

de peuplement coïncidait avec celle de l'originale civilisation néolithique iakoute. Comme le prouvent des données relativement récentes, les Ioukaghirs peuplaient jadis le territoire entre la Léna à l'ouest, l'Aldan au sud, l'Anadyr à l'est et l'océan Arctique au nord ; au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle encore ils étaient incomparablement plus nombreux qu'aux XVIII<sup>e</sup>-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles. Il est fort probable que, dans un passé beaucoup plus reculé, les Ioukaghirs avaient occupé une portion bien plus vaste encore du nord de l'Asie, y compris les territoires en amont de Iakoutsk sur la Léna.

Le fait que des pièces très proches du néolithique de Iakoutie se rencontrent non seulement dans la presqu'île des Tchouktches, mais aussi dans le Grand Nord américain et au Groenland, aide à résoudre le problème de l'origine des Esquimaux. Il faut croire qu'ils comptent parmi leurs ancêtres certains Paléoasiatiques de la civilisation continentale du Nord-Est, qui oublièrent peu à peu leur idiome natal et furent assimilés par les Esquimaux proprement dits.

Quand on confronte les nombreuses trouvailles néolithiques du bassin de l'Amour avec les témoignages de la civilisation des riverains de ce fleuve du XVIII<sup>e</sup> et du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (les Ghiliaks, les Oultchis et, en partie, les Goldes), on constate aussi l'identité de beaucoup de traits essentiels et, notamment, de l'industrie, des habitations (pêche en tant qu'occupation principale, cabanes demi-souterraines) et de l'art.

Autre fait important qui ressort de la comparaison des styles d'ornements paléobaïkaliens néolithiques, nivkhs (Ghiliaks) et nanai (Goldes) actuels : ils se ressemblent non seulement du point de vue de leur allure générale (emploi des bandes courbes) mais même dans les détails : méandres, spirales, impressions de nattes. D'autre part il est plus que probable que les Néolithiques sakhaliniens étaient des Paléoesquimaux ou leurs parents très proches.

Telles sont les conclusions générales qu'impose la confrontation des groupements culturels et ethniques contemporains et néolithiques de la Sibérie et de la partie extrême-orientale de l'U.R.S.S. C'est de ces Paléosibériens et Paléoeextrême-orientaux que descendent les habitants contemporains des forêts de la Sibérie et de l'Extrême-Orient soviétique, notamment les Ougriens de l'Obi, les Toungouzes, les Ioukaghirs et ces Paléoasiatiques de l'Amour que sont les Nivkhs et les Oultchis.

Restent en dehors de notre étude les Turcs et les Mongols. Mais leur histoire a incontestablement débuté en Mongolie steppique et dans les régions centre-asiatiques attenantes, ce qui les situe hors du cadre de cet aperçu.

## MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION FROM THE WORLD-HISTORICAL VIEW

### I

THE *Journal of World History* has provided the forum for a challenging debate on the new concept of world history, as it emerges from the continuously broadening view of interactions between historical civilizations, implicit in specialized studies over the past twenty or thirty years. The new concept of universal history is as yet far from complete. We have been given intriguing glimpses of a huge mural, as it were, in which much of the detail must still be filled in. But already these new vistas are compelling enough to make many of our standard ideas seem hopelessly obsolete in their regional limitations. Even in elementary history teaching the suggestion is hard to reject that the student should from the beginning be introduced to a sense of world-historical contexts in keeping with these trends in modern research<sup>1</sup>. And a few recent textbooks are representative of a similar awareness—if little more—on the undergraduate level of American college teaching today<sup>2</sup>.

Yet for all its inevitably tentative nature the debate may have done more than provide a mere sketch of emerging world-historical perspectives : It may have given us at least an inkling of the vast possibilities by which the "world-historical approach" may one day come to *revolutionize our concepts of individual historical civilizations or "periods"*. — Briefly put one might argue as follows : If we assume that "world history (is not) merely the sum of separate histories of the nations or regions of the world", but to a significant degree also an entity, a historical force in its own right, i.e. the "history of interregional develop-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. B. STEINITZ' "Proposal for an International History Reader", *Journal of World History*, Vol. II, No. 4 (1955), pp. 995-7.

<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., T. W. WALLBANK and A. M. TAYLOR, *Civilization Past and Present*, Chicago, 1960.

ments among the literate urban civilizations"<sup>3</sup>, the idea is difficult to reject that "world history", thus understood, must in turn have decisively affected the shape and development of individual historical civilizations. To put it differently, our increasing awareness of world historical contexts should help us towards a fuller, more rounded, more vibrant and colorful understanding of individual civilizations in history. It should enable us to grasp the uniqueness of a given civilization not only on its own terms but also in terms of its peculiar position with regard to the rest of the world, or—more broadly speaking—to the context of world history as a whole.

To present this as an altogether brand-new idea would be presumptuous. In a sense all distinguished historical writing has forever been characterized by the historian's awareness of the larger contexts in which the subject of his specialized studies evolved—though it was perhaps more a matter of intuitive awareness than the deliberate use of world-historical criteria.<sup>4</sup> Besides, especially in the field of ancient history there seems to be a growing tendency among modern scholars to relate the origins of western civilization to their proper context with the ancient East (and in this sense to broader world-historical contexts)—from which they would indeed seem inseparable. And in fact, how should we be able to form a realistic idea of the birth of civilization in Egypt and Mesopotamia without a view of the most ancient Near East as a whole and its interactions with the Indus valley civilization, or its position with regard to the late prehistorical developments across Europe and Asia that preceded it? Or of the rise of Greek civilization, without an understanding of the Aegean culture and its place in the history of the ancient Near East? Or of the sources of Etruscan civilization, without an overall view of the late Aegean, post-Hittite world, in which they appear to have originated? Or of the background of intensive East-West exchange, without which the phenomenon of the "Hellenistic civilization" remains a pale abstraction without actual depth or significance<sup>5</sup>?

Yet although such tendencies are no doubt indicative of an important

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Marshal HODGSON in his searching article, "Hemispheric Interregional History as an Approach to World History", *Journal of World History*, Vol. I, No. 3 (1954), pp. 715-723.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, one of the attributes distinguishing G. M. TREVELYAN's *History of England* as a work in the great tradition of historical writing might be found precisely in his ability to evoke flashes of Roman or general European history and to correlate these with the corresponding English developments.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., e.g., Henri FRANKFORT, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East*, New York, 1956 (esp. chapters two and three); V. Gordon CHILDE, *New Light on the Most Ancient East*, New York (no publication date given), (esp. chapters two, nine, ten and twelve); M. P. NILSSON, *Homer and Mycenae*, London, 1933 (and other works by the same author); M. PALLOTTINO, *The Etruscans*, Harmondsworth, 1955 (esp. chapter two); and W. W. TARN, *Hellenistic Civilization*, London, 1952; and *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, Cambridge, 1951.

trend in modern scholarship, one may wonder whether the potentialities of the world-historical perspective have as yet been accepted in their full scope and in every field of specialized research. The barriers are obvious: they stem in part from the very incompleteness and tentativeness of the world-historical concept, of which this debate has provided frank evidence. In part they may be barriers inherent in the fundamental "working psychology" of the specialized historian with his wholesome—and by and large inevitable—predilection for the tested methods and established limitations of his subject, as against anything that might smack of speculation or arbitrary generalization<sup>6</sup>. Nonetheless, the pressures for using a wider focus and a conceivably decisive readjustment of approach along broader world-historical lines appear to be mounting inside almost every field of western history, precisely because the progress of specialized scholarship is pointing in this direction<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> The writer might be permitted to confess that in his regular research work, concerned with later-medieval and 15th-century problems, he tends to share these preferences and aversions.

<sup>7</sup> Thus, to name only one example, such seemingly established concepts as "Humanism" and "Renaissance" have recently become the objects of heated controversy, because the impressive accumulation of evidence concerning "forerunners" of these movements tends to cast serious doubts upon their uniqueness as phenomena of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. This has not only occasioned a stimulating debate, aiming at redefining the meaning of these concepts in the light of such evidence (cf. Ernst CASSIRER and others, in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, IV, 1943, pp. 1-74; Paul Oskar KRISTELLER, "Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance", *Byzantion*, XVII, 1944-45, pp. 346-374), but has even prompted some Medievalists to go so far as to throw out the concept of "Renaissance" altogether (cf., e.g., Lynn THORNDYKE, *The History of Medieval Europe*, 3rd ed., Boston, 1949, pp. 682-3 and passim. — Actually, Prof. Thorndyke's magnificent analysis of the Middle Ages assumes throughout that the 15th century was part of the Medieval world.). — On the other hand, it might be argued that this entire controversy, for all its occasional fruitfulness, may become mired in purely semantic argument, with one group of scholars applying the term "Renaissance" to practicably the entire Medieval period, confronted by another group which substitutes the term "Middle Ages" for the Renaissance, both groups acting on the strength of essentially the same body of evidence. Indeed, there may be no conceivable end to this controversy, as long as we persist in defining the uniqueness of "Humanism" and "Renaissance" solely in terms of historical precedent, viewing these movements in an exclusive Western European context. While this becomes increasingly difficult as our knowledge of similar tendencies during the Middle Ages grows, we might find more satisfactory answers when we look to the overall context of world history. There, the increasing "world- openness" and "internationalization" of Western Europe around the 15th century appears clearly substantiated by a no less impressive body of evidence, also resulting from specialized scholarship during recent years, in such fields as trade and banking, travel and discoveries, geographic lore and solid geographic theory, accompanied by the collecting of manuscripts (Graeco-Roman as well as "Oriental") and the revival of ancient scientific authors. Looking at the "Renaissance" in this broader international context, Jacob Burckhardt's concept of the "discovery of the world and of man" seems to make as much sense on the basis of recent specialized studies as it did, more or less intuitively, one hundred years ago. (Cf. also the writer's forthcoming study *Florentine Humanism and the Vision of the New World*, where much of this evidence will be summarized).

## II

It is from similar reflections that one might approach a specific civilization such as the European Middle Ages with the question, what new aspects and perspectives the "world-historical view" might in fact reveal. One should of course keep in mind that any such inquiry at this point is bound to be *tentative* in the highest degree: because our actual knowledge of Medieval Europe's relations with the contemporary outside civilizations—such as Islam—is as yet scanty; and tentative also, because a certain arbitrariness of judgment, an element of subjectivity may be unavoidable, where the interpretation of relations between widely distant cultures is involved. In short, all that could be attempted at this stage is a tentative sketch of Medieval civilization, as it appears from the overall perspective of world history.

To describe Medieval civilization in terms of its relations with the outside world or its position with regard to world history as a whole is a task which confronts us with certain immediate problems: while Medieval Europe's relations with the contemporary outside world seem to have been comparatively weak, especially during the early centuries, the Middle Ages could hardly be described as an age of isolation. If that were the case, it would be difficult to account for the great cultural achievements which we associate with the height of Medieval civilization; nor could we explain the phenomenon that Medieval institutions, thought and art underwent a profound transformation in the course of the centuries under the impact of outside influences. Viewed in the context of world history, this would suggest that, although Medieval civilization was characterized by comparative isolation at a certain time and in certain respects, it was nevertheless influenced by the "history of international developments among the literate urban civilizations" of the world<sup>8</sup> in many decisive and possibly complex ways. It would mean that Medieval Europe, especially during the earlier period, was struggling above all with the problems of economic isolation; but—far from representing a "primitive civilization" in the sense of lacking all links to the overall context of cultural history—was a civilization which, though initially *weak in its relations with the contemporary world*, was curiously *intense in its retrospective relations*, i. e. in its dependence upon certain civilizations which, as such, had ceased to exist when the Medieval world was emerging—above all the civilizations of Rome, of Hellenism and Near Eastern, "early" Christianity. And the perspective of world history reminds us finally that the Medieval world, far from representing a "static" and "homogeneous" civilization (which at first glance it might appear to have

<sup>8</sup> See Marshal HODGSON's definition, note 3, above.

been), was of course subject to profound changes between the early feudal period and the centuries of fully developed Medieval culture—involving radical changes also in its position towards the outside world.

Yet these are by no means the only complexities we shall find in trying to place Medieval civilization in its proper world-historical context.

## III

More than any other age the "Middle" Ages stand out in our minds as a period clearly distinguished by its position in the overall context of world history: the very name purports to say that this is an age "in between" the end of Roman and the beginning of modern society. How obsolete this concept is in blandly glossing over all that is great and original in Medieval culture, is by now an established fact<sup>9</sup>. It seems self-evident that to define the Middle Ages merely as an age of transition between two *Western European* civilizations is an equally gross misrepresentation of Medieval relations with the outside world.

In surveying Medieval Europe's relations with other civilizations in all their complexity we seem to discern three types, which we might summarily term "negative", "positive" and "transformative" relations—strictly for classification's sake and for want of a better terminology. On the *negative* side matters seem obvious enough—at first glance at any rate: With the disintegration of the Roman Empire Western Europe was plunged into a state of cultural semi-darkness and wellnigh complete isolation from the lifelines of international trade. Due to the destruction wrought by the Germanic invasions; the growing alienation from the centers of economic and political life in Byzantium; and the rise of hostile Mohammedan powers which contributed to Western Europe's isolation from its ancient trade contacts in the East<sup>10</sup>, the West was forced back to a "subsistence" level—the limitations of an agricultural, essentially local economy—having henceforth to eke out its exist-

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the article "Middle Ages" in the 1959 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the bibliography cited there.

<sup>10</sup> Henri PIRENNE's theory that the Islam expansion was chiefly responsible for Western Europe's commercial isolation may now be considered as substantially refuted (cf. *The Pirenne Thesis, Analysis, Criticism and Revision*, ed. Alfred A. HAVIGHURST, Boston, 1958). Nevertheless, the heat of controversy should not obscure the fact that Moslem power, Moslem conquests in the Mediterranean and the deep-felt ideological conflict between the camps of Christianity and Islam must have aggravated the economic isolation of the West, at any rate during certain periods (from the 7th to the 9th century at least). — The major causes of the economic decline, if one attempts to sum up PIRENNE's thesis and the ensuing controversy, will have to be sought in the contraction of Byzantine influence and the series of invasions hitting the Roman Empire, Germanic, Mongol and Arab, as a whole—two chains of events which were obviously highly interdependent. And it can hardly be denied that Islam expansion played a momentous role in both these developments.

tence largely by what could be extracted from the soil. Yet although the impact of this initial experience was felt through all levels of society for a long time to come—and although it left its unmistakable imprint on the Medieval mind—we realize that Western Europe had by no means completely lost touch with the civilization of Rome, when we think of the subtle but vigorous thread of Roman literature preserved in the monasteries; or of the fact that Roman institutions lived on even in agriculture and in the basic framework of the feudal society<sup>11</sup>; or of the repeated upsurge of the Roman tradition, as in the “Carolingian Renaissance”; or of the continued vitality of Roman architectural elements in the Romanesque style.

Yet even in areas where isolation seems most pronounced Medieval Europe's position in the context of world history could not be described as entirely “negative”. From the very beginning Medieval civilization displayed its characteristic tendency to *compensate for the real isolation by creating a substitute world of the imagination and of the mind*, complete with a foreshortened view of history, geography and the astronomical universe. *Medieval universalism*, of course, was an integral part of Medieval Christianity and its teachings. In emphatic theological terms the church conveyed to an essentially isolated society an almost flawless sense of completeness in space and time, by teaching a Europe-centered view of the world, in which the rest of the earth appeared compressed into a mere backdrop and the universe revolved in the outer spheres; meanwhile, a view of the Biblical period, in Medieval costume and setting, with a few rare glimpses of the Graeco-Roman past, served as a foreshortened panorama of history.

To be sure, the tendency to create an imaginary substitute in the absence of a real and vital relationship with the outside world seems to have been typical of most essentially isolated societies<sup>12</sup>, and might therefore quite generally indicate a deep-rooted need for completeness in man's relationship with his contemporary and historical context. What distinguishes the universalism of the Middle Ages is that it was replete with echoes and memories of an earlier age, when Europe had been an integral part of the world.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Alfons DOPSCH, *Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters*, Vienna, 1928, pp. 356 f.; 363 ff. — For a more up-to-date view cf., e.g., H. St. L. B. Moss, “Economic Consequences of the Barbarian Invasion”, quoted in *The Pirene Thesis*, p. 51 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cf., e.g., John A. WILSON's sections on ancient Egyptian “Cosmology” and “Cosmogony”; and Thorkild JACOBSEN's chapter on “The Cosmos as a State” in ancient Mesopotamia in *Before Philosophy. The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, Harmondsworth, 1954, pp. 51 ff., 137 ff.

## IV

We have already hinted at some of the complexities involved in Medieval Europe's *positive* ties with the outside world in saying that they were primarily of a “retrospective” kind, at least during the earlier period. But when recalling that those earlier civilizations, whose influence was most strongly felt in the Middle Ages, were the civilizations of *Rome*, of *Hellenism* and of the *ancient, Judaeo-Christian, Near East*, we have yet to state how these various cultural influences were related among each other. The most outstanding feature in this age of comparative material isolation and cultural retrospectiveness is that Europe was *more open to the influence of the East than at any other time before or after the Middle Ages*. This, for one thing, is the only time when Europe as a whole was an essentially theocratic society, such as they were common in the ancient East<sup>13</sup>. Nor was this merely a question of an accidental parallel between a daily life ruled by religion, under the spiritual and often real guidance of the priesthood, and the ancient Oriental theocracies: the West was reflecting *actual and profound Oriental influences* both in its spiritual and institutional life—with the memories of Palestine in Hebrew and early Christian days upmost in the people's imagination; with the tradition of Hindu and Buddhist monks perpetuated in the institutions of Medieval monasticism; with eastern mysticism permeating European thought from St. Augustine and John Scot Erigena to St. Francis, or to the Manichaean influences on the cult of the Albigensian Catharists. In its comparative and temporary isolation, early Medieval Europe was not only looking back to the days of Rome; it was looking East, living on the heritage of the great religious civilizations of the Orient, as transformed by Christianity.

Yet even as the image of the Orient was filtering in through the stories of the Old and New Testament, including the gospel of the man from Tarsus in Asia Minor, as the West was shaping its culture under the ultimate inspiration of eastern mystics, another eastern civilization, for once contemporary with the European Middle Ages—Islam—was subtly at work, exposing Europe to the full flavor of the Graeco-Roman world. At first glance it might therefore seem that the influence of the ancient Orient was considerably stronger during the early Middle

<sup>13</sup> The term “theocratic” is, of course, used merely in a relative sense, referring to the dominant power of religion in society, compared to earlier and subsequent ages in the West. But even the “investiture struggle”, while indicating the difficulties of the papacy in asserting its claims for supremacy against the emperor and the feudal system as a whole, was conducted in a spirit of general devotion to the Christian way of life—and ended in the ultimate triumph of the papacy (cf. Lynn THORNDYKE, *The History of Medieval Europe*, Boston, 1949, pp. 284-295).

Ages and that the contacts with the Graeco-Roman world, which the Islam civilization helped so greatly to intensify, belong essentially to a later period; that, in other words, Medieval Europe underwent a process of "reorientation" from predominantly Oriental to Graeco-Roman influences through the agency of Islam. But it should immediately be obvious that this view, although not altogether without validity, would be extremely oversimplified, since it suffers from a severely inadequate concept of the ancient world, by unduly contrasting "eastern religious" with "Graeco-Roman" (or Hellenistic) elements.

Nor do we seem to get a more balanced picture of the *ancient background of Medieval civilization*, by resorting to the conventional idea of purely "Roman" traditions perpetuated in the early Middle Ages (thanks chiefly to the diligent labor of manuscript-copying monks), since this too appears to be based on a curiously distorted view of ancient civilization. For when we assume that the Middle Ages were heir to a select number of "Roman" elements but were essentially alien to the Greek tradition, to which they found access only during the "high" Medieval period, between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries—are we not proceeding from a wholly inadequate concept of Roman civilization itself, especially during the final centuries of the empire? Such standard views overlook, for one thing, that *Graeco-Roman* civilization had been an inseparable and integral unity, from the days of Polybius and Scipio Africanus, if not from earlier, more basic heritage—so that *Medieval culture* was almost by definition *heir to both Greece and Rome*. We would overlook furthermore that Christianity, specifically the development of early Christian theology, bore the unmistakable hallmarks of the late Hellenistic civilization in which it originated. What was more, the Greek, or Hellenistic, influence on Roman civilization had been particularly intense towards the end of the empire, and the "Latin" fathers of the church, especially St. Augustine with his dependence on Neo-Platonist thought, had been steeped in the Hellenistic tradition, even though they ultimately contributed to the growing separation between West and East. Lastly, despite that growing rift, Medieval Europe remained the recipient of an almost uninterrupted stream of Graeco-Roman influences emanating from Byzantium from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, as witnessed in the history of Medieval art<sup>14</sup>. There are almost countless further elements we might add to such a sketch of the Greek legacy in its influence upon the Western European Middle Ages, even during the earlier period—like the knowledge of

<sup>14</sup> Cf., e.g., the chapter "Byzantium and the West" in D. TALBOT RICE's *Byzantine Art*, Harmondsworth, 1954. — The brief summary of continuous Byzantine influences upon Western Europe in Steven RUNCIMAN's *Byzantine Civilization* (New York, 1956, pp. 236 ff.) serves to show that the momentous impact of Byzantine scholarship during the 15th century came as the climax of essentially uninterrupted contacts.

Greek among the Irish monks of the seventh and eighth centuries<sup>15</sup>; or the "waves" in which the West experienced the influence of Byzantine art (especially during the eighth and twelfth centuries<sup>16</sup>); or the abiding influence of Byzantium on Venetian civilization and art.

What all this amounts to is a picture of ancient influences on Medieval culture, which were both *broader, more consistent* and on the whole *more vigorous* than the concept of a purely "Roman" tradition (as opposed to the Graeco-Roman tradition as a whole) would make it appear—a concept, we should note, which the Middle Ages themselves were anxious to emphasize because of their conscious commitment to Rome as the center of Western Christianity<sup>17</sup>. And we shall see how the influence of the Oriental civilizations tends to strengthen the picture of a vast and diversified dependence of Medieval civilization upon the ancient world as a whole.

How, then, should we envisage the full range of Medieval Europe's ties with the ancient civilization? — Here was a society whose basic framework had been determined by its temporary severance from the great international civilization which had been created in ancient times, achieving its ultimate political unity in the empire of Rome<sup>18</sup>. *Medieval culture, in all its fundamental elements, was a product of this ancient world*. Yet, although the effects of this severance from the world civilization of Rome (and its Byzantine successor) were primarily practical—to be felt in such fields as trade, administration and government—the isolation left its mark on the culture of the Middle Ages as

<sup>15</sup> Cf. W. G. DE BURGH, *The Legacy of the Ancient World*, Harmondsworth, 1955, Vol. two, p. 441 (3). — De Burgh's inspiring and profoundly knowledgeable study conveys throughout a more balanced concept of the combined Graeco-Roman heritage than is usual in works of a more limited scope.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. TALBOT RICE, p. 245.

<sup>17</sup> It is worth keeping in mind that during the early Middle Ages the Roman church and the West in general were engaged in a bitter struggle for independence from Byzantine domination, so that they had understandable cause for asserting the "Roman" as against the Graeco-Roman background. Cf., e.g., the climax of the conflict during the 8th century in the confiscation of the papal revenues from Sicily and Calabria by the Byzantine emperor, which caused the pope to turn to the Franks as strong "Western" allies (see Steven RUNCIMAN, *Byzantine Civilization*, p. 98).

<sup>18</sup> The concept that the basic framework of Medieval society developed in what was substantially a commercial vacuum for Western Europe does not appear to be essentially altered by the spate of detailed studies in recent years (mostly prompted by the "Pirenne controversy"), indicating a greater continuity of trade than was assumed before (cf., e.g., Robert LOPEZ, "Mohammed and Charlemagne: A Revision", in *The Pirenne Thesis*). No matter how gradual the transition (and how convincing the evidence that trade revived again toward the end of the 9th century), early Medieval Europe was nevertheless an agricultural society, and what trade remained was no more than a trickle. Nor, unquestionably, could the sporadic revival of trade before A.D. 1000 be compared with the volume of international commerce during the later Middle Ages, esp. under the stimulus of the crusades, and its revolutionary impact upon the structure of the society of the high Middle Ages (cf. also note 10, above).

well, by making the ancient world and its legacy appear "as through a glass seen dimly"—that is in a *fragmentized* and *distorted* way, *dimmed* by the characteristic spiritualism of the Medieval mind. The ancient tradition became fragmentized in that the West, struggling for independence from Byzantium under the leadership of the papacy, tended to over-emphasize its "Roman" background and to minimize the Greek element in the common Graeco-Roman tradition<sup>19</sup>. Even where the Greek heritage continued to live on in Medieval civilization—as noted above—it did so by and large in an equally fragmentized way, i.e. outside, or perhaps we should say, in an emphatic denial of the original unity of the common tradition<sup>20</sup>. What was more, Western Europe in the spirit of western independence so characteristic of the early Middle Ages quite naturally tended to reach back to the original sources of Christianity, bypassing the ultimate synthesis of the Byzantine church, thus building its own religious civilization in a more direct contact with the religious tradition of the ancient East<sup>21</sup>. Lastly, the legacy of the ancient world lived on, although through manifold prisma-like distortions, in the highly spiritualized "substitute" world of Medieval universalism, as we have pointed out above.

Yet one feature deserves to be underscored to conclude this brief survey of the ties between the essentially "closed", "isolated" and "regional" civilization of the European Middle Ages and the great world civilization which had gone before. The civilization which continued to radiate its vital impact upon the substance and texture of Medieval culture, across all the fragmentizing, distorting and attenuating effects of the basic isolation of Medieval society, was in the final analysis neither "Roman" by nature nor, strictly speaking, "Graeco-Roman" or "Hellenistic". There is no real validity in contrasting Hellenistic, Graeco-Roman culture with the religious civilizations of the ancient Near East<sup>22</sup>. Whether the Middle Ages were driven, by their own intrinsic situation, to emphasize the Roman "Western" or the reli-

<sup>19</sup> Cf., e.g., the explicit preference of the earlier Middle Ages for selected Roman "aethores" (which by the 13th century gave way to a far less restrictive interest in the "artes", i.e. the liberal arts including the works of Greek philosophers and scientists); see Paul Oskar KRISTELLER, "The Classics and Renaissance Thought", *Martin Classical Lectures*, Vol. XV, Cambridge, Mass., 1955, pp. 6 f.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. RUNCIMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 238 for spasms of outright hostility to the Byzantine cultural influence, during the 10th and 12th centuries.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., e.g., Edgar ALEXANDER, chapter "Rome and Western Christianity" in his *Christianity and the Middle East*, Cornell University Press, 1952, and the bibliography cited there. — Significantly, Western Christianity, though of course heavily indebted to the Greek theologians of the early centuries, found its link with the world of Graeco-Roman thought primarily through the synthesis of the "Westerner", St. Augustine.

<sup>22</sup> The central role of the Hellenistic as well as Near Eastern heritage for the Roman Empire is succinctly stated, if merely in overall terms, by C. DELISLE BURNS, *The First Europe*, quoted in *The Pirenne Thesis*, ed. HAVIGHURST, Boston, 1958.

gious "Oriental" elements in the ancient legacy, the civilization from which they drew these inspirations was in fact the common and continuous civilization of the ancient world. It was, as some historians have observed, the first great international civilization the world has known<sup>22a</sup> which, beginning in Hittite, Phoenician and Hebrew times, had woven intense commercial and cultural ties across Asia and the Near East in days long before Alexander's conquest; had radiated its creative energies throughout the Mediterranean to Carthago and Etruscan and Greek Italy, like waves reaching distant shores; had produced the fertile mingling of Persian and other Asiatic elements in the religious fermentation in Palestine before the emergence of Christ; and had finally culminated in the Hellenistic civilization of the Roman Empire and the triumph of Christianity. If the early Middle Ages, for understandable reasons, chose to ignore its most outspoken secular manifestations (as well as to deny the "Greek" element), the civilization based upon the uniquely stimulating fusion between East and West was nevertheless one in its religious and philosophical as well as its strictly "wordly" aspects.

In the final analysis, it was not so much a particular civilization whose memories sustained Medieval Europe in its lonely isolation and the barrenness of a frontier-like life: it was *civilization itself*—the memories of the world at large, at the very peak of its cultural diversity.

If these reflections may have served to highlight some of the ways in which an essentially homogeneous and "closed" civilization was nevertheless decisively influenced by its position towards the world as a whole, we have yet to see how it accomplished its fullfledged return into the world community—how it was transformed from an isolated society into one which came to take a leading part on the international scene.

One might say that it was precisely because of Medieval Europe's inherent ties with the totality of the world-historical context that this transformation was achieved. At the height of the Middle Ages Europe presented the sight of a characteristically "mixed" civilization in which the earlier, feudal elements coexisted side by side with the manifestations of an incipient modern society—including highly developed international trade and banking, as well as other symptoms of an early capitalist economy. While the earlier, feudal economy survived essentially in the countryside, the cities were increasingly turning into a stage for the unfolding of these "modern" trends in society and culture. And if the feudal period was essentially the product of Europe's temporary isolation, in which outside contacts had largely been a matter of

<sup>22a</sup> J. H. BREASTED, as quoted in W. F. ALBRIGHT, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (New York, 1957, p. 209), speaks of "the First Internationalism".

distant echoes of the past, the new urban civilization reflected in every aspect the direct, vigorous influences of the contemporary outside world. Thus the high Middle Ages witnessed a spectacular "internationalization" of European society; and the progress from this age to the modern era saw in turn the triumphant expansion of the emerging international civilization, founded on the revived world trade, beyond the walls of the Medieval town, until it finally came to dominate the society. At the same time the manifestations of the new way of life developed from forms which had still represented a degree of compromise with the Medieval environment (like the guild system; or scholastic philosophy) to overt expressions of the new world-mindedness in the age of the discoveries and the Renaissance<sup>23</sup>.

What had caused this spectacular change? It is a textbook truism that the transformation of Europe during the later Middle Ages was the result of intrinsic as well as outside forces, acting together to produce what is known as the "revival of trade"<sup>24</sup>. The external factors are easily identified: the crusades—for all their failure in achieving their avowed objective, the liberation of the holy places from the infidels—acted as a powerful stimulant for trade, above all by establishing trade posts in the Near East, thus linking the West once more to the ancient international trade routes across Asia, and reopening the dikes for an unending flow of Oriental goods. The result was the vigorous growth of a middle class engaged in the various aspects of revived world trade, the diversification of urban life, as well as significant intellectual and cultural movements stimulated by the new contacts with the outside world, primarily Islam.

But what were those "intrinsic forces", which had enabled Medieval Europe to transform itself from a backward and underdeveloped society into a leading international power—including the creation of an international military force—and therewith from an agricultural into a predominantly commercial society?

In surveying the various factors underlying this spectacular recovery one is struck by one general observation. Ultimately it was the legacy of the ancient world which gave European society the cohesion to live through the disintegrating and corroding effects of the feudal age and, what is more, to emerge from the early Middle Ages with a new unity and strength. In fact, the crusades were themselves the triumphant

<sup>23</sup> This is not the place to go into the problem of "re-defining" the meaning of the Renaissance, which has become pressing, due both to recent controversy and actual progress of scholarship (see note 7 above). Far from taking the concept for granted, I am here merely referring to the "international" aspects of the period, whether manifested in business and banking or in the interests of humanists, painters and writers in civilizations others than the European Middle Ages.

<sup>24</sup> For the continued validity of this concept, despite the evidence of earlier, more gradual beginnings, see note 18 above.

expression and climax of this resurgence. No matter how fragmentized, the slender ties which bound the Middle Ages to the ancient world proved to be sinews of strength, agents of recovery and transformation. There was, first of all, the ancient skill, inherited from their Roman ancestors, which enabled the farmers of the early Middle Ages to evolve such far-reaching improvements as the three-field system or the deep-furrow wheel plough. There were the towns, destined to be centers of the economic revival, for the most part inherited by Medieval Europe from the Roman Empire. There were Roman traditions in warfare and the building of fortifications, in administration, government and law which proved decisive in the final recovery. There was a continuous trickle of trade even during the time of the most devastating commercial disruption—including a not unimportant continuous commerce with Byzantium in those places which had kept up the contact with the East Roman Empire; and trade, in time, produced its own gradual expansion (though the crusades, reflecting Europe's overall recovery, undoubtedly acted as a more momentous stimulant). Above all, there was the church, Near Eastern and late Roman in origin, founded on a body of doctrine which included Greek, Hellenistic, Persian, Byzantine and Roman elements beside the central Judaeo-Christian core—the only significant force of cohesion, the only tangible link with the cultural past in an age of otherwise hopeless decentralization. It was when the most ancient and basic institutional element in Western Christianity, the monastic movement, born in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, dedicated to the closest preservation of the original Christian way of life, applied its stupendous potential of regenerative energies upon the body of the church—which itself had threatened to succumb to the petty power politics of the feudal system—that a *Cluniac* pope, Urban II, managed to call for a tremendous effort of united Western Christianity, thus ending a period of essential isolation and defensiveness. Thus, the ties with the world civilization of antiquity proved to be more than mere echoes and memories, or at best tenuous survivals: in time they proved to be a decisive force in reality, sufficient to produce a fullfledged return to the contemporary outside world.

## V

Europe's return to the international community was a return "in space" as well as "in time". The resumption of contacts with the outside world brought with it a flurry of curiosity about distant countries, reflected in the travels and expeditions of the high Middle Ages and the immense popularity of travellers' accounts—especially if they were as full of exotic color as Marco Polo's. Travels and expeditions, as we

know, led to global discoveries; the revival of trade to the "commercial revolution". Europe's return to the area of ancient civilization in its full extent broadened in time to the control of the earth.

But as Western Europe broke out of its geographic isolation, it also managed to relate itself to the context of world history in new and significant ways. If the actual isolation had produced its counterpart in the unique ideology of the Middle Ages, the realities of the newly found contacts with the outside world led to a more realistic approach to outside cultures, ultimately rooted in historical interest and appreciation. And just as it was not merely the "Roman" heritage which had left its mark on the early Middle Ages but ancient civilization as a whole, so the interest of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance—the bend of mind which we call "humanism"—was now turning to antiquity in its full scope, the Roman, Greek, as well as the early Christian and Oriental legacy. Only where the earlier period had thought of the ancient world in the dream-like manner of fragmented, distorted and sublimated memories, the age of humanism, under the refreshing impact of the immediate contacts with the contemporary outside world, began to appreciate antiquity on its own terms, thus resuming the ancient heritage in a forthright and direct way, on the strength of critical philology and a substantial interest in what the ancient philosophers and scientists had to say<sup>25</sup>.

An isolated civilization, whose conscious relationship to the world had been essentially one of hazy memories, succeeded in placing itself once more into the full stream of historical continuity. Europe discovered the world as a geographical and astronomical reality, and as a reality of organic, historic growth.

<sup>25</sup> The role of Islam civilization as a mediator of ancient culture, esp. from the 12th century on, and that of Byzantine scholars in the 15th century vividly illustrate the significance of *geographic* contacts, between Western Europe and areas outside, for the revival of a *historic* appreciation of past civilizations and their continued vitality.

G. B. L. WILSON

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## TECHNICAL GAINS DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

(1775-1905)

A FEW times in the history of our western civilization there have been periods when there has been a great flowering of culture, of the arts and crafts and of men's thoughts. Such a one was the Hellenic period of 500-300 B.C., the age of Plato, of Aristotle, of Praxiteles. Another occurred in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries A.D. in Europe when the Athenian culture was re-discovered and the mists of the Dark Ages were swept away. Appropriately called the Renaissance, it set a standard by which we still measure our achievement in art and in culture.

A third flowering was that which took place in the period covered by this chapter, from the middle of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth, best known as the Industrial Revolution. This period is so close to our times that although we can recognize its importance it is hard to evaluate its magnitude in the history of civilization—but when viewed from afar it may turn out to be the greatest period of the three. Whereas the Hellenic and the Renaissance epochs affected men's minds and their attitude to life—and only those of the leisured, cultured classes—the Industrial Revolution changed their whole way of living. From the earliest times the chief occupations of human beings have been to grow food, to keep warm, to build houses, to make clothes, to get rich and to fight wars—and they did these things in much the same way in the Renaissance as they did in the Middle Ages and also in the time of Alexander the Great two thousand years before. The Greek loom and the Florentine loom were not dissimilar, flour was ground in like manner, fire was struck from a flint, animals were killed by the spear and the bow, and the water-wheel and the pump were among the few machines available to both ages. Each civilization was based on the slave or peasant class, and a Greek slave could have changed places with an Italian peasant with hardly any alteration in his *modus vivendi*. Only the embellishments of life were different.

But during and after the Industrial Revolution nothing was the