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## **The Structure of Hume's Historical Thought before the History of England**

David Hume's historical thought was shaped before he had even begun to write the History of Great Britain in 1752. This paper shows how Hume developed his historical thought in an attempt to combine two modes of historical argument: the natural-jurisprudential conjectural history of the Treatise of Human Nature and the early eighteenth-century historical narratives of modern Europe that featured in his Essays. The Treatise's conjectural history used the developmental categories "rude" and "civilised" to explain the origins of justice, government, and the moral sentiment. The narratives of modern Europe, in contrast, revolved around the historical categories "ancient" and "modern". Hume's historical thought was shaped around the status of classical antiquity and its relation to modern Europe: were the ancients civilised and modern Europe a revival of classical antiquity? Or should classical antiquity be considered rude and modern Europe be considered as a progression from thence? The paper shows how Hume moved from the former to the latter between 1740 and 1752. That transition shaped key elements of Hume's political and economic thought, such as his understanding of "luxury" or "civilized monarchy". The paper concludes by suggesting that that combination of modes of historical argument defined Enlightenment philosophical history.