

Europe as a Cultural Area

World Anthropology

General Editor

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Europe as a Cultural Area

Editor

JEAN CUISENIER

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General Editor's Preface

If the continent of Europe is an area which particularly requires cooperation between historians and social scientists, then anthropologists are the obvious brokers. The present book states the conditions and provides the data for what will, hopefully, stimulate the rapid development of what the Editor calls "historical anthropology." This happy outcome appears to stem only from the scholarly tradition of Europe alone, since none of the authors in the book are Africans, Asians, or Latin Americans. In fact, however, it derives from the absorption, in our post-colonial world, of a worldwide comparative perspective. Indeed, the book is one of the products of a congress of scholars unusually representative of that new world.

Like most contemporary sciences, anthropology is a product of the European tradition. Some argue that it is a product of colonialism, with one small and self-interested part of the species dominating the study of the whole. If we are to understand the species, our science needs substantial input from scholars who represent a variety of the world's cultures. It was a deliberate purpose of the IXth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences to provide impetus in this direction. The *World Anthropology* volumes, therefore, offer a first glimpse of a human science in which members from all societies have played an active role. Each of the books is designed to be self-contained; each is an attempt to update its particular sector of scientific knowledge and is written by specialists from all parts of the world. Each volume should be read and reviewed individually as a separate volume on its own given subject. The set as a whole will indicate what changes are in store for anthropology as scholars from the developing countries join in studying the species of which we are all a part.

The IXth Congress was planned from the beginning not only to include as many of the scholars from every part of the world as possible, but also

with a view toward the eventual publication of the papers in high-quality volumes. At previous Congresses scholars were invited to bring papers which were then read out loud. They were necessarily limited in length; many were only summarized; there was little time for discussion; and the sparse discussion could only be in one language. The IXth Congress was an experiment aimed at changing this. Papers were written with the intention of exchanging them before the Congress, particularly in extensive pre-Congress sessions; they were not intended to be read aloud at the Congress, that time being devoted to discussions — discussions which were simultaneously and professionally translated into five languages. The method for eliciting the papers was structured to make as representative a sample as was allowable when scholarly creativity — hence self-selection — was critically important. Scholars were asked both to propose papers of their own and to suggest topics for sessions of the Congress which they might edit into volumes. All were then informed of the suggestions and encouraged to re-think their own papers and the topics. The process, therefore, was a continuous one of feedback and exchange and it has continued to be so even after the Congress. The some two thousand papers comprising *World Anthropology* certainly then offer a substantial sample of world anthropology. It has been said that anthropology is at a turning point; if this is so, these volumes will be the historical direction-markers.

As might have been foreseen in the first post-colonial generation, the large majority of the Congress papers (82 percent) are the work of scholars identified with the industrialized world which fathered our traditional discipline and the institution of the Congress itself: Eastern Europe (15 percent); Western Europe (16 percent); North America (47 percent); Japan, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand (4 percent). Only 18 percent of the papers are from developing areas: Africa (4 percent); Asia-Oceania (9 percent); Latin America (5 percent). Aside from the substantial representation from the U.S.S.R. and the nations of Eastern Europe, a significant difference between this corpus of written material and that of other Congresses is the addition of the large proportion of contributions from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. “Only 18 percent” is two to four times as great a proportion as that of other Congresses; moreover, 18 percent of 2,000 papers is 360 papers, 10 times the number of “Third World” papers presented at previous Congresses. In fact, these 360 papers are more than the total of *all* papers published after the last International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences which was held in the United States (Philadelphia, 1956).

The significance of the increase is not simply quantitative. The input of scholars from areas which have until recently been no more than subject matter for anthropology represents both feedback and also long-awaited theoretical contributions from the perspectives of very different cultural,

social, and historical traditions. Many who attended the IXth Congress were convinced that anthropology would not be the same in the future. The fact that the Xth Congress (India, 1978) was our first in the "Third World" may be symbolic of the change. Meanwhile, sober consideration of the present set of books will show how much, and just where and how, our discipline is being revolutionized.

Readers of the present volume will be especially interested in other books in the series treating problems of historical and cultural theory and the history of ideas, as well as those which provide comparative data on other continental areas.

Chicago, Illinois
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SOL TAX

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Introduction

JEAN CUISENIER

During the IXth ICAES more than two hundred and forty communications whose theme, subject matter or field of investigation was Europe were issued. Was this to be interpreted as a revival of anthropologists' interest in an area more easily accessible than Africa, Asia, or the Middle East, which are gradually closing their doors to foreign ethnographical research? Or a significant symposium gathering of specialists in the European aspect of fields as different as folklore, archaeology, history and museology, linguistics and ethnology, who found there the opportunity for an interdisciplinary approach? Or else a new interest shared by an increasing number of intellectuals as regards the destiny of that part of the world, the motherland of anthropology?

Whatever the case it is true that after being deserted for the benefit of other parts of the world, Europe is gradually becoming a preferred place for anthropological research. But we would be mediocre anthropologists if we were content with stating that fact without trying to interpret it. In fact the growing interest for Europe is not really new. It is only a revival. During the Enlightenment the inquisitiveness of naturalists, men of letters, engineers, physicists, doctors, and jurists was as acute as regards Europe as regards other parts of the world. As a matter of fact, in Diderot and d'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, the chapters devoted to *technique* were a compilation of the knowledge acquired mainly by European societies rather than by other civilizations. During the nineteenth century anthropological research as regards Europe was very active, and included the identification of monuments and ancient sites, archaeological excavations, investigations in dialectology, fauna and flora surveys, and compilation of customs, proverbs, common sayings, tales and legends. Nowadays we can see clearly how much all this was linked to the nationalist movement, and promoted by the desire to set up, region by region, the

principles of a cultural identity. We better understand now how it provided with arguments those who, politicians and patriots, were fighting in order that the relations between the state and civil society be organized on a national basis. But at the end of the First World War this period of intense activity gave way to one of withdrawal and a general decrease in research. There were many reasons for this, and not least among them the heavy losses of people, from which the university communities were not spared, for most of the members of the French school of sociology died on the battlefield. Yet, no matter how heavy the loss, it does not account for the fact that between the wars most of the anthropologists in England, France, Scandinavia, and Italy preferred an exotic field of research to a European one. The colonial tradition, which was then triumphant, bears a great responsibility for that choice, even if later on anthropological research was to question it. Indeed colonialism, the violence of which was the counterpart outside Europe of the violence within, revealed to the anthropologists a difference between civilizations more important than the one they experienced in their own European society. Social anthropology appeared at that time and had no link with dialectology, folklore, and history such as they were used in and about Europe. Social anthropology and the other disciplines diverged from one another, becoming more and more alien to one another, being linked and backed by more and more different institutions: on the one hand the *Völkerkunde*, museums of ethnography, and departments of ethnology in universities, on the other hand the *Volkskunde*, museums of folk arts together with departments of folklore, dialectology, and regional history in universities.

Yet along with decolonization things changed once more. Countries which were formerly colonies rejected anthropology as being linked to colonial institutions. Others, anxious to avoid that anthropological studies carried out by foreign scientists be used for intelligence purposes, imposed upon their work limits incompatible with the usual standards of such a work. Others agreed to the presence of foreign anthropologists, sometimes even requesting their assistance, provided that their work of investigation was carried out in collaboration with colleagues of the country and was included in a program of economic development. Being more and more numerous, European anthropologists have recognized the fact that the non-European countries they are studying evaluate the methods used and the results reached according to political criteria. They have come to realize that the governments which are to deliver the certificates of registration and cooperation contracts are little interested in the general progress of knowledge, and much more attentive to the contribution that anthropology can make to the building of their nationalist states. Now, at the same time, the economic, social, and cultural bases of Europe and its nations changed more deeply than at any other former period. A vast range of countries emerged and the

relations between the state authority and its ethnic components became less obvious and necessary. Consequently, the folklore, dialectology, and history studies which had justified the demand for frontiers but remained outside the general movement of social sciences acquired a new importance. Indeed, how can a European community or something alike be established without examining the supranationalism of its institutions, modifying the relations between the nation-states and giving a new definition of the relations between the central and regional authorities? How can we consider that situation without securing the elements for a detailed knowledge of regions, of their relations and the conflicts which oppose them, without analyzing the mechanisms at the root of their cultural identity and their basic principles? How can, what is called so rightly in the continental tradition, an “ethno-logy” be developed without the help of the hypotheses, instruments and techniques of the Anglo-Saxon social anthropology?

It is not then by mere chance that at the Congress such a large proportion of the contributions deals with Europe, and that those contributions belong to such different intellectual traditions. These differences provided the principle of the gathering of the contributions in this book. Since it was obviously impossible to publish all the texts, it was necessary to make a choice, and so three kinds of texts will be found in this volume, each being elaborated according to a specific intellectual tradition.

The first, written by William H. McNeill, deals with the main characteristics of European history. It was necessary to begin with a wide historical survey. It would be impossible to deal with European cultural differences as Kroeber did for North America — by favoring synchrony for lack of precise and abundant archaeological and historical data. The main point here is to take into account the length of the period. The anthropology of Europe, whether used by Japanese, Americans or Europeans, cannot be developed without a conceptual framework in accordance with the standards of European learning, or without the archivistic and archaeological documentation in accordance with the rules of the historical method. To what extent does McNeill’s essay reach that aim? What does he teach ethnologists and historians? On what theoretical bases does he bring together social history according to Marc Bloch and Fernand Braudel and social anthropology according to Franz Boas and E. E. Evans-Pritchard?

The second series of texts is the result of Branimir Bratanić’s work. In the first of his two contributions he sets forth the principles on which the European ethnographical atlas rests, and develops the obvious and specific problems which appear because of the unequal historical age of the cultures being treated. It is time now to examine the relevance of those ethnographical atlases which gather data belonging to the same ethnographical present-time. In fact they concern the old traditional folk

culture. But that culture is disappearing everywhere, either more quickly here or more slowly there, so that the problem is always to compare what may be still alive somewhere with what disappeared some or even hundreds of years ago elsewhere. The question is whether this is legitimate. Yes, Bratanić asserts, if it is true:

... not only that history is a chronological sequence of events, a process (what it surely is), but also that what has happened, originated and remained as a result or product of the historical process and continues to live, to change, to 'move' at its own pace as a concrete pattern of cultural life (Bratanić, this volume, p. 106).

Bratanić's second contribution traces some of the similarities existing in peasant cultures thousands of miles apart, positing possible topographical reasons for their existence.

The third series of texts represents a significant sample of studies in anthropology, with papers by Matilde Callari-Galli and Gualtiero Harrison, Joel M. and Barbara K. Halpern, Claude Karnoouh, Mübecce B. Kiray, Mihai Pop, Martine Segalen, and Paul-Henri Stahl. Each articulates in his own way the theoretical approach, the ethnographical description, and the historical inscription which are required for studies in European anthropology. Each develops his own method, which, whether right or wrong, I think will open later on to wider perspectives. For anthropology of the European field still remains on the whole a "task," whatever the intellectual tradition in which it is used. This volume will have achieved its aim if it could show that as regards European anthropology there is no need to sacrifice an intellectual tradition to another, but to study thoroughly each tradition by confronting one to another and building up what I would call a historical *anthropology*.

PART ONE

Time and Space

Patterns of European History

WILLIAM H. McNEILL

RÉSUMÉ: MODÈLES D'HISTOIRE EUROPEENNE

Notre concept de l' "Europe" est hérité des Grecs : divisée en une zone méditerranéenne et une zone atlantique et baltique, c'est la première qui, jusqu'en 1600, exerça une prééminence culturelle. Le pluralisme des sociétés et des cultures la mit sur la voie du modernisme. A partir des années 900, les centres économiques et culturels oscillèrent fréquemment, quand la Russie et l'Europe du Nord-Ouest, grâce à leurs voies navigables ainsi qu'aux progrès de la navigation maritime, participèrent au mouvement des marchandises et des hommes. L'Europe vit surgir soudain sur ses confins orientaux une puissance mongole, cependant que l'Espagne musulmane et Byzance déclinaient peu à peu et que l'Italie regroupait toutes les richesses, la puissance et les facultés créatrices du temps. Après une période d'apothéose, les empires ottoman, espagnol, et britannique entre autres manifestèrent leur suprématie par rapport à l'Italie, dont le rayonnement culturel s'exerça encore néanmoins pendant plus de 150 ans. Cependant, on peut considérer que 1500 constitue la charnière entre ce que l'on appelle traditionnellement le Moyen Age et les temps modernes.

Après cette date, de nouveaux modèles économiques et socio-culturels supplantèrent les anciens. L'invention de la poudre à canon bouleversa l'équilibre politique des puissances : les ottomans et espagnols reconquirent leur prééminence ; au nord-est, Ivan III et Basile III jetèrent les fondations d'un empire russe immense. En revanche, l'empire de Charles Quint, qui semblait former le noyau d'un territoire considérable, ne put résister à la concurrence des états voisins, militairement aussi bien équipés que lui-même, pour aboutir à une répartition des forces et à un état de guerre perpétuel entre les nations d'Europe occidentale, avec pour corollaire des divergences culturelles. Les contacts avec les Indes Occidentales et Orientales firent affluer biens, techniques et idées, entraînant un bouleversement des valeurs culturelles de tout le continent. Au terme d'une grave crise économique, au début du XVII^e siècle, les pays méditerranéens, surpeuplés et pauvres en combustible, disparurent de la scène européenne jusqu'à la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle, quand l'électricité leur permit de sortir de l'impasse. En contrepois à ce déclin, la Hollande, l'Angleterre et la France connurent un développement économique grâce à de nouvelles techniques agricoles, ainsi que

par la mise en exploitation des mines de charbon, entraînant de profondes mutations sociales. Simultanément, la Russie et les nations de l'Europe de l'Est virent leur agriculture se développer. Parallèlement, cette époque connut un développement universel, artistique et intellectuel, ère des lumières en cours de laquelle les idées religieuses devaient être reconsidérées. La Révolution Française, qui succéda à la Révolution Américaine et dont les effets s'étendirent dans toute l'Europe, peut être mise sur le même plan, par ses conséquences, avec la révolution industrielle, les deux phénomènes concourant à parachever la suprématie définitive de l'Europe sur le reste du monde. Entre 1750 et 1850, les nouvelles ressources en produits alimentaires et en combustible, autant que la nouvelle mobilité sociale, constituèrent les fondements de cette révolution industrielle à l'échelle mondiale, et jusqu'en 1870, l'effervescence économique renforça le bouillonnement politique, aboutissant à un remaniement des structures sociales. Puis le processus d'industrialisation européen, plus particulièrement anglais, gagna l'Amérique où il s'emplifia grâce à une forte immigration d'Européens.

Vers 1914, les Allemands qui avaient réalisé leur unification grâce à la guerre de 1870 s'attribuèrent la primauté dans le domaine industriel et dans celui de la recherche. La politique bismarckienne inquiétait l'Europe au point de susciter l'alliance de la France, de la Grande-Bretagne et de la Russie où deux élites rivales s'affrontaient pour s'emparer de la direction politique et économique du pays.

Au terme de la première guerre mondiale, les Etats-Unis étaient les protecteurs de la révolution nationaliste en Europe, trainant dans leur sillage la France et la Grande-Bretagne récalcitrantes, cependant que la Russie se plaçait à la tête de la lutte de classes.

Le XIX^e siècle constitua un âge d'or, où les arts et les sciences connurent un développement tel que l'Europe accéda à la domination du monde par les sciences, la technologie et sur le plan intellectuel. Cette époque vit se constituer deux super-puissances à l'est et à l'ouest : la Russie et l'Amérique.

La deuxième guerre mondiale entraîna des migrations et des remaniements économiques d'une ampleur telle, que les frontières — obstacles majeurs au XIX^e et au début du XX^e siècle — perdirent leur rôle, résultat paradoxal et inattendu de toute la politique hitlérienne. Les progrès technologiques en matière d'armement, puis l'utilisation de l'atome, fruit d'une collaboration internationale, conduisirent après la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale à modifier les rapports entre les inventions et le marché économique.

Le rôle prééminent de l'Europe se maintint dans le monde, en dépit de la perte de ses colonies d'Afrique et d'Asie, d'une part, et d'autre part de sa division en deux zones d'influence (l'Europe orientale fut soumise par la Russie à un régime semi-colonial pendant que l'occident était entraîné dans l'orbite américaine). Mais on peut se demander si l'avenir ne verra pas l'Europe reconquérir une indépendance effective fondée sur de nouvelles structures politiques transnationales, où Français, Anglais, Allemands et Italiens regroupés constitueraient une force nouvelle apte à jouer un rôle mondial.

The pages that follow were written for historians rather than for ethnologists and anthropologists and were aimed at an American rather than at a European audience. Experts with other backgrounds and concerns will probably find odd discrepancies and some glaring biases. The intellectual justification for this essay is that both the available models for understanding the history of Europe as a whole — the Marxian and the Lib-

eral — show serious signs of wear. Not everyone will agree with this assertion and an effort to improve upon nineteenth-century theories will only be welcome insofar as men recognize inadequacies in the older views. Defenders of the Liberal version of European history (which, in its pure form, declared that what mattered in the tangled record of the past was the growth of limited and representative government) would be hard to find today. Marxism, on the other hand, commands a considerable following, both in socialist countries, where the government officially supports Marxian doctrine, and in lands where no single political orthodoxy exists. Yet Marxism has come to mean many different things, so that some of the generalizations advanced in the pages that follow will seem familiar and acceptable enough to some Marxists, even if the notion of a plurality of cultural styles and civilizational centers is alien and unacceptable.

The organizing concepts behind my remarks on the shape of European history derive mainly from an almost casual undergraduate encounter with cultural anthropology as taught by Robert Redfield. The immediate occasion for writing this essay, however, was a clarification of my view of Europe's past that took shape as I worked on a history of Venetian relations with Orthodox and Ottoman Europe between the eleventh and the eighteenth centuries. Hence a modest kind of disciplinary cross-fertilization lies behind this work, though my acquaintance with anthropology and ethnology remains fragmentary and largely accidental. Whether such an essay will survive professional criticism from anthropologists and ethnologists specializing in European studies remains to be seen, and whether such a hasty overview of Europe's past is of any use to students of these subjects is even more problematical. But an international congress seems an ideal place to find answers to both questions.

EUROPE TO A.D. 900

Like so much else, our concept of "Europe" as contrasted with Asia and Africa descends from ancient Greece. Early Hellenic seamen located Asia on the eastern side of one of the most easily traveled seas of the earth — the Aegean — and located Africa to the south of an only slightly more difficult traverse between Crete and Egypt-Libya. Yet the terms stuck, largely because the cultural configurations of the time gave "Asia" and "Africa", thus defined, a palpable reality, capable of challenging Greek autonomy, as the invasion of Xerxes' armies, and Herodotus' awe at the attainments of the sophisticated Egyptians clearly showed. The effort to use the Urals and Caucasus as boundary lines came much later, though still within classical times, as a way of lending precision to what by

then had become a fixed habit of thought among Greeks and those influenced by them.

This evolution of geographical terms points to an important fact of human geography. Distant and culturally alien lands like "Asia" and "Africa" were named by Greek seamen because their ships took them there. Travel overland was far more difficult, and when it came to carrying goods, costly, since pack animals had to be fed, whereas a sailing ship, once put together, derived its movement from the boundless air. As a result, under the conditions of transport prevailing until the mid-nineteenth century, when railroads began to change things, water transport was so much superior to transport overland that large concentrations of men who did not produce their own food by their own muscular effort could only flourish close to navigable water. Cities that could not be reached by shipping remained small and comparatively unimportant. Waterways, therefore, remained until very recently the major determinants of where cities and civilizations arose.

Europe's configuration divides the continent into a southern or Mediterranean zone and a northern or Atlantic and Baltic zone, depending on which way navigable streams run. Despite several important military incursions from the north, until about 1600 the Mediterranean zone of Europe remained culturally dominant; since that date the Atlantic zone has surpassed the more ancient centers of the south in most respects. This is probably the most important watershed in European history, though four hundred years of Atlantic dominance is a small segment of time to set against the four thousand years during which the Mediterranean zone of Europe was culturally ahead of the north.

Mediterranean primacy rested partly on historical circumstance. The earliest European civilized societies were domiciled around the shores of the Aegean. Subsequent ages inherited skills and techniques which, elaborated over time, sustained comparatively vast concentrations of wealth and population at varying key locations within the Mediterranean zone, from the beginnings of Minoan civilization in Crete (circa 2100 B.C.) until the present. On this basis, a long series of civilizations arose and flourished within Europe's Mediterranean zone. No other part of the continent enjoyed such an inheritance, and to overtake and surpass the achievements of the men of the south was not easy, given the severer climate and initial technical handicaps under which northern peoples labored.

These technical differentials between north and south constituted a second basis for Mediterranean primacy. They were fundamentally twofold: agricultural in the first place, nautical in the second. The agricultural superiority of Mediterranean lands over northerly ones lasted only until A.D. 900 or thereabouts; hence this section breaks off at the time when one of the important bases of Mediterranean primacy disappeared. The

nautical superiority of the Mediterranean lasted longer, for it was only shortly before 1500 that improvements in ship design and navigation began to make travel on the stormy and tide-troubled Atlantic waters almost as safe as seafaring within the Mediterranean. As this was achieved, northern-built ships came to enjoy a clear superiority to less stoutly constructed Mediterranean vessels, and the second technical basis of Mediterranean cultural primacy dissolved. Within about a century, Atlantic Europe was in a position to overcome its age-old deficiencies *vis-à-vis* the south, and in due season, soon after 1600, for the first time took over cultural leadership of the continent as a whole.

Throughout pre-modern times, the steppes of the Ukraine, Rumania, and Hungary constituted a different kind of sea — a sea of grass — across which horse nomads traveled with an ease and speed rivaling that of seamen. Nomads ordinarily could not conveniently carry large, bulky goods; they often preferred rapine and raiding to more peaceful encounters, since their superior mobility gave them persistent advantages in military confrontations with settled, agricultural folk. On occasion, however, civilized defenses made raiding costly, inducing nomads to fall back on more peaceful trading. Their abundant animals made it comparatively easy for them to organize pack trains capable of carrying goods of high value in proportion to their bulk for very long distances.

The nomads of the steppes checked agricultural exploitation of the fertile Ukrainian grasslands for many centuries. Not until after 1600, when handguns transformed the age-old military balance between agricultural and nomad communities, did the steppes of southeastern Europe really open up for pioneer settlement, although in earlier ages there had been several periods during which relatively peaceful conditions permitted cultivators to extend their fields into the grasslands on a significant, though never on a decisive, scale. Such advances of agriculture were subsequently rolled back when new and more ruthless raiders arrived from the east, ravaging farmsteads, slaughtering or enslaving whomever they could catch, and driving survivors to take refuge in the forests of the north or in the Carpathian and other mountain zones lying south and west.

The soil and climate of the forested zone of eastern Europe made agriculture a less rewarding occupation than it was in more westerly parts of the continent, where in most years a longer growing season and richer soils allowed a better return on seed than was to be expected in the northeast. The marginal character of cereal cultivation in Sweden, Poland, and Russia,¹ combined with the exposure of the more fertile parts

¹ Seed to harvest ratios of 1:2 and 1:3 were more or less normal; in a bad year total loss, or a harvest only a little larger than the seed that had been planted, was to be expected. By contrast, seed to harvest ratios of 1:10 were possible and 1:4 or 1:5 were common in western Europe. See the very instructive data gathered in Slicher van Bath (1963).

of the two latter lands to nomad raiding from the steppes, meant that only small populations, dependent in part on hunting and gathering from the forests, could survive in most of these regions, at least as long as the steppe nomads remained a threat.

Yet the vast reaches of Russian rivers, easily navigable for hundreds or even thousands of miles, made it possible to gather trade goods — furs, wax, honey, slaves, amber — across comparatively long distances. Beginning in the tenth century, the same arterial system allowed state building on a territorially vast scale despite the sparse and impoverished condition of the population. Rivers, in short, did for northeastern Europe what seas did for the south — provided a means of easy transport across long distances. Northwestern Europe had the best of both worlds, enjoying access to a fine natural network of navigable waterways debouching into a number of narrow and at least relatively protected seas: the Baltic, the North Sea, and the English Channel. Yet this advantage remained only potential until techniques of ship-building and navigation reduced movement by sea to routine regularity. In a similar fashion, the full potential of the Russian river system could not develop without free movement across the sea of grass lying to the south. The struggle of Russian agriculturalists and rivermen to stave off or overcome the horsemen of the steppes was analogous to the problem northwestern Europeans faced in trying to tame the tides and storms of the Atlantic waters. The one called for military, and the other for naval, organization and technique; the one confronted a human opponent, the other struggled against natural forces. Both aimed at breaking through a persistent barrier to movement of men and goods; and neither succeeded in more than sporadic and temporary fashion until after A.D. 900.

The Mediterranean zone lacked large navigable rivers, with the conspicuous exception of the Nile, the Po, and the rivers debouching into the Black Sea. As long as their horses sustained their military dominance, the nomads of the steppes deprived the Black Sea rivers of most of their potential significance. But the Nile from deep antiquity and the Po from A.D. 900 provided a basis for local and markedly individualized styles of civilization that stand somewhat apart from the cultural history of the rest of the Mediterranean. That history turned on movement across open water, whether the Mediterranean proper or its connecting seas — the Black, the Aegean, and the Adriatic. Navigation in these waters required far less skill than was needed amid the storms and tides of the Atlantic and its connecting seas. Yet the storms which do afflict the Mediterranean during winter months were more than ships and mariners of Greek and Roman times cared to confront, and with good reason, as the Bible story of Saint Paul's shipwreck may remind us. Indeed, in ancient times, it was customary to haul ships ashore in winter and to sail only during the season of the year when the trades, blowing steadily from the northeast under

constantly clear skies, made navigation easy. Since grain harvest fell in May or in June, and good sailing weather lasted until about October, this allowed enough time to carry grain supplies to whatever capital city or cities dominated Mediterranean shores. This essential attended to, movements of other goods and of men could and did accommodate the seasonal pattern of Mediterranean shipping without much difficulty.

Capacity to concentrate enough food to support scores of thousands of city folk who did not raise their own food was an important prerequisite for developing the kind of culture in the Mediterranean zone that was capable of commanding admiration and inspiring imitation elsewhere in Europe. This required not only ships and sailors, but a hinterland whose inhabitants were either compelled or induced to produce and part with a surplus of grain and other commodities. This sleight of hand, prerequisite for all pre-modern civilizations, was achieved sometimes by force, sometimes by offering goods produced in civilized workshops in exchange. In most situations both elements were present; and both trade and compulsion often achieved a customary definition that softened and disguised the collision of interests involved in such exchanges.

Characteristically, rents and taxes were collected by force or threat of force. Local magnates usually collected small surpluses locally, playing the role of landlord, and then exchanged part of what they had thus accumulated for luxury goods brought from afar. Such civilized luxuries were offered for sale by seafaring merchants whose numerical weakness *vis-à-vis* local populations made forcible seizure of desired local commodities — grain, metals, lumber — impracticable. This sort of symbiosis between a local landlord class and civilized merchants and traders allowed relatively smooth concentration of food and other raw materials at the center. Local landlords, glimpsing the refinements and luxuries of civilized life, became barbarians *par excellence*: they were aware of what was possible, and aware also of their own inability to rival locally the products and skills of full-blown urban civilization.

In ancient times the Mediterranean urban centers had more than fine cloth and trinkets with which to charm the barbarians of the European hinterland. Olive oil and wine served as civilized staple exports. These were commodities requiring some capital, for a first crop could only be produced after several years of waiting for the trees and vines to begin to bear fruit. In addition, olive trees will not survive severe or prolonged frost. This set sharp limits on their habitat even within Mediterranean lands. Some skill and fairly elaborate machinery are also needed to produce wine and oil from the fruit as it comes from the vines and trees. Yet once the uses of wine and of oil became familiar, landlords and chieftains of the backwoods areas of the ancient Mediterranean, wherever they lived, were willing, indeed eager, to exchange grain and other products of their fields and forests for wine and oil.

Terms of this trade favored the civilized center. The produce of an acre of land in vines or olive trees could usually be exchanged for a quantity of grain that required far more ground. This made it practicable to concentrate relatively large amounts of food and raw materials in places where wine and oil were available for export. In effect, the pattern of trade enlisted the active cooperation of thousands of distant landlords in the delicate and difficult task of squeezing unrequited goods and services from the peasantry. Only after local magnates had collected a quantity of goods in demand at the civilized center could they hope to exchange such goods for the wine and oil they had come to prize so highly.

In the earlier stages of Mediterranean civilized history this pattern of exchange was of central importance. Crete appears to have been the first great center of both wine and oil export; the wealth of Minoan palaces probably depended upon exchange of these two commodities for metals, grain, and whatever else the lords of Knossos required or took delight in bringing to their courts. Similar exchanges may also have helped sustain the might of Mycenae, although there can be no doubt that direct resort to force — the plundering of distant coasts and sacking of cities as celebrated by Homer — played a much larger role in Mycenaean economics than had been the case in Minoan times.

We are much better informed about classical Greece, where first Ionia and then Attica rose to prosperity and mercantile preeminence with the help of massive oil and wine exports. To be sure, Athens in its most glorious days supplemented income from trade with tribute monies collected from subject cities all round the Aegean; but many if not most of these tribute-paying communities in turn derived the means wherewith to pay the assessed tribute by exporting wine and oil.

In the fifth century B.C. market production of wine and oil was still quite new, and was restricted to the Aegean area for the most part. Yet Greek vessels made these products available throughout the Mediterranean coastlands. Response among Scyths, Thracians, Macedonians, Illyrians, Italians, and other barbarians was tremendous. In later times terms of trade within the Mediterranean regions never favored oil and wine producers so strongly. It was never afterwards possible to concentrate such a preponderance as Athens enjoyed from 479 to 431 B.C. without resort to taxes, rents, and tributes on a far larger scale than anything of which Pericles or even Cleon conceived.

The special quality of Athenian culture in its golden age, when custom lost its hold and everything had to be examined and considered afresh, was deeply tintured by this unique geo-economic balance between an oil-wine export metropolis and a hinterland eager to accept all that the Athenians and their fellow Greeks cared to spare from their own consumption of these commodities. In particular the equal participation of

citizen farmers in the affairs of the Athenian polis was sustained by the active role these same farmers had in the production and marketing of the wine and oil whose export, more than anything else, sustained the entire Athenian economy. City folk could not afford to scorn and deride those whose land and labor provided such a vital link in the city's prosperity; still less could they neglect the armed and organized might of these same stalwart farmers, concentrated in the city's phalanx. In this fashion a firm bond between urban and rural segments of the Athenian citizenry could be maintained. The agricultural producers of Attica, instead of sinking to the level of an excluded and oppressed peasantry (as seemed to be happening before Peisistratus, who ruled from 554 to 527 B.C., organized production of wine and oil for export), instead came to embody the very essence of the civilized ideal. The Athenian farmers were free men, each the master of himself and his land, head of his family and household, and an autonomous participant in public affairs, with the right to vote on all important matters of policy.

Lest we idealize Greek democracy unduly, it is worth reminding ourselves that foreigners and slaves resident in Attica did not participate in public life, and by the time Athens' power crested in the latter part of the fifth century B.C., slaves and foreigners had become almost as numerous as citizens. Moreover, the freedom and civil equality that prevailed among the Athenian citizenry depended upon the labors of distant cultivators who raised the grain the Athenians consumed. Like excluded peasantries the world around, these distant populations did not share directly or indirectly in the high culture generated by the city their labors helped to sustain.

Collective exploitation of distant communities is not necessarily less oppressive than similar exploitation by individual landlords or industrial entrepreneurs. Indeed it is arguable that when the exploiting collective is large enough its members may be insulated from any lively fellow-feeling with their victims by the sustaining force of their own in-group norms and standards; whereas a landlord, living in semi-isolation from his peers and close beside those whom he exploits, may lack the practical means and psychological insulation required to carry exploitation to its greatest practicable extent.

Yet viewed from within the exploitative community, the phenomenon was entirely different. Instead of being surrounded by "inferiors," members of the privileged community were surrounded by "equals." Possibilities of open-ended and open-minded encounter within such a community were enormously enhanced. In the city's golden age the citizens of Athens lived modestly, but all had enough to eat without working very hard. Vineyards and olive groves of the modest size ordinary Athenians possessed required some sixty to eighty days' work per annum; the rest of the time men could devote safely enough to noneconomic concerns.

Indeed, the real measure of the city's wealth was the leisure its citizens enjoyed without starving.

A leisured mass of citizens several thousand strong constituted the best possible audience for anyone who had something special to say, whether about practical or theoretical questions. As a result, literary, intellectual, and artistic creativity have never been so intensely concentrated before or since; and the subsequent influence of classical Greek culture upon European (and Islamic) civilizations enhances the significance of what was then achieved.

Being first to elaborate a literary and learned tradition that has lasted uninterruptedly to the present mattered a great deal. Assumptions and biases that have been taken for granted ever since among European men of letters could establish themselves easily merely because there were no competing notions about to dispute the ground. An example: no logical necessity supports the assumption that the most important human association beyond the nuclear family is the territorial state. Yet this notion pervaded Greek and subsequent European life all the more forcefully because it was so often taken for granted. Even more remarkable is the implausibly bold speculation that just as human affairs could be regulated by law, agreed to and recognized in public assembly of the citizens, so also the behavior of natural objects and forces might conform to laws, if only men were clever and observant enough to discover what they were. European natural science, whose importance in recent centuries has been enormous, would be inconceivable without this assumption. Yet there is remarkably little in the behavior of earth, wind, and water, as observable to ordinary men engaged in ordinary occupations, to justify such a wild assumption.

Even the movements of the heavenly bodies, when considered closely, offered stubborn resistances to being reduced to definite "laws," although persistence in what an outsider would surely have regarded as a vain pursuit did pay off after centuries of effort in the form of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and a mechanical model of the universe that accounted for almost everything — except for such conspicuous motions as those of comets and shooting stars!

Being first enhanced Athens' historical significance enormously. Moreover I find it impossible to deny that the Athenian model of high culture had a kind of intrinsic excellence that sets it apart from all other great civilizations. Such a judgment smacks of ethnocentrism. And it is true that the early Pharaohs, for instance, built their pyramids and other monuments with a perfection unequaled later. Yet the range of the Pharaonic culture and its capacity for later growth was far less than that which inhered in Greek civilization. Other early classic formulations of great cultures — Confucian, Buddhist, Judaic, Islamic — that have endured to the present seem somehow narrower, perhaps because what

has survived to our times from these ancient fonts of inspiration has been encapsulated into organized religions. In the process discordancies were largely edited out. No single hand ever edited the diverse literature of ancient Greece, though the taste of generations and accidents of copy-making and survival have certainly left deep marks on our classical inheritance and may, for instance, exaggerate the primacy of Athens by combing out texts that originated elsewhere.

Yet when all appropriate reservations have been made, there remains a special awe and reverence for what the Athenians and a few other Greeks accomplished. Who can compare with Herodotus and Thucydides among early writers of history? Or who can match Plato and Aristotle among philosophers? What literature excels Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides? And classical Greek art, with its idealized naturalism and technical mastery, can surely bear comparison with any other art tradition of the earth, though the unique value nineteenth-century art critics once assigned to it is perhaps unacceptable in an age when contemporary artists have so emphatically repudiated the entire classical inheritance.

In such matters there is great danger of naïveté. One praises the familiar and may be tempted to reject strange ideas and disregard alien traditions of art simply because they arouse no echoes from prior personal experience. It may therefore be a confession of my own culture-boundedness to say that the classical Greek style of civilization seems to excel all its contemporaries. Yet there is this tangible basis for such an assertion: men in Macedon, Asia Minor, Scythia and central Europe, Italy, Carthage, Syria, Parthia, Egypt, and even Judea, all found Greek accomplishments impressive. They proved this by borrowing aspects of Greek civilization when Alexander's conquests (334–322 B.C.) and subsequent churnings of peoples and armies throughout Mediterranean and Near Eastern lands brought the achievements of classical Greece — warlike as well as peaceful — vividly to their attention. Elements of Greek art and thought seeped even into distant India and China, modified and transformed in the process of transmission all the way from one side of Asia to the other, yet recognizably continuous throughout. For more than half a millennium everybody who could borrowed from the Greeks. Some, like the Romans, took so much that their own traditions were almost overwhelmed. But borrowing ran both ways. Thus the spread of mystery religions of salvation among Hellenized populations of the Mediterranean brought what had begun as a Middle Eastern religious tradition into the heart of the Greek world. But prior to about A.D. 100 such movements made only slight inroads among the upper classes of the Mediterranean world. They found almost everything they wanted in refined and variously watered-down versions of classical Greek culture.

Throughout the fifth century B.C., the Aegean metropolitan center of classical Greek civilization remained sharply defined. It embraced some

fifty to sixty city-states located on both sides of the Aegean, where vines and olives abounded. Greek craft skills — shipbuilding, weapons manufacture, pottery production, mining, monumental stone construction, and the like — did not differ much from professionalized levels of skill long familiar on the Syrian coast and in Asia Minor. On the other hand, the polis or city-state was distinctively Greek. In order to flourish, a polis had to command the services of a richly leisured citizenry. Otherwise the long hours spent in public business — training for the phalanx, campaigning, deliberating, administering justice, conducting diplomacy, not to mention participating in festivals and discussing matters of common concern in private gatherings of every kind — could not have been spared from the tasks of finding food enough to eat. Mass leisure was secured through the favorable terms of trade wine and oil exporters enjoyed.

No less vital to the success of the Greek city-states were sentiments of solidarity binding all citizens together. Such feelings were built up in all young men by prolonged drill exercises, preparatory to and climaxing in the experience of battle, when each man's life depended on his neighbor's readiness to keep his place in the ranks of the phalanx. The concept of law, above and beyond any merely human will or preference, applicable to everyone and accepted knowingly by all citizens, gave intellectual form and definition to such sentiments and sustained remarkably effective cooperation among the entire body of citizens.

All these elements had to be present for classical civilization to flourish. Regions where the agricultural-commercial-industrial complex failed to take root because of climatic or other obstacles remained incapable of constructing strong and effective city-states, lacking a sufficiently leisured citizenry. Thus Thessaly and Arcadia, although inhabited by Greeks who were continuously in touch with the centers of classical civilization, nonetheless remained rural, marginal, and unimportant, because in these landlocked areas the requisite number of leisured citizens could not be found. Sparta was a special case. Spartan citizens won the requisite leisure for constructing a formidable city-state by enslaving the entire population of neighboring Messenia. The Athenian pattern of trade required grain-growing landlords to exploit local peasantries living in the coastlands of the Black Sea and in Sicily and southern Italy; the Spartans exported only threats to Messenia whence came the grain and other food supplies that the Spartan citizens needed so that they could devote all their adult years to military training and campaigning. But the immediacy of the threat of revolt in Messenia required the Spartans to concentrate their leisure narrowly on military preparedness; the cushion — both geographical and sociological — between the Athenians and the excluded oppressed peasantry who fed them allowed scope for a far wider range of leisured activity. Though their means of support differed in detail, the upshot was similar. In both Sparta and Athens a sufficient body of leisured citizenry

with intensely shared common sentiments provided the human material from which emerged the fine flower of classical Greek civilization.

In subsequent centuries the enormous geographical spread of aspects of Greek classical civilization involved radical transformation of the socioeconomic structures that sustained its initial flowering. Leisure remained critical always: men who had to work every day just to find enough to eat were never sharers in classical civilization. But the basis of leisure shifted from the sort of collective exploitation of others that had raised Athens and Sparta to greatness. Instead, a more dispersed pattern of exploitation took over. Local landlords and tax collectors with their hangers-on gathered into small towns and cities and there set up plausible simulacra of the city-states of classical Greece — with one important difference: military power and political sovereignty were, from the age of Alexander of Macedon, snatched away from mere city-states and transferred to new-sprung military monarchies, of which the last and greatest became the empire of Rome.

This vast political upheaval was matched by a dispersal of economic activity as well. The great advantages of wine and oil production meant that vineyards and olive groves tended to spread to new ground, wherever soil and climate allowed. As new sources of wine and oil came into production the older centers sometimes lost markets, and it is likely (though data are lacking, to be sure) that the relative price of oil and wine as against grain declined over the centuries from what it had been in Athens' glorious days. The small farmers in the original Aegean heartland lost out in the course of the fourth and third centuries to rival producers located mainly in Italy and Asia Minor. Italian producers, in turn, confronted disastrous market conditions in the first century A.D., when Spanish and North African oil and wines usurped western Mediterranean markets, and vines were successfully acclimated through most of Gaul all the way to the Rhine. Accordingly, from the time of Domitian (reigned A.D. 81–96), Italy lost export markets that had been vital to the prosperity of the slave-staffed latifundia that had sprung up in the southern part of the peninsula after the Second Punic War (218–202 B.C.).

Wherever wine and oil for export commanded a substantial market a region of relatively high prosperity was always to be found. As such regions multiplied and dispersed toward the geographical limits of the Mediterranean world, various provinces of the Roman Empire achieved a level of wealth that permitted a far-reaching reception of Greco-Roman culture, at least among the leisured, landowning class that dominated Roman provincial society almost everywhere. But no single metropolitan center could arise and sustain itself on a commercial basis once the original Aegean heartland had lost its initial near-monopoly of such exports. Instead wealth and food supplies were concentrated at political headquarters — Pella, Pergamum, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome — by a

combination of predation and taxation (the difference between the two was not always very obvious to any of the parties concerned). The great city of Alexandria by Egypt, for example, where Hellenistic high culture had a particularly full development, lived largely on tribute paid by the Egyptian natives, from whom Ptolemy's agents extracted everything not required for mere survival. Industry and trade soon brought additional wealth to supplement this hard core of tax income, so that even after the Romans intervened and siphoned off for their own uses the major part of Egypt's tax yield (30 B.C.), Alexandria remained an important city and, as a matter of fact, developed a new commercial hinterland of some importance in distant India.

In the western Mediterranean, however, commercial-industrial development never got very far in ancient times. As the Romans extended their power throughout the Mediterranean the city of Rome became a vast parasite. By the second century B.C., almost all of Rome's inhabitants lived directly or indirectly on plunder and taxes. After the time of Augustus, however, the Roman armies were stationed permanently along the frontiers of the empire. Among other things this meant that a major disbursement of tax income was shifted away from the city of Rome to the garrisoned provinces. This powerfully reinforced the tendency for economic prosperity to disperse toward the fringes of the Mediterranean world as a result of the simultaneous diffusion of grape and olive cultivation.

The result, therefore, was that the peculiar circumstances that had provoked and sustained the brilliant cultural innovations of the fifth century never recurred. The bearers of the Greek and Roman cultural tradition became a privileged class dispersed widely throughout the Mediterranean lands, dependent in large measure on rents and taxes for their income, and surrounded by comparatively vast numbers of social inferiors, with whom they shared relatively little in the way of common sentiments, ideas, or way of life. Such a milieu was not conducive to bold and restless innovation of any kind. Moreover, the easy availability of superbly attractive models of art, literature, thought, not to mention the delights of elegant eating, drinking, and sex, as worked out by Greeks of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., inhibited innovation still further.

There were changes, of course, and for a generation or two when Rome was rising to political preeminence, a handful of Roman writers and sculptors reacted to the collapse of customary Roman ways by using Greek patterns of thought and art to express deeply felt and profoundly serious concerns. Vergil, Cicero, Lucretius, and the artists who carved the Ara Pacis belong in this select company. They created, with others of lesser rank, a truncated version of the Athenian golden age all over again. But the Roman efflorescence did not last very long and died away without attaining richness and variety to equal the Athenian inheritance. Roman