

# SRI LANKA IN GROTIUS' "DE JURE PRAEDAE" (1604) AND "MARE LIBERUM" (1608) \*\*

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## Introduction

Huig de Groot, better known in the Latinised version of his name Grotius, was born in the Dutch city of Delft on 10th April, 1583. In 1594, at the age of eleven, he entered the prestigious Dutch university of Leiden, and studied there till 1597. Grotius commenced his practice as a lawyer, in 1599, and a few years later, he was appointed *Advocaat Fiscaal* (or *Attorney General*) of Holland. He also functioned as 'Pensionary' of Rotterdam, and represented Rotterdam in 'States General' (the Representative Assembly or Parliament). In the late 1610s, Grotius became involved in a political and religious conflict, and was consequently sentenced to life imprisonment at the Loevestein Castle. After three years of imprisonment, he escaped to France in 1621, and lived there till 1631. During his exile in France, his monumental work '*De Jure Belli ac Pacis*' (Law of War and Peace, 1625), which is generally regarded as the first systematic treatise on modern international law, was published, and it earned him the title 'Father of Modern International Law.' In 1634, Sweden appointed him Ambassador to France, and he held that office for ten years. Grotius died in Rostock, Germany in 1645.<sup>1</sup> His writings, as a jurist, have made a significant contribution towards the development of modern international law, and he is

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(\*) Sri Lanka was known as Ceylon prior to 1972.