. Moving forward from Muller, the Dorian Invasion theory will first revolve around one of the founders of contemporary American white nationalism, William Pierce.

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<sup>21</sup> Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans*, 216.

### The Dorian Invasion of William L. Pierce

William Luther Pierce (1933 – 2002) was an American white nationalist who is often regarded as a founding figure of the far-right. To further his white nationalist cause, he founded the National Alliance (NA) in 1974, and although his organization currently operates in a limited capacity, it lives on more fully through its formerly affiliated website *National Vanguard*, which is managed by Pierce’s former assistant Kevin Alfred Strom.<sup>22</sup> On the site Strom has republished many of Pierce’s essays, among which is an essay collection entitled *Who We Are*, devoted to providing a history of the Nordic white race from the beginning of humankind onwards.<sup>23</sup> In the course of this tracing of history Pierce comes to the ancient Greeks and, as he approaches this subset of Nordic peoples, he invokes the Dorian Invasion as an agent of the Nordification of Greece. To the Dorians he gives his tenth essay of this twenty-six-part series: “Who We Are #10: Hellenes and Dorians,” which will be examined here for the ways that Pierce reiterates or changes the Dorian Invasion theory from its original intellectual founding. What will be seen is that Pierce employs the Dorian Invasion as a way to better attach Nordicism to the far-right movement, a significant move because of his notoriety within it. Not only does he push Nordicism as an idea that his personal organization, National Alliance, esteems, but he also warns, through the Dorian Invasion, how Nordicism can be ruined, namely through an intermingling of Nordic peoples with those of other races as well as homosexuality. Moreover, these perceived dangers, which he likewise finds in America, propel him to emphasize what he terms a “racial history” and “racial health” of a people, the latter of which is necessary for his

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<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive profile of Pierce, consult Swain, *Contemporary Voices of White Nationalism in America*, 260ff.

<sup>23</sup> *Who We Are* was also published as a book in 2012, ten years after Pierce’s death, but this format is far less accessible. As such, Strom decided to make the essay collection available on National Vanguard, the medium cited here. For those interested in Pierce’s collection as a whole, follow the URL provided in the entry for his essay in the works cited at the end of the thesis.

ultimate far-right goal, the white ethnostate. As such, Pierce's objectives will be shown to be far more nuanced than merely to discuss the Dorian Invasion as a valid historical model. The implications beyond a mere historical treatment, despite what Pierce may explicitly argue in his essay, are what give currency to the Dorian Invasions' use by the far-right.

First, Pierce's word choices need some contextualization. The Dorian Invasion is a model he views through a lens of "racial history," a phrase Pierce uses to adopt his own version of Muller's substantiation of the superiority of a Germanic, now Nordic, minority, over all other peoples regardless of their race. By "racial purity," he means the degree to which members of this race of people have refrained from intermarriage with other peoples. Pierce terms his claim that the Nordic people are conscious of their race, their inherent superiority, and the subsequent pride they take in it as their "racial constitution."<sup>24</sup> Racial history, purity, and constitution are partially borrowed from Muller's treatment of the Dorian Invasion, though he invokes none these explicitly: he assembles and discusses myth and sources, albeit in his own biased way, to situate the Dorian Invasion as a Germanic event, thus making the ancient Greek founding myths to which it is a part connected with a broader scope of German history. His audience is moreover the German academy, but Pierce uses all these terms out of that context and in the confines of postwar America. As such, both the endgames for which Pierce employs his racialized language and the audience for whom he intends his essay will not copy those of Muller.

Pierce says that the Dorians came with the children of Heracles, which is in keeping with the Return of the Heraclids myth, and he calls their invasion a "complex phenomenon:"

The Dorian invasion was actually a ... complex phenomenon ... It involved repeated interactions with other peoples on a protracted journey which, although generally

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<sup>24</sup> After this introduction of terms and phrases that Pierces uses, they will no longer be subsequently put in quotations in this thesis. These are to be understood as his.

southward, included a number of detours, loops, and rest stops. And their legendary leaders, the Heraclidae, had already been south once before, prior to the Trojan war. This is a fairly accurate description for the Return myth, but he never acknowledges that he is emphasizing the people that the children of Heracles came with rather than these Heraclids themselves. By taking the Return myth and calling it something different, it gives Pierce more evidence to work from to justify the Dorian Invasion as a historical process if he chooses. What is interesting, unlike Muller in a broad sense, is that he chooses not to do this. He attributes to the Dorians blond hair and qualities such as rudeness, or “incivility,” and a “Faustian spirit,” but he explicitly notes that there is no evidence tracing the development of how the Dorian later became the Spartan:

It is unfortunate that no written documents of any real significance survive from the centuries immediately following the Dorian invasion. It would be quite interesting to follow in detail the development of the unique Spartan lifestyle.

Pierce, a postwar American white nationalist, is clearly not trying to extol German identity and a Dorian-Germanic continuity, and thus it follows that he has some other motive since he is not forcing the Return myth or literary records of Dorians to say anything that they do not. He in fact argues that time periods with scant historical records are perhaps the most important and, to him, the time period in which the Dorian Invasion occurred is a chief example of racial history:

It is not in the external forms of organization and activity of a people that we see the most important criteria for making a judgment as to the significance of a particular period, but rather in the actual *racial* constitution of a people and in the dynamic processes which, for better or worse, are influencing that racial constitution.

By arguing that the racial constitution of a people is more important than the external organization and activities of a people, he upholds the Dorian Invasion, a historical process that only matters because of the racial constitution of those involved. He assigns this constitution as part of a standard of values that history does not share, but that his own organization, National

Alliance, does. As such, it appears that Pierce uses the Dorian Invasion to show that racial history is important though usually undocumented as well as to advertise his own organization with the backing of classical antiquity, a practice that he also adhered to when soliciting former classicist Revilo Oliver to help found it.<sup>25</sup>

In trying to explain what happened in the Dorian Invasion, Pierce draws a parallel that Muller never makes in that he likens the Dorian Invasion to the “fall” of Rome, wherein both Greece and Rome respectively succumbed to “racially healthier” but “culturally less advanced” peoples:

In both cases a people of an older civilization, who had begun to succumb to racial mixing and decadence, was overwhelmed by a more vigorous and racially healthier but culturally less advanced people from the north. And in both cases a period of gestation took place over a dozen generations or so, during which a synthesis of old and new elements, racial and cultural, occurred, before a new and different civilization arose from the ruins of the old.

The use of this parallel is a far cry from how other far-right contemporaries of Pierce treat the “fall” of Rome: the current trend is to use it to support the xenophobic argument that American borders should be far more selective of the peoples that are admitted into the country.<sup>26</sup> There is perhaps only one use of the Dorian Invasion in a similar vein, in which former Greek Minister of Public Order and Citizen Protection Nikos Dendias remarked in 2012 that “ever since the Dorian Invasion 4,000 years ago, never before has the country been subjected to an invasion of these

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<sup>25</sup> This, along with the history of the organization, is stated on *National Vanguard*, the site that succeeded it: [nationalvanguard.org](http://nationalvanguard.org).

<sup>26</sup> For a window into the xenophobic arguments on the “fall” of Rome, consult Curtis Dozier, “Hate Groups and Greco-Roman Antiquity Online: To Rehabilitate or Reconsider?” In *Far-Right Revisionism and the End of History: Alt/Histories*, edited by Louie Dean Valencia-Garcia (New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2020), 253. For those interested in Dozier’s work, see his online platform *Pharos: Doing Justice to the Classics*, [pages.vassar.edu/pharos/](http://pages.vassar.edu/pharos/).

dimensions ... this is a bomb on the foundations of society and the state.”<sup>27</sup> This is in response to an influx of refugees into Greece, however, and Pierce in his essay treats the Dorian Invasion and the present “fall” of America to be two dissimilar events, the former a racial accomplishment and the latter a racial failure. The upshot of this is that, according to the general nature of invasion, any influx of people is not inherently good or bad solely because of that people’s race or culture. Pierce’s parallel to the Dorian Invasion reflects this observation: labels like “racially healthier” and “culturally less advanced” give him the choice to overemphasize one label which he sees as good while leaving the other label, which he sees as less ideal, as a temporary side effect. Here, aligning with his racial history of Nordic people, he opts for the “racially healthier” emphasis. The “culturally less advanced” label in turn acts as a side effect to the Dorian Invasion model and, in doing so, makes it easier to justify the lack of evidence via fewer means of effectively recording history.

Moreover, Pierce’s treatment of the Dorian Invasion reflects the choice that any far-right writer could make to bolster this idea of racial history. But given that the predecessors of Pierce who wrote on the invasion never made his parallel between Greece and Rome, the question still remains as to what the Dorian Invasion theory stands to gain from it. Perhaps the most obvious answer is that in comparing it to an historical transformation (for him a collapse) that has been treated extensively by academia, Pierce can then argue that the Dorian Invasion worked in a similar way. The issue for his predecessors here would be the lack of academic integrity on which this leap is founded, but his audience is a far-right base to whom his ideas are more likely

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<sup>27</sup> Anastassia Tsoukala, “False Narratives in the Migration Debate: Playing Games with Immigrants’ Lives in Greece.” In *Global Migration: Old Assumptions, New Dynamics, Vol 3*, eds. Diego Acosta Arcarazo and Anja Wiesbrock (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015), 61.

to resonate.<sup>28</sup> As such, Pierce does well for himself to take the Dorian Invasion out from the academy, which in fact betrays one of his intentions. Pierce intends to take an academic innovation from its original context and put it out to a subset of the public. By doing so, he can make a compelling argument to his audience backed by his own definition of history that is less academically rigorous yet still authoritative, an argument that says the Dorian Invasion brought racial health to the Greek Peloponnese at the expense of culture, to which Pierce is perhaps referring to something like technological savvy. To his American readers, the intent is to connect this with the state of America and its growing diversity. He does as much when he forecasts what America's future will look like:

Imagine what America will be like two or three centuries hence (barring a White revolution), when Whites are a minority, outnumbered by both Blacks and Chicanos ... the American people — the real Americans — will have passed from the pages of history.

As such, Pierce envisions a “White revolution” of some sort, which entails the emphasis of his Dorian Invasion and Roman “fall” parallel: a revolution to alter the racial health of America. This is the chief endgame of the far-right, an America whose racial health makes it possible to create a lasting white ethnostate.

It is not clear how close Pierce believes the American far-right is to becoming an ethnostate. He says that the Dorian Invasion was not a process in which the Dorians conquered the Pelasgians, a vague catch-all for the indigenous peoples of Greece, but rather the Nordic Achaean people:

The Dorians, who had settled in central Greece a few years earlier [to the sack of Troy], proceeded to conquer the Achaeans, occupy the Peloponnesus, and extinguish

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<sup>28</sup> Also an issue for Pierce is that before the “fall” of Rome was nuanced to more of a transformation, this was seen as a historical event that impeded “Western” civilization, whereas Pierce is arguing that both the “fall” of Rome and the Dorian Invasion were necessary to advance because they put those who were “racially healthier” on top.

Mycenaean civilization. But, in so doing, they prepared the way for the rise of a new civilization which would greatly surpass the old one.

On the surface, a struggle amongst two Nordic peoples echoes Pierce's claim that a feeling of racial unity amongst Nordic peoples was "usually overshadowed by intra-racial conflicts," a way to explain why Nordic peoples, especially the Dorians, did not stay superior in the Peloponnese in Pierce's racial history. Even so, there is something else at work in this Dorian-Achaean conflict, namely the idea that diversity is weakness. Pierce claims that the Achaeans were less racially pure than the Dorians:

The Dorians were blonder than the Achaeans they conquered, but that is only because the Achaeans had been mixing with the Mediterranean aborigines for several centuries before the Dorians arrived; originally the two tribes had been of the same racial composition.

Furthermore, Pierce suggests the deciding factor in this struggle between peoples was the degree to which each was racially pure and, since the Dorians were the most racially pure, they were victorious. Whether or not Pierce's intended audience is receptive to his belief in racial health as a trump card can be observed later on in this thesis in a comment made by his far-right near-contemporary Greg Johnson. What his treatment of the Dorian Invasion stresses is merely what should be the single most important attribute to the American people, and that from it, in time, everything else may follow.

As evidenced with Pierce's Achaeans, mass movements of peoples, whether peaceful or violent, are bound to have unintended results. Pierce laments this inevitability in his rendition of the Dorian Invasion theory. He, like Muller, extends the Dorian Invasion process below the Peloponnese to Crete, but his claim that the "despicable vice" of homosexuality originated there is not shared:

The Dorian conquest of Crete resulted in the infection of the Dorians with a despicable vice which was endemic there: homosexuality. From Crete this disease spread to the Greek mainland, and not even the Spartiates were immune to it.<sup>29</sup>

This is how he explains the homoerotic behavior later exhibited between Spartiates, behavior that is well-attested in the ancient sources.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, appending Crete to the end of the Dorian Invasion has a clear intent: Pierce points the proverbial finger at a non-Dorian people as if to say that homoeroticism is not natural to the Dorian people and thus does not belong in their racial constitution. The connection here not only to Pierce's America, but also specifically to his organization National Alliance is quite easy to make. Pierce sees more than one element of America that he condemns and, in including Crete, he kills two birds with one stone. Racial constitution, as Pierce uses it, does not encompass the orientation or any other element of an individual identity other than race and, what is more, he never applies racial constitution to an individual but rather to a group. As such, it does not fit into his racial history so he reframes it as a racial quality by attributing it to a non-Dorian people. The implication of his Dorian Invasion treatment is no less at stake, in that if a people is racially healthy then everything else should eventually follow, but there is nothing in that logic to suggest homosexuality is both foreign to the Dorian people and a vice. In connection with America, the assumption seems to be that for any people to be racially healthy, homosexuality must be absent regardless of race. In this way, it is easier for Pierce to take homosexuality, now in his argument a racial quality, and present it that way it to his audience. As a white nationalist who invokes the idea of a "White revolution,"

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<sup>29</sup> For Muller's claim that the Dorians conquered Crete, refer to Muller, *History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 36.

<sup>30</sup> For homoeroticism in an ancient military context as well as a sampling of attesting ancient sources, a good starting point is B. R. Burg, *Gay Warriors: A Documentary History from the Ancient World to the Present* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 5ff.

it is plausible that he intends his essay for the white people of America, whom he hopes will be the revolution's igniters, thus ending his argument via an analogy from antiquity that white people in American should not express homosexuality.

In stark contrast to singling out Crete as a source for later Dorian decline, perhaps Pierce's greatest gloss is the concept of the "protracted journey" introduced earlier. This suggests that no one really knows what happened from the moment the Heraclids met the Dorians to their joint arrival at the Peloponnese. The only authority is Spartan founding myth, which can be contradictory although the political nature of founding myth tends to supersede this logic for the ancients. The mistake Pierce makes in his version is that he claims this journey included "repeated interactions with other peoples." He does not expand on these interactions unlike those with Crete, but the ambiguity that he creates here both acknowledges the interactions that result from mass movement and creates a void that weakens his argument. Repeated interactions with other peoples threaten the racial health of the Dorians, who, regardless of physical superiority, cannot be impervious to the effects of interaction. Change is thus an inevitable consequence in this case and, as such, the Dorians must adhere to it. The only rebuttal Pierce provides is his concept of racial constitution, in which a people consciously take pride in their race. This, however, does not work as a means of repelling unwanted interaction if his Crete example is any indication.

Pierce's gloss notably ends with wholesale displacements of non-Dorian peoples:

It also involved the displacement of other peoples, and it came during a period when lesser Greek-speaking tribes were undertaking invasions of their own to the south. Displaced Achaeans, Aeolians, and Ionians migrated to new areas, sometimes displacing those people already there and sometimes amalgamating with them.

Despite the tendency of mass movement in the ancient world, it is difficult to show that a whole people at any point up and left. This applies not only to the Dorians who are traveling southward

from central Greece, and before that southward from an arbitrary north, but also to the peoples they subjugate. In truth, there is no need for Pierce to claim displacement: it is a stretch to claim that the Dorians displaced any peoples completely during their rest stops en route to the Peloponnese. But even if the Peloponnese is considered exclusively, it would not be in keeping with the history of early Greece to claim that the Dorians displaced the peoples of the Peloponnese. There could have been some mass movement northward: this is suggested in the Return myth.<sup>31</sup> But there can be no doubt that the Spartans, the Dorians' celebrated descendants, had both helot slaves and included non-Spartan perioeci in their society. The fact thus remains that if peoples are expelled then it is difficult for them to function as slaves or cogs in the economy at the same time. For Pierce's version of the theory, it also would not work if Dorians were enslaving fellow Dorians.

Pierce's claim of displacement reflects a common anxiety held by members of the far-right: the anxiety over white survival. The idea takes on both a literal and symbolic meaning: in its most basic usage it reflects the fear that one day white people as a race will die out, but it also can be taken to mean the death of the collection of institutions by which white people continue to disproportionately benefit, or what is often called "Western civilization." Since white nationalists are of the opinion that non-white peoples can be manipulated and displaced, it is plausible that they could find the possibility of the reverse alarming. What is more, although Pierce argues that the Dorians were superior in early Greece, he does not appear certain of how his analogy fits into contemporary America. His fear that white people will gradually become an American minority is explicit and in this fear is the belief that minority is synonymous with weakness, hence the subsequent fear of displacement. It should be noted that it is not white people in America for

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<sup>31</sup> Muller, *History and Antiquities of the Doric Race*, 74f.

whom he fears displacement, but rather the brand of nationalism that he wishes to teach them. As it is, if American demographics trend towards increasing diversity then his endgame of the white ethnostate will lose traction.

Furthermore, Pierce imitates the Dorian Invasion of Muller in its most basic structure, but at several points he veers from the original substantiation of the theory, at times in an effort to bolster his own version but often with unintended results. His reliance on the racial health of the Dorians is necessary for his racial history, which he justifies in the absence of an attested historical record and outside the rigors of the academy. Even so, the implications he draws for this racial health fall apart in parts of the theory, but invariably when connected to contemporary America. In one sense, he uses the Dorian Invasion to promote his own organization National Alliance, while in another he deploys it as currency contributing to fundamental ideas of the far-right movement, like a “White revolution,” or a white ethnostate, or white survival. It seems that Pierce comes to realize that, even in a white America, race is not everything, which means some reframing might be needed. Identity has many facets and, in Pierce’s case, his attempt to racialize orientation becomes clear once his emphasis on racial health is recognized. These intentions are far removed from extolling Germanic identity within the academy or even with an intact academic basis, albeit contested. And although clear that Pierce’s Dorian Invasion does not hold well in structure or in implications, the theory, like any, can prosper if unchallenged and in turn held to be true.

### Jon Harrison Sims' Hellenic Invasions

Jon Harrison Sims is an historian based in Kentucky whose work has appeared primarily in the white supremacist magazine *American Renaissance* and on its site. Both Sims and the site, along with its founder Jared Taylor, are mentioned by Dr. Donna Zuckerberg in her work *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age*, in her discussion on the frequent association of misogyny with white supremacy online.<sup>32</sup> It is one of Sims' essays, "What Race Were the Greeks and Romans," that will be the focus of this chapter. As the name implies, Sims speculates what the race of both peoples might have been by providing copious references from ancient sources pertaining to physical features like hair and eye color. But in tandem with the method he discusses at length invasions from the north, which he claims brought Greece both its ancient peoples and later its culture. As such, he forces, although Sims himself does not explicitly say it, a reading of Nordicism onto the invasion theory, an attempt likewise made by Pierce. This chapter will examine Sims' purposes for conveying Nordicism through Hellenic invasions, namely to demonstrate white superiority, a precedence for infighting amongst those peoples whom he sees as superior, and the potential for a white ethnostate. To this end, Sims' employment of Hellenic invasions, the last of which being the Dorian Invasion, will be shown to bolster those aims.

Early on in Sims' essay he observes the attitude classical scholars usually have towards the Dorian Invasion:

Some years ago I asked several classics professors about the race of the ancient Greeks only to be met with shrugs that suggested that no one knew, and that it was not something worth looking into. Today, an interest in the race of the ancients seems to be taken as an

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<sup>32</sup> Donna Zuckerberg, *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 196. For more on Jared Taylor, the founder of *American Renaissance*, see Swain 87ff.

unhealthy sign, and any evidence of their Nordic origins discounted for fear it might give rise to dangerous sentiments.

Similarly, the norm in the field of classics is to describe the Dorian Invasion as a debunked historical process substantiated by Muller in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup> The second part of Sims' observation, that "an interest in the [Nordic] race of the ancients seems to be taken as an unhealthy sign," is not without truth in that attaching a Nordic history with an already established Dorian myth is not a natural combination. The marriage of these two narratives jumpstarts a conversation on race in antiquity, one that imposes Nordicism where it does not belong in classical antiquity to give a Nordic race prestigious roots as far back in history as possible. To this end, Sims, like his white nationalist contemporaries, claims pre-Dorian Greek history as part of the Hellenic narrative as well:

Neither the Minoans nor the Pelasgians spoke Greek — the linear A inscriptions of the Minoans have still not been deciphered — so the Greek language must have arrived with the light-haired conquerors who migrated from the north, most likely from the middle Danube River Valley. According to Greek national myth, the Hellenes were descended from Hellen (not to be confused with Helen of Troy), the son of Deucalion. Hellen had sons and grandsons, who correspond to the four main tribal divisions of ancient Greece: the Aeolians Achaeans, Ionians, and Dorians.

Notice that Sims displaces the "light-haired conquerors," the Dorians and their predecessors, all the way up to the Danube River Valley. Neither Greek myth nor Muller were ever so bold, preferring to confine their north to what they understood as northern Greece. In displacing them he also reattributes the Greek language to an origin well outside Greece, which in the sense that

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<sup>33</sup> For the importance of Muller's work to the invasion theory, refer to Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans*, 53. For some treatments of the Dorian Invasion in textbooks, consult *Robin Osborne, Greece in the Making 1200 – 479 BC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 49 – 51; Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 38 – 9; and Victor Parker, *A History of Greece: 1300 to 30 BC* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 53 – 4. Osborne and Pomeroy are more representative of the norm; the former does not allow it while the latter neither treats it as credible nor wholly dismisses it. Parker's treatment is uncommon for a 21<sup>st</sup> century popular Greek textbook; he goes so far as to claim that linguistic evidence proves that the Dorian Invasion happened in some capacity, though he does not commit to as a violent process nor does he invoke it in the same sense as the white nationalists examined here.

it has Indo-European ties is not implausible, but beyond those ties has no evidence of being established as identifiably Greek in the Danube River Valley.

Despite that, to this point, Sims has modified early Greek myth, he argues that the myth nevertheless indicates descents of Nordic Hellenes into Greece:

Scholars today tend to dismiss such myths but they would not have survived if they had not been generally consistent with the long folk memories of ancient peoples. In this case they point to what classical scholars have long believed was a series of Hellenic descents upon mainland Greece and the Aegean islands. The first Hellenes to arrive were the Ionians and Aeolians; then a few centuries later, the Achaeans, and finally the Dorians.

Here Sims somewhat contradicts himself, first saying that scholars dismiss Greek myth and then arguing that classical scholars in particular discern enough truth in that myth to believe in Nordic descents into Greece. Perhaps “long believed” would be more accurate for classical scholars from the 19<sup>th</sup> to early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but in this case Sims is repackaging outdated scholarship. Once he comes to the conclusion that there were multiple descents of Nordic Hellenes into Greece, he is able to substantiate Nordic history: he claims that the fall of Mycenae and the Achaeans’ sack of Troy were both under the bracket of achievements by Nordic peoples, even if they were at times over other Nordic peoples. Of these two iconic processes of Greek history and myth, Sims says the following:

Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions probably played a part in the destruction, and later Greeks attributed it to invasions from the north. Waves of Hellenic warriors swept down and burned the Mycenaean citadels and became the ruling race in Greece. They also sacked the city of Troy, and Homer’s *Iliad* is about them. They also seem to have snuffed out much of Mycenaean culture: Greeks stopped writing, and abandoned the arts, urban life, and trade with the outside world.

Again he modifies what is normally thought about Mycenae and Troy in that the Greeks did not attribute a collapse of Mycenae to Nordic Hellenic warriors. Not only does he claim that these Hellenic warriors conquered Greece, but also that they became its “ruling race.” Sims does not discuss at length the idea of racial health like Pierce, whereby the purity of a race is suggestive of

its success when in conflict with another people. His narrative instead seems to be reduced to one of clear superiority in which one race, Nordic Hellenes, will prevail over Mycenaeans and indigenous Pelasgians because the former are inherently superior to the latter groups. While a simple point, Sims is raising the issue of what happens when two Nordic peoples come into conflict. Without Pierce's racial health, Sims cannot elaborate on the Nordic Dorian conquest of the Nordic Achaeans except to state as a matter of fact that the Dorian Invasion happened:

It was the Dorians, the last Greek invaders, who ended Achaean rule and probably provoked a mass migration of Aeolian and Ionian Hellenes — no doubt including Homer's ancestors — across the Aegean Sea to the coast of Asia Minor. The Dorians who settled in the fertile valley of the Eurotas in the southern Peloponnesus were the direct ancestors of the Spartans of the classical age, and they claimed to be the only pure Dorians.

Sims does not expand on this last claim except to misattribute it. Chapoutot argues that it is Muller, not the Spartans, who suggests that they were the only "pure Dorians," but nevertheless Sims has provided an invaluable case study of Nordic conflict.<sup>34</sup> As an *American Renaissance* contributor who has written myriad pieces on white nationalism in America, his own white nationalism is not in question. Given that the endgame of American white nationalism is the white ethnostate, it is interesting to see how Sims betrays that goal and its ever-increasing implausibility. He has every intention of connecting his Hellenic invasions and the Achaean-Dorian conflict with recent events:

Viewed in a historical context, it is almost as if today's northern Europeans have set out perfectly to imitate the ways in which the Greeks ... destroyed themselves. In both Europe and America, patriotic young men slaughtered each other in terrible fratricidal wars ... Will we be able to resist the forces that brought down the ancients?

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<sup>34</sup> Chapoutot, *Greeks, Romans, Germans*, 216. The same relevant quote is that cited at the end of "Apollo, Heracles, Dorian, Spartan, German: The Legacy of Karl Ottfried Muller." Perhaps not an entirely sound assertion on his part; Muller himself does not explicitly claim that the Spartans were the only pure Dorians in his work. With that said, Chapoutot's retrospective attribution of the argument to Muller is certainly not without merit, especially in that his *Die Dorianer* preceded Nordicism as an established ideology.

Moreover, Sims has two agendas in arguing that waves of Nordic, Hellenic invasions took place in early Greece. The first is to teach Nordicism, the belief that there is a Nordic people whose physical and mental makeup makes them superior to other peoples. Interpreting this passage as a whole, Sims' reference to "northern Europeans" seems more like a racial label than a geographical one, a label that suggests a people who share ancestry with those who came from the north, or Nordic people. His second agenda is to warn that these people have a tendency to destroy themselves. His claim that "patriotic young men slaughtered each other in terrible fratricidal wars" does not specify what historical events he means by fratricidal wars, but in the context of America and Europe the American Civil War and the First and Second World Wars are plausible references. In any case, Sims sees infighting as the Nordic people's greatest weakness and the primary reason a white ethnostate has not been sustainable in the past.

As a result, it is significant that Sims holds out hope that contemporary Americans can "resist the forces that brought down the ancients." It is clear that there never were any Nordic Hellenes, let alone extant descendants. As Sims demonstrates himself, however, there are people who would believe that living descendants of these Hellenes are in fact real. As such, he needs to teach this idea of shared Nordic descent if any white people are going to buy into it because it is likely that most of his audience knows little about Nordic superiority as an ideology. Naturally, Nordicism needs to be adjusted in order to be current, but Sims notably does not make sweeping changes. He takes its original meaning, referring to a superior northern people, to now mean descendants of an ancient and superior "northern European" people. As such, he changes the name from Nordic to "northern European" while preserving much of the meaning and, in doing so, risks his message resonating less successfully with his broader white audience. From the above passage, Sims does appear to conflate "northern Europeans" with white people in general,

so perhaps he expects his far-right audience to likewise gloss over, or otherwise take no issue with, that conflation. Or perhaps, after teaching Nordicism to his audience, he hopes his readers will believe in the conflation he makes instead of outright conceding that they are not descendants of a Nordic people, but that they can nevertheless carry on their legacy.

Two byproducts of Sims' version of the waves of Hellenic invasions remain to be mentioned. The first is that he claims from Homeric literary evidence that some slaves in the Aegean (not necessarily Greece) had fair skin and blond hair and thus, he concludes, were of the "Nordic type." He then says that the "Nordic type" may have been "present elsewhere in the Aegean world." The greater significance of his claim is that inherent racial superiority does not necessarily translate into class superiority. The upshot in turn is that members of the ruling race in Greece could be slaves, which is not the message that Sims wants to convey. It stands that he could make some sort of class parallel with current "northern Europeans" as a minority to a diverse majority to explain why they do not currently occupy an elite class, but otherwise he is lamenting that white people have thus far been unable to successfully maintain a white ethnostate in which, according to his ancient narrative, some of the racially superior people would also occupy bottom status.

Sims' second byproduct of the invasions is that the Nordic, Hellenic invaders did not always become the rulers of Greece. In some instances he claims that they merely coexisted with non-Nordic white people:

Classical Greece was a fusion, both cultural and racial, of these two types of whites. Some city-states, such as Thebes and Sparta, were predominantly Nordic. Others, such as Athens, were predominantly Mediterranean, and still others were mixtures of the two.

Thus what Sims is saying, albeit unknowingly, is that Nordicism is not the determining factor in which people become the rulers and which become the ruled. That is an issue, however, because

that is exactly what Sims is arguing and working to impart to his far-right audience. It is notable that he does not take this claim at face value given that not all white people are Nordic today. In the idea of Greece as a fusion of Nordic and non-Nordic peoples, neither do they need to all be Nordic, yet Sims elects rather to remain ambiguous towards the relationship between these two groups in current white people. What his fusion comment really signifies is that Nordicism does not need to be a key idea of the white nationalist movement to create a white ethnostate; the fact that he, Pierce, and Tort need to introduce it to far-right readers shows that it is not already a key idea, and; the best way for people like Sims to make Nordicism real and important is to tie it to something they see as both real and important. Broadly, this takes the form of Greek antiquity, but specifically this takes the form, for Sims, of several Hellenic waves culminating in the Dorian Invasion.

Furthermore, Sims emphasizes both the Achaeans and Dorians throughout his essay, yet the latter seems to occupy a special status. If not historical, at least Achaean myth is well attested in the ancient sources, while the sources attesting to the Dorian Invasion are either scant or decidedly less ancient. Only one of these peoples, in Sims' view, provide a continuity with the Spartans, whom Muller and 20<sup>th</sup> century classicist Werner Jaeger, cited by Sims, claim are the purest of the Dorian descendants.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Spartan stereotypes are quite common to popular culture; Nordicism not so much. But that connection, the Dorian Invasion as a Spartan founding myth, is Nordicism's catalyst to being taken up by white nationalists and perhaps thus, to the ideologue, his ideology's best shot.

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<sup>35</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Vol. 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 81. Again, the attribution of a similar claim to Muller is somewhat contentious, though reasonable, in that it is less explicit.

### Cezar Tort's Dorian Invasion and the Naïve White Nationalist

Cezar Tort, the white nationalist whose observation on Nordicism started this thesis, is a steadfast advocate of the ideology in its strictest sense. He upholds the argument that northern white peoples are superior beings whose power lies chiefly in their racial purism, even at his own expense. The author of many articles on Greco-Roman antiquity on his sites *Evropa Soberana* and *The West's Darkest Hour*, in Spanish and English respectively, he admits that whoever “declares himself an admirer of classical European culture (Greece and Rome) and, at the same time, asserts that it was founded by swarthy, Mediterranean-like-me folks is placing himself in the most uncomfortable form of self-consciousness.”<sup>36</sup> Tort, born in Mexico City but of a Spanish heritage, moreover argues for an ideology to which he believes he does not belong. Beyond his own relationship to Nordacist criteria, he pairs the ideology to the Dorian Invasion theory in many of his discussions of early Greece and Sparta, emphasizing especially the Dorians' racial purism. Tort uses the Dorian Invasion as a means to teach Nordicism to a white nationalist base that he fears is lacking the radicalism sufficient to establish a white ethnostate. In other words, he attaches extremism to the antiquity that best reflects it and, in doing so, provides precedence intended for current white nationalists to follow. As the next chapter will show, a Nordic precedence is contested amongst white nationalists, but their admiration for Greco-Roman antiquity is far more uniform.

While each Hellenic wave is Nordic, the Dorians are given quintessential northern imagery. Like Muller before him, Tort says that the peoples responsible for Greek language and culture are invaders from the north:

They were invading Hellenes (and maybe some Illyrian groups allied with them). That is to say: Indo-European peoples who entered Greece from the north, from the Balkans and

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<sup>36</sup> Cezar Tort, “Were the Greeks Blond and Blue-eyed?” *The West's Darkest Hour*, trans. Cezar Tort, November 17, 2013.

Central Europe. These invaders of whom descended, among others, the Achaeans (Mycenaean civilization and “Homeric” Greece), the Ionians (Athenians), the Dorians (Spartans), people from Thessaly (Thebans) and Macedonians (like Alexander the Great) were predominantly Nordic.<sup>37</sup>

Grouping these peoples together, he adds that they are “predominantly Nordic.” Aside from the Illyrian groups he parenthesizes, this would put each on a level playing field and thus fitting for appropriation. But instead of choosing Homer’s Achaeans or Alexander’s Macedonians, he further specifies that, according to Herodotus, the Dorians had come “among the snows.”<sup>38</sup> For the Hellenes as a whole, Tort only says that the groups descend from the Balkans and central Europe, but this description of Herodotus would seemingly place them as far north as Tort’s range allows. Without elaborating further on the Dorian’s descent, Tort has already established the Dorians as a northern invading people and thus satisfies a condition of Nordicism. The fact that he brings in an authoritative ancient source to drive that condition home with explicit northern imagery indicates that he is also setting the groundwork to satisfy the Nordic aesthetic. The most common trait pointed to by Muller as well as Tort’s contemporaries has been blond hair, a trait Muller claims is reflected in the art and sculpture of Greek mythology and particularly in renditions of Apollo, who will be discussed later in this chapter. Muller locates the Dorian homeland on a sort of fine line between what can be construed as ancient Greece and barbarian land, the latter of which he places blond hair. In this sense, Tort’s version of the invasion theory starts out fundamentally the same as Muller and follows in a similar path.

Tort explicitly cites the trait of blond hair amongst the Dorians as evidence that they were instinctually racist people. He uses this trait as a physically obvious way to distinguish between Nordic Dorian and Greek native:

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<sup>37</sup> Cezar Tort, “Nordish Hellenes.”

<sup>38</sup> This is his paraphrase; nowhere in Herodotus has a like quote been found.

Given that the dyes [needed for blond hair dye] in Sparta were banned, we can deduce that racism and the Apartheid instinct of the Spartans with respect to aboriginal Greeks was strong enough so that, no more and no less than seven centuries after the Dorian invasion, blond hair still predominated among the citizenry of the country.<sup>39</sup>

Beyond a trait of admiration, Tort reads into the deduction of predominantly blond hair an instinctual racism on which the trait can depend. Muller does not echo this idea, but Pierce does in what he terms the Dorians' racial consciousness, or the awareness that the racial group to which one belongs is superior to others. Ancient racism in turn can, but need not always, fit current racial categories, which would situate the racism or "Apartheid" of Tort's Dorians with a lesser white, if not multiracial, people.<sup>40</sup> In this way, the invasion theory is not always so conducive to getting current white nationalists to buy into Nordicism, a theory that fits white peoples into a hierarchy. Although this is where it makes sense to adapt the ideology in a broader form, Tort has already demonstrated no interest in doing that, which adds nuance to his vision of a white ethnostate. In order for the ethnostate to be sufficiently radical, he cannot allow its members to start making exceptions as to who can join it without conceding to some sense of inclusivity, albeit in a narrow sense. It is the current racial inclusivity and multiculturalism of Euroamerican nations that has created Tort's need for a white ethnostate to begin with and, as such, he must define a people with inner and outer characteristics like instinctually racist and blond hair so that his invasion theory and ethnostate vision advocate a level of exclusion that surpasses that advocated by those who interpret Nordicism more broadly.

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<sup>39</sup> Cezar Tort, *Sparta, The West's Darkest Hour*, trans. Cezar Tort, September 25, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> For more on race and antiquity, consult Denise Eileen McCoskey, *Race: Antiquity and Its Legacy* (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019) and Benjamin H. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006) as excellent starting points.

Though all Nordic peoples theoretically share the same fundamental physical characteristics, the Dorians are, as Tort argues, responsible for bringing beauty to Greece via their worship of Apollo. Tort in fact names the ideal Dorian aesthetic after the god:

two among them acquired singularly relevant and important roles and became the most worshiped deities, even by the time of the Dorian invasion: Apollo and Artemis ... He was conceived as a young, blond and blue-eyed man, holding a lyre, harp or bow, and possessor of a manly, clean, youthful and pure beauty—"Apollonian" beauty.<sup>41</sup>

Again Tort takes a page out of Muller's work by citing Apollo as the embodiment of the appearance and character of his worshippers, or at least those qualities that they admire. Muller is continuing a tendency amongst 18<sup>th</sup> century art historians, chiefly Winkelmann, to label Apollo statuary as the most beautiful artistic representation of man. By connecting the Dorians to his cult, he can in turn suggest that the Dorians are not just conquerors, but beautiful conquerors at that. Tort does not term a similar "Artemisian" beauty for women though he nonetheless echoes her counterpart's characteristics, but more importantly he tries to associate these qualities with beauty so as to instill a sense of pride in the white nationalists who possess them. As such, he extols a subset of modern white nationalists in a similar way to Muller's Germans, which is an attempt to define what features should and should not be admired. Moreover, this is not Tort's endgame, but it does bolster it in that "Apollonian" beauty may make Nordicism via the invasion theory more palatable. In other words, if Nordicism is the brains of the operation and the Dorians the agents, then Apollo is the aesthetically pleasing face that makes both more persuasive.

At the heart of Tort's version of Dorian success and failure is their racial purism. In a discussion on Spartan decline that culminates in their military defeat to Thebes in 371 BCE, he suggests the key reason for their failure:

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

It could be said it was humiliating for their heirs, but we must add that many of them were no longer heirs of Dorian Sparta since it no longer ran in their bodies the most important heritage: pure Dorian blood.<sup>42</sup>

Muller somewhat complicates Dorian purism by adhering to the Return of the Heraclids myth wherein the children of Heracles intermarried with their Dorian followers. In doing so, Muller furthers his own endgame of extoling Germanic identity, but Tort is quiet on the Return myth. It is plausible that he takes no issue with it given the mythological status of the Heraclids, but in any case they are perhaps less relevant for his rendition of the theory, which argues that the power of the invading Dorians, and their Spartan descendants, lies in their pure Dorian blood.<sup>43</sup> In essence, he argues for intermarriage as weakness, something that threatens the Nordic Dorians' blond hair and instinctual racism, for example. For Tort's vision of the white ethnostate to work, he needs people who fit the physical criteria that Muller originally lays out and that soundly believe in both their own superiority and the necessity of exclusivity. Tort is teaching that racial purism, although a difficult if not impossible condition to satisfy, is the source behind Nordic Dorian power and thus needs to be the cornerstone of white nationalist power because the invasion theory is the oldest and best example of what that purism can accomplish.

Despite the threat of intermarriage, Tort argues that the Dorians and early Spartans were most susceptible to infighting. From the time of the Dorian conquest up until Lycurgus' reform of Spartan society, Tort says that this Nordic people was locked in fratricidal war:

Blood brothers senselessly killed each other instead of uniting in a common will and not seeking personal glory but the glory of their people. Sparta herself was immersed in this

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> It is nonetheless surprising that the Heraclids are not invoked to bolster his Dorian Invasion theory. One would think that their reputation as mythically descended would be enough to allow them through Tort's rigid criteria, but it also true that they are not indispensable to his rendition.

heroic but fratricidal system, where every man was walking his way seeking his own immortality. Noble Dorians killed each other while their real enemies proliferated.<sup>44</sup>

Tort's narrative of infighting is not found in Muller's work, which should not be surprising. It would not be conducive to extoling Germanic identity if those who claim it are characterized as fighting amongst themselves. Endgame aside, Muller often makes an attempt through *Die Dorier* to adhere to ancient myth and sources, neither of which attest to the violence. But to Tort, this susceptibility perfectly parallels the current state of the white nationalist movement: disputes amongst members who are more focused on factionalism or individual relevancy instead of working together to construct a white ethnostate. Despite the divisions within the movement, Tort's rendition of the invasion theory reflects more than a failure to cooperate. Not only is there a dispute as to what the white ethnostate should look like, but also who should be in it. As such, this dispute is a struggle not merely for relevancy, but for survival in the movement. The last claim in Tort's passage, that the Dorians' real enemies grow stronger as they grow weaker, likewise reflects the common white nationalist fear that Euroamerican nations are becoming too diverse so as to reach a point of no return. That point culminates in a new demographic in which white people, or in Tort's case a subset of white people, are a (or an even smaller) minority, but that does not defeat his optimism.

Tort makes the Nordic Greeks more relatable by casting them as a minority. Speculating on the Nordic invaders' numbers, Tort says the following:

On the whole of the population of Greece, I do not think that the Nordics ever predominated. They may have been more than a third of the total population after the Second Hellenic wave (brought by the Dorians). In any case, despite being in the minority, they were the architects of the *polis* (city-state), culture, art and Greek

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. Also for the timing of the Dorian Invasion, but more precisely the Return myth, refer to the following ancient sources: Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.12.3; Pausanias, *Description of Greece, Vol. 2* 4.3.3; and Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History* f. 7.9. The consensus, according to the myth, is two generations or about eighty years after the sack of Troy.

civilization, while the rest of the population formed a mob that had little to do with the Hellenic culture as we know it today.<sup>45</sup>

In the height of their numbers in Greece, Tort groups the Dorians with the other Nordic peoples, but his message is clear; a Nordic minority, heavily outnumbered by indigenous peoples, not only subjugated these peoples but were responsible for all elements of Greek achievement, from their poleis to the art and culture of each. Perhaps this is why he is not afraid to transform white nationalists into an even lesser minority, as the Nordic precedence he teaches is far more powerful and influential than their numbers would otherwise indicate. According to his rendition of the invasion theory, this is made possible by their racial purism, which is why he discerns a need to teach Nordicism to current white nationalists. Some fit the bill but do not know it yet and, as such, Tort wants to instill the idea that a modern Nordic minority is capable of more than the current diverse majority, even if that means his own part is limited to that of a sympathizer for not possessing Nordic characteristics himself.

Furthermore, Tort chooses the Dorian Invasion theory as a catalyst to convey Nordicism in a very narrow sense of the ideology. In an interview with one of his English site's followers, he notes that his interviewee argues that "Nordicism has come to refer [to] the recognition that some parts of Europe have undergone significantly more mongrelization than others."<sup>46</sup> The fear of intermarriage in contemporary Euroamerica would, on its own, broaden Nordicism to mean all white people, as is the case with Pierce and Sims. But as Tort insists, citing himself as one example, not all white people are created equally under the extremism. Broadening the definition of Nordicism undermines the triumphs of Dorians over non-Dorians and lesser Nordic peoples. In a broader form, racially pure Dorians become less relevant because the people idealized may

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<sup>45</sup> Tort, "Nordish Hellenes."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

not always match the people who are supposed to idealize them. As such, there is a need for Nordicism to adapt, but Tort holds it back and implicitly creates the very contentious question of who belongs in the white nationalist movement. It is with this question in mind that each of the white nationalists selected for this paper, Pierce, Sims, and Tort, will be held up to both each other and a prominent dissenting voice in the current white nationalist movement.

## They Came from the North: Where the Dorian Invasion Went Wrong

In an interview for his white nationalist site *Counter-Currents*, editor-in-chief Greg Johnson, a leading figure in the American white nationalist movement, predictably discusses the current state of the country's white demographic. A far cry from a united people, Johnson suggests that "invidious distinctions among whites today ... divide our race and make us less of a politically viable people."<sup>47</sup> Though his observation is overtly racist anywhere outside of his white nationalist base, the "invidious distinction" that preludes his observation, steeped in Greek antiquity, is equally out of place. This distinction is the ideological message of Nordicism conveyed through the historical example of the Dorian Invasion theory, one that says that a Nordic white race is physically superior and capable of more impressive cultural achievements than other lesser Nordic and non-white races. Johnson concedes that "maybe improving our race [in the future] is going to entail purifying it in some sense," but he just as importantly points out that the Dorians "don't really exist anymore; they're just ingredients now in what we call white people today."<sup>48</sup> In other words, not only does he diminish the example of the Dorians and their invasion, admired and deployed by his white nationalist contemporaries, but he rejects that the example carries value based on its past purism and authority as a relic of Greek antiquity. The Dorian Invasion is a failed appropriation with an intricate narrative that has no obvious way of being repackaged into more palatable forms like succinct visual imagery and catchphrases. Pierce, Sims, and Tort all contribute case studies on its failure as rhetoric and thus a broader

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<sup>47</sup> Tort discusses the interview in his article "Johnson's Amnesty." The timestamp for this quote is 43:30 – 45 from Greg Johnson, interview with Matt Parrott, "Counter-Currents Radio Podcast No. 63: Greg Johnson Interviews Matt Parrott on Street Activism, Press Engagement, and Craig Cobb," *Counter-Currents*, November 15, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* with timestamps 41:10 – 15 and 42:20 – 40 for the respective quotes.

failure to advance a white ethnostate with language that does not resonate with their base, going so far as to do more harm than good by sowing discord amongst the movement's members.

Though the versions of the invasion theory put forth by these three case studies show variance from one another, they converge on the elements that best support it as a quintessential Nordicist example. Pierce, whose entire *Who We Are* series is explicitly dedicated to Nordicism, argues that the Dorians conquered and expelled the Achaeans from the Peloponnese because the former both possessed and was conscious of their own racial purism. To Pierce, this, what he calls the Dorians' racial constitution, is the source from which they draw their strength, a source that Johnson is not so keen to champion. Tort, a more rigid advocate of Nordicism than Pierce, nonetheless agrees that Dorian success and failure boils down to their pure blood, a quality that, citing a physical preference for the trait of blond hair, he uses to argue for the Dorians as an instinctually racist people. In other words, both white nationalists put a premium on purism and a consciousness of it that gives precedence to their own current attitudes towards non-Nordic peoples. Purism, integrated in a lesser capacity into Muller's invasion theory as well, is thus not a new element of the narrative, however it was not originally intended as a signifier of strength. Muller's primary objective, to extol Germanic identity and to do so in the context of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century German academy, only makes use of purism insofar as it makes the Dorians, and their Spartan descendants, chiefly Germanic. And to this end, unlike Pierce and Tort's base, the invasion theory's acceptance by Muller's rigorous (though not without its own racism) academic community marked his work as a success. Furthermore tracing the German people back to the mythical Dorians was meant to tap a source of pride, not power, the combination of which Pierce bundles into his racial constitution. Beyond his promotion of the Dorians as a knowingly pure and thus powerful white people, with this racial constitution, Pierce discerns a need to organize

his contemporaries around it in order to found upon this idea an American white ethnostate. To this end, he uses his version of the invasion theory as a sort of advertisement for his organization National Alliance, the publications of which would eventually come under the name *National Vanguard*.

Hardly an outlier amongst his contemporaries, Sims' silence on purism is still worthy of mention. His version of the invasion theory is more predicated on a strongly held belief than abstract idea, a belief that asserts the Dorians as an inherently superior people who thus logically conquer inherently inferior peoples. The upshot of this is that it remains unknowable what exactly gives the Dorians a characteristic superiority over others, an ambiguity that, left as is, gives a contemporary white nationalist more room to work with when connecting them to current white people in general. This is not to say that Sims would disagree with Pierce or Tort, as he too identifies the trait of blond hair as indicative of Dorian superiority, but his noncommittal silence towards the purism that dominates Johnson's divide with Nordicism makes Sims' version more malleable and its adjoining ideology milder, though unmistakably Nordacist nonetheless.

The focus on past purism, or in Sims' case inherent superiority, translates not only into Dorian physical superiority but also into a more comprehensive, privileged identity. Pierce, discerning that a people's investment in their racial constitution alone will not be an adequate filter to determine who belongs in his vision of a white ethnostate, uses the Dorian example as a way to racialize sexual orientation. He asserts that the Dorians were uniformly heterosexual but that they learned of homosexuality during their conquest of the inferior people of Crete. As such, he inserts into his version the fallacy that a people's racial constitution will automatically ensure all of that people's, in this case his, desired characteristics. By introducing Cretan homosexuality as a sort of bad and contagious element, he weeds out anyone who is not heterosexual that would

otherwise qualify for his ethnostate. Pierce's move is then a concession that identity is multi-faceted and too involved to be imposed uniformly over enough people to establish any state. Even without the purism, Sims must grapple with the same issue of uniformity when he discusses Nordic social hierarchy. A sign of physical superiority, he adds that blond hair was even a trait amongst Nordic slaves in the Aegean, yet this undermines the idea of Nordic, and more specifically Dorian, people as conquerors by definition. Sims moreover shows that there can be a slide from physical to class superiority, a sobering inequality for white ethnostate hopefuls whose social mobility in a more exclusionary state would not be guaranteed.

For Pierce, the very future existence of white people is just as unsettled. He imagines that in a matter of centuries the only means of preserving white Americans will come by way of a revolution. The Dorian example may be an attempt at expediting that while a white demographic is still the majority, an example which he, along with Sims and Tort, assert was derailed not by non-Nordic peoples but by the infighting of the Dorians themselves. Pierce goes so far as to warn that their internal violence overshadowed racial unity while Tort adds that they were more susceptible to it than other peoples. Tort does not specify why, although in a racial group where everyone is superior, not everyone can stay that way. Sims extends the downfall of Dorian rule into contemporary America and Europe, the white people of which he says have historically suffered from similar fratricidal war. The point of inventing a self-contained Dorian downfall, one which Muller never knew, is both to stress the power of purism or inherent superiority and to instill a conviction that no multiracial, multicultural force would be sufficiently formidable to prevent the establishment, or disestablishment, of an American white ethnostate if enough white Americans would buy into the Dorian example. Strong perhaps, this conviction is also a misnomer; no member of a white ethnostate founded on purism can ever truly be certain that he

or she satisfies the criteria for admittance. What is more, it is unclear how inherent superiority could be performed amongst equals. The result is that any member that passes into the white ethnostate would be caught in a liminality where the question of whether one belongs would be based on more of a performative element. This could take the form of ostentatious displays of racial consciousness, Tort's instinctual racism, or, if these are not possible, the infighting of which all three case studies unanimously warn.

The Dorian narratives of Pierce, Sims, and Tort, all involved, are not easily summed up. Words like purism and superiority encapsulate the full story no better than their original Dorian Invasion itself. The Nordicism that underlies the theory only adds to the intricacy and indeed is responsible for much of it, which in turn makes any standalone reference to the invasion theory almost unusable. By itself, this does not prove the Dorian example as a failure of Greek appropriation, however the evidence against it is overwhelming. The success of an appropriation of antiquity is, in some sense, dependent on what one considers successful, but it is much easier to tell when it has been less so. Not only does the appropriation remain obscure, it may also be argued against. Despite the essay-length treatments of the Dorian example by three different ideologues, on three different white nationalist platforms (an online magazine, journal, and blog), their appropriation's greatest claim to fame is perhaps in its rejection by fellow ideologue Greg Johnson, whose white nationalist reputation led to his arrest and subsequent deportation by the country of Norway two days after he arrived there for a human biodiversity conference in 2019.<sup>49</sup> Far from resonating with the American white nationalist base and circulating in and on their

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<sup>49</sup> For Johnson's arrest in and deportation from Norway, refer to Liam Stack, "American White Nationalist is Arrested in Norway," *The New York Times*, 2019; Associated Press, "Norway Arrests US Far-Right Activist, Seeks Deportation," *ABC News*, 2019; and Yuliya Talmazan and Caroline Radnofsky, "U.S. White Nationalist Arrested in Norway for 'National Security Reasons,'" *NBC News*, 2019.

many organizations, publications, and sites, the Dorian Invasion theory and the Nordicism that its new renditions have been teaching has fallen on largely unreceptive ears. In drawing Johnson's ire, this appropriation has, at least in part, backfired by encouraging the infighting that the invasion theory ironically warns will weaken them.

Unintended consequence aside, the Dorian Invasion does speak to the nature of ancient appropriation. To draw this out, it is worth pinpointing exactly how other Greek appropriations prosper where this one falls short. Perhaps two of the most conspicuously successful relics of Greek antiquity both in popular culture and white nationalist circles are Spartan military prowess (and almost as common, laconic language) and Athenian democracy. The former, popularized especially by Zack Snyder's 2006 film *300*, has commonly been represented by the iconic Spartan helmet, the use of which in costume wear has been both innocuous and, as a white nationalist protester at the 2017 University of California, Berkeley protests demonstrates, politically charged. Another protester at the same event also carried a banner on which was written the Greek phrase *molon labe*, or "come and take them," a laconic quote attributed to Leonidas by Plutarch.<sup>50</sup> This catchphrase, popular with gun rights activists, has also been adopted by white nationalist militia groups like the Oath Keepers and the American Guard. The founder of the former group, Stewart Rhodes, has furthermore gone so far as to announce that the group would be forming Spartan training groups to guard, and more accurately dictate, its vision of domestic peace.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Any recommendation to informal reporting of both the Berkeley protests and the Spartan helmet and *molon labe* flag spotted therein would lead to coverage with a progressive bias. It is furthermore not the intention here for the reporting to persuade how the reader engages with this discussion, but merely as a place for further inquiry. With this in mind, for images of both appropriations consult Curtis Dozier, "Spartan Helmets at April 2017 Berkeley Protests," *Pharos: Doing Justice to the Classics*, 2017. For the origin of *molon labe*, refer to Plutarch's *Moralia* 225D.

<sup>51</sup> For more on these gun rights activist groups, refer to the following for Oath Keepers (first two articles) and the American Guard respectively: Larry Diffey, "An Open Letter to All Law Enforcement Officers in New York State,

Successful for its simplicity and requiring only a passing familiarity to both understand and invoke it, the appropriation of Athenian democracy rivals, perhaps less obviously, the relevancy of Spartan helmets and *molon labe*. Though a misnomer for its exclusionary, xenophobic government by current standards, Athens as the birthplace of democracy is a commonly accepted attribution. Whereas Spartan helmets are tangible, democracy as an abstract form of government is less visual, yet its popularity has led to creative, albeit at times misrepresentative, solutions to fill the void. Architecture like the Parthenon has been extracted from antiquity and mimicked as a democratic symbol, most closely in the form of the Nashville Parthenon. More misleading is Athenian sculpture, the copies of which have varied from professional to amateur artistic projects. The paint having faded from the originals (or old replicas) over the course of millennia, the traces of color that persist on them have proven that Athenian sculptors frequently experimented with polychromy, at times choosing garish color combinations that are by no means meant to add lifelike accuracy.<sup>52</sup> The emphasis on whitewashed architecture and sculpture has historically reinforced white supremacy and its performance of imperialism, the former of which is still taken advantage of by the white nationalist group American Identity Movement (formerly known as Identity Evropa).<sup>53</sup>

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*Oath Keepers*, 2014; Dan Griffiths, “Help Us Launch the Oath Keepers Spartan Training Program,” *Oath Keepers*, 2018; and Joshua Long, “The American Guard Ethos,” *The American Guard*, 2018 (this page is listed as a way to view their logo, which references *molon labe*). Archived URLs are provided in the works cited so as to both ensure access to the webpages and to avoid generating traffic to them, which is not the purpose of this discussion.

<sup>52</sup> Brinkmann, Dreyfus, Koch-Brinkmann, *Gods in Color*, 28.

<sup>53</sup> For Identity Evropa, consult Nina Angileri, “Classicizing Identity: The Alt-Right, Art, and Archaeology,” PhD diss., (Bryn Mawr College, 2019). For those interested in antiquity as historically whitewashed, the following informal sources are recommended: Sarah Bond, “Whitewashing Ancient Statues: Whiteness, Racism and Color in the Ancient World,” *Forbes*, April 27, 2017 and Margaret Talbot, “The Myth of Whiteness in Classical Sculpture,” *The New Yorker*, October 29, 2018.

In both instances of mainstream Greek appropriations, it is evident that there is no need to flesh out, to provide an elaborate explanation. Where the appropriation as language does not suffice, it can be easily repackaged into palatable visual imagery, a nod to its versatility in mediums.<sup>54</sup> This is the key to how Spartan helmets and Athenian democracy succeed, and likewise the limits of the Dorian Invasion. In its substantiation by Muller and in each of its case studies, it is bolstered neither by catchphrases nor by visual representations that summarize a proverbial Gorgon's knot of intricate, contested, or otherwise ambiguous myth laced with Nordicist ideology. Because of its failure to adapt outside of an historical confine, the argument that starts at Dorian Invasion and ends at American white ethnostate is not evident in any other way except as an involved written narrative. Furthermore the point of an appropriation is to invoke it with limited to no explanation, whereas the invasion theory necessitates explanation so that it can be used at all. Otherwise, Tort's pithy observation on Nordicism at the start of this thesis will hold true of the Dorians: the white nationalist will know little on either.

The failure of the Dorian Invasion to resonate with the American white nationalist base, on a surface level, proves that Greek appropriation is not foolproof. In other words, an ideologue cannot invoke an obscure relic of antiquity and expect that, as this remnant of antiquity, it will grab its audience. More important is that the failure of the Dorian example discredits invoking

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<sup>54</sup> The effectiveness of appropriations' visual imagery is not unlike advertising, the latter of which is mentioned in Jason Stanley, *How Propaganda Works* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 51. Though not his focus, he observes that advertising is a kind of propaganda that "exploits an aesthetic ideal." Aesthetic ideal is encapsulated by these examples: Spartan helmets, Athenian architecture, the Dorian Invasion. Some examples, however, conflate a chiefly aesthetic ideal with one that may be developed based on hate politics. All three examples can, but certainly not exclusively, visually symbolize brands of hate. The failure of the invasion theory to resonate and circulate indicates that its visual symbolism is unclear, irrelevant, or otherwise unwanted, impeding the spread of its Nordicist message. The emphasis on visual imagery and memorable language or catchphrases, though relevant here, are furthermore part of a larger set of criteria that many, though by no means all, successful appropriations share. Comprehensibly defining this set is beyond the scope of this thesis, but merits further research so long as the criteria is treated more loosely as guidelines wherein an appropriation may, but does not have to, have them to resonate with a mass audience.

involved ancient appropriation as a rhetorical move because it has not been shown to be persuasive. In the white nationalist movement, as with any political movement, where the success of political advocacy depends heavily on the rhetoric used, the invasion theory confuses, if not bores, more than it clarifies. While similar, Pierce, Sims, and Tort do not tell identical narratives and each have their own vision for what the white ethnostate should look like, all of which are in turn a split from that of Greg Johnson. The former three, to varying degrees, mask the political advocacy in an illustrative example that does not illuminate, but the example is needed to legitimize Nordicism, obscure even within their own movement. Perhaps ancient appropriations, aside from those most successful, are better saved until after the politics resonate with its base; the audience wants to be convinced, not tricked. The lack of positive feedback, evident in the invasion theory's failure to circulate in the movement, suggests that the examined ideologues, via intricate ancient appropriation, ultimately write at their base instead of to them. This author does not recommend that white nationalists need a better approach to propagate their ideas, but what they have done with the Dorian Invasion, and likely are doing with other involved Greco-Roman appropriations, is not working.

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