A Tall Ship: The Rise of the International Mercantile Marine

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Abstract
Between 1890 and the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, nations on both sides of the Atlantic attempted to gain prestige by building the world's greatest steamships for their merchant marines. In 1901, the United States entered this competition with the advent of J.P. Morgan's International Mercantile Marine, which built on the previous work of shipping magnate Clement Griscom. This project will explore why and how Morgan built his monopoly and the implications and repercussions this project had for both Atlantic shipping and U.S. foreign relations. Moving beyond Morgan the man, it also tells the story of the key figures in American politics and business that supported his venture.

To reconstruct this history, this dissertation draws on a wide variety of primary source materials. These include archival materials housed at the, University of Liverpool and the Ismay-Cheape Family Archives. It also draws from published sources, including period newspaper articles, advertising material from the IMM and its constituent lines, and political speeches and documents that supported American shipping.

Although many secondary sources exist on the history of trans-Atlantic liners, much of this literature has been written by enthusiastic amateur historians and antiquarians. This dissertation, by contrast, makes a more scholarly contribution to this field. Influenced by scholarship on the history of U.S. foreign relations and American and global capitalism, this dissertation analyzes the history of the trans-Atlantic ferry from new angles. In the process, it also makes a new contribution to studies of shipping and
international politics. While many scholars have examined the link of the race for battleships in the lead up to the First World War, professional historians have largely ignored the role of commercial super ships in this international rivalry. My project begins to correct this oversight.

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