

Colégio Universitário
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HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

*This is a **translation of Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira's handouts for his "History of Civilization" course.** Additions or omissions are the responsibility of Mr. Carlos M. de Vasconcellos, who typed out the Portuguese originals.*

"In July 1934, when his work in the legislative arena ended, Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira, while maintaining his activities as a lawyer and journalist, took up the History of Civilization chair at the University College attached to the Law School of the University of São Paulo. He later became a professor of Modern and Contemporary History at the São Bento College of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters, and at the Sedes Sapientiae College, later integrated into the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo" (cf. [Um homem, uma obra, uma gesta - Homenagem das TFPs a Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira](#), 1989, topic "Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira - fé, coerência, liderança e valentia," p. 29).

For a detailed account of this same period, see "[Minha Vida Pública - Compilação de Relatos Autobiográficos de Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira](#)" [*My Public Life-A Compilation of Plínio Corrêa de Oliveira's Biographical Accounts*], ArtPress, São Paulo, 2015, Part III, Chapter I, pp. 133-147.

Those wishing to delve deeper into this subject would do well to consult Lílian Miranda Bezerra's work "**O Arquivo do Colégio Universitário da USP: um Instrumento de Pesquisa**" (USP's University College Archive: a Research Tool), a dissertation submitted to the Postgraduate Program in Social History of the School of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo to obtain a Master's degree in History (2020).

Part One

HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY

Historical methodology is a set of methods on which historians base their work.

Definition of History

History is the narration and explanation of verified, past and memorable events. This incomplete definition constitutes a preliminary notion for the study of historical methodology.

In common parlance, history is a series of accounts of fictitious or dubious events disfigured by popular imagination. However, as a science, history only deals with events about which there is no shadow of doubt.

Past Events Only. History disregards the present and only considers past events.

As a rule, historians can know past events only after a few years have passed since they took place. The difficulty of obtaining accurate and abundant documentation on recent events generally makes them very difficult for a historian to know. Such is the case, for example, with the causes of Austria's annexation by Germany.

Therefore, history should not record all past events but only those that occurred long ago so one can know them accurately and judge them calmly.

Facts Worth Remembering. History disregards events of minimum importance and purely individual interest. However, that does not prevent it from recording certain minor facts because of their special significance.

That is the case, for example, when Louis XVI slept soundly throughout the night before his beheading. The course of history would not have changed if the king's sleep had been restless rather than serene. Still, history sees it fit to record that circumstance because it helps define the monarch's character and explain some of his earlier attitudes.

History also records some actions that are not precisely of great political interest but are highly interesting because of their significance in studying the human soul. Such is the case, for example, with many extraordinary deeds because of their nobility or baseness, which had no notable influence on events but are of great interest to people who like to observe humanity.

Events worthy of remembrance are not only those of political, economic, scientific or artistic importance but any facts worth remembering because they attract the interest of scholars from other points of view.

History is an account of past events but doesn't just narrate them. It seeks to discover the relationships between those events and how they caused or influenced one another.

Historical sources are all the material traces of a fact, and even more so, the memories it left behind in peoples' oral narratives.

In this sense, oral tradition should be recognized as a source of accurate knowledge of past events. Oral tradition is a verbal account of past events accurately preserved in people's memories. This tradition differs from legend, which is the narration of the same facts in a poetic sense, usually altered by the imagination of several successive generations. The ancient people's great longevity often allowed the author of a fact to tell it directly to his great-great-

grandchildren or great-great-great-grandchildren. That made the knowledge of the event much more direct.

On the other hand, people who didn't use writing took great care to keep their oral accounts free from distortions introduced by imagination. There are frequent cases of oral traditions whose truth can be rigorously verified.

An **Archaeological Document** is distinct from a historical document because it is a monument or object left by the past, which history uses. Even devoid of written signs, archeological documents are obviously of interest to studying history.

Heuristics is an auxiliary science of history that studies the research of sources. For the work of heuristics to be possible, historical documents must be preserved, centralized, classified and made available to people who wish to examine them.

Most diverse circumstances can lead to the destruction of historical documents. First and foremost, man's will. People destroy old documents because they harm their interests, vanities, or comfort.

In addition to man, a thousand other factors contribute to the loss of documents, from moths to humidity and fires, which is why almost all contemporary states have official archives that preserve public documents against agents of destruction.

The conditions for preserving historical documents vary greatly, for example, according to their material. Some ancient parchments, due to the parchment's durability and the amazing indelibility of its ink, can be preserved more easily than modern documents, written on paper of often inferior quality, with inks that soon fade.

Preserving archives of contemporary documents for posterity is very difficult, if not impossible. For example, Edward VIII's act of abdication, which, unlike all important acts of royal English life, was typewritten and signed with regular ink, instead of being written on parchment and signed with special ink.

Centralization. The habit adopted by contemporary public administrations of setting up large public archives has greatly facilitated Historical research. Not only does that make it easier to preserve valuable documents, but centralizes them in one place, greatly facilitating the work of historians. They can effectively research records from various sources without leaving the (State, Municipal, Metropolitan Curia, etc.) archive building.

To make research easier, some states take over the archives of old and interesting documents private individuals no longer want to keep and even buy old and valuable documents from private individuals.

Classification. Classifying historical documents in important archives is a major task. Given the immense volume of documents in old archives, all historical work becomes useless without classification, as it would be impossible for a researcher to personally go through thousands and thousands of documents to find what he is looking for.

The classification method varies, generally using files and catalogs. The last requirement is to make the archives available to interested parties.

In the past, it wasn't easy to consult official archives. Nowadays, all official archives are usually open to the public regarding less recent documents. More recent documents are usually kept secret. In France, for example, diplomatic, political and military records from 1870 onwards are not open to the public.

Printed documents. As for printed documents already published, their use in heuristics work is much simpler. Extensive official and private libraries are responsible for preserving, centralizing and making their books available to interested parties. In addition, bibliographic journals periodically list all works published in the various branches of science. Finally, the most important libraries generally publish admirably well-classified catalogs of their books.

History's Auxiliary Sciences. Strictly speaking, every science can be of some or even valuable assistance to history, even natural sciences, which at first glance seem most distant from the study of history. That is the case, for example, with Physics and Chemistry, the knowledge of which can be of great interest in elucidating historical facts from ancient times.

In common parlance, history's auxiliary sciences are disciplines that provide it with more immediate assistance:

Paleography's purpose is to decipher and study the characters of ancient documents, for otherwise, historians cannot use them.

The analysis of graphic characters is of the utmost importance in historical studies. Paleography can reveal a document's date and provenance because different regions had their own handwriting. Once you know how people write in a certain region, you can easily check whether or not a particular document comes from that region. Differences of this nature can exist from people to people or region to region. The document's date can also be discovered from the characters since people in certain eras write differently from others.

Finally, the characters used to write a diploma are rarely the same as those used to write a private letter. Commercial ledgers are usually written with characters different than those in ordinary account books.

Epigraphy provides history with the same services as paleography when writing on metal.

Sigillography provides history with the same services as stamps or seals. In addition to sigillography, there is heraldry, which studies coats of arms, and numismatics, which explores ancient coins and medals. Archaeology, mentioned above, is often included among history's auxiliary disciplines.

Philology is one of the most essential disciplines in history. The languages peoples speak evolve. For example, classical Latin gradually evolved into barbaric Latin due to various circumstances and gave rise to other languages, which have reached the present day with variations.

Authenticity of external review's purpose is determining whether a document is original, copy, or forgery.

The importance of this critical work is evident. While an original document can have great value, a forgery can only be of historical interest in special cases.

It is also of great interest to historians whether they are dealing with an original or a copy. The original, being written by an author, is absolutely faithful. On the other hand, a copy can differ significantly from the original. Such differences result from copyist carelessness, incompetence, or bad faith.

One should remember that sometimes a historian's greatest perplexity does not concern an entire document's authenticity but a particular passage he fears has been introduced or removed by a third party. The authenticity of interpolations is a delicate problem for external criticism.

In order to elucidate these questions, external criticism seeks to ascertain:

- 1 - who drafted the document;
- 2 - when it was written;
- 3 - where it was written;
- 4 - in what form it was written;
- 5 - how it was transferred.

When verifying a document's authorship, a historian can face a huge variety of concrete cases. Sometimes, the signature is incomplete and insufficient to ascertain the document's real author. Other times, although autographed, the document doesn't even bear a signature. Still, other times, the document is not autographed and only carries the author's presumed signature. Finally, some official documents are sometimes written in the name of sovereigns who are unaware of them. These various hypotheses are paramount in verifying a given document's authenticity.

The same document was often written by several successive authors, who, however, failed to mark their part. The date on which the document was written must also be ascertained. An exact date cannot always be ascertained, but an approximate date is often found. This verification can be done by various means, such as examining the material, the handwriting, or the language.

Checking the place where a document was written is also very important. Examining the material, language and handwriting can be very useful as well.

We must also analyze how the document came to us because this analysis leads, if not to certainty, at least to valuable hypotheses. For example, it is unlikely that unknown works by some Latin authors can still be found in European archives today, which are referred to only in known works by the same authors. The reason is that so much research has been done in all archives to find such works that one cannot admit their existence. So, a historian should rigorously verify how they were preserved to this day before accepting them as authentic.

Finally, a document's shape can also indicate its authenticity. Certain official documents, such as diplomas or documents granting honorary titles, always display special formalities to be analyzed by diplomatics, one of history's auxiliary disciplines.¹

As for copies, there can be different cases: Either there is only one copy, through which we seek to know the original text that has been lost, or there is more than one copy for the same purpose. In the first case, the work is extremely difficult. In the second case, comparing several copies can make it possible to reconstruct the text. This critique is called reconstitution.

A credibility check or internal criticism is about verifying the credibility of a historical document. One should not believe a document simply because it is authentic. A credibility check is necessary for the historian to believe what it says. In historical methodology, this examination is known as internal criticism.

For a historical document to contain a truthful account, its author must have accurately observed the facts and narrated them well. Internal criticism can verify this twofold operation by checking the following:

1. the exact interpretation of what the author said;
2. the quality of his findings;
3. the narrator's competence to observe the fact;
4. the narration's degree of accuracy;
5. the author's sincerity.

¹ Translator's note: Diplomatics is a science that was developed in France in the seventeenth century for the purpose of ascertaining the provenance and authenticity of records that attested to patrimonial rights, and later grew into a legal, historical, and philological discipline, as it came to be used by lawyers to resolve disputes.

The interpretation critique must reveal:

1. what the document's author said;
2. what the document's author meant.

Sometimes, the author uses terms whose meanings we can't grasp at first glance. Certain words sometimes disappear from our vocabulary and are forgotten. Other times, they don't disappear but change their meaning. That is the case with the word *industry*, which began to be used in its current sense around a hundred years before the French Revolution but used to mean activity. For example, to understand a 16th-century document properly, one must interpret the word *industry* in this sense.

Sometimes, a document's words are correctly interpreted, but not its meaning. It's not just a question of knowing what the author meant. Most courtesy formulas have a straightforward meaning, but that does not necessarily tell you precisely what the author meant when using them.

A Finding's Quality. The more direct a historical observation is, the more reliable it is. As observation becomes indirect, it becomes inaccurate, precarious, and less trustworthy.

Degree of Accuracy. The accuracy of a historical account can be paramount to a historian, who must usually attach great importance to specific details often missing from inaccurate descriptions. On the other hand, excessive minutiae can be a reason for a historian to raise a general doubt about all of them.

Some authors display a widespread narration vice by seeking to enhance the color of their narrations with very refined literary forms. They tend to alter the narration slightly when failing to do so with licit literary resources.

It is also imperative in this critical work to check whether or not the historian narrated immediately after the fact.

It is also necessary to know how he made the account by consulting as much as possible narrations of the same author to check if he is usually careful, exact and judicious when narrating, if he used notes taken during the events, etc.

Critiquing the sincerity of an historical document's author is of the utmost importance. Not all narratives deserve credit, and not all of those that do are believable in every detail. That is why, in general, we should be wary of accounts in which the author relates facts that flatter his vanity or favor his interests. A narrative often does not refer directly to its author but to a political party, a club, a class or the country to which he belongs, and for whose benefit one can assume that he distorted reality.

Conversely, one should consider the author's testimonies contrary to these interests credible, for it is a common sense principle that a person deserves faith when they tell facts that go against their vanity or convenience. Even then, one

must verify whether the fact narrated at the time it took place was considered truly disreputable by contemporaries.

Comparative Critique of Testimonies

By diligently employing heuristic processes, a historian obtains more than one testimony about the same historical fact. If the testimonies coincide, they should be taken as true, especially if it can be proven that the respective authors disagreed on the subject beforehand and represented opposing interests.

If the testimonies contradict each other, good historical criticism should prefer one. Using the comparative process, one will try to ascertain which testimony best fulfills the requirements of internal criticism in certain circumstances and will attribute more significant value to that testimony. Therefore, between two accounts, one will prefer direct testimony to indirect testimony, that of the most competent to that of the least qualified, that of the person who had more reason to be sincere to that of the person who had less reason, etc.

Historical Overview

Having researched the documentation through heuristics, checked it for authenticity through external criticism, and checked it for veracity through internal criticism, a historian has completed the preliminary task of his work.

Through the documentation he duly examined, he has learned specific facts from the past that will be useful for the work he has in mind. He now has to write the work, for which he must carry out the following operations, which constitute the historical synthesis: 1. ordering the events; 2. interpreting and inserting them into history; 3) and finally, explaining them.

Ordering events is arranging them according to a historian's purpose when collecting documentation. Therefore, this first task of historical synthesis requires the historian to have the object of his work clearly in mind, to exclude facts that do not refer to the subject on which he intends to work, and to compare relevant facts to record only the most significant and worthy of memory.

A historian obviously must know the subject he is writing about, and the size of an excellent historical work must vary according to the nature of the matter. A historian uses very few of the many historical documents he looks through, and even fewer in their entirety, as he usually uses some information and disregards the rest.

Finally, a historical work can focus on the most varied subjects. Since human action is the object of history, every sector of human activity can be the subject of a historical work. That is why there are histories on the most transcendent manifestations of human activity, such as the history of religions, philosophy, political institutions, and the art of hairdressing and cooking.

History can be about a single or several subjects. It can refer to a period in the life of humanity, to that life as a whole, or a combination.

History Divided into Periods

Universal History deals with the history of all peoples at all times. For ease of exposition, history is usually divided into these periods:

1. Antiquity, which lasted until the fall of the Western Roman Empire;
2. The Middle Ages, which, according to some historians, lasted until the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire; according to others, until the Renaissance, or, according to still others, until Protestantism and the Pseudo-Reformation;
3. Modern Times, which lasted until the French Revolution;
4. The Contemporary Period dates from the French Revolution to the present day.

A concern to divide history into ages influenced this classification. It would be more logical to divide human history into two eras, which correspond to how we count the years: before and after Christ.

Often, to make a more detailed study, historians specialize their work by focusing on the history of a continent or a single country, province, municipality, family, individual, or a single period of an individual's life rather than on humanity as a whole. Finally, there are specialized studies on a single historical episode or even a single circumstance of a single historical episode.

Monographs are history studies highly specialized in a subject matter. Biographies are studies of the life of an individual.

Sometimes, one chooses the local criterion for ordering events to delimit the subject better. Example: The Bourbon family's history in the Kingdom of Sicily. Sometimes, one adds a delimiting time standard in addition to the subject's delimiting criterion. Example: The Bourbon family's history in the [Kingdom of the] two Sicilies in the 18th century.

Ordering involves the collaboration of two reputed disciplines, known as "the two eyes of history": chronology and geography.

After his preparatory work, a historian must expand his historical narrative with the data he has. That data can be: 1. certain; 2. probable; 3. possible.

Historical methodology allows us to form an unyielding conviction about certain historical facts. Sometimes, a document doesn't give us direct knowledge of the fact, but its interpretation and analysis allow us to deduce that fact's past existence with certainty.

For example, a 16th-century document may not mention the mode of transportation a particular fugitive used. But if it says the number of days it took him to reach the frontier, and that's too short a time to cover that distance on

foot, and if the document states that the roads were unfit for animal-drawn vehicles, one will deduce with complete certainty a fact the document did not mention: that the fugitive used a horse.

Alongside deductions made with absolute certainty, one also has the process of hypotheses based on analogy. Suppose a historian lacks enough information to explain a particular historical fact fully. In that case, he examines similar facts that occurred in other places or at different times because there is a likelihood that the fact under study has analogies with other events of the same nature.

For example, while doing archaeological research in Chaldea, a historian learns that the king of a particular country was defeated, arrested, taken to the victors' capital, and executed. If he wants to know how the death penalty was applied, he looks at similar events in Chaldean history to see which execution procedures they adopted for defeated kings.

Historians often draw conclusions based on the argument of silence, meaning that when a historical narrative fails to narrate a particular fact, one concludes that it did not happen. Of course, one must employ much common sense not to draw ridiculous conclusions.

History as a Science

To adequately complete the definition of history given at the beginning, one can define it as the narration of past events that are certain and worthy of memory, along with the explanation of those events by their causes.

The scientific nature of historical studies stems from two reasons:

1. Science is the study of things by their causes. In this sense, when history studies the causes of events, it is doing scientific work;
2. The historical method is genuinely scientific and gives the study of history a scientific character.

Progress of Historical Studies from the 19th Century to the Present Day

The 19th century marked the beginning of a veritable golden age for historical studies, although history works were already a long way from simple narrations or chronicles. In the 19th century, historical studies underwent an extraordinary development. One of the most significant factors in this development was the increasing ease of communication, which normalized commercial, political and cultural contacts between all continents.

For example, more accessible communications with the Far East allowed Western historians to come into contact with civilizations that are still alive, such as those of Japan, China, Indochina and India. That made it possible to learn about the

past of these countries through the direct preservation of their still-alive millenary institutions or knowledge of their languages, documents and legends.

Easier communications also enabled Europeans to come into contact with dead civilizations. During the 19th century, Europe extended its political hegemony worldwide, assuring archaeologists set off to distant regions an environment of tranquillity and relative comfort, often imposed by force on the peoples in whose territories such research took place. With greater or lesser honesty, this political hegemony allowed the European powers to take invaluable archaeological riches to Europe and create museums where scientists unable to travel to the East could study the history of ancient civilizations and other continents without discomfort.

Another consequence of the development of communication routes in the 19th century was a more frequent contact with the primitive populations of America, Oceania and, above all, Africa and Asia, which allowed, by analogy, a much more perfect study of prehistory.

Finally, excavations in various places have greatly facilitated prehistoric studies, providing a reasonably extensive knowledge of prehistory with the cooperation of geology and other disciplines.

The Great Historians

In ancient times, historical narration had very basic terms, as it only consisted of catalogs containing names of sovereigns and national festivals. Later, these catalogs included brief information about earthquakes, eclipses and other significant natural phenomena and quick references to notable people. These works are called annals or decades, depending on whether they cover a period of 1 or 10 years. They were only a rudiment of history and don't yet deserve to be called history.

The **Chronicles**—brief chronological records of essential events usually written by private individuals—were the first to be called history. **Ephemeris** were a kind of diary that recorded events worthy of mention. **Memoirs** were descriptions or portraits of more or less prominent personalities. The ancients called "**histories**" narrations of events contemporary with the narrator and in which he usually had participated.

These genres existed in the Middle Ages, in modern times, and also exist today. Nowadays, people attach great value to monographs, historical works explicitly written on a historical topic. They are critical because there is no surer resource for a historian to get to know a set of historical facts and make a grand synthesis than consulting a few well-done monographs on each of the aspects or events he seeks to study.

Not all peoples were highly dedicated to recounting past events. The Egyptians were very traditionalist and dedicated to history, which the northern Aryans also cultivated. The Persian kings took great care to build archives and promote the production of biographies through which historians would learn about the times in which they lived.

Among the Assyrians and Babylonians, history never seems to have gone beyond a pompous account of the deeds of their prominent kings, concerned chiefly about telling glorious events and hiding or misrepresenting facts unflattering to national pride. The Chinese cultivated history a great deal. The greatest Chinese intellectual, Confucius, had a unique approach to historical studies.

However, history had more valuable writers among the Greeks and Romans than in any other ancient country except for the Bible. Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius and Plutarch are among the leading Greek historians. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Deodorus of Sicily and Diogenes of Laertius were also valuable Greek historians.

In Rome, leading scholars began cultivating historiography only in the last century of the republic. In addition to Rome's most outstanding historians—Caesar, Salustius and Cornelius Nepos—we can mention Pompeius Trogus, Florus, Pliny, Valerius Maximus, Valerius Paterculus and Eutropius. Paul Orosius and St. Augustine were notable Christian historians.

In the Middle Ages, historiography went into decline for reasons we'll give when we study this period. Einhard wrote an excellent biography of Charlemagne. Bede the Venerable was a historian worthy of appreciation. Othon of Freising wrote a world history of some value. Froissart and Joinville were also reputable historians whose narration left much to be desired from a literary point of view. Still, their sincerity and intelligence can be seen in their highly qualified treatment of historical subjects. In Spain, still in the Middle Ages, we have Ayala, Peres del Pulgar, and Don Pedro of Aragon.

With the Renaissance and Humanism, historical studies acquired new value from the point of view of historical research. The literary form in which Renaissance historians wrote their works is more esteemable than that of medieval historians. At that time, they published collections of historical books with great concern to always refer to documents to substantiate any claims. Among the historians of Humanism, Machiavelli—perhaps one of the most profound thinkers recorded in history—was extraordinarily valuable. In the 17th century, Cardinal Baronius, Muratori and Vico are also worthy of note.

Historical studies developed very much in the 18th century, as Voltaire in France and Gibbon and Hume in England considerably developed historical methods, and so did their contemporary, the famous, London-founded Society for Historical Studies.

These period's historical works are characterized by their appeal to history to debate major philosophical and religious theses. Voltaire used history as a means of criticizing the political institutions and religious ideas prevalent in his time. While history profited from this from the point of view of the broad concepts introduced into it, it is also true that in this period, it lost much of its impartiality. From a historical point of view, Voltaire's most notable work was the history of Charles XII.

Bossuet was a remarkable philosopher of history. He wrote the famous *Treatise on the Philosophy of History* for the Dauphin's use. Another book he wrote, *Essay*

on the Spirit and Customs of Peoples, was not on the same level. The Benedictines of the Congregation of Saint Maur were highly distinguished for their immense work on chronology, archaeology, linguistics and diplomacy. Mabillon and Dom Bouquet can be cited in this regard.

Melanchthon and Helvetius dealt with history. In the transition between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Goerres, the great German historian, reacted with Lessing against the partisan spirit of Voltaire's works, which very often turned history into a collection of gratuitous and unfounded assertions to justify his atheistic and anarchic ideas.

The 19th century saw a reaction against this anti-scientific spirit, which the encyclopedists and their followers introduced into the field of history. Carlyle, Grote and McAulay in England; Prescott and Washington Irving in the United States; Herculano and Oliveira Martins in Portugal; Taine, Thierry, Guizot, Mignet, Lamartine and Michelet in France were notable historians of this period. In Italy, Cesare Cantu stood out the most.

Test Summary

Historian's Task - Before ascertaining whether history is a science, we should examine the historian's task, and then we can verify whether or not this work is scientific.

The Greek words "histas" and "histeron," meaning past and previous, gave rise to the Greek word history, which passed into the Latin language and then into our language [Portuguese]. It means a narration of past events, real or imagined. So we have fairy stories, fairy tales, Napoleon stories. Fairy tales are fruits of the imagination. Napoleon's story might be true.

More rigorously, one must examine history if it is the narration of verified events. History as history is a science—the accurate narration of past events worthy of remembrance. Each term in this definition has its own meaning. Events must be truly narrated, for otherwise, they are not history. They also must be worthy of memory; otherwise, they are unworthy of a historian's interest.

A historian's work consists of:

1. narrating events truthfully, that is, only narrating what happened;
2. analyzing, interpreting and relating these events to each other;
3. recording cases not worthy of memory.

A historian's first job is to look at the sources available to discover the past and carefully collect records of human activity to tell the whole story. To that end, he needs to look for documents in archives, libraries, museums, etc., and consider historiography, testimonies, tradition, etc.

Before basing his account on these sources, a historian must critique their authenticity, i.e., verify that the sources (documents, etc.) are authored by the people to whom they are attributed.

This work requires great acuity of mind and much technical training. When looking at old documents, you need to examine them to determine the material they are composed of, that with which they are written, and the place and date from which they originated. You need to see from the document's style if it is really attributable to its author.

One must examine everything in the document to ensure no contradictions in the narrative cast doubt on its authenticity and to check that different people have not intentionally or accidentally interpolated it.

Once the necessary work to guarantee the document's authenticity has been done, one must check the integrity of its account. The fact that a document is authentic does not suffice for a historian to base himself on it. It also needs to be truthful, i.e. relate facts as they happened. This second task is perhaps even more delicate than the previous one.

To accept the writing of a past event as truthful, a historian must be sure that the document's author wanted to tell the truth, could tell the truth, and knew how to tell the truth.

Some documents are too suspect to be accepted as proof of the truth of a fact. For example, a letter from the Marquise of Santos containing severe reproaches for Empress Leopoldina. Given the character of the Marquise of Santos, whose unruly life is very well known, and the natural animadversion one can assume she had against the Empress, it is entirely legitimate to doubt the Marquise's sincerity in making those accusations. A historian can never accept such a document as sufficient evidence to prove any statement detrimental to Empress Leopoldina.

Secondly, the author of the historical document must have been able to tell the truth. Often, a person witnesses an act but cannot tell the truth because he was physically prevented from doing so, was not in the necessary circumstances, or lacked the intellectual resources to see the situation appropriately. For example, a soldier who recounts a battle can only be accepted as a credible historical witness if he wrote away from his superiors' surveillance and if the circumstances allowed him to observe the combat accurately.

Finally, the document's author must have been able to tell the truth. Specific facts are so complex that, to be credible, their account must be made by an observer capable of penetrating the most subtle details of the event he or she witnessed.

Without these circumstances, the document cannot be a reliable basis for any historical work.

However, that is not enough. It is also necessary to examine the document to see if it contradicts information in other historical sources or contradicts itself. One of these two flaws could seriously damage the document's credibility in part or as a whole. What I just said about written documents also applies to critiquing verbal statements of a historian testifying to a historical fact.

After this evaluation, the historian enters another phase of historical work. After duly recognizing in the documents all the elements necessary to know the event as much as possible, he will relate that event to others that took place simultaneously, preceded, or succeeded the one under study.

Thus, by juxtaposing these various facts with the fact he is studying, he can shed light on events that will give him an even more perfect understanding of the episode that interests him. Essential details about a particular event are often missing. Sometimes, the lack of such information prevents one from including the event in history. For example, one can evaluate the place where the event took place; it is even more important to know the time when it happened. A historian must relate this fact to another to see if he can clarify these circumstances.

The comparative study of a historical fact with others is also critical because the similarity shared by events of the exact nature in different epochs makes it possible to elucidate obscure parts of a historical fact.

Finally, the study of several historical facts together is necessary for a historian to reconstruct the functioning of institutions, the environment of past societies, and the habits of some collectivity (courts, armies, etc.), not just in isolated facts but in an entire social life in the set of episodes that compose them.

Once this work is done, a historian naturally examines the causes of the historical fact he is studying and the consequences it produces. This work requires the utmost scientific rigor, lest fantasy take away all its value. The historian must rigorously distinguish between causes that he knows to be certain and those he can imagine to be probable or simply possible. When studying these causes or consequences, he needs to equip himself with the most varied resources the specialized technique of various sciences can offer him.

When telling the battle's story, he has to examine the causes of victory, using the resources provided by military art. When writing the story of poisoning, he must explore the causes of death with all the help that medicine and chemistry can provide. When writing the history of a social institution, he has to use all the facilities that modern sociology puts at his disposal. Therefore, a historian's intellectual scope is immense. To do a conscientious job, a historian must have recourse to every science without exception.

Controversies are essential especially at this stage of a historian's work. Free-willers, determinists, or materialists see the causes and consequences of historical phenomena from entirely different prisms. Hence, historians must establish their philosophical convictions before undertaking any historical work.

After studying an event, verifying its causes, and establishing its consequences, one examines it in conjunction with other historical facts to reconstitute the big

picture of history, a historian still needs to group events according to a specific criterion to make it easier for readers to understand them.

The criteria used to establish the grouping of historical facts vary greatly. Firstly, you have the grand divisions of history: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Modern Age, and the Contemporary Age. Other chronological divisions are the history of a century, a generation, etc. However, sometimes, one can group historical facts by their nature. There are military histories, reporting only military events; diplomatic histories, reporting only facts of diplomatic life; a country's internal history, relating only events of internal politics, institutions, customs, etc.

Once this phase is over, a historian faces another problem: narration. A narration can be more or less literary depending on the historian's character. In literary narrations, the historian is concerned with making a brilliant narration.

Some historians, however, find literary preoccupation detrimental to the objectivity of historical narration or lack literary talent, so they try to make a concise narration to emphasize the objectivity of their work and the perfection of its informative elements, almost entirely disregarding its literary aspects.

The classical historians of all countries were great historians and stylists simultaneously. That was the case with Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius and Plutarch in Greece and with Tacitus, Titus Livius and Salustius in Rome.

That said, the question of whether history is a science is not easy to answer to those like you who haven't studied philosophy because the notion of science varies according to different philosophical schools. Disagreement on this issue can happen even among philosophers of the same school.

For lack of time, I can't give you an account of the immense controversy about the true concept of science. Many modern philosophers uphold this clear and common definition: Science is the sure and systematic knowledge of things by their causes. If we accept this concept, we can say that history is a science because it studies facts to know them, investigate their causes, and describe their effects.

This issue of recognizing history as scientific is fairly recent because the ancients considered history a search for information about past events. They did not consider the possibility of history systematically explaining the events it narrates. This concept remained until very recently. History was rejected as a science under the claim that knowledge is classified as historical, philosophical or poetic if based on memory, reason, or imagination respectively. History had no place for reason; therefore, it was not a science.

However, today, there is a growing tendency to recognize history as scientific. The ever-increasing development of sociological studies, closely intertwined with history, has meant that both are often confused. As these studies have a scientific character, there is a tendency to attribute this character to history.

Historical Sources. A historical source is anything that helps a historian to learn about a past event worthy of remembrance. In addition to written documents, oral statements and testimonies, tradition can be critical as a historical source. In his studies, a historian should also analyze objects left by preceding generations, which can be of keen interest in understanding the past.

External criticism of a historical source occurs when a historian tries to analyze a document's authenticity. Earlier, I referred to this part of historical work when I talked about examining the material of which the document is composed, etc.

A historical document's internal critique happens when its content is analyzed. I also highlighted this phase in my presentation of a historian's work when referring to the inquiries necessary to establish the truth of historical facts.

History's Auxiliary Sciences. This term refers to all the sciences historians use to carry out their historical work. As a rule, all sciences are auxiliary to history because all sciences interest a historian. Since man is the main object of historians' study, what interests man concerns the historian.

More specifically, history's auxiliary sciences make it easier for historians to work with historical sources. These sciences include archaeology, which is the study of ancient monuments; abigraphy, which establishes the set of rules necessary to decipher, translate and examine inscriptions of the past, deducing all their philological and historical lessons; paleography, the knowledge of the writing of past times and the elements necessary to read and interpret ancient texts.

Diplomatics is the study and critique of documents, letters, codes, and especially self-authentic documents and all historical deeds. One should not confuse this science with what is commonly called diplomacy, which has nothing to do with it.

Sigillography is the auxiliary science of history that deals with describing and studying seals, particularly medieval ones.

Heuristics is the art of stating the material the historian should use in his work.

Geography and **chronology** provide essential elements for historians because geography makes it possible to know the facts and the place where they happened, while chronology makes it possible to learn the time in which they occurred. It is impossible to insert an episode into history without them.

Genealogy is also important for history.

Anthropogeography studies the relationship between man and the physical environment, including political geography, economics, etc.

Anthropology is the natural history of man.

Ethnography is the study and description of different nations from the point of view of their activities' material manifestations.

Ethnology is the science that deals with the formation and physical characteristics of human races.

Psychology, sociology, philosophy, and linguistics are instrumental for an accurate knowledge of history.

Philology aims to understand and interpret the various languages critically, grammatically, or rhetorically. Naturally, language is one of the surest indicators of a people's mentality, traditions, intellectual values, etc. Philology provides a historian with such a wide range of resources that it would be impossible to list them all. To give an idea of the value of philology for historical studies, suffice it to note in passing the possibility of establishing the racial kinship between peoples who have been dead for many centuries through the affinity of the languages they spoke.

Historical synthesis reconstructs the past by comparing already-known historical facts.

Part Two

Pre-History

Definition

Some authors say that pre-history is a separate science from history. It should be called proto-history rather than pre-history.

Origin of Life

The problem of the origin of the human race has been widely debated over the last century and consists of knowing how man appeared. Suppose we do not admit that humans originated from the evolution of lower beings. In that case, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to reject the biblical version according to which God created them.

The origin of the human race is related to the origin of life and, more remotely, that of inanimate beings. The doctrine of spontaneous generation that life could

originate from inert matter arose to combat the arguments demonstrating the existence of God. That hypothesis became thoroughly discredited once the spontaneous generation theory failed due to Pasteur's experiments.

Some scientists then claimed that spontaneous generation occurred in ancient times, when all the conditions on the globe differed. However, with the perfection typical of modern laboratory experiments, scientists replicated the most varied temperature, pressure, etc. without inert matter acquiring life.

Furthermore, calculating the time needed for the first living cell to evolve into a plant, for example, would require many centuries, and life in the universe would positively have been impossible at that time, given the existing conditions. Sensing that this hypothesis was unfeasible, some evolutionists resorted to the theory of microbial rain from another planet very close to our globe.

Darwin's Evolutionary Hypothesis

The origin of the human race was also the subject of heated discussion in the 19th century for the same philosophical and religious reasons evident in the debate on the previous problem. Darwin authored a scientific hypothesis according to which man is nothing more than an evolved animal. His doctrine can be reduced to three principles:

1. In the struggle for life, adapted animal species suppress others through vital competition;
2. by natural selection, vital competition produces the survival of the fittest species;
3. sexual function provides the procreation of the most advantageous types for a species.

"Pythecanthropus" Not Found

Fervently accepting Darwin's hypothesis, Haeckel claimed that apes were man's ancestors. In 1873, the French Congress for the Advancement of Science heard a report by two scientists who, for the first time, hypothesized the existence of an intermediate being between man and the ape, which they called Pythecanthropus, meaning ape-man—the so-called intermediate being.

Seventeen years later, they found evidence of a first being identified as an intermediary between man and ape. A Dutch military doctor participating in a Dutch expedition to the island of Java, excavated a site called Trinil and obtained many bones from elephants, rhinoceroses, etc. He also found three monkey bones. The first, acquired in September 1891, was a tooth; another was found in October of the same year, one meter from the same spot. Finally, in 1892, a femur was found 13 meters from where the tooth had been.

Studying those remains, Dubois reconstructed man's "great-grandfather." Served by a fertile imagination, he did not shrink from making a reproduction of

Pithecanthropus, exhibited with great success at the famous World Exhibition in Paris, given people's curiosity. Despite the limited material obtained, Dubois reconstructed a Pithecanthropus in the most minute details. However, objections began to arise.

In 1906, a wealthy German widow, in memory of her husband, ordered new research on the site where Dubois had found the bones above. She hoped to find other bones of the same being to reconstruct the ape-man with complete objectivity. However, her research had a contradictory result. They turned over ten thousand cubic meters of dirt around the small monument erected to Dubois on the site where the remains of the supposed Pithecanthropus were found without finding any bone that one could remotely attribute to a Pithecanthropus despite the large number of different bones found there.

The perplexity caused by this finding became more acute when many scientists, also prone to evolutionism, drew general attention to the fact that the bones found by Dubois were not intermediate between a man and an ape, while the skull and teeth are typically those of an ape, the femur is that of a man. To consider the Pithecanthropus as an intermediary, one must simultaneously find both characteristics in a single bone.

Finally, authors sympathetic to evolutionism pointed out that the skull was the part that made the most remarkable progress in the evolution from ape to man. But the Pithecanthropus had such an imperfect skull that a human brain endowed with intelligence could not fit inside it.

Unanimity among scientists against the Pithecanthropus was such that in 1924, Dubois himself, speaking before the Royal Academy of Amsterdam, acknowledged that the so-called Pithecanthropus was nothing more than an ape at a higher level of evolution than other apes and that, without having anything human about it, it might have been, among the various species of apes, the one from which man originated.

Later, they thought to have found traces of the ape-man in various bones, successively taken from a prehistoric site, but no one knows whether those bones truly belonged to an ape-man.

Primitive Man

Within the short time frame of our school year, we cannot wholly analyze primitive man from a material or intellectual point of view. However, intelligence is the characteristic that distinguishes man from other beings and gives him royalty over all of them.

The appearance of some prehistoric human remains and the extremely rudimentary condition in which primitive men lived give us the impression that their intelligence was very short of resources and did not allow them to make progress and produce any more than the very rudimentary utensils they left.

A first check will destroy this false impression. In order to prove that primitive man's intelligence of primitive was on the same level as that of civilized man, it is enough to see that, when given the education commonly imparted to today's children, the children of savage tribes in contact with civilization reveal a surprising aptitude for learning everything and consistently rise to the cultural level of any ordinary civilized person. Furthermore, there are today savage tribes as primitive as the most remote prehistoric populations.

A second argument corroborates this last thought. No one measures the talent of a people, at a given time, exclusively by the degree of development they are at, but by the effort they are capable of making to progress.

For example, Euclid's outstanding scientific achievements have been made available to educators. However, no one has concluded that Euclid had the same intelligence as today's math students. All mathematicians still consider Euclid an immortal genius, but his knowledge has long been surpassed. Therefore, Euclid's intelligence is measured by his original achievement.

If we measure primitive man's intelligence by this criterion, we will conclude that it was mighty. Many authors have claimed it was more potent than contemporary man's. Given the number of inventions made at the time, they called primitive man "*homo faber*" (ingenious man).

Races

There is no unanimity among authors regarding the criteria to adopt for classifying human races. The current classification based on color differences fails to cover all peoples in clear categories and is based on a relatively secondary characteristic.

Sometimes, the wide variety of essential characteristics within the same race reveals this classification's fragility. These differences often mean that people of different races have more or less similar types, which is not the case with other types of the same race.

Many historians have tried to classify the current races according to the evolutionary criterion, seeking first to establish a hierarchy of values among the contemporary races to deduce which are the oldest.

Proceeding from a series of highly debatable aprioristic affirmations, they concluded that all characteristics of superiority coincide in the white race, from the first—intellectual—to the perfection of physical vigor and beauty. Thus, the race most different from this would necessarily be the least perfect and, therefore, inferior.

This assertion, which lacks a positive scientific basis, has led certain evolutionists to claim that the oldest of races is the black race, from which the other races, including the white race, are directly descended. And, [they claim that] within the white race, the Aryan race, being the most perfect, would necessarily be the youngest.

However, it has now been proven that the black race is much more recent than others. Prehistoric studies demonstrate the existence of prehistoric races profoundly different from each other, according to the various periods. The diversity between these races is confirmed by the remarkable difference in the features of the various human remains, and many people claim that race differences in prehistory are at least as significant as in historical times.

Paleolithic and Neolithic Civilizations

Lower Paleolithic

Prehistory's various periods are characterized by the names of the places where the first excavations occurred. Thus, the Paleolithic era's earliest is often called Chellean because of Chelles, in France, where they first made excavations relating to that period.

On the other hand, each of those periods saw the existence of a different race, usually designated by the name of the locality where human bones from that period were first found.

The human race that lived in the Chellean period is the oldest of the known races, and is called the Mauer race. During this period, the climate was uniform and temperate. Man lived preferably on plateaus and riverbanks and in small, very easy-to-build dwellings. At that time, the animals were mainly hyenas, hippos, lions, bears, etc. The most common tool used during this period was a tonsil-shaped, i.e., almond-shaped chipped stone, used mainly to cut meat, the fur of small animals, and wood chips. People in this period were already familiar with the use of fire.

Pitldown was the existing human race in the following period, called Chelonian. During this period, the temperature dropped more and more, which explains the mammoth's appearance. However, man still endured living outdoors. His objects show much greater perfection in prehistoric industry, both in terms of their finish and their greater variety.

The Mousterian period followed, during which the Neanderthal race lived. The already frigid climate forced man to move into caves, some of which were very spacious. Studying the soil in these caves shows that prehistoric man was indifferent to the cleanliness and decorum of his dwelling. Remains of food, traces of a fire and pieces of broken utensils are found everywhere.

Cave dwellers, including women and children, went out hunting during the summer, which was always very short. Hyenas would then enter the abandoned dwellings, feed on the waste and dirty them copiously. It has been proven that the families did not clean up the place when they returned. In general, they only

found bones from animal skulls and limbs, suggesting they butchered the hunted prey and only used the parts mentioned for food.

Mousterian industry often produced poorly finished instruments, even though some details showed their makers had great skill. That is because those men habitually made large quantities of those instruments, thousands of which were found in a single cave.

The relative frequency of migrations made it inconvenient for them to carry those instruments constantly, so they were made in each place. The Mousterian industry stands out for the perfection, variety and specialization of its tools.

The Mousterian period is the first in which the cult of the dead can be seen for sure. Traces left behind from previous periods are not sufficient to judge anything in this regard.

Upper Paleolithic

Its early period is called Aurignacian because of the Aurignac region. The people of this period are of the Grimaldi race. This period marks the appearance of art. Notably, people of this period revealed a highly remarkable aesthetic sense in their artistic manifestations—the oldest known statuettes date from this period. In addition to sculpture, they began to practice painting and engraving.

The use of bone, ivory and horn for personal objects began. Men painted themselves with ochre and a wide variety of dyeing minerals and usually made ornaments made from shells or animal teeth. Bone made it possible for the first time to make jars for carrying paint, flutes, whistles and statues.

The extremely cold climate only allowed hunting for two or three months a year, and they usually consumed horse or reindeer meat.

This period also saw the cult of the dead, with colored corpses buried with a large number of objects like America's savages.

Chro-Magnon is this period's second phase. The temperature remains cold. While certain animals such as mammoths, rhinoceros and horses significantly decrease in number, reindeer multiply tremendously.

Industry at this time produced much lighter, more delicate and artistic objects than in previous eras. Characteristic of this industry is the object commonly called a laurel leaf, a work of extraordinary skill. Some of these leaves, made of crystal, seem to have served as jewelry. However, painting, sculpture and engraving do not seem to have progressed during this period.

In the following period, called Magdalenian, with the Chancellor's race, the fauna and flora continued to be characteristic of the polar regions due to the consistently colder and drier temperatures. Reindeer are still numerous. The widespread use of bone led to a decline in the flint industry. Early limestone lamps, arrows, harpoons for hunting and fishing, fish hooks, etc., date from this period.

When analyzed at first glance, the Azilian period is so inferior to previous periods that many people have assumed that Paleolithic races emigrated from Europe

during the Azilian period and were replaced by a less advanced race, leaving us traces of that period's characteristics. This conjecture seems unfounded since, in many respects, the Azilian period shows significant progress along with some setbacks.

Agriculture began to appear, as well as early signs of graphic characters on stones polished by the action of river currents and decorated with letters from the Latin, Greek and Phoenician alphabets, and even from the island of Cyprus.

Neolithic

The Neolithic period is divided into two phases: ancient and recent. In the old phase, great humidity continued, and the fauna was almost the same as today. Tools are made of polished stone and are very varied.

The most important remnants from this period were found in Denmark's Kjoekkoumedding ("kitchen remains"). During this period, people were already familiar with using domestic animals, including dogs, oxen, sheep and pigs.

The recent Neolithic period saw the appearance of axes made of valuable polished stones, such as jade, which were real luxury objects. Wonderful stone vases from Egypt date from this period. The manufacture of daggers and spearheads reached remarkable perfection. They extracted flint from great depths, with excavations up to 12 meters deep.

People made fabrics, and trade took on considerable proportions, both by land and sea, with many commercial roads. Dwellings were fortified camps surrounded by a water moat or famous lake dwellings.

Megalithic monuments are stone monuments dating back to the Neolithic period. Mega means big, and lithos means stone. These monuments include the Dolmen, a small burial chamber made of large rocks juxtaposed and containing a hole for introducing food for funeral meals, and *menhirs*, large stones isolated or arranged in rows, whose meaning is unknown.

Eastern Civilizations

Eastern civilizations include Egypt, Phoenicia, the Hebrews, Chaldea, Persia, India, China and Japan, not to mention others of great interest but still less studied that flourished in Asia Minor, Indochina, etc.

The study of history and prehistory has made significant progress thanks to recently acquired knowledge, the support of Western powers, and the more or less spontaneous tolerance of the peoples of the East.

Forms of Government

Almost all Eastern civilizations were governed by a monarchy. The ruler, generally hereditary, was almost always considered to be a descendant of the gods and thus endowed with an almost divine nature. Surrounded by splendor, he generally lived like the ancient Russian emperors (at least until Peter the Great) enclosed in his palaces, whose immense courtyards contained many buildings and constituted small fortified cities that accumulated wonders of wealth and art.

China had an elective monarchy for a long time. Although Egypt's monarchy was hereditary, the pharaoh could only ascend the throne after undergoing an examination before a board of priests to verify his competence to govern.

Egypt was the only country that seemed to have known a clear separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers. Egyptian priests exercised legislative power, and the pharaohs exercised executive authority. A people's court exercised judicial power in each municipality. People who disagreed with the court's ruling were entitled to appeal to the priests' supreme court, against whose decision there was no appeal.

The Chaldean monarchy, as it existed in Assur, Nineveh or Babylon, was the classic type of absolute monarchy in which the king's authority was unlimited.

Social Classes

In most countries, royal authority was limited by powerful aristocracies. Egypt and Japan had feudal regimes very similar to those of medieval Europe.

Social classes in antiquity were clearly differentiated by unequal political rights and tax brackets and from the point of view of honor. Each social class was often entitled to wear its own clothes and receive great reverence, profound greetings, and other expressions of respect from the lower classes.

Although there was some difference in social classes in Chaldea and China, it was, like today, mainly economic and cultural. From a political point of view, everyone was equal before the state, embodied by the king.

Criteria for Differentiating Social Classes

In most ancient peoples, social classes formed as follows:

1. an invading people penetrated a particular region and reduced its inhabitants to servitude;
2. on this territory, there will be subsequently two demarcated classes: a) that of the conquerors and their descendants, endowed with full civil and political rights; b) that of the conquered people, reduced to slavery or a situation of considerable legal inferiority;

3. no matter how many centuries passed after the conquest, the two peoples remained separate, and the distinction between the classes remained ever-present.

The early inhabitants of Japan, India, Egypt and Phoenicia were subjugated by invading peoples. In other words, the peoples we now call Japanese, Hindu, Egyptian, Phoenician, etc., occupied the highest social stratum. In contrast, the others, the peoples that really should be called Japanese, Hindu, Egyptian, Phoenician, etc., were placed in the lowest layers of society and enslaved.

This way of dividing classes was often very complex. For example, the Persians dominated the Medes and formed a higher class. The Medes and Persians then dominated the Bactrians, who became a third class, with the Medes remaining as an intermediate class. And so the Persian empire successively incorporated different peoples, the last forming a class inferior to the last but one. Finally, they had what could be called the empire's ground floor—the social class that belonged to peoples who were deadly enemies of the Persians and were conquered by force without laying down arms.

The organization of classes in Phoenicia, as well as in Sparta, obeyed this same criterion. In Sparta, in addition to the social class of the Spartans, descendants of invading and dominating aristocracies who held the plenitude of powers, there were the Periecs, a second class made up of small, free farmers who inhabited the outskirts of the Spartan state, and the Iliots, a miserable class deprived of all rights and whose members were hunted down and killed in city streets like animals, on certain days of the year. The Iliots and Periecs were the descendants of two different peoples dominated by the Spartans. The unequal treatment of the two derives from the unequal conditions in which they surrendered.

The same criteria prevailed in all municipalities of Greece and Rome until social revolutions changed the situation. Roman nobility descended from tribes that invaded the area and founded the city. The plebs descended from adventurers or escaped criminals who slowly joined the municipality. No matter how remote, those of foreign descent were always treated as foreigners. The laws didn't exist for them and only protected descendants of the nobility. This total lack of rights for the plebs and the transformations it brought to society led to the social revolutions we will study in Greece and Rome.

Thus, social classes did not gain prominence by moral or intellectual value or by a refined education but by force imposing one person over another. Two notes were characteristic in the division of social classes:

1. the enormous disproportion of rights between the various classes, with all advantages concentrated to benefit a small number of people;
2. the fact that social difference originated solely from force.

Slaves

Slavery was the most characteristic expression of domination by force. Except for China during a specific period, all ancient peoples knew slavery. The slave was usually a prisoner of war and passed the condition of servitude to all his descendants indefinitely.

In Roman Law's heyday, a slave was considered an inanimate object of which the master could dispose at will. A victorious people could not refrain from enslaving all members of the defeated people. A slave had no right to life, property, or even a family.

The Assyrians used to blind their slaves in large numbers and then employ them in public work. The Phoenicians often employed their slaves in galleys, where they rowed all their lives, subjected to inhuman treatment.

In general, slaves built all the great monuments of antiquity.

Slave markets were a highly developed type of trade where buyers evaluated entire families. They would buy the father to build a monument in Chaldea and the mother to be a perfumer for an aristocratic lady in Rome. One of the children would go to Carthage and the other to Egypt, so the family dispersed, never to see each other again. Beatings (that often caused bloodshed and even death), mistreatment, hunger, insults and crushing work would be their fate.

It is impossible to understand the functioning of democracy in Athens and Rome, but above all in Athens, without knowing the role of slaves in human societies before Jesus Christ. A small number of free men debated almost daily in the public square on the rights of the people and indulged in the luxury of listening to antiquity's best orators. At the same time, a slave population two or three times as numerous toiled in the city and surrounding fields.

Economic Life

The distribution of wealth in ancient society was an expressive index of what I have just said. In most cases, as trade and industry increased people's wealth, customs lost their patriarchal simplicity. Luxury developed and became ever more pronounced in the wealthy classes.

Opposition between social classes generally became clearly defined after a while. On the one hand, you had a very wealthy class living in an exuberance of all material goods; on the other hand, a pauperized multitude lived from exhausting work and subsisting with insignificant resources.

Pagan Religions

Despite the immense variety of cults people practiced before Christ, all share commonalities. Each country had its own religion and gods worshipped by its nationals. However, these religions did not generally consider each other false, as is the case today. Indeed, a Roman could believe, for example, in the existence

of Egyptian tutelary gods in addition to his own, just as an Egyptian could believe in Roman gods. But each country's gods were private to their people.

The Romans believed that while two countries were fighting, their gods were also fighting. Always skillful politicians, they tried to get other people's gods to betray them and promised that if the Romans won, they would transfer those gods to Rome, a prize the Romans considered an enviable one even for gods. For this reason, many people, fearful of betrayal, turned to the gods before the fighting and threatened to stone them if the city was not victorious. Just in case, they tied up those gods with strong ropes.

As for morality, certain ancient religions undoubtedly prescribed very elevated rules of conduct, while others promoted frankly immoral ones. Even the former agreed to great immoralities and dictated infamous rules. For example, they all permitted slavery, which contained every possible immorality, and were thus complicit with this heinous social crime.

In addition, a series of childish practices mixed with religion, even in the most advanced civilizations. In Japan, they chased away spirits with hissing arrows. Persian religion made it a sin for people to spit in water or bury their dead. And the ultimate remedy for a seriously ill person was to bring a dog close to him, as its gaze drove away the evil spirits causing the illness. Killing ants was a great act of virtue.

Another characteristic of the debasement to which ancient religions reduced man was worshipping beings inferior to him. Hence, the Egyptians worshiped oxen, birds, and crocodiles. In India, they worshipped even cats, elephants and fleas. Even worse was the worship of inanimate beings. Certain religions even exerted an evil influence due to the intrinsic immorality of their doctrines. If the gods of Greek Olympus existed, they would have been arrested by the police, given the number of incests, infanticides, parricides and robberies they were accused of.

The Phoenician religion demanded human sacrifices. It believed that man must offer the divinity what is most precious to him, so men sacrificed their manhood to the gods. They would enter the temple at set times, with loud music playing with repeated rhythms. Near the altar, specific individuals connected to the religion would follow the music by spinning around a fixed point like spinning tops. The music's rhythm hallucinated and infected the crowd. The men in the audience willing to sacrifice themselves would approach the altar, frantic with the collective dance, amputate their manhood with a sword and run out into the city drenched in blood. They would be offered women's clothing in the first house they entered and would take up residence near the temple. They would perform their circular dance and scourge themselves daily until they were dripping with blood.

Women offered gods their virginity and promises. Such an offering consisted of placing themselves in the temple at any man's disposal. After that, they descended into the most infamous of professions and went around the country, practicing their abominable trade as a holocaust to the divinity.

The Greco-Roman religion was no less cruel or depraved. According to the ancient cult of the ancestors, professed by the Greeks and Romans, when a head of a

family died, some slaves were strangled over his grave along with some horses so that he was served in the afterlife.

The gladiatorial games, which took on terrible proportions in Rome, were also religious solemnities. The old Roman religion considered it appropriate, in addition to sacrificing slaves, to sacrifice extra lives to appease the dead. Hence, they held gladiatorial fights in which they immolated the defeated combatant for the benefit of a deceased person's soul. Later, fights became public entertainment without ever losing their religious character. Thus, in many combats, the solemnity began with the killing of an innocent victim at the foot of an altar in the arena.

A great historian said that the Greeks and Romans, so admirable for many of their virtues, completely lost their morality regarding religious matters. Greece had countless temples dedicated to Venus, the goddess of impure love. However, they dedicated no temple to conjugal love.

Religion was so closely linked to immorality that when Athens was once in grave danger of being conquered by its adversary, its government recommended its fate to Venus. When the threat passed, the city ordered a parade of its most infamous women painted on the temple standing in an attitude of prayer, with this inscription: "These have saved Athens with their prayers."

It wasn't long before the most eminent minds in both Greece and Rome rose against this religion, recognizing it as absurd and convinced that only one God existed, and the pagan gods were false. Socrates was condemned to death for having secretly preached such doctrines, and the great Plato only shared the same conviction with under the utmost secrecy for fear of having the same fate.

Part Three

Egyptian Civilization

We've already seen the difference between sociology and history. Now, let's move on to the study of Eastern civilizations. Of course, because of the brevity with which I am obliged to present this subject, I will skip parts commonly mentioned in compendia of the History of Civilization.

Let's take a look at the oldest civilization, Egypt. I'm not going to talk about everything contained in Universal History textbooks on this subject because you've already been tested about it at the entrance exam.

You know how isolated the Egyptian people were from other peoples of antiquity, which gave them various advantages. On the one hand, Egypt is connected to Asia by the Isthmus of Suez and separated from it by the Red Sea. It has the Mediterranean to the north and the desert on the other side, leaving any invaders little chance of attack. Lands to the south were home to a mysterious and peaceful people: the Ethiopians.

All these circumstances gave the Egyptian people relative calm, and they built their greatness in peace through peaceful victories of work and intelligence instead of not wars of conquest. The people were civilized by their own resources. It was a great empire that knew how to elicit from itself all it could give. The Egyptians were not conquerors but defended their wealth.

As far as scientific studies were concerned, it was one of the most cultured countries of antiquity. One historian said Egypt was the "highest school of antiquity, where other peoples went to study." For the Greeks, it was like a shining beacon.

Curiously, the Egyptian people have a very ancient history. It is difficult to assess their value no matter how deep we delve into their history, and we always find them at a high level of civilization no matter how deep we delve into their origins.

There were two distinct racial elements in Egypt:

1. Before being invaded by the people who made it great, it seems that a race with a dark complexion inhabited it; 2. White invaders defeated that race, and both races mixed, giving rise to Egypt's inhabitants a color that gradually became lighter in the upper echelons of society to such an extent that the empire's leading personalities were almost white, only toasted by the sun.

Egypt owed its prosperity to the fertility of the land bathed by the Nile, which turned sandy soil into highly fertile land. A phrase from the ancient Egyptians sums it up well: "Egypt had three aspects during the year. First, it was a little sand, then it became a sea of water, and, finally, it became a sea of flowers." That is easy to explain. It was a sea of sand during droughts before the Nile flooded, a sea of water during that flooding, and a sea of flowers after the Nile receded, meaning that, due to the fertility of its land, Egypt was filled with flowers that later became fruits.

Here are the main aspects we should study in Egyptian civilization: 1. culture and religion; 2. political, economic and social organization; 3. architecture and the arts.

Religion

Primitive men created religions and erected idols to worship, a phenomenon that reached grand proportions among the Egyptians. Egyptians are essentially superstitious, and justifying their belief has always been the primary national concern. Extraordinarily superstitious, the Egyptians took all the phenomena they

didn't understand as manifestations of hidden divinities. Hence, one finds panic in many passages of Egyptian history, which is the reason for their many gods.

Characteristics of the Egyptian Religion

Mildness is its main characteristic, as it does not have the human sacrifices seen in other religions. Some people claim that red-haired people were thrown into the fire because they had the color of "Seth," but this fact is disputed and disappeared entirely in the religion of Middle and New Egypt. The Egyptian religion was concerned with its people's morals, and one finds numerous proofs, such as *The Book of the Dead*.

Cults

They practiced two cults in Egypt: the Initiate cult and the popular cult. Priests and people practiced the initiates' cult at a higher intellectual level, and it formed a religion whose philosophy was far above the ordinary. Popular cults, practiced by the general population, featured a series of ceremonies and acts seemingly with no explanation but showing a religious spirit and satisfying their superstitions. Among popular cults, we can distinguish between local and national cults.

Local Cults

Egyptian cities were more or less separate, so many had their own cults. For example, Memphis worshipped Apis the Ox, and many cities revered the famous triads of which Osiris, Isis and Horus were the most important. Sometimes, a city dominated Egypt and made its gods respected throughout the country, making them national gods. Many took on various aspects, and their names changed so much that today, they could be considered different deities.

National Cults

Osiris was the national god but appeared under many names, such as Amun, Ma, and Phas. Of the national gods, the best known were Osiris and his triad's companions, Horus and Isis.

In popular worship, Osiris represented the setting sun, Horus the rising sun, and Isis the moon. The myth of Osiris was related to these triads. According to a popular explanation, Osiris, the father of all, was killed by his brother Set, god of the desert and darkness. He reduced Osiris to pieces and threw them into the Nile. Isis looked for her husband's pieces in the river, gathered them together and made a new god, Horus. That is how the legend sought to explain day and night.

The most extravagant divinations appear in popular worship. Animals were worshipped, such as the ox in Memphis; the cat was considered sacred; crocodiles, such as the famous Lebok very, and scorpions, hawks, geese, beetles and ibises were also worshipped. In modern times, however, it seems the cult did not address animals directly, as they were merely manifestations of the gods.

The Initiates' Cult

The cult of animals was little known and studied for a long time. Today, it appears as a new manifestation of Egyptian culture. Although still quite rudimentary for that time, its conceptions are remarkable. They believed that a supreme being was responsible for creating and transforming matter. Osiris contained the principle of the transformation of matter, spirit, space and time, all of which came together to form the supreme being. It is an abstract concept, so the lower classes did not understand it.

Worship of the Dead

They had a particular cult dedicated to the dead and accepted metempsychosis [transmigration], the soul's passage and return to the body. They accepted the existence of the *kā*, a spiritual part in men that did not disappear with the body. It remained with the body for as long as it body lived, and sometimes even for a long time after death, then left to undergo the judgment of Osiris. But one day, it would return to the abandoned body, hence the need to preserve it by mummification. The *kā* needed food, so they placed food and drink in the tombs.

No one could evade the judgment of Osiris. They say that even the pharaohs submitted, but only usurper pharaohs submitted. As the soul had to submit to judgment, they placed *The Book of the Dead* in the tomb so the person wouldn't forget anything about his life. The book contained everything he had to tell Osiris. His heart, which could not lie, could be called upon to testify to what the soul was saying. This belief in the dead is valuable as a source for studying Egyptian morality.

The embalming to preserve the body was the most important thing. They subjected corpses to a series of operations and even placed images of the deceased next to his body, apparently so the *Kā* could use it if the mummy were damaged.

The ancient Egyptians were the most religious people of antiquity. One writer said that everything in Egypt was a god except for God himself because they worshipped everything. They had few animals but adored all of them.

Egyptians considered snakes as emblems of royal dignity. They were sacred, and you can tell how highly regarded they were by the treatment they received. When caught, they pulled their poisonous fangs but treated them affectionately, giving them cakes to eat. People went so far as to play music for them to listen to.

In addition to snakes, they also revered the ibis wader, as you may already know. Crocodiles were kept in lakes surrounded by marble, with men to guard them. Pilgrims would stop to worship these animals when passing by their pond. Dogs, cats, the famous *apis-ox*, and all animals were sacred to the ancient Egyptians. Depending on a believer's more or less difficult situation, he had more or less of his hair shaved off.

According to some historians, this type of belief seems to be due to the influence of the country's black inhabitants, who went up to the highest social classes. The same thing happened here in Brazil, as the fetishism of black slaves brought from Africa moved from slave quarters to the big houses of plantation owners. In other words, it rose from the lower to the higher classes.

In addition to the beliefs we've described, there was also a high cult maintained by priests. The priests of ancient Egypt were jealous of their knowledge. They kept their high cult a well-guarded secret, especially the priests of Heliopolis, who doubted the veracity of popular cults and even conceived the idea of a single god.

For them, god was a supreme force from which all existing things sprang. The souls of individuals reincarnated successively in the form of animals or men until they returned to god, or instead, until they became an integral part of god. All things originated from a divine breath, which is why the Egyptians symbolically hung an egg on the doors of their temples. According to this belief, man needed to atone for a crime committed at the dawn of humanity.

After death, people had to pass through two judgments: the earthly judgment and the divine judgment. The earthly judgment was exciting and took place as follows: when a person of a some social position died, his body had to cross the River Nile in a unique funeral boat. It was received on the other side of the river by important figures arranged in a semi-circle. These figures would hear complaints against the dead person from all those who had any, but they had to prove their allegations. If they concluded that the deceased person had been good, they would bury his body; if not, they would not bury it.

This judgment was so impartial that even a pharaoh was denied a grave. On the other hand, such a ceremony became deeply engraved in the public mind. Thus, it was very educational as it gave people an accurate idea of the morality highly cultivated by Egyptians. A famous Egyptian document, the Turini papyrus, contains 42 precepts on morality.

The morals of the Egyptian people differed significantly from those of other ancient peoples. It recommended kindness and practicing the love of neighbor. Characteristics of Egyptian morals were kindness, gentleness, respect for one's parents, mutual respect between husband and wife, respect for one's superior, etc. That was not the case with other peoples contemporaries of the Egyptians, such as the Assyrians and Babylonians, whose kings thought they should only earn a reputation as wicked warriors whose motto was "a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye." On inscriptions in the ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, one can see the characteristics of the people or race that inhabited those cities. These inscriptions show that Assyrian and Babylonian kings boasted of their cruelty and depravity.

Social Classes

Egypt had three social classes: 1. the priestly class; 2. the warrior or aristocratic class; 3. the popular class. There was another group not considered a social class, which consisted of the slaves.

Priestly Class

This class was hereditary, i.e., the son of a priest became a priest, and so on. They owned one-third of Egypt's land and had immense assets. They enjoyed political resources and exercised legislative power. The priests were heard by the pharaoh, whom they could examine before ascending to the throne. They had the

right to forbid him from exercising his royal functions if they found him incompetent and also exercised judicial power as a court of second instance.

Warrior or Aristocratic Classes

Like the first, this class owned 1/3 of Egypt's territory, divided between its members as fiefdoms. In his fiefdom, the warrior had political authority, the right to mint currency, and was the military chief. The Egyptian feudal organization was similar to the one England later had, done in such a way that the warriors were never more potent than the pharaoh. The pharaoh's power was somewhat limited because if he needed military forces and did not want the support of the warriors, he had to pay mercenaries, which always caused great discontent among the aristocratic class.

Popular Class

The third class was made up of dark-skinned people who were free, meaning they could own a house, change jobs, get married, etc. However, they couldn't own property because one-third belonged to the pharaoh, another to the priests, and another to the warriors. They were poorly paid for their services, lived miserably, and were given the humblest jobs and chores.

To give an idea of how they treated that class, it's enough to say that when an Egyptian of a certain status touched a pig, he was obliged to bathe in the Nile even if he had touched the animal with the tip of his cloak because they believed that contact with a pig brought essential impurity because it affected the man's soul. That impurity could only be removed by bathing in the river Nile. So, they recruited men from the lower classes to deal with pigs.

The group not considered a social class was made up of slaves who lived in a situation worse than that of animals. They had no rights, not even the right to life. A slave could be killed at his owner's whim, even without a reason. He could be mistreated at will by his masters, separated from his family, and sent to the most arduous labors.

It's a little hard to understand how a country as civilized as Egypt could go to such lengths. True, the existence of slavery is peculiar to all ancient societies, even China. Only the advent of Christianity ended this degrading regime of absolute and absurd subjection of one man to another. With Our Lord Jesus Christ, the notion that all men are equal before the Most High was born and made life relatively good for all men. Only then did the idea of spreading [suitable] living conditions appear so all men could live with dignity. Before the advent of Christianity, in shocking inequality, some lived in plush material comfort while others were utterly trampled underfoot by the arrogance of the former.

The Pharaoh in Ancient Egypt

We already know that the pharaoh was the head of the country in ancient Egypt. He was respected as a god because they assumed he had divine ancestry. On a hieroglyphic inscription, a priest boasts of wearing a pharaoh's sandal. I read a

letter from a pharaoh's commercial agent in which he confessed that he was unworthy of kissing the pharaoh's feet.

The pharaoh exercised executive and judicial power as a court of first instance. The priests exercised second-instance power, meaning they were above the pharaoh.

One must establish the difference between the executive, legislative, and judicial powers: The legislative creates laws, the executive enforces them, and the judiciary deals with doubts that may arise regarding the execution of laws.

For example, the legislative power makes a law to prevent theft; the executive ensures that legislation is applied (executes it), as issuing a law is not enough. The judiciary deals with cases such as two individuals fighting over property and issues a ruling on who owns it.

Thus, the priests held the legislative power. They also held judicial power as a second-instance court. The pharaoh had the second and third powers, and the nobility had the fiefdoms.

Culture

Things unique to Egypt, such as its grand monuments, show its culture was much more significant than we can imagine. The priests were jealous of their culture, kept it hidden, and revealed it to foreigners only partly.

A book by Moreau addresses an issue about the pharaohs' mysterious science: Were the pyramids built to serve as funerary monuments? If an archaeologist working in Europe 500 years from now were to search the rubble of one of its many cathedrals, he would find tombs of bishops, princes, etc., just as we have the remains of [Indian chief] Tibiricá in our cathedral here. The archaeologist could conclude that those cathedrals were built to serve as tombs when we know that worship is their primary function. Moreau claims that the pyramids's primary function was to serve as a reservoir for science, and their secondary role was to be funerary monuments.

Take the Great Pyramid, for example. It stands in a place such that if you draw a line from its apex, it divides the Nile Delta into two equal parts. The Nile Delta took its name from the letter in the Greek alphabet that it resembles. One can compare it to an irregular triangle. The great pyramid's line lies at the apex of that triangle. Scientists who have studied the Great Pyramid's location found it stands on the world's longest earthly meridian, which crosses the largest expanse of land and the shortest stretch of sea. It also divides the habitable parts of the globe into two equal parts—a unique geographical situation.

These findings became even stranger when they pinpointed the location of the Great Pyramid's doors. To their amazement, the scientists found that the Great Pyramid's entrance is located where the polar ray was falling at that time, at the birth of the polar star. They then saw that the polar star appeared when the Great Pyramid was built. The ray of that star pointed toward the Great Pyramid's door. A wealth of knowledge attests to the fact that the pyramids are actual repositories of science.

Many other scientific discoveries have been related to the pyramids, but I won't delve into them because they are too wordy and technical. It is beyond doubt that the study of the pyramids has revealed that these monuments have a highly scientific significance, which leads us to believe that they were not built at random but have a profound meaning.

To give you an idea of these monuments, I'll tell you what a historian says about the cemeteries of ancient Egypt. After the judgment of the deceased person had taken place, they took his corpse to a large necropolis with enormous pits, one of which had a base of 20,000 square feet. Near Lake Meris, the labyrinth was the burial place of families and entire peoples. This labyrinth was a colossal enclosure made up of immense corridors arranged in such a way as to bewilder the strangers who ventured into them. It is curious to note that the labyrinth's floor reproduces the arrangement of the celestial stars.

The inner walls of Egyptian monuments are generally frescoed, depicting the judgment of the dead, family scenes, etc. Egyptian wall paintings show people's life in all its aspects.

The sciences among the Egyptians developed extraordinarily, so we face this problem: Was Greek culture original, or was it assimilated from the Egyptians? We are all used to considering Greece as our spiritual mother, but if we show that in ancient times, Egypt was the country that most cultivated the arts, sciences, etc., it will be clear that the Greeks did not play the role attributed to them.

When other peoples, such as the Romans, spoke about the Greeks, they spoke severely. Plutarch says the Greeks assimilated their whole culture from Egypt. Indeed, Greek music originated abroad. Pythagoras studied in Egypt. The great Greek astronomers were either born or studied in Alexandria, and that of the Egyptians influenced the culture of all or almost all the great Greek talents.

Monuments in Egypt were ubiquitous. There were some very curious temples, such as the labyrinth mentioned above. The wise men of ancient Egypt used these monuments, such as the great pyramids, to consolidate their knowledge.

The temple was laid out as follows: there was a first enclosure, with the priests' quarters, then a more internal square, the temple proper, with the *colossi*, monumental statues such as the Memnon colossi. Egyptian temples also had an inner courtyard where apparitions took place. At the back was a large room where the public was admitted on certain days. It was the hall of columns, or hypostyle, made up of three different naves. The middle one, higher than the other two, led to the apparition room, where they displayed the god on days of great festivities. Finally, there was the room of mysteries, where the statue of the god rested.

A road lined with sphinxes gave access to the temple. In front of the temple were two obelisks, the colossi, the so-called pylon entrance, etc.

Thus, the sciences had an extraordinary development in ancient Egypt. Philosophy, which is the science of sciences, must have greatly developed there. However, we can't say anything about this because the priests, jealous of their knowledge, did not pass their intellectual productions to us. Thus, we cannot assess the extent of their culture. Not only were they very knowledgeable, but

their knowledge appeared when most of the other peoples of history were still in poor intellectual conditions.

Studying the Egyptians' history, we see that they declined and liquefied astonishingly after going through a period of such greatness. Later, we will look at the laws of human progress. Now, if it is true that man moves from one kind of progress to another led by a powerful driving force, how can we explain the demise of such a great progress as that of Egyptian civilization, which suddenly seemed to melt away? One could say that all the life that animated it stopped, and Egypt practically disappeared. What's more, the descendants of the ancient Egyptians became strangers in their own homeland. Champollion went to Egypt to decipher the past because the pharaohs' descendants could not solve the hieroglyphic writing used by their ancestors.

One cannot say that all peoples sustained a blind evolution. A people's prosperity is precarious, and we can compare it to the passing fortunes of men. There have been cases of multimillionaires becoming beggars from one moment to the next.

Let's now look at the writing of the ancient Egyptians, one of the most important things in their history. They wrote using hieroglyphs (hyero=sacred, and graphos=engraving). These hieroglyphs were small drawings, or rather, small strokes with conventional signs. It was possible to tell what the letters were and then interpret the texts.

The laws of reading hieroglyphics were discovered in 1822 by the French scholar Champollion, who compared texts containing various names, such as Cleopatra, Alexander, etc., written in hieroglyphics, Greek, etc. He broke down the name of Ptolemy and deciphered other terms with the help of the initial letters until he obtained a rudimentary alphabet.

The Egyptian priests were mighty. But in times of war, as I've already said, the king's powers increased. In ancient Egypt, the pharaoh was surrounded by an enormous protocol and revered by all his subjects. An ancient writer says that an Egyptian was more interested in the king than his family.

What effective powers does the king enjoy in England today? Any party leader outranks the king in that sense. The king only has the right to give his opinion to his ministers. Despite everything, the British Empire is in a nervous crisis because of what happened to its former King Edward, now the Duke of Windsor.

Here, you can see something interesting: Man is always man, and politics is always politics. No matter how much things change, there are always the same political devices to solve the same problems. History is of great value to modern people because it tells us about the experiences of the ancients, in cases still being repeated, and that's the best thing you can get from history.

An interesting episode shows that history repeats itself. It goes like this: the sons of defeated rulers were educated in the courts of the pharaohs, much more magnificent than others. Thus, those crownless princes assimilated the Egyptian spirit and no longer rebelled against Egypt. England is now doing with India what the ancient Egyptians did with the defeated countries.

When Ramses II was born, his father educated him along with 1,700 boys born on the same day. Firstly, he didn't want the spirit of the future pharaoh to be tainted with flattery; secondly, he wanted to create a core of dedication around the prince. European courts also did it.

Regarding Egypt's foreign policy, one should examine her treaties with neighboring powers.

Concerning internal politics, we know that Egypt comprised Lower and Upper Egypt as if two merged crowns formed the empire. It was a more or less centralized monarchy. At one time, there were 12 crowns, which eventually merged.

The pharaohs' governance was very soft in one sense and very despotic in another. A problem today is whether a man has the right not to work. Does an individual have a right not to work? A pharaoh was concerned about this problem. Many things we say are ultra-modern already existed many centuries ago.

Egyptian political administration or governance was quite disrespectful of individual conditions. They even left a pharaoh unburied and forced men to work on the construction of the great monuments without asking them whether or not they wanted to do so. The people hated such work.

Criminal Law

Egypt's penal laws were very severe, but some were quite sensible.

Perjury was punishable by death, which shows respect for one's word. A parricide was tortured and burned alive; an infanticidal mother had to spend three days and three nights hugging the corpse of her child.

A murderer's sentence was more or less identical, as he had to spend three days cuddled up to the corpse of his victim. It was a dreadful punishment, worth all the torture in the world. Free men and slaves were punished for murder in the same way.

The law protected both the life of a slave and that of a free man. Thefts were rife, and there were even gangs like those of modern "gangsters." A special police force considered one of the best in antiquity was set up to deal with them.

The rich were allowed polygamy, but the priests were not. Egyptians punished the body part of the person who committed a crime, so weight forgers and swindlers had their hands cut off.

Commercial legislation prevented profits from being twice as high as the capital.

Artisans lived in cities and humble laborers in the countryside. It was customary for the children of craftsmen to take up their parents' profession, as later happened in the Middle Ages.

Art

The material characteristics of Egyptian art are large proportions and great resistance. They display beautiful combinations. In admirable ways, the Egyptians combined the beautiful with the great and the strong. Their temples and tombs are always massive, built for eternity, and beautiful. From an objective point of view, Egyptian art is only funerary and religious. The Egyptians constructed only for God and the dead. Their primary art was architecture, with sculpture and painting playing decorative roles.

Painting

Egyptian painting is quite flawed because the Egyptians didn't know the theory of perspective and shadow or how to mix colors and only used pure ones. They also didn't know how to dilute colors, so paintings were always garish, with black and red being preferred. In ancient Egypt, paintings were based on rural and pastoral scenes. Images depicting farmers cultivating wheat, scenes of the Nile flooding, etc. are familiar. But after a certain period, which is not well defined, only religious and funeral scenes were painted: the preparation of a mummy, a burial, the Kā pilgrimage, etc. We don't know the names of paintings, interspersed with bas-reliefs.

Sculpture

Sculpture comprises statues, sphinxes and bas-reliefs. Statues had two functions: decorative and funerary. They were used to adorn temples and to replace memories. The earliest figures were sculpted without fixed rules and, therefore, with artistic freedom, but later ones always followed religious principles. A standing statue always had its arms crossed over its chest, its limbs clasped, and its gaze fixed on one point. When seated, a statue had its arms held over its thighs. Among the most famous statues are the Scribe, the Colossus, Ramses at Karnac, etc.

The sphinx is a unique sculpture apparently symbolizing protective gods. It is a mixture of animal and man: a man's head on a lion's body. It seems that the sphinx also represented intelligence and strength. The most famous is the Giza Sphinx, which is very large and carved into the rock.

Architecture was the primary art among the Egyptians. They knew the column and decorated the capital with various sculptures, the most common being sculptures depicting plants from the Nile. They knew and wisely used the arch and the platform. The funeral and religious architecture was large, as Egypt was concerned with the gigantic. The buildings were usually made of stone.

Main Architectural Monuments

The most important are the tombs, which can be on the surface or underground, and the temples. The *massabos* is a primitive category among the tombs, shaped as a rectangle on the outside. Inside, it was divided into an upper room with a statue of the dead person and a lower room with his mummy. The pyramids are the most important tombs. They had and still have a rectangular base and a triangular face. Built by the pharaohs, they are among the most remarkable Egyptian monuments.

Like tombs, temples can be both underground and above ground. At the temple entrance, there was always a row of sphinxes. The main temples include Karnac and the famous Ipsambul temple.

We still find jewelry and ceramics among the Egyptians and exquisite jewelry and vases in their tombs.

Part Four

Chaldean and Assyrian Civilizations

Mesopotamia

We're now going to study the civilization of the people who inhabited Mesopotamia since I've already given you everything you need to know about the Egyptians.

From the Greek "mesos" and "potamos," as the word says, Mesopotamia is a region between two rivers. In Hebrew, it's "Aram Naraim" (Syria of the two rivers), and in Turkish, it's "Gesireh," which means island.

These two rivers are the Tigris and the Euphrates, which rise in the mountains of Assyria, flow in a converging direction, then confuse their waters and pour into the Persian Gulf. These rivers constantly bring floodwaters, slowly but progressively filling with sand their mouths in the Persian Gulf, which used to be much more profound.

The soil of Mesopotamia proper covers an area of 270,000 km² and is amazingly fertile. Wheat is native to this region and can be harvested three times a year. There is no reason to complain in Mesopotamia because "if you plant it, you get it." The lands of Mesopotamia are, therefore, ideal for agriculture.

However, while it is true that this fertile soil produces even without being planted, that would not happen without irrigation because this region lacks abundant rainfall. The Egyptians did the same with the waters of the Nile.

The inhabitants of Mesopotamia built tiled canals to take advantage of soils that produced when irrigated. So they transported water to most remote regions using large canals from which these people enjoyed two benefits by using them: 1) to fertilize some tracts of land; 2) to navigate on them.

Mesopotamia's geographical location meant that it could develop extraordinarily commercially, as it was an obligatory passage for all caravans from Asia. On the other hand, the people who inhabited Mesopotamia had a great tendency to trade, which reached a high level of development.

In the history of Mesopotamia, some cities reached a very high level of culture, enjoyed a certain renown, and became sovereign. As time passed, one of these cities developed its trade further and increased its military power. It became "ipso facto" more powerful and took supremacy. We can, therefore, divide the internal history of Mesopotamia into five periods:

1. Lower Chaldean period;
2. Babylonian period;
3. Assu period;
4. Nineveh period;
5. Period of Babylon the Great.

The last four correspond to the names of the capitals that succeeded each other in power in the history of the peoples who inhabited the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates.

Foreign Policy

As for foreign policy, we can say that it was limited to wars against the peoples that were not part of the empire and also against the more distant provinces, which constantly rebelled against the crudely imposed yoke of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings.

Architecture

In Mesopotamia, there was a great shortage of stone, so the Chaldeans turned to another means of construction: Bricks covered with highly artistic tiles, which was almost a novelty at the time. They used these bricks to build palaces, walls, temples, etc. The great buildings and monuments of the Chaldeans were always made of bricks.

Assyriology is the archaeology of Assyrian and Babylonian antiquities. This science was complicated because Chaldean palaces and monuments were made of bricks, and various physical agents, especially water, influenced their composition. The bricks melted and lost their natural shape. Afterward, a network of vegetation formed over these monuments, and they looked like ordinary mounds.

Thus, anyone passing through the area before the excavations would see nothing more than several mounds of earth covered in foliage without suspecting the value of what lay beneath them. To a certain extent, the growth of plants on the Assyrian monuments' ruins was both good and bad. In a way, it made it difficult to get to know the Assyrian cities for a long time because they appeared like mounds, which are very common in that region. However, it was good from another point of view because the documents in these palaces and monuments, the natural colors with which they were decorated, etc., have been preserved to this day.

Alabaster was a stone the Chaldeans used on a large scale as a decorative element because it was abundant in the region.

Cities

The cities of this great empire were stunning. The Assyrians had a curious way of building their cities: they surrounded great capitals with massive walls, which made it easier to defend them against possible attacks. Inside these walls were great monuments, temples and sumptuous palaces.

An interesting fact about the Chaldean cities is that their streets were parallel and straight, which shows that today's modernity was ordinary among the Assyrians. The streets of the Middle Ages and ancient Rome were tortuous and irregular. I don't think there's anything more winding than our Rua Direita ["straight street"]. Some urban planners figured that streets should be like those of the ancient Assyrian-Chaldean cities, that is, parallel and straight. Recently, however, urban planning experts have said that it's best to make broken streets so that the groups of houses form parallelograms.

They often built large cities because kings sought to perpetuate their name with some imposing work. One can also see that the founding of towns did not obey an economic or political motive, as today we have the example of the project to move [Brazil's] capital to [the state of] Goiás and the founding of several cities in the interior of the state of São Paulo.

What's the reason for the move? In the first case [Brasília], the reason is political: In a war, defending a federal capital located in the country's center is much easier. In the second case, it's economic because founding new cities in the state's interior generates an influx of people wanting to earn money, so they develop a great deal of activity, which is helpful for the state's economy.

The Assyrian and Babylonian kings founded great cities to immortalize their names. They also built large and imposing monuments. Thus, Sargon had a palace built with a capacity for 80,000 people.

Ancient historians give us fascinating descriptions of Chaldean cities. Herodotus says about the city of Babylon: "It was situated on both sides of the river, forming a vast square. It had 250 towers and 100 bronze gates. Its houses were three to four stories high. There were also many squares and parks, and the streets were straight and parallel."

The city of Nineveh was larger than Babylon, forming a vast square. It was surrounded by a wall 100 feet high and 30 feet thick, so three chariots could race over it. There were 1,500 towers on the wall. The ruins of Nineveh cover an area of 110 km², something extraordinary for that time.

Another remarkable work was the wall built at the behest of Nebuchadnezzar to defend against the Medes, who were related to the Persians. Nebuchadnezzar built this enormous wall to protect his empire against the Medes. It is reminiscent of the one in China because of its purpose and size: It was 56 miles long, 80 feet thick, and 320 feet high.

Another interesting work was the hanging gardens of Semiramis. According to the most likely historical version, these gardens were made for the concubine of one of the Chaldean kings. She had been born in Persia, a mountainous country that treated the plains of Mesopotamia with disdain. So, to provide his concubine with every comfort, the ruler ordered the construction of hanging gardens. There are several other legends about hanging gardens, but this seems to be the most accurate. They were a kind of artificial mountain with tunnels placed next to each other like giant steps over which they planted gardens with lush vegetation. These gardens are attributed to Semiramis, but that seems unlikely. The hanging gardens made such an impression in ancient times that, as we know, they were considered the 5th wonder of the world.

We also have the river works, attributed to Queen Nitocris, made to defend the capital against the Medes. The queen ruled the entire empire, and they say she played a trick on her successors. She had an entrance built, her grave placed on it, and she told her successors there was a large amount of gold in her tomb to use only in extreme need. She was sure that as soon as she was no more, her successors would open the coffin, driven by greed. However, she didn't foresee that it wouldn't be her successors who would open her coffin, but conquerors, who were sorely disappointed because they found no gold but a few tips against greed instead.

Temples

They were large buildings with an astronomical observatory on top. Each floor had a different color, representing a planet. Lest I forget, all the houses were decorated in very bright colors, whereas today we prefer less garish colors: white, cream, etc.

Apart from the Hebrews, the religions of antiquity were not very moral. The lustful nature of the Chaldean religion appears as they kept a woman in the temple, destined for the god's pleasures.

Customs

Chaldean customs had a very interesting contrast between brutality and softness. The kings spent their entire lives in their palaces in a very soft life and continuous orgies. However, when the time for war approached, the kings became valiant and cruel warriors, went on far-flung expeditions, and usually led their people to victory.

In times of peace, in addition to their soft pastimes, kings hunted a lot. These hunts, almost always of lions, were done on horseback, on foot, or in boats on the canals. When the hunting was over, the prey was taken on a great cavalcade through the cities so people could admire their sovereign's deeds. A Chaldean inscription shows a king holding a lion by the ears, which needs no comment.

They also enjoyed hunting other wild animals, such as bulls.

After the wars, they held great parades in which kings and generals carried off the looted objects from their enemies with great ostentation. Quality prisoners were displayed in cages. They would pierce a prisoner's eyes, cut off his ears, pull out his nose, etc. Prisoners entered the city in chains, like animals unable to defend themselves, to the cheers of the victorious people.

The Assyrians were extremely cruel in war. The tiles they left us are very accurate in this respect. They show us the rulers piercing prisoners' eyes in a very humble attitude, bound by their lips with rings. A rope passed through these rings is fastened by the king's hand so the vanquished could not resist. If a person with a ring through their lip resists being pulled by the rope attached to the ring, he risks tearing his lip, which is rather unpleasant. The king wears a sizeable cone-shaped hat, has wavy hair, a long beard, and a vibrant dress. With a ferocious look, he throws the spear into the eyes of his opponents, very docile slaves used for transporting materials. The advantage was that one person could oversee 50 or 100 slaves, as all were blind.

In their tiles, the Assyrians depicted characters not by their physical size but by their importance, a practice also followed in the Middle Ages. That gives us an idea of what ancient peoples were like and the enormous effort Christianity made to mitigate their brutal customs.

Next to these customs, the Middle Ages events appear stripped of much of the horror attributed to them. For example, when we read that in the 100 Years War, the English arrested 100 French soldiers, pierced the eyes of 99 and left only one blindfolded so he could lead the others to France, we see a lot of barbarity in these customs, but not as much as in those of peoples before the advent of Christianity.

Those facts have come to our attention through inscriptions left by the rulers boasting of their deeds and telling everything they did to the enemy. In general, they boasted about their cruelties. The mentality of the Middle Ages was not the same as that of ancient peoples.

The Assyrians and Babylonians were great warriors but not good colonizers, as their primary concern was to keep the colonies to pay them tribute. They only wanted them as a source of income and treated them very harshly, so they had to deal with constant revolts. The Bible compares the Chaldean empire to a great

statue with clay feet because they were great people with fragile foundations. The other peoples hated the Chaldeans.

The concern of certain modern nations, such as England, is to hold on to their colonies for a long time. So they try to use the minimum amount of violence to keep the people under their yoke while giving them a lot of local authority (as in India, for example). But the Assyrians and Babylonians didn't know how to do that, which is why they never had a very stable empire.

Another example of these people's cruelty is a scene shown in some tiles, in which soldiers play a kind of bowling (which more closely resembles the game of shuttlecock) with their enemies' severed heads.

The winged bull was one of their decorative motifs. Its origin is not well known. It's not clear how they came up with an animal with wings, a bull's body and a man's head. Still, it seems to have a symbolic background: they wanted to symbolize an animal that represented power and brought together the power of all animals in one.

From the above, you have an idea of how barbaric these people's customs were. Alongside these barbaric customs, the Assyrians and Babylonians had some conception of morality, which we can gauge from a saying by Sardanapalus found on a monument from that period. It contains a whole philosophy of life and goes something like this: "Remember that you are mortal and satisfy the lusts of your heart while enjoying life." This maxim shows us what their philosophy was. These people were unbelievers for whom life ends with death and who wanted to get as much pleasure out of life as possible. This philosophy brought down the immense empire of the Chaldeans because their soft life made even the toughest men unfit for combat. They also became enemies of work and responsibility, which did much to bring down their empire.

Trade was highly developed among Assyrians and Babylonians. In addition to their privileged geographical location, industry also had a great development. They manufactured very precious fabrics. They embroidered textiles with precious embroidery. We can calculate the value of these fabrics as follows: Hero bought an Assyrian couch covered in one of these fabrics for an astronomic price.

They also made vases, were experts in making metal objects, and cut precious stones. The trade of Assyrians and Babylonians was one of the most prosperous in antiquity.

Their objects circulated so widely in antiquity that they appeared in Egypt's pyramids and Etruria's tombs.

They also traded in women. Herodotus tells us roughly the following: "In every village, once a year, as soon as the girls are ripe for marriage, they are gathered together and taken to a certain place, where there are many men, and then a peddler shows them one after another, starting with the most beautiful. As soon as the most beautiful has found a buyer, they make another one stand up, and so on. Rich Chaldeans wishing to wed compete to buy the most beautiful women. Then, the auctioneer puts the ugliest ones up for sale and offers them to the men with the least money. Finally, those who get the ugliest are paid for it. The money

obtained from the sale of the most beautiful women goes towards the dowry of the ugliest."

No one could take a woman without committing to marry her. Anyone who received money to take an ugly woman was obliged to marry her, and if he didn't, he was obliged to return the money.

You can understand that I'm not telling this as a joke, which would be out of the question. It is an excellent example of the state of ancient civilizations that shows the decadence or rather degradation they were in before the appearance of Christianity, and all this data is from the philosophy of history.

You need to compare the situation of women before and after the advent of Christianity. Before, they were in a much lower position than today. After the appearance of Christianity, there was a remarkable religious, social and intellectual evolution.

As a rule, marriage among the Chaldeans was monogamous. Each man was entitled to one legitimate wife but could have as many concubines as he wanted. Often, the wife herself bought a concubine for her husband as a present. However, concubinage was not a temporary union but a kind of polygamy and entailed rights and duties fixed in writing.

Repudiation was always in writing, with the husband paying compensation to the wife. If a father gave his daughter a dowry in the event of divorce, her husband was obliged to return it. The husband had to give his father-in-law guarantees in this regard. Marriage was only valid if done in writing, and the contract set out all the conditions on how the marriage was to take place.

They recognized the right to adopt children. Parents were also entitled to pledge their children [as collateral] for three years. If they were in debt, it could last for a lifetime.

The Assyrians and Babylonians were very vain. They dressed in very rich fabrics and carefully curled their hair and beards. We can see in their drawings the huge beards of the Assyrian kings, curled with great sophistication. So, permanent curling is not as new as we might think.

The way the Assyrians and Babylonians treated the sick was very curious. There were no hospitals, which only appeared with Christianity so that they would expose the sick in public squares, and each passer-by would advise a remedy to cure the patient. You can imagine how effective that was!

They used a stone (beryl crystal) as a signet.

Their exciting legends confirmed many of the Bible's traditions. They referred to original sin. I saw a photograph of a Chaldean bas-relief depicting a tree, a man and a woman, and a serpent coiled up in the tree. That is precisely what the Bible says.

That does not have the indecorous interpretation people want to give it either in the Chaldean interpretation or the Bible's. It is often said that the first sin was the practice of sexual intercourse, but this is absurd because if God said, "grow and

multiply," He would not have punished sexual intercourse intended for procreation within marriage. He would only punish disorders in this practice. The Assyrians and Babylonians interpreted the biblical tradition that a [forbidden] fruit was eaten. There's no certainty that it was exactly an apple; it could have been a pear, a pineapple, [or any other fruit].

As well as the traditional notion of original sin, they also had that of the Flood, very similar to the Bible's, which also exists among our Indians. They also had the traditional notion of the confusion of languages in Borsipa in Mesopotamia, where the tower of Babel is said to have existed.

Interestingly, a great deal of information known through the Bible before the study of Assyriology was confirmed by the study of Assyrian and Babylonian monuments in the 19th century when Assyriology studies developed considerably. Chaldean inscriptions confirmed biblical traditions very precisely.

The famous Code of Hammurabi (1810-1750 BC) is a fascinating document left by the ancient Chaldeans. This code ranks among the oldest legislative documents.

Let me read something from this code:

When [Anu the Sublime](#), King of the [Anunaki](#), and [Bel](#), the lord of Heaven and earth, who decreed the fate of the land, assigned to [Marduk](#), the over-ruling son of [Ea](#), God of righteousness, dominion over earthly man, and made him great among the [Igigi](#), they called [Babylon](#) by his illustrious name, made it great on earth, and founded an everlasting kingdom in it, whose foundations are laid so solidly as those of heaven and earth; then [Anu](#) and [Bel](#) called by name me, Hammurabi, the exalted prince, who feared God, to bring about the rule of righteousness in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil-doers; so that the strong should not harm the weak. ²

We are looking at the story of one of the most cruel people that history has ever known. Yet, despite the Chaldeans' immense cruelty and oppression over their defeated adversaries, this writing contains a protest from the human conscience against the oppression of the humble by the powerful.

After this preamble, Hammurabi begins to tell us about his exploits, his wealth, and the precious objects he possessed. There follows a list of penal laws to be apply to the various types of crime.

Firstly, on adultery:

An adulterous woman must be thrown into the river, but if the husband forgives the adultery, both must be thrown into the river. If a prisoner's wife has nothing to live on, she may marry another man, but if her husband can return home, she is obliged to return to her husband.

This can be explained by the fact that the people were constantly at war. There was no mail, telegraph, or effort by the victors to reassure the families of the vanquished. Their soldiers were led far away when taken prisoners, and the

² <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/hamframe.asp>

Assyrian kings considered them lost. That's why a woman could marry another man if she didn't have enough to live on; if her husband returned, she had to return to her first husband. I think the situation then became very awkward for everyone.

If a husband repudiates a frivolous woman, she cannot demand compensation, and her husband can make her his slave. A woman who abandons her husband is thrown into the river.

One can see from the above that there was a vast inequality between husband and wife. Christianity vigorously fought that inequality and preached complete monogamy and purity of customs for both men and women. The situation began to change as soon as Christianity lost its initial vigor. The hypocritical use of polygamy reemerged, and women returned to the previous conditions.

The communist solution consists of equalizing both sexes in a complete corruption of customs, so we are between the two, Catholicism and communism. The former preaches good morals and purity of customs; the latter preaches dissolution and free love. One is the opposite of the other.

It is not lawful for a husband to repudiate his sick wife, but he may take another wife for himself.

Criminal laws on incest are particularly strict.

They preached the famous maxim: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." When an architect built a house, and it fell on its owner's son, they punished the architect's son instead of the architect. The point of all this was to make one person suffer what he made someone else suffer. It was necessary to make the architect suffer morally by punishing his son.

Even among the Romans, the father had the right of life and death over his son. Take, for example, the case of the architect. As we said, it was necessary to make the perpetrator suffer by punishing his son, but the law didn't consider the son's rights, which had nothing to do with the case. Christianity changed this situation, which shows us its true meaning.

God's judgment was another widespread custom among the Chaldeans. They thought that when a person was accused of a crime but was innocent, they could be exposed to grave danger, but God would save them. So, when a person was accused of a crime, they were thrown into the river. If they died, they were guilty; if they survived, they were innocent. We also see that in the Middle Ages, many centuries later. It was an extension of the institutions of barbarian peoples. Note that these practices were only abolished with the advent of Christianity.

Often, a person accused another of stealing, and the two would duel. These laws were absurd and ungodly, as God is not constantly intervening in world affairs. The Church strongly opposed dueling in the Middle Ages.

We can see that certain barbarian customs of the Middle Ages did not result from of Christian influence but from the impact of barbaric civilizations that existed before the advent of Christianity.

Returning to our subject, here is another paragraph of Chaldean legislation: "If virgins consecrated to worship should get drunk, they must be burned alive." Ancient peoples took their religions very seriously, whether good or bad. Rome, which had very little exchange with the Chaldean civilization, also had its vestals and buried them alive if they lost their purity.

These are the main punishment clauses in Hammurabi's code, which give a pretty accurate idea of the customs of the Chaldean people.

As for the situation of the government and the social classes, the king was omnipotent. All others were at a lower level and entirely subject to the sovereign's power. This situation was quite different from that of Egypt, where the king was the country's first person, but others (notably among the priestly class) had rights that curtailed those of the sovereign. All members of the Chaldean people, even the most important, were under the ruler's dominion.

The priestly class was much more accessible than in Egypt because even foreigners could be priests. In Assyria and Babylon, priests had easy access to the king but didn't have the influence they had in Egypt.

The king had a prime minister who was more or less like the vizier in Mohammedan countries. These ministers had great power and were called "rabsaris." They also had a war minister called "tartan."

It seems that military service was compulsory. They were excellent warriors who knew how to use war machines. They built wooden walls parallel to the rampart of the city they wanted to conquer. They also used another exciting war tactic: Each soldier had a leather wineskin, which he filled by blowing when he had to cross a watercourse. Floating on the wineskin, he rowed with his right arm while holding the strap that attached the spear, shield, and other pieces of weaponry to his back with his left.

However, even for them, who knew many warfare tactics, war was not entirely without danger, as the enemies usually tried to burn down the wooden walls they built.

Nothing is certain about how they organized government. The king's decrees were published in Turanian, Aramaic and Assyrian. Each province was governed by a civil and military chief dependent on the king.

As far as their culture is concerned, it seems to have been one of the world's oldest; it is one of the oldest we know. They had literary works of some value. The palace of Sardanapalus had a very interesting library that would total around 18,000 volumes today if printed. A remarkable poem - the poem of Ishtar - was found in the Sardanapalus library, where several catalogs displayed the names of gods and kings and the epic of Nemrod.

Astronomy was at an advanced stage of development as they made astronomical calculations. It is said they achieved more than 1,000 years of consecutive study of astronomical calculations.

Their religion was polytheistic and pantheistic. They believed that the gods lived on the planets. They had a very confused idea of God, whom they identified with nature. Theirs was a religion of terror, and they were terrified of the gods they worshipped. That religion was sinister and corrupting, with immoral and horrifying practices. They appeased their gods with their women's virginity, and their practices were usually riddled with great immorality.

Herodotus tells us that the most despicable of these people's practices was the following: "Every woman in the country was obliged to expose herself in the temple of the goddess Mellit to unite with an outsider. After that union, the outsider would hand the woman a coin and say: "Receive this money in the name of the goddess Mellit." The woman could never despise any outsider. That gives us a very accurate idea of the Chaldean people's customs.

Assyrians and Babylonians inhabited Mesopotamia and occupied the plains between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Babylonians lived in the south, in the region of Chaldea, and their main center was Babylon, hence their name. They were also called Chaldeans. To the north lived the Assyrians, whose center was the city of Nineveh.

These populations, however, do not belong to a single race. Mesopotamia was a veritable melting pot of races. Among numerous tribes of unknown origins are representatives of Arabs, Semites, Iranian populations and a host of other peoples. Thus, these populations (Assyrians and Babylonians) were thoroughly mixed. This anthropological knowledge of these populations is indispensable for understanding their civilizations. In fact, each of these peoples left their mark. For example, their religion has some extravagant things even though they evolved at different ages.

Religion

Their religion resulted from bringing together the beliefs of various tribes. The Mesopotamians formed a particularistic religion practiced only by them, as with all ancient religions. Religion called for violent and even human sacrifices. Their mixed religion included notable cults such as some triads and worshipped supernatural beings. They were polytheists but always prioritized by the god of the most important city, who thus appeared as a national god. Babylon had the gods Ilu and Marduc, who often dominated all the tribes. The main Assyrian gods were Assur and Istar. They also worshipped the planets known as Nergal, Eor, Nineveh, etc. Triads were also common; the most important were the Sun, Moon, and Air (Chama, Sim, Romani). Other triads included Anu, Bel, and Nuoh, which explained the creation and transformation of matter.

Cults

Mesopotamians practiced fetishism mainly as a legacy of the Sumerian tribes. It was a veritable doctrine of witchcraft. They believed that man was surrounded by mysterious beings who obeyed hidden forces, some evil, others protective. Only

priests knew how to invoke these invisible forces and could ward off or summon such beings. The use of protective talismans was common among the Mesopotamians.

Astrology

They also believed in the divinity and power of the stars. Some priests, called "magi," would predict a child's life by taking stars as their guide. This cult gave astronomy a notable boost among the Mesopotamians.

From the above, we can understand that the Mesopotamian people, subjected to a religion of terror, willingly accepted the influence of the priestly class.

Art

Only at the end of the 19th century did explorers begin researching Mesopotamia. Guided by Greek documents, they headed for the places where important monuments had once stood. They found only hills, which the Arabs, the region's masters, considered natural. There was no legend among the Arabs about those hills. However, excavation showed that the mounds were nothing but ruins formed by the action of time.

The first characteristic of Mesopotamian art is that it was built in clay due to the lack of stone, hence its transitory nature. As in most of antiquity, Assyrian-Chaldean art was neither funerary nor purely religious. Most buildings were palaces of kings, although some were temples. They show the influence of these populations' bellicose genius. Their bas-reliefs always depict hunting, fighting scenes, etc.

Architecture

They were unaware of the arch and used the straight platform but were the first region to use the cylindrical dome. They always used a straight line, so the buildings represented a geometric solid.

Buildings

The great palaces of Mesopotamia consisted of many rooms and were divided into three parts: 1. royal quarters, 2. for lackeys and servants, 3. for women. In addition, the palace always had a temple that was also an astronomical observatory. Palaces were always built on high ground, defended by solid walls, and kings used them to celebrate their victories. Among the most famous are Colai (Assurbanipal's) and Corsabad (Sargon's), which had 209 rooms covering 7 km².

The temples were divided into two parts: one for priests and the other made up of floors, each representing a planet. Some temples had eight flights. The most famous temple was the one Nebuchadnezzar ordered to be built in Babylon, intended for Bel.

Clay was used as a building material for palaces and temples, but their insides had gold and silver inlays and marble. The walls were covered with mosaics, polychrome enameled tiles, and bas-reliefs. The palace's interior was full of columns, which acted as decorations.

Alongside palaces and temples, we should consider the walls, of which the most famous was that of Babylon, defended by towers. Finally, there were the famous hanging gardens built on columns.

Sculpture

They were great sculptors. As with all other Eastern peoples, sculpture played a secondary role, dependent on architecture. The two primary examples of Assyrian-Babylonian sculpture are winged bulls and bas-reliefs.

The winged bulls were sculptures of the same type as the sphinxes of Egypt, made up of a bull's body with a man's head and a large pair of wings, symbolizing protection. The winged bull was seen as a protector and placed in a sequence forming a large avenue at the entrance to temples and palaces. The bull had five legs so that, seen from the front, it gave the impression of standing still, and when seen in profile, it gave an impression of movement. These bulls were not built of clay but granite from mountainous regions. The bulls in Sargon's palace are famous.

Their bas-reliefs are the most remarkable sculptures in terms of representing movement. Arguably, no other people at the time knew how to make them with more excellent talent. The bas-reliefs depicting animals are particularly important. The bellicose genius of the two peoples highly influenced these sculptures.

Painting

Like the Egyptians, they were ignorant of perspective and shading but knew the art of decoration. Decorated tiles can be found in temples and palaces. They knew the art of tapestry very well; their jewelry was less notable.

Science

Mathematics and astronomy were the sciences most cultivated by the Assyrians and Babylonians. They divided the circumference into 360 degrees, the day into 24 hours, and the year into 12 lunar months. They determined the eclipses of the moon and distinguished the signs of the zodiac. They also practiced medicine.

Part Five

Medes and Persians

Persian civilization was the first civilization of the Aryan race, which initially inhabited the center of Asia and split into several branches. One penetrated Europe, another India, and another, called the Iranians, gave rise to the two peoples we will study—the Medes and the Persians.

The origin of this race is somewhat obscure, and hypotheses about it vary greatly. Some say it originated on the banks of the Danube, others in the Carpathian Mountains, Scandinavia, etc.

The Iranian branch, so called because of Iran's mountains, bifurcated and gave rise to the Medes and Persians. For a long time, the Persians remained at a very rudimentary stage of civilization, while the Medes were a flourishing and already quite civilized monarchy.

However, at a certain point, the Persians overcame and dominated the Medes and projected their influence over Asia, Africa and Europe. They didn't create a civilization like the Egyptians but merely synthesized and spread other civilizations. In other words, they assimilated other people's civilizations and spread them through their numerous conquests.

The Persians' synthesizing work was arduous because the peoples that made up their empire differed greatly in terms of civilization and culture. For example, there were even linguistic differences between the peoples who inhabited its various regions before Italy's unification. What could we say about the Persian Empire, which was much more extensive and made up of peoples more heterogeneous than the Italians?

Culture and Literary Production

Literary productions in the Persian Empire began very early on, and even today, we have works from the earliest periods of the civilization of the Medes and Persians. It's worth noting that in these works, many traditions coincide with those of the Bible, especially regarding the beginnings of humanity.

Zoroaster was the greatest thinker of this race. His existence is beyond doubt, although there are disputes about the place and date of his birth. He is said to have been born between 6,000 and 6,600 BC; he would have been Persian, Mede, Bactrian or Assyrian.

Zoroaster's philosophy took deep root in his land. There are still around 500,000 adherents of his doctrine today. It is based on the observation that, in both the moral and physical worlds, there is an ongoing struggle between factors favorable to life or order and others favoring death or disorder.

To explain this claim, Zoroaster affirmed the existence of a fundamental antagonism between Ohrmuzd, a potent and good being, and Arimanius, a mighty and evil being. Since Ohrmuzd created man and all factors that contribute to his physical and moral health, Arimanius, to combat Ohrmuzd's work, began to use all factors harmful to man in this struggle. That's why there are good and harmful animals, mild and harsh climates, and healthy and poisonous foods. In short, there is help or harm for man everywhere, all of which represents the struggle between Ohrmuzd and Arimanius.

For Zoroaster, there was the army in favor of man on one side, led by the Ameshapentas (geniuses of good), and Ohrmuzd as its supreme leader; and on the other side, the Daevas (geniuses of evil), led by Arimanius, who sought to destroy Ohrmuzd's work. Man would then play the role of a pendulum, swinging between one party and the other, but his duty would be to fight for Ohrmuzd against Arimanius.

If a man fought for good, his soul would go to paradise when he died. After a while, a man born of a virgin would come into the world and save humanity. Then a star would collide with our planet, and a sea of molten metal would appear, in which all men would bathe. For those who had been good, the bath would be a pleasure and a torment for those who had not helped Ohrmuzd's work. However, the sea would soon end since everyone was Ohrmuzd's creation. Everyone would enjoy an eternal paradise with Ohrmuzd, who would annihilate the Daevas and Arimanius, and then men would always live well.

We can see a certain similarity here with Catholic doctrine. However, we must emphasize that in Catholic doctrine, there is only one God, while in the other, there are two gods. In the Catholic religion, the devil is not a god, unlike in

Zoroastrian doctrine. The tradition of the savior exists in many other ancient peoples, such as China.

The Persian empire based all its morals on Zoroaster's doctrine. Among the peoples we are studying, there was a profound horror of lies because the god of good should also be the god of truth (the love of truth gave rise to the cult of light because light is an image of truth).

The Persians divinized and worshipped light and respected the truth as man's fundamental duty, so they despised the (very untruthful) Greek people. That's why there were no markets throughout the Persian empire, unlike Greece, where markets were numerous and centers of intrigue and perfidy. The Persians also had very severe penalties for adultery, which is a kind of perjury.

It was also forbidden to 1. throw a corpse into the water because it would contaminate an element favorable to man; 2. limit offspring because it would curtail the development of the Ohrmuzd army; 3. murder was a serious and severely punished offense, especially when the victim was a good man because Zoroaster said that man should only exterminate harmful beings.

A man who wounded a dog to death would receive eight hundred lashes, not applied to the culprit but to a harmful creature, as that would be much more helpful to defend Ohrmuzd's cause.

Ants harmed agriculture, so exterminating them was an act of kindness. Many Christian martyrs in Persia allowed themselves to be martyred because they didn't want to kill ants, an act interpreted as acceptance of the Persian religion.

The Persians confused the notion of moral and physical purity because they believed, as we saw, that a bath in liquefied metals would make moral impurities disappear. Bringing a dog close to a dying person scared death away because if a dog scared away thieves by guarding its master's possessions, it should also scare death away.

When someone died, the fire in his house was extinguished so the corpse would not contaminate it. They then took the corpse to a place with neither water nor trees and abandoned to the birds of prey, which devoured it. It was forbidden to bury it because it would contaminate the earth, Ohrmuzd's creation. For the same reason, it was a sin to spit in the water. The fire was rekindled in the house of the deceased only nine days later.

Almost all beings favorable to man were sacred. The sacred fire was held in the highest regard and was lit atop altars in containers called pyres, accessed by ladders. Sacred animals were sacrificed to that fire without their entrails, which would contaminate the fire. There were fires for different social classes, maintained by a kind of monks who ate cheese and vegetables, lived in very original houses, and inhabited provinces where they were in charge. The habit of confessing to a priest was widespread among them.

Political and Social Organization

The Persian Empire's territorial extension was enormous, including Egypt, from Hindus to beyond the Bosphorus. It was divided into provinces, called satrapies, ruled by satraps.

Persian empire's rulers provided many communication routes to communicate in difficult situations. They also had a well-organized postal system.

The kings didn't trust the satraps very much, so they placed a spy as each satrap's secretary. These secretaries were recruited from the aristocracy and had an open path to the position of satrap. Appointed by the king, they informed him about everything the satrap did.

The Persians practiced a tolerance policy, leaving their own laws and customs to the conquered peoples, and the country's native citizens collected taxes. That benign policy explains why the Persian Empire lasted much longer than the Chaldeans'.

The Persians unified the East under their rule, and although their kings were sometimes cruel, they ruled with relative leniency.

Cyrus, the great Persian, defeated the Lydians, imprisoned Lydia's King Croesus and condemned him to the stake. But the latter's son, who was mute, spoke for the first time as he pleaded for his father's life, which Cyrus granted.

When Croesus was at the top of the pyre where he was to be burned, he began shouting: Solon, Solon! Intrigued, Cyrus asked Croesus what those cries meant. Croesus told Cyrus that the Athenian legislator, Solon, had once told him there was no imperishable kingdom in the universe. Cyrus then forgave Croesus and appointed him his minister. Cyrus got it right because Croesus assisted him greatly, helping him to govern Lydia with kindness and gentleness.

Like the Chaldeans, the Persian sovereigns also left tales of bravery.

Among the Persians, children often paid for their parents, as in the case of high treason, when they punished all of a traitor's relatives.

As for the organization of society, in ancient Persia, we can distinguish four classes: priests, warriors, farmers and artisans. The warrior class was very important, providing the army, and they recruited warriors from the nobility.

Peoples incorporated into the empire did not have equal rights. The genuine Persians came first, followed by the Medes, the Bactrians, etc. The peoples who most resisted Persian rule had the fewest rights.

Race was the criterion for distributing rights, with the victorious race imposing itself on the vanquished. The more recently conquered peoples were under the tutelage of the previously conquered peoples.

Thus, a division into social classes existed in almost all ancient societies. Christianity extinguished this custom of distinguishing between losers and winners, making it possible for a lower-class man to ascend to a higher class through his merits.

The accepted criterion for the distribution of wealth was not based on merit but exclusively on the person's race. Hence, it was extremely difficult for a person to enjoy greater rights than those the empire's laws granted to people of their race. And the hierarchy of races within the empire was based solely on force.

The Persians defeated the Medes and, therefore, had more rights than the latter. As allies, the Medes and Persians defeated the other peoples that made up the empire together. That is why the Medes were the second-largest people in the empire. Some peoples thus placed themselves in a position superior to others, and force was the only criterion for establishing the hierarchy of peoples within the realm.

As for the army, it had a core formed by the all-Persian guard of the 10,000 immortals, all very loyal to the king. That proves the instability of the Persian Empire because if the kings trusted the conquered peoples they would have formed this guard corps with soldiers recruited from them.

Family

While the family was indissoluble, there were rare exceptions, such as in the case of a woman's sterility, when her husband could leave her if she agreed. The family was solid and stable, with the father having much authority.

Art

We've just given a brief note on the Persian's art. As we said, Persia developed a civilization of synthesis, assimilating that of the various peoples that composed its empire. This heterogeneous character of Persian civilization can be seen in its art, which was primarily inspired by Chaldean artistic principles.

In addition to Chaldean influence, Persian art was also influenced to a lesser extent by the Egyptians and Greeks. We find particularities in Persian art that are reminiscent of Egyptian art. They thus created an art of synthesis, bringing together artistic elements from various sources (Assyrians, Greeks, Egyptians, etc.).

Like the Assyrians, the Persians used the winged bull as one of their decorative motifs. They topped their columns' capitals with the heads of that animal.

There were no temples in ancient Persia because the Persians considered their god a purely spiritual being who couldn't fit within the walls of a building. They thought they should worship him in the open air, which is why there were pyres in the forests.

Like the Chaldeans, the Persians used tiles a lot. However, the artistic figures of the Persians and those of the Chaldeans differed in that the images of Assyrians and Babylonians appear without relief. In contrast, the Persian figures appear as a high relief on the tiles, standing against the background. It was a small difference.

We can't say that the sculpture of the ancient Persians was great, but it did reach an appreciable level of development. It is not wrong to say that Persian sculpture was a slavish copy of Chaldean sculpture.

The most important types of Persian architecture were palaces and tombs. The palaces were very sumptuous, reminiscent of Assyrian palaces. Ceilings were made of precious wood. Royal tombs did not have the religious character of Egyptian tombs. Persian royal tombs were carved out of rocks. Their entrance is like a palace entrance but lacks stairs or access ramps. They stand at a good distance from the ground.

Customs

I've already explained what the Persians' policy was and talked about the benign principles of the Persian administration toward the peoples they defeated.

As you know, the Jews lived under the rule of the Chaldeans. When the Persians defeated the Chaldeans and destroyed the Mesopotamian Empire, the Jews were restored to freedom by a decree of Cyrus. That document was found, so we know the text of the decree in which Cyrus gave the Jews their freedom. In it, Cyrus allowed the Jews to rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, a fact also confirmed by the Bible.

That should not lead us to assume that the Persians were a people of unparalleled benignity. Facts such as those narrated made an impression on the minds of most ancient peoples, who were generally endowed with a great inclination for cruelty and led to the Persians passing into history as the most benign people. This criterion can lead us to erroneous judgments about these people's character. This Persian character should be well established because it defines all of antiquity.

You can see from this the extent to which the ancients considered feelings of kindness, solidarity, and mercy, which were almost non-existent among these peoples and finally appeared in all their strength with the advent of Christianity. We find facts among the Persians that indicate great cruelty. We know they mutilated defeated prisoners and cut off their noses, ears, and everything they could cut from their faces.

Yet, these people were reputed for being "benign" in ancient times. Persian sovereigns used to boast about their deeds and victories, as in the famous rock of Bebristum. Once in a while, they showed mercy to the defeated peoples. However, in the manner of the Chaldeans, they very often showed great cruelty toward the peoples they dominated. There was among them a custom of crucifying prisoners.

We've already mentioned the case of Cressus, King of Lydia. You know that Cressus was condemned to the stake, along with fourteen children of the Lydian nobility, and the whole story of Cressus invoking Solon. The bottom line is that Cyrus thought what had happened to Cressus could happen to him, so he freed Cressus and appointed him his minister. That shows the true character of Cyrus' benignity, based entirely on the fear of misfortune.

Concerning cruelty, some fascinating cases show the existence of this instinct among the Persians. Among others, we can mention that of Cambyses, who unsuccessfully tried to conquer Ethiopia. On the way back, a vast sandstorm caused the Persians to run out of food. The Persian soldiers suffered great hunger, and historians say they killed each other to avoid starvation. On one occasion, when Cambyses received a rebuff in Memphis, Egypt, he ordered the killing of

2,000 people from that city. Those people went down in history as one of the most benign of antiquity, given that the law of force prevailed at that time.

In this regard, a significant event occurred in Roman history. The Gauls, led by Breno, defeated the Romans near the river Alia, entered Rome, and only agreed to withdraw on payment of a heavy indemnity. The Gauls used false weights, and the Romans complained about that irregularity. Breno then plunged his sword into the scales, uttering the phrase that became famous (before the advent of Christianity): "*Vae victus!*" - Woe to the vanquished!

Another characteristic society gained from the advent of Christianity is hospitals. Before Christianity, physically inferior sick were despised. For example, the Spartans killed children born with inferior physiques.

Part Six

The Phoenicians

As we have seen, the Persians developed a civilization of synthesis. The Phoenicians developed no civilization at all. They were numerically small, and their only value in history was their navigation and trade.

In ancient Phoenicia, there were significant cities like Tyre and Sidon, which formed small autonomous republics and met from time to time under the rule of one of them to confront other peoples. By comparison, note that all cities in São Paulo are under the state government. That was not the case with the Phoenicians because Phoenician cities were small aristocratic republics with overlapping populations of different origins.

[On the social scale], first came the aristocracy and the nobility, made up of individuals whose ancestors had invaded the country in a remote period and reduced the people to captivity.

The second class was not precisely aristocratic but more or less what the bourgeoisie was before the French Revolution. It was made up of free city dwellers who could accumulate wealth but not manage public affairs.

The third class was composed of elements recruited from the descendants of the peoples most recently conquered by the Phoenicians. They were more or less what commoners are today. Their property right was very restricted.

The fourth and final class was the slaves, who lived under great oppression from the other social classes.

As I pointed out, you can see how erroneous the criteria used by ancient peoples to divide classes were. Hitler's racism is, therefore, nothing new: the winning race imposes its domination on the other races because it is more robust and for that reason alone. The entire social hierarchy was based on this principle.

As far as the government was concerned, there were three senates in ancient Phoenicia:

1. the Great Senate, where each family had its representative;
2. the Minor Senate, where each aristocratic tribe had its representative;
3. the Ten Member College.

You can easily imagine that a country with three senates poorly managed public affairs. They needed a strong government and replaced that form of government with a monarchy. There was a king, but he only had two functions: he was the military chief and exercised judicial power. That is how the political regime ultimately formed among the Phoenicians. Note that this regime excluded the popular classes from power.

Seeing that the aristocracy was robbing him of all his powers and attributions, the king very often linked up with the popular classes to turn them against the aristocracy, which caused a fascinating phenomenon in Phoenician life: the king himself instigated many revolutions, accompanied by looting and killing. The people wanted to overthrow the aristocracy but not the king. Popular uprisings in Phoenicia were intense and even caused the defeated class to emigrate en masse.

A popular revolution expelled an entire aristocratic class from the city of Tyre. They fled to Carthage and founded a new city. Historians attribute the demise of Tyre to this aristocratic emigration.

The popular element was fragile and unable to give Phoenicia the intelligent government the aristocracy provided. When Carthage became the greatest power in the Mediterranean, Phoenicia fell into decadence.

There were interesting legends, such as Pygmalion, etc., which I do not mention for lack of time, but you may already know.

What guidelines did these people's foreign policy follow? They only wanted monetary gain from trade without the complications caused by wars. That's why they often allowed themselves to become tributary peoples. The Egyptians and Chaldeans were successively sovereigns of the Phoenicians. When the Egyptians

became powerful, the Phoenicians paid them to guarantee their coastline against any invasion. Then, the same happened with the Chaldeans. Finally, the Chaldean Empire succumbed to the blows of the Persians.

Their armed forces had a kind of contract like England's with its colonies. For example, Canada is a colony that could very well break away from England because it can do so. However, it does not want to be independent because it would have to maintain a large fleet to guard its coasts, which are very long, and England has a powerful fleet to defend them. The British are first-rate diplomats, and Canada's interests prosper as a result. Canada is almost as developed as the United States despite not being independent.

The Phoenicians did the same thing with all the powerful ancient peoples they encountered. You will later learn that the Phoenicians established colonies all along the Mediterranean coastline crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to Ireland, and even reached South America. They say the Phoenicians went around Africa during the Amor period.

The Phoenicians' economic organization was very interesting. They had very small monetary wealth but many colonies. A colony was not what it is today, like Dutch Guyana, which has no autonomy. According to their criteria, today, we would be a colony of Portugal, which has the same language, race, and religion as ours. In ancient times, that's what a colony was. The Phoenicians had many colonies, including what are now called concessions.

Today, certain powers have concessions in China, India, etc. A concession is a block or a little bigger plot not big enough to form a colony. The Phoenicians had concessions on almost all the Mediterranean coasts. They were almost like fortresses and functioned as support points for developing Phoenician trade. In barbarian countries, they built a fort with a temple at its center and commercial establishments around it, and there was also a very secure port. They did with barbarians what the Portuguese did here with our savages; that is, they exchanged things of small value and earned large profits. They willingly submitted to the sovereignty of these peoples to shelter in the shadow of their armies.

By sailing, the Phoenicians brought together peoples who did not yet know each other, even though they were civilized. They became suppliers of goods that they alone could sell, making huge profits from it, as is clear from the fact that they had no competition.

What's more, the Phoenicians were great industrialists because while the East only had a small industry, they created factories that employed many workers to make many things.

The Phoenicians were the inventors of the bill of exchange. They created an extensive network of land-based commerce. Many were street vendors, and a traveling circus is even mentioned. These vendors did what the Syrians did in São Paulo not so long ago: they went out looking for buyers, which logically facilitated selling their products.

There was also the slave trade, which usually involved stolen women and children. Here, we can still see the oppression of the weak.

Their religion was polytheistic. They named the main god of each city Baal. The Phoenician religion was characterized by horrendous corruption and dreadful cruelty. They were based on the idea that sacrifices are necessary but that a sacrifice is more valid the more valuable the object. So they sacrificed children whose disappearance caused a lot of pain (preferably only children with a living father and mother). The children were burned alive without anesthetic (then still nonexistent), and their bones were kept in the temple. Sometimes, the children were offered spontaneously. Once in Carthage, 300 children were offered. Adults were very rarely sacrificed.

Curiously, they preferred to immolate the children of nobles because they thought they were worth more. That shows the absurdity of their ideas on nobility because they believed that a nobleman was worth more than a person of the people, just as we think that a pear is worth more than a banana; a commoner was supposedly made with fifth-rate human raw material. That is a whole philosophy of life.

Their religion was extremely corrupt. They thought that virginity was the noblest thing a woman had, and a man's noblest was virility. So they sacrificed the woman's virginity and the man's masculinity to the gods. The woman became a harlot and was available to pilgrims. In one temple, there were as many as 6,000 prostitutes, and in another, 3,000. Sometimes, they would go on a country tour, offering themselves to whoever wanted, and return to the temple. You can see how extremely stupid all this is.

As for men, some ceremonies began with music played on a flute, after which the men would go into a furious delirium and mutilate themselves with a knife. Then they would run out, virile organs in hand, and in the first house they entered, they would be given women's clothes to attend liturgical ceremonies while the women would dress as men.

They practiced a very strange dance, spinning around while furiously flogging themselves. Afterward, they were entitled to a delicious meal and peace and quiet, which they enjoyed until the next day when they repeated the same dance.

Curiously enough, the Phoenicians, neighbors of the Jews, also a Semitic race, and having the same development, are separated from the Jews by a formidable moral abyss, as the Jews commanded not to violate chastity. At the same time, the Phoenicians' religion mandated corruption.

From an intellectual point of view, the Phoenicians invented the alphabet, which would be invaluable, but some people dispute this. We have very few academic productions by the Phoenicians because other peoples overran their territory. We do have some Latin writings from the Phoenicians, but it seems certain that they did nothing appreciable from an artistic or intellectual standpoint.

Their travels reached as far as the Black Sea. They had merchant ships and warships with a hook attached to the enemy ship to facilitate boarding. They had many markets unknown to other people, which they did everything they could to keep secret. Among these was the tin market in the Cassiterid Islands. There is a well-known case of a Phoenician ship whose captain, realizing he was followed by

a Roman ship, ran aground on a sandbank so the Romans wouldn't find out where they were going. This captain was highly praised and rewarded by the king.

The Phoenicians' immoral religion did not shock the people of antiquity at all. Only the Hebrews, who obeyed Moses' Decalogue, disliked this religion. Phoenicians practiced their cult with ease and built temples in the Italic and Hellenic peninsulas and Egypt.

Phoenician Trade

The Mediterranean

Throughout the ages, the Mediterranean played a crucial role in connecting the West and the East. Thus, Europe's economic life was tied to trade in this sea, and the peoples who became masters of this trade became great economic powers. The Phoenicians were one of them.

Phoenicia was a narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean and the mountains of Lebanon. There were points where this strip was less than 100 km wide. There were Assyrian, Persian and Egyptian populations to the east, north and south, respectively. Both politically and physically, the Phoenicians were thus unable to expand their territory. They also lacked national unity. The cities they built were independent from each other, so there was no "national spirit." The speed of the waters coming down from Lebanon's mountains hampered their communications, which could only be by sea.

Trade

Two conflicting schools try to explain the formation of Phoenician trade:

1. The first and oldest is the German school called geographical determinism. Its proponents are Ratzel, Ritter etc.
2. The second is the French school of Vidal de La Blanche, Valenne and others. According to this school, trade occurred as a human reaction against the environment, contrary to the German opinion that the environment inspired the Phoenician trade.

Routes

The Phoenicians followed many routes. However, we must not confuse Phoenician trade with Phoenician navigation, two undoubtedly different fields. Until recently, Phoenician trade was considered fabulously vast, as Phoenicians were seen in the Red Sea and the Atlantic and even claimed to have been to Brazil. Victor Bernard is among these apologists for the Phoenicians.

Today, however, thanks mainly to German studies, one can say that Phoenician trade took place in the Mediterranean, with one route in the Atlantic cutting through Gaul and reaching the Cassiterid islands. No one denies that the Phoenicians sailed along the west coast of Africa or the Red Sea, as traces of them were found in Senegal and the Limpopo fortresses. However, those Phoenician expeditions were not for trade but rather for adventure.

The Phoenician routes can be divided into sea and land routes.

Sea Routes

As we know, cities developed trade, not Phoenicia as such. That's why it went through phases corresponding to the development of the main cities. Tyre and Sidon, the two most important cities in Phoenicia, were the headquarters of Phoenician trade. Each had different routes. At the time of Sidonia, they went north and reached Cyprus, Karia and Rhodes; they entered the Aegean and visited its islands (Paros, Scythia and Crete); they reached Thrace, crossed the straits, and reached the Caucasus.

At the time of Tyre, these communications with the north continued, but trade was mainly carried out in the west, i.e., they reached Greece, Italy, Sicily, Malta and North Africa. They also reached Sardinia, the Balearic Islands and the Hercules Columns, and founded colonies. They entered the Atlantic, bordering the Iberian Peninsula and Gaul and the Cassiterides.

Land Routes

Although the study of land routes does not appear in most authors, the importance of these routes is indisputable. Thanks to them, the Western world came into contact with the East. Caravans set out from Phoenicia to Mesopotamia, Persia, India, and even Indochina. These caravans played an important role in exchanging Eastern and Western products.

Goods

The Phoenicians preferred to trade in goods but usually did not trade in their own products but bought them from other peoples. They practiced trade in kind, i.e. exchange without money, as coins only appeared after the Medical Wars.³

The variety of products they traded in is remarkable. Few are from Phoenicia, but sodium, potassium and building stones stand out in the mineral realm; in the plant realm, the Phoenicians used wood for construction (they sold little of it, keeping most of it for themselves) and exported fruit, which they had in large quantities. Phoenician coasts were home to the scarab beetle, an animal from which they obtained dyes to color fabrics and make purple. Most Phoenician goods came from their industry: purple, glass, gold and silver work, vases with relief sculpture.

However, most Phoenician-traded goods came from other countries. From India and Arabia they received perfumes, precious stones, silks, spices, etc.; from Persia, carpets, silks, furs and fabrics in general; from Abyssinia, slaves; from Spain, silver and tin; from the Cassiterid islands, tin and copper; from Crete and Cyprus, marble and copper; from North Africa they brought silks and horses from the regions today called Sirenaica; from Sicily, wood for buildings, etc.

³ The Medical Wars is a set of military conflicts between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia and the Ancient Greek Civilization, represented by the different city-states of the Hellenic world. These wars meant the end of the expansion of the Persian Empire towards the Mediterranean Sea, when it was defeated by Greece. <https://whatdoesmean.net/what-were-the-medical-wars/>

Of all the Phoenician goods, three stood out: purple, slaves, and tin. Purple originated in Phoenicia itself and gave them fabulous wealth, as it had to be worn in priestly and royal garments. Slaves were brought from the Caucasus and included prisoners from the high seas. They had large tin mines in Spain.

Part Seven

The Hebrews

The study of Hebrew history is of multiple interest:

1. From a religious point of view, it presents the life of a people predestined to preserve the worship of the true God and the practice of true morality within the pagan ocean of humanity until the coming of the Messiah;
2. Still from a religious point of view, the lives of the characters in Hebrew history, prefigures of the Savior and the Church, constitute a study of capital importance to elucidate the most critical question that history deals with, which is the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ;
3. From a historical point of view, it provides valuable insights into the earliest events in human history;
4. Still, from a historical point of view, described with admirable precision, it shows us the development of a small people from a nomadic tribe to a large state organized into a powerful monarchy.

Palestine is a region covering approximately 9,650 square miles, situated between Syria to the north and Egypt to the south. This region is squeezed between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. There are three distinct zones:

1. The coast, which ends in the north at the boundary between Mount Carmel and Phoenicia;
2. The plateau;
3. The Jordan River valley.

Philistines inhabited the coast. Before the Hebrew invasion, the Canaanites and Amalekites occupied the plateau. The Ammonites and Moabites lived in the desert to the east, beyond the Jordan Valley. These peoples appear frequently in the Bible as enemies of the Jews.

The Dead Sea is of great interest from a geographical point of view. It is located about 400 meters under the level of the Mediterranean. Its waters contain a lot of salt and bitumen and are poisonous. No plant or animal life exists in these waters or on the Dead Sea coastline, hence its name. Traces of land convulsions suggest that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah once stood there.

The people were Semites who had long lived in a nomadic state like today's nomadic African tribes. The Hebrews were shepherds and led their flocks from place to place, changing pastures as they ran out.

Religion

These people's primary characteristic was their religion. Living in tribes under patriarchal rule, they had no real political unity. Their habitual migrations from Mesopotamia to Egypt made it impossible to have a fixed territory. Religion was the great bond of national unity that held the Hebrews together.

While all ancient peoples worshipped many gods, the Hebrews worshipped only one God. Unlike other ancient peoples, the Hebrews conceived God as a spiritual being, not a material one, free from human weaknesses, passions and imperfections. Omnipotent, omniscient, infinitely just and infinitely merciful, the true God the Hebrews knew bore no resemblance to the crude idols, animals or deeply corrupt and vicious mythological beings that most ancient peoples worshipped.

Many other ancient thinkers indeed knew about the oneness of God. Without mentioning the Greeks, we know that other ancient peoples worshipped only one God but later descended into polytheism.

Alongside their very high concept of God, the Hebrews had a very high moral code, revealed by God to Moses: the Decalogue. To this day, the Decalogue is the basis of civilization, as it constitutes a perfect moral code infinitely superior to the moral conceptions of other ancient peoples.

Deeply attached to this worship and morality, the Hebrews felt very distant from all the peoples of antiquity in ideological terms. Hence, there was an extraordinary

feeling of national unity that kept the Hebrew tribes together during all migrations and through the Egyptian captivity.

The Bible

"Bible" is a Greek word that comes from "byblion," meaning "book." The Bible is the book par excellence. It has two parts, each containing several books: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament contains the entire history of the Hebrew people and their religious and moral doctrine.

In addition to the Bible's value from a religious point of view, it offers great historical and literary interest.

The great characters in the Bible are the Patriarchs, the Judges, the Kings, and the Prophets.

Patriarchs were great tribal leaders who led the nomadic Hebrew people in the early periods of their history. The patriarch was, at the same time, head of the family, political leader, war leader, and religious leader. As such, he had direct communication with God. The great patriarchs were Abraham, his son Isaac and his son Jacob.

Jacob was the father of Joseph, who was sold to the Egyptians and became Pharaoh's prime minister. Joseph brought his brothers to Egypt, and the Hebrews multiplied tremendously there. But the terrible conditions in which they lived made them lengthy for liberation. So, under Moses' guidance, they searched for the Promised Land. After wandering in the desert for forty years, they finally reached Palestine, where they settled in the region occupied by the Canaanites.

Moses was not only the leader of his people during the "Exodus," i.e., the departure from Egypt and pilgrimage through the desert. He was also the organizer of his people, to whom he gave the Decalogue handed to him by God on Mount Sinai.

God was the head of the Hebrew people. Under him was an elective judge or hereditary king. The people were divided into twelve tribes, one of which, the tribe of Levi, was consecrated to divine worship. The Council of Elders was composed of heads of families. In some cases, the people gathered in the general assembly also exercised governmental functions.

Judges

The establishment of the Hebrew people in the promised land did not happen without struggles. They needed to drive back the peoples who occupied the invaded region and resist their counter-attacks. During this period, God raised up Judges, i.e. men who led the tribes attacked by their enemies. A judge was not the commander of the entire Israelite people or Israel but only of the tribe under attack. The tribe's prophet consecrated the judge. The prominent judges were Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and Samuel.

Kings

A tendency to imitate neighboring peoples led the Hebrews to want a king. Samuel, the last of the judges, at their urging, made Saul king. The custom to have Western kings consecrated by the Church originated from this consecration.

Saul served the Hebrew people and successfully fought off their aggressors. However, he did not want to submit to the spiritual authority of Samuel, to whom God expressed His wishes, so he was defeated in battle and killed. His successor, David, was the true founder of the Hebrew monarchy.

David seized Jebus, a stronghold belonging to the Canaanites, and built the city of Jerusalem there, whose strategic position made it easy for him to impose himself on his subjects. With the town well fortified, David transported the Ark of the Covenant to it in great pomp and made Jerusalem the seat of the monarchy.

Within Jerusalem's fortified walls were the Hebrew people's religious center (the Ark of the Covenant, and later the Temple), the political center (the king's seat and residence), and the military center (it was the country's great stronghold).

David founded Hebrew power, transforming his patricians, formerly unruly highlanders, into docile subjects to his rule as absolute monarch.

David organized a permanent army to exercise his sovereign rights and started several wars to definitively break the power of neighboring peoples incessantly attacking the Hebrews. Having succeeded in these wars, David extended his empire from the Red Sea to the Euphrates. He placed the Israelite people on the level of a great monarchy endowed with a large metropolis and tributary peoples over whom he exercised his power.

In his old age, David's was saddened by his son Absalom's unsuccessful revolt. At the end of his life, David became a poet and composed the psalms that bear his name, which are a unique masterpiece.

David was succeeded by his son Solomon. Endowed with a wisdom that made him famous, Solomon organized the monarchy bequeathed by his father. He surrounded himself with all the splendor required by the dignity of a great monarch, divided the kingdom administratively, ensured the maintenance of the finances, and regulated public service and other state duties. On the other hand, he traded and navigated on a large scale and became very wealthy.

Solomon's most remarkable work was the Temple, built by Phoenician specialists with precious materials from various sources. In this Temple, the Jews offered the true God sacrifices of animals and fruit. The priests maintained the worship and presided over religious ceremonies. The Temple, within a large enclosure, comprised several compartments. The Ark of the Covenant was in one of them, the Holy of Holies. The High Priest entered it once a year.

After Solomon, the Jews divided. Two tribes kept Jerusalem as their capital and remained faithful to Rehoboam, the legitimate heir. The other ten tribes acclaimed another king and later had their capital in Samaria. From the religious standpoint, the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel, which comprised the ten tribes separated from Jerusalem, were schismatic in rebelling against the legitimate religious authority. Revolutions often subverted that kingdom. Under Sargon, the Assyrians

took over the kingdom and reduced its inhabitants to captivity, which the Jews rightly saw as a punishment from God.

While the kingdom of Israel declined in greatness by violating its religious duties, the small kingdom that remained faithful to God officially professed divine worship. This kingdom, which retained Jerusalem as its capital and included only two of the twelve Hebrew tribes, was seduced more than once by the prestigious polytheism professed by neighboring nations. More than once, the kings renounced worshipping the true God and imported false gods and their respective priests. However, the true God had followers among the Hebrews and was adored in the Temple until the advent of Jesus Christ.

Prophets

The prophets were men inspired by God, who addressed them directly. They announced the future to God's people on great occasions and foretold the impending punishment their sins deserved or forgiveness for their repentance, which would bring rewards. They also foretold the coming of the world's Savior.

Their heroism was extraordinary. Their strong reproaches of people and kings often cost their lives. However, nothing stopped them from vigorously fulfilling their mission. The most important were Isaias, Jeremias, Elias, Amos, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Jewish Life

The kings lived with extraordinary wealth, while the poor lived in very modest situations.

Characteristics of Hebrew Civilization

Although David and Solomon raised the Hebrew people to a great and robust monarchy, Hebrew civilization undeniably did not deserve a great place in history from a material point of view, in which it was surpassed by the Egyptians, Assyrians and Persians, and a political point of view, since, even at their peak, the Hebrews never had a great empire like those mentioned above.

This civilization's characteristics lie in its founding principles:

1. Their very high concept of God, which the greatest thinkers of Greece or Egypt did not achieve, except in a very imperfect way;
2. The perfect moral principles of the Decalogue, which far exceed anything found in all other ancient peoples;
3. The high moral perfection reached by the prominent figures of Jewish history in general, a perfection that often makes them superior to the greatest heroes of antiquity;
4. A concept of human brotherhood derived from the idea that God is the Father of all men. This concept gave Hebrew civilization a gentleness and benignity that antiquity was entirely unaware of or glimpsed only incompletely, so it never became a fundamental economic and social organization principle.

In our study of other peoples, we have seen the cruelty with which the ancients treated their enemies during wars. Suffice it to remember what the Persians did. The morality professed by the Hebrews prohibited wars of conquest, which ancient writers usually praise as high deeds. The Hebrews forbade them. An enemy should not be treated as such except in self-defense, and you should do him good deeds rather than evil: "If you find your enemy's ox or donkey wandering, hand it over to its owner." In times of war, it was not permitted to cut down trees in enemy territory, which would reduce the enemy to misery.

The Jews welcomed foreigners, whom most ancient countries treated like enemies or persons inferior to nationals and devoid of legal protection. Accordingly, foreigners who underwent circumcision could be admitted to the Hebrew community, and a hungry traveler could avail himself with impunity of ears of corn and other fruits necessary for his sustenance.

The reason for this ideal of harmony between all peoples lay in the conviction that God created all peoples, not just the Jews. In ancient times, all gods were national. Some gods were only concerned about their people. The true God, worshipped by the Jews, is the God of all men and people. True, He prefers the Hebrew people because they are the only ones who have remained faithful to His worship, but He loves and protects all the peoples of the earth with infinite devotion.

Since God is the Father of all people, they are all brothers and sisters and should love one another. That is why fortunes should not be so great as to harm low-income people. Each family should have enough land to live on and reasonably meet its needs. When unfavorable economic circumstances forced a family to sell their property, that sale would only be temporary because the land would return to the family in the Jubilee year.

The Jews were a people of brothers, which is why usury was forbidden. As a people of brothers, they had to love their slaves. An Israelite who became the slave of another was to be freed within six years without ransom, and an Israelite slave belonging to a foreigner living in Palestine was to be freed in the year of Jubilee and could be ransomed at any time. A slave enjoyed the Sabbath rest and had the same rights as any citizen before the courts.

Such kind feelings extended to God's other creatures. That's why it was forbidden to cook a lamb in its mother's milk or destroy birds' nests. Even domestic animals had the right to rest On the Sabbath. And in a sabbatical year, all wild animals had a share in the fruits of the field. Such precepts already existed 3,000 years before the appearance of animal protection societies!

Every seventh year was a "sabbatical" year, in which the people did not work the fields and lived off leftovers from the previous year, an easy proposition in that very fertile region. During the sabbatical year, the land's spontaneous produce belonged to the poor, foreigners, or animals.

In the jubilee year, celebrated every 50 years, all slaves were freed, all debts ceased, and all sold or mortgaged land was returned. That prevented the excessive accumulation of money.

It was forbidden to mutilate the human body because it holds a soul made in the likeness of God, and so there were no human sacrifices.

You can easily see from this the nobility of Hebrew civilization in antiquity and its extraordinary progress compared to all others. It was up to Christianity to give such high principles their full development, producing our Christian civilization.

Part Eighth

Civilization in Early Greece

The Greeks considered themselves autochthonous, that is, originating from Greece itself. Ignoring the story of their true origins, they claimed that the first man had been formed from clay by the giant Prometheus, who animated his creature with fire stolen from Zeus. Outraged, Zeus chained Prometheus to the top of the Caucasus, where a vulture was supposed to tear at his flank constantly. Zeus then tried to annihilate Prometheus' work by destroying the human race with a flood. But Deucalion, Prometheus' son, managed to save himself from the flood with a boat. When the waters receded, Deucalion populated the earth by throwing stones over his shoulder. A human was born from each of those stones. One of them was Helen, who had two sons, Doros and Aeolus, and two grandsons, Ion and Aqueons. From these descended the four great groups of Greeks: Dorians, Aeolians, Ionians and Achaeans.

Of course, this exclusively mythological legend is only of historical interest because it further confirms the biblical tradition of the Flood, which was so widespread among ancient peoples. But it teaches us nothing positive about the origins of the Greek people, who undoubtedly did not come from Greece itself but from other peoples who settled in Greece, Asia, or perhaps Europe.

Ancient Greek legends confirm that, in addition to Greek ancestors, Greece was inhabited also by colonists from other countries, perhaps belonging to other races. A Phoenician founded Thebes. According to tradition, an Egyptian founded Athens and Argos. And the Peloponnese owed its name to another foreigner, Pelops, son of the king of Lydia, a country in Asia Minor.

The Greeks called the first inhabitants of Greece Pelasgos. Some historians claim that the Hellenes - Greeks - were nothing more than a tribe of Pelasgians. Others argue that Greeks and Pelasgians were different people. According to some historians, the Pelasgians were Celts or Phoenicians. As for the Hellenes, some believe they came from Asia and were related to the Persians, while others say they came from northern Europe as part of the great European invasion by the Aryan peoples.

We will return to Greece's early history when we study the Hellenic people's beliefs and institutions. Let's now take a look at pre-Hellenic civilizations, considering recent discoveries.

Pre-Hellenic Civilizations

The first people to inhabit Greece built cities surrounded by walls made with huge stone blocks. Mycenae was the most famous. One of the mural stones found in Mycenae weighs around 120 tons. Impressed by the proportions of these stones, which could only be transported and used for construction by people with enormous muscles, the Greeks claimed these cities were built by a race of giants, the Cyclopes.

Explored in 1876 by a German, Schliemann, these ruins provided insight into the Mycenaean civilization. Like Athens, the city consisted of two parts: 1. the upper part, or Necropolis, fortified with two walls; 2. the lower city, fortified with a single wall. Many diadems, jewels, and very rich weapons found in excavated graves led to the belief those graves served kings. Studying Mycenaean's racial type was possible by examining gold masks covering corpses, which took precisely the features of the face.

In addition to exploring Mycenae, Schliemann excavated the temple of Venus in Scythia and the tomb of the Athenian dead in Marathon. Above all, he dedicated himself to exploring the ruins of Troy.

Schliemann's excavations, as well as later ones, attest to the fact that Mycenae and other pre-Hellenic cities belong to a civilization called Mycenaean, which flourished in Eastern Greece, on the islands of the Greek coast, Crete, and part of Asia Minor. This civilization's characteristic monuments are large walls, tombs with large domes, etc. The walls were so thick that they were as much as 14 meters wide in some places. Cities and monuments were so similar that they attest to a remarkable unity of art and culture.

In addition to this pre-Hellenic civilization, so called because it preceded the formation of Hellenic civilization proper, other civilizations influenced pre-Hellenic Greece through foreign colonies established there. In this sense, the influence of

Egypt and Phoenicia on Greece through Phoenician colonies often found on the Greek coast is worth noting.

The relatively recent discoveries by Schliemann and other researchers in Greece and Crete have not fully unraveled the mysteries of Mycenaean civilization, about which much remains to be studied.

History of Early Greece

A long stretch of legendary history lies between the prehistoric period of Greece and Rome and the first historical events properly so-called.

The Greeks considered themselves autochthonous, born on their own soil, and flattered their national pride by repudiating any kinship with ancient peoples. However, modern historians reject this hypothesis and adopt different opinions on the matter.

For some, the Greeks and Romans descended from an Aryan branch from Asia, which was stationed for a long time to the north of the Adriatic, whence it forked off to invade the Italian and Greek peninsulas. Others believe the Greeks descended from Asian populations, perhaps of different origins, which would have merged to form the pre-Hellenic people.

The study of recent discoveries in this matter has ascertained that legendary narratives, especially Homer's, contain an important portion of truth alongside absurd mythological legends.

Recent Discoveries have abundantly proven the truth of the classical narratives and, at the same time, the existence of a flourishing civilization in Greece and Asia Minor, which foreshadowed Hellenic civilization from a cultural point of view and showed the Greek people's close kinship with the peoples that formed it from a racial point of view.

Schliemann was the most notable figure in this field of recent historical discoveries. Raised in his childhood on stories of ancient Greece's classical legends, as an adult, he conceived the project of finding the ruins of Troy, thought to be lost. After various vicissitudes, he managed to build up an immense fortune, set off for Asia Minor, and began excavations where he believed ancient Ilium existed.

He found superimposed ruins of several cities, one of which, destroyed by fire, seems to have been the Troy of Priam and Hector. Difficulties previously caused by the Turkish government forced him to abandon the site after research of incalculable historical significance.

He also carried out research in Crete and Mecca. The Cretan civilization turned out to be extraordinarily developed and pretty cosmopolitan, as the island's geographical situation would suggest, given the various traces of alien civilizations that can be seen there.

Mycenae was a civilization very close to that of Troy and Crete. The size of the stones in their walls, one of which is heavier than a locomotive, was very impressive. Many authors see a connection with the ancient legend of the existence of a people of giants in Greece. These studies of Troy, Crete and Mycenae have revealed the existence, on the Greek mainland, the islands, and Asia Minor, of a civilization called pre-Hellenic because it contained the seeds of the main elements of the Hellenic civilization that sprang from it.

Hellenic Civilization

The cities of Athens, Thebes and Sparta were the main centers of Hellenic civilization. Thebes and Sparta alternately exercised hegemony over Greece. The latter was politically organized as small municipalities completely independent of each other and linked by alliances (amphictyonies). These amphictyonies were vast federations of peoples related by the cult of certain divinities common to all of them, in honor of which they periodically celebrated athletic games.

Greek cities generally practiced maritime trade, leading to the foundation of cities with an entirely Greek population, called colonies, in various parts of the Mediterranean coast. They were politically independent of the metropolis but had to worship the gods of the metropolis, to whom they sent periodic tributes, and also owed it military assistance in some instances. They had fortified colonies in Magna Graecia, Asia Minor, and Sicily.

Civilization in Athens

While Sparta presents a social organization characterized by the absorption of almost all individual rights for the benefit of the state and by exclusively cultivating military virtues and physical fitness to the detriment of intellectual training and completely sacrificing freedom and individual independence, Athens distinguished itself by developing all civic virtues to the detriment of a certain sense of discipline that Sparta had in excess.

The Athenian state, a friend of intellectual culture, the arts and freedom, was sacrificed and absorbed by individual interests and sank into anarchy, which was the opposite excess of Sparta.

Athens sought to realize the ideal of a modern liberal democracy. After several revolutions that destroyed its old aristocracy, they established popular democracy along its characteristic lines. The citizens, all free and equal and numbering around 15,000, periodically elected 6,000 temporary civil servants. No office could be held for life or be hereditary, and no citizen could have more than one public office.

All matters of importance were dealt with in large assemblies convened almost daily, in which all citizens participated. As they started discussing an issue, the speakers were given the floor and argued their points of view at length. Finally, they took a vote. That is how the Athenians sought to achieve the ideal of a genuinely popular government.

A Flawed Democracy

Athenian democracy did not deserve its name for two reasons: 1. The special conception given the word "people" in Athens; 2. Democratic institutions suffer from the corruption that democracies easily lend themselves to.

In everyday language, the word "people" means all the inhabitants of a place or, in a more restricted sense, the lower classes of the population. The people of Athens did not govern in either sense. The right to vote was granted exclusively to a small minority, and the slaves, two or three times more numerous than the free men, worked all day while the Athenians engaged in politics and listened to speeches.

On the other hand, democratic institutions soon became distorted. The Athenians were passionate about rhetoric, so the most eloquent orators won the most votes. Thus, the city's leadership belonged to orators and indirectly to men wealthy enough to buy the orators. There were even cases of foreign governments bribing certain orators.

Characteristics of Greek Civilization

Placed between Europe and Asia, Greece represents a fusion of Eastern and Western spirit. The Eastern mind is spontaneously speculative, but the preponderance of fantasy in the Orient leads speculation in inconsistent directions, turning it into sterile rambling.

Oriental art vividly reflects this preponderance of imagination. The Orientals, very refined and demanding in terms of luxury and comfort, give their works the stamp of unreal dreams never fully realized even by the most fanciful potentate. Hence, in general, their fixed idea of wealthy details in ornaments, clothing and decorative motifs of buildings. Hence their concern to always do big things. The Greeks, continuing the aesthetes, gave all their works an unmistakable artistic stamp, and continuing the speculators, they gave philosophy a development that took them to the highest heights of metaphysics.

However, characteristics of the Western spirit were already clearly evident in Greek civilization. The preponderance of reason over imagination characterizes the Western mind. Its speculative activities are more positive and aimed at conquering truth without inner digressions pleasing to one's imagination but unacceptable to reason.

The Greek spirit created its most characteristic artistic productions along these lines instead of conceiving aesthetic dreams more typical of legends or tales from One Thousand and One Nights. Entirely based on reality, the monuments of Greek art are indicative of a clear and positive mind that admires all that is beautiful in nature without trying to escape into an unreal order of things. This positive character also explains the sobriety of Greek art, which is much more concerned with the harmony of details than with the richness of detail.

Hellenic Civilization

To understand the development of Hellenic civilization, the spirit of its institutions and political life, it is essential to study the most ancient beliefs of the Greeks. Once we have reviewed these beliefs, we will see their impact on the development of Greek society and follow that development from the earliest to the latest periods of Greek history.

However, since the Greeks and Romans are very closely related racially, and since primitive beliefs identical in both peoples affected the formation and evolution of their political and social institutions, we will extend this study to Rome and the Italian cities racially linked to Greece. Therefore, whenever we describe beliefs and events without mentioning places, understand that we are indistinctly talking about Italy and Greece.

If you would like to delve deeper into the subject, I strongly advise you to read Fustel de Coulanges' magnificent book, *La Cité Antique*.

Worship of the Dead

The ancient Greeks and their relatives on the Italian peninsula believed that once buried, the dead would live a life analogous to ours. It would be the same for the bad and the good—the happiness they could have depended on the cult their descendants paid to the dead. The dead who received worship from their descendants would be happy. Those abandoned by their descendants or whose descendants died out would be eternally unhappy. The deceased, forsaken by their descendants, would return to earth in the form of evil ghosts to torment their unfaithful offspring.

When someone died, their descendants would hang some horses and slaves over their graves in the hope they would be helpful to live underground. The graves had a hole through which they introduced food for the dead. Funeral banquets were often held next to them, in which all family members would have a meal together while associating the dead with the meal through the food introduced into the grave.

From a social point of view, this cult's main feature was its family exclusivity. The dead could only be worshipped by their respective descendants. A dead person frowned on the cult given to him by a non-descendant, even if he was doomed to eternal misfortune by the abandonment of his own or the extinction of his descendants.

Another cult peculiar to the people we are studying was the sacred fire, which consisted of worshipping a fire that kept burning on an altar inside the home. This cult received its family exclusivity from the cult of the dead. The sacred fire could only be worshipped by family members. Given the family nature of this cult, it had no priest other than the head of the family. Every head of the family was a priest in his own home. Nor did this cult have any other sanctuary than the home.

Gens, Curia, Tribe

In the period we are studying, the peoples we are dealing with lived under a patriarchal regime. That means the only known form of organization was the patriarchal family of the patriarch and all his offspring. This society or organization

was familial, economic, political, military and religious. Familial, because it was one big family. Economic, because it was within this organization and under its authority that the economic life of individuals developed. Political, because each family was a small kingdom that declared war and made peace, condemned or pardoned, and fulfilled other political functions. Military, because all men in the family made up a small army. And religious because the family was at the same time a small church, that is, a small group of believers gathered around the same worship.

This situation corresponded exactly to a fundamental idea at the time: a political organization had to have a religious foundation. Only around a cult could one understand men coming together in such a way as to constitute a political unit.

The natural unfolding of the family organization gave rise to the *gens*. The gens, so-called by the Romans, were a group of families that, while each had its ancestors to worship, were nevertheless linked together by the worship of common ancestors. In other words, each family worshipped its own ancestors but also had ancestors who descended from other families. These ancestors were adored as *gens*. Like the family, the gens were simultaneously a religious, political, family and military association.

The head of a family was, at the same time, its religious, political, and military head. Above the heads of families that made up a gens, there was a head of the gens who exercised his leadership not only in the religious but also in the political and military sense.

The gens were likewise grouped together in *curiae*, groups of gens gathered around a common cult with functions similar to those the gens had concerning the family. By the same process, the curiae formed into tribes, groups of curiae with a chief. These tribes were to the curiae as the curiae were to the gens, and the gens were to the families.

When this development process was well underway, a new type of religion emerged and spread across the Greek and Italic peninsulas, developing alongside the cults of the ancestors and the sacred fire without destroying them. It was the cult of mythological gods, beings belonging to a higher category than men, whom men worshipped because of that superiority and not because of any kinship. The cult of mythological gods did not have a domestic character and was not an extension of the family. Sometimes, these gods were mere mortals, worshipped after death for their great deeds. But these mortals could be adored by those not descended from them.

We don't know for sure whether the religious basis of the curiae was the cult of ancestors common to the gens that made them up or some regional hero. It is certain, however, that the tribes' religious foundation was the cult of a god, not an ancestor.

The new cult's exclusivism. By a rather curious phenomenon, the cult of heroes and gods retained the family exclusivism of the cult of the ancestors. In the tribes formed to worship one of these deities, only members of the curiae that made up the tribe and their descendants were admitted to the cult. If anyone outside these

curiae wanted to worship the deity and participate in the religious ceremonies held in its honor, they would not be admitted.

But the new cult was no longer so domestic that it didn't need temples. The religion of the dead and the sacred fire had no temple; the ancestors' homes and graves sufficed. That was no longer the case with mythological worship. The gods needed their own temple. Of course, that temple was the point of attraction for all families connected to it. The temple required a protective wall in the event of war, and the multitude of the faithful would naturally take shelter behind that wall, so they had to establish the first cities.

The founding of a city did not take place, as is often the case today, insensitively, gradually, without the place's early inhabitants having the explicit intention of founding it. The foundation was a solemn religious act, and the founders explicitly intended to establish a city.

The ritual for founding cities involved many details, which we don't need to go into. Suffice it to say that the founder opened a furrow in which the stones for the wall were to be set, and he did so while reciting certain prayers. The trench, once drawn, was sacred and impassable. It was sacrilege to jump over it. That explains Romulus' indignation and why he went so far as to kill his brother Remus. Once founded, the city formed a new political, religious and military unit: the municipality.

The Aristocracy

Like the gens, the curia and the tribe, the municipality had its own gods, which could only be worshipped by the early inhabitants and their descendants. Foreigners, i.e., those who came in after the founding and their descendants, could not be admitted to adoring municipal gods. For the Greeks and their Italic relatives, someone could only belong to a religion by inheriting it from their parents. Therefore, individuals who did not belong to the city's founding families could not inherit the right to municipal worship and were excluded.

Now, in the municipality, as in the tribe, curia, or gens, all authority and all law were religious. No one outside the municipality's religion could exercise authority or benefit from the law. As a result, anyone not descended from the municipality's founding families could not hold public office and had no rights whatsoever.

As newly founded municipalities had a large population of fugitives from other municipalities and adventurers and runaway slaves who came to settle there, and as the number of these people grew ever larger over time, two classes formed in each municipality: the founding families and the foreigners. The former were allowed to participate in government and were protected by law because they belonged to the municipal religion. The privileged families constituted an omnipotent aristocracy, and the others formed the plebs.

First Revolution

All Greek-Italian municipalities were ruled by kings who were both supreme political and religious leaders. Alongside the kings, there was usually a senate

where the heads of noble lineages took part. Commoners were excluded from the government.

The struggle between the aristocratic senate and the kings began very early on, with each wanting to reduce the other's prerogatives. When the kings realized that the aristocracy was increasingly threatening their prerogatives, they decided to ally themselves with the plebs, demanding some rights for the latter that would imply reducing the power of the nobility. Unable to tolerate this, the aristocracy revolted, ousted the royalty in every municipality, and began governing through senates and temporary officials such as the Roman consuls.

The revolution, aristocratic and republican, did not occur similarly in all municipalities. In some, it took place at gunpoint or through strictly political struggles. In others, it was imposed by force. Some cities abolished the king's functions in one fell swoop. Others gradually reduced the king's functions to the point where he lost all power. Some municipalities retained royalty with exclusively religious functions. In others, the royal family lost even the high pontificate's functions attached to kingship.

Second Revolution

Once the kings—their most fearsome opponents—were defeated, the small municipal aristocracies began to rule with an iron fist. However, various social phenomena conspired to reduce their power.

First, rivalries between the heads of the aristocratic lineages caused a shake-up in the structure of the aristocratic organization. Until then, only the heads of the firstborn lineages could be senators. Eventually, the heads of non-first-born lineages became disgusted and sought to participate in the senate, which the firstborn had to allow. However, leveling firstborn lineages to others broke the rigor of the aristocratic organization, and the dismemberment of the generations shook the aristocracy.

Secondly, there was a movement to abolish patronage. Without going into detail about the famous institute of clientelism, which would not be compatible with summarizing this one-year course, I can tell you that the client was a commoner tied to an aristocrat by solid ties of economic dependence, which implied great social and political inferiority. This institute of patronage began to displease the plebs, who demanded its abolition with greater or lesser violence and ended up getting it abolished.

These two reforms profoundly shook the aristocratic organization. The first broke down the cohesion of the aristocratic families, maintained by the strict discipline that subordinated the numerous secondary lineages to the firstborn lineages united by their participation in the Senate, and the second disconnected the plebs from their vassalage to the aristocracy, creating the possibility of new social progress.

Therefore, the aristocracy will face the third revolution very much depleted of means to resist.

Third Revolution

This revolution was eminently democratic, equalizing political rights between the aristocracy and the plebs. Before this revolution, only the aristocracy ruled. In the 3rd revolution, sometimes at gunpoint, by purely political means, the plebs began to demand the right to participate in public office and municipal government.

Several factors contributed to facilitating this. One was the rise of infantry as a weapon of war. Until then, cavalry had been the preserve of the nobles and was the main combat weapon. In times of war, the commoner was a factor of secondary importance. However, as the infantry's war value grew, commoners grew in influence, and their participation, in some instances, became decisive for the aristocracy to triumph in combat.

Another factor was the appearance of money. Under the old aristocratic constitution, the plebs could not acquire real estate. Commoners could not acquire wealth since all wealth necessarily consisted of real estate. When the use of money began, and with it the development of commerce and industry, the commoners could build up immense estates that did not consist of real estate, especially in municipalities where the nobles considered any industrial or commercial activity beneath their dignity.

Another educated class formed alongside the aristocracy: the wealthy plebs, who fought the old noble lineages on an equal footing with all the resources of fortune and culture and the prestige of a thorough education. Successively, the plebs were admitted to all public offices until any distinction between them and the aristocracy finally disappeared.

As with other revolutions, the episodes in this one were very diverse in the different municipalities, and the struggle included alternatives of violence and political cunning, which the history of the leading Greek-Italian cities has preserved for posterity's knowledge. We will look closer at these different episodes when we study Athens, Sparta and Rome.

As a rule, it will suffice to say that the means social reformers used to achieve a leveling out between the two classes consisted in creating new classes rather than immediately suppressing class differences, with money rather than blood being the criterion for differentiating between citizens. In other words, aristocracy was replaced by plutocracy. Finally, the nobles resigned themselves to this reform without much opposition because, as large landowners, they were included in the highest class of citizens, i.e., the richest. But even so, the aristocracy's resistance was very strong.

Finally, they also eliminated this difference between classes according to money, and all free men became equal in rights whether they were nobles or commoners, poor or rich.

Fourth Revolution

Having achieved the leveling of political rights, the fatal virus of ambition and anarchy would produce yet another revolution. The nobility had already dethroned the kings. The rich plebs had already crushed the nobility. All that was needed for the chaos to become complete was for the poor plebs to attack the rich plebs. That's what happened.

Once the democratic regime was established in the Greek-Latin municipalities, the oligarchy gained such strength that the commoners wanted to strip it of its political preeminence and wealth. Bloody revolutions of the poor against the rich took place, characterized by truly abominable episodes in which neither the elderly, nor children, nor tradition, nor modesty, nor nobility were respected. This struggle occurred in almost all Greek-Latin cities and only ceased under the yoke of Roman arms, restoring social peace.

Tyranny first appeared during this phase of Greek-Latin history. This word did not have the pejorative meaning it has today. The plebs, feeling that they could not retain their power without a strong government capable of stifling any temptation of aristocratic restoration, restored the monarchy everywhere. However, they could not restore royalty because it required a religious character that the old aristocratic religion would not give. So, they had to create a monarchy where the monarch was not called king. The tyrants were those crownless kings. They were often adventurers without the slightest intellectual or moral value, who skillfully flattered the vilest popular passions and mercilessly sacrificed aristocratic families to the wrath of the plebs.

The regime of tyranny marks the end of this evolution. When Greece submitted to tyrants, it was prepared to lose its independence, and Roman troops promptly took it away.

Sparta

Located on the Peloponnese peninsula, Sparta was a city where a rigid aristocratic and military civilization flourished. The Spartans were Greeks who belonged to Dorian tribes, who, driven back from northern Greece by a Thessalonian invasion, established themselves on the Peloponnese peninsula and subjected to their domination of a region once in the hands of the Achaeans. Far fewer in number than the peoples they subjected, the Spartans had to maintain a military organization not to be expelled from a conquered country. This obligation had another result: once the Spartans were absorbed by military service, they had to force the vanquished to practice agriculture for their benefit.

Social classes

There were three social classes:

1. The first was the aristocracy, made up of the Eupatria, i.e. the invaders. It consisted of around 9,000 men. This aristocracy had all the rights;
2. In second place were the Periecs, inhabitants of the surrounding area, who seemed to descend from ancient occupants of the mountainous maritime region of Laconia. They numbered around 30,000 and inhabited around 100 villages in which they had free administration. They cultivated the land and practiced commerce, industry and navigation but had no political rights. Eupatrians were forbidden to have these occupations.

3. Finally came the Ilotas, descendants of valley dwellers. They were half free and half slaves and didn't live in villages but in isolated huts built on land, they cultivated. They were not owners but serfs of the glebe, i.e., they could not sell the land. They had no right to fight or sing war songs. They were said to get drunk for young women to see. They were very numerous, so they got killed in annual Cryotas hunts. Many suffered capital punishment for various reasons, for example, leaving their house after sunset.

Ruled by two kings, the military aristocracy also oppressed the Peloponnese by dominating much of its territory. Lycurgus' laws tended to establish the preponderance of that aristocracy. As powerful as they were, the two kings became mere figureheads. It was the senate, made up only of nobles, that ruled. An assembly in which all members took part convened monthly to approve or reject the senate's laws. Ephors were magistrates elected for five years who supervised the kings and other state officials. There was, in theory, absolute equality of fortune among them to unify this aristocracy. But that equality didn't exist because there was a rich aristocracy and a poor one.

Education was geared to train soldiers. They cared little for intellectual culture. From his early childhood, a Spartan, destined to be a soldier, received an education that predisposed him to shine in the practice of military virtues. As soon as he was born, he was examined by tribal elders, who checked to see if his complexion was normal. If not, they would throw him from atop Mount Taigetos to his death, as the life of a physically deformed citizen unfit for the military did not seem as helpful to the homeland. As you can see, racist theories of selection are not new.

Once healthy children returned to their mothers, the most uncompromising strictness characterized their upbringing. The children were not protected from the cold with warm clothes. They were forced to eat food suitable for their age, whether it seemed pleasant or not. At the age of seven, a boy was incorporated into a small children's military militia, the commanders of which were students who had distinguished themselves by their intelligence or strength. In addition to weapons training, the pupils learned the famous, warlike Pyrrhic dance. Athletics were also highly developed. However, intellectual education was neglected, and the Spartans considered the cultivation of the mind superfluous for the military.

The boys were forbidden to complain about cold, heat, hunger, thirst, fatigue or pain. They constantly wore fabrics of the same quality in winter and summer. Except on days of great celebration, they were forbidden to wash or perfume themselves. Their food was poor, and they had to steal to live. Anyone caught in the act of stealing, however, was punished inexorably. Every year, there was a contest at the altar of Artemis. The contestants sustained a tremendous endurance test. Exposed to flogging, they had to resist the pain as long as possible. The winner would be the one who complained last. Some contestants died of pain during the test.

Adult life was also extremely austere. They had to attend daily military exercises, including running, jumping and handling weapons. Men were often obliged to participate in certain public meals for the aristocracy. The food was elementary

and men gathered in groups of 15. Although not daily, these meals were frequent enough to become highly annoying, but not even kings were exempt from attending.

Laconism

Such an upbringing and lifestyle made people's minds rigid, severe and not loquacious. The Spartans were very fond of brevity. That is why speech sobriety and conciseness were called laconism - from "Laconia," a Spartan region.

Women

Although exclusively dedicated to family life, they also had a peculiar mental formation. Their habits were very manly compared to Greek women. They played sports and were thus the target of irony throughout Greece.

Women had an extraordinary heroism that led them to face serenely even suffering to which the female heart is most sensitive. For example, there is a famous case of a mother who, when she heard that her five sons had died in war, said: "So much the better; let's give thanks to the gods." Another Spartan woman killed with her own hands a son who had fled the battlefield. That is heroism to its fullest extent but taken to unnatural and monstrous exaggeration.

Sparta's Military Value

Curiously enough, this brutal education did not make the Spartans the most glorious soldiers in Greece. By stunting the mind in favor of the body and compressing the free expansion of personalities with inexorable military discipline, the Spartans were undoubtedly heroic soldiers but lacked initiative and military talent. The great Athenian generals were much more helpful to Greece for their minds' lucidity, audacity, and vigorous performance than Spartan soldiers. The war against the Persians clearly demonstrated this point.

Since military perfection was the goal of all political and social organizations and all Spartan pedagogy, one can thus say that Sparta failed whenever it tried to exaggerate the concept of heroism and discipline by transforming man, an intelligent and free being, into a brute and massive automaton.

Sculpture

In addition to Phidias, author of the famous statue of Athena in the Parthenon, we should mention Myron, who sculpted the Discobolus, and Praxiteles, who carved Hermo. Parthenon's builder was the great Ictinus. Galimachus built the Erecteion.

Painting also achieved great perfection. The Greeks generally painted frescoes, i.e., directly on walls and not on canvases. Greek paintings are mainly vases and other small objects. They denote the perfection of artistic style peculiar to the Greeks.

Literature

In addition to the great Greek orators, among whom Demosthenes shone unmistakably, literature had admirable cultivators in Athens. There were Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides in tragedy, Aristophanes as a comic poet,

Herodotus, Thucydides and Xenophon as historians, to mention only names of the century of Pericles. I won't mention philosophers, which are covered and addressed in the History of Philosophy course.

As can be seen from this list of exponential names in the arts and letters that stood out to the admiration of the whole world, Athens was the "school of Greece," in which the Hellenic spirit flourished admirably and attained its characteristic and highest summit, making Homer's great homeland immortal.

Invasions and Migrations in Early Greece

The Greeks were considered indigenous, but this was not the case. They came from Asia and belonged to the great Aryan family. The country's first inhabitants were the Pelasgians, who built the oldest cities. They are also called pre-Hellenic, that is, before the Hellenes. They populated the mainland, neighboring islands, and the western coast of Asia Minor, giving rise to the three main foci of pre-Hellenic civilization: the mainland, Crete, and Troy.

The Pelagians, once farmers and shepherds, did not speak Greek and suffered the civilizing influence of Egyptians and Phoenicians. Tradition attributes the founding of Athens to the Egyptian Cecrops and that of Thebes to the Phoenician Cadmus, who brought the alphabet to Greece. It is said that Cadmus left Phoenicia, his homeland, in search of his sister Europa, was kidnapped by Zeus, metamorphosed into a bull, and settled in Greece on the orders of the Delphi oracle.

The Hellenes, a Greek-speaking people, appeared in Greece around 1,400 BC. At first, the Achaeans and then the Aeolians from southern Russia entered the country through Thessaly and Epirus. The Achaeans went as far as Crete, whose power they destroyed, and established themselves on most of the continent with the Aeolians. Later, they overcame the Trojan resistance by reaching the coasts of Asia Minor. The Achaeans, erecting fortifications in Tirynus and Meccenae, dominated a large part of Greece and spread the Cretan civilization they had adopted.

As one can deduce from the Homeric poems, the Achaeans prevailed during the heroic times and dominated the Peloponnese. The Aeolians populated central and western Greece; the Ionians lived at first in Prindo and Maupacta to the north and later left to settle in the south of the Peloponnese.

Coming down from the mountains of northern Thessaly, sometimes peacefully and sometimes violently, the Dorians invaded Greece and settled first in the Peloponnese. This invasion led to a great migration of the country's former inhabitants and the founding of colonies on the coasts of Asia Minor and nearby islands.

Among the Hellenic tribes, the Dorians and Ionians stood out the most for their civilization and role in Greek history. With their migration (to the south), the Dorians provoked rivalry with the Ionians, resulting in population movements and, consequently, the foundation of colonies. That led to the foundation of many Greek

colonies in the Mediterranean and Hellenic expansion into Asia Minor and other European islands.

The Dorian invasion caused rivalry between the Dorians and the Ionians and gave Greece two distinct aspects:

1. The Dorians, inhabitants of the mountains, concerned themselves with the physical and the material;
2. The Ionians, city inhabitants, concerned themselves with the arts. We owe them great legacies of Greek civilization that play an important role in human history. The Dorians are only remembered as strong, courageous and bellicose people.

Colonies

In ancient Greece, a colony was not just dominance over other peoples. A Greek colony was a nucleus of population and civilization founded and organized by the Greeks. The colonies had friendly relations with the metropolis but owed it no obedience. Politically, a colony was completely independent of the metropolis; they could even wage war against each other. This was not usually the case because the great bonds of religion and culture united them.

A colony's founding was usually done by a chief, almost always a man of prestige due to his social prominence. They brought the sacred fire from the metropolis to the colony. Founding was a religious act, so they always consulted the Delphi Oracle before founding a colony to find out where to establish it.

Greek settlers were usually poor or from a lower political position. The first Greek expansion was by farmers.

Causes of Greek Colonization

Various causes, such as invasions, overpopulation, political persecution, etc., influenced migration in Greece. Overpopulation was a significant factor. Although Greece had plenty of land to provide for its people, it went uncultivated. The political factor was also important in the migrations, as the defeated party always left forcibly and sometimes of its own free will.

Greek colonization was an almost non-stop phenomenon, although it was sometimes more intense. Colonization began almost entirely in Asia Minor. The Aeolians, coming from Bavaria, settled on the island of Lesbos and founded Aeolia. The Ionians settled in Asia Minor and founded many cities: Ephesus, Smyrna, Phoea and Miletus; 300 trading posts on the coasts of Pontus Euxinus and Chios and Samos, islands on the Aegean Sea.

The Dorians settled to the south of Ionia, in Italy, which they called Magna Graecia, and in Sicily, where their Tarentum, Sybaris, Regium, Agrigento and Syracuse colonies became the richest and most illustrious. They reached Egypt and Cyprus, and later the coasts of Macedonia and Thrace, southern Gaul (Massilia = Marseilles), Spain (Sagunto), and northern Africa (Cyrene, Barca and Naucratis).

Note that sometimes, the colonies influenced the metropolis's civilization, thus contributing to Greece's intellectual development.

Greek Philosophy attests to the high level of culture that Greek civilization reached. It is divided into three distinct periods: pre-Socratic, Socratic, and post-Socratic.

Pre-Socratic Period – This initial period includes all philosophers up to Socrates and brings together various schools, including the Ionian, Sophistic, Italic, etc.

Ionian School

This materialist school's central figure was Thales of Miletus. He stood out for his study of nature, cultivated geometry and astronomy, and can be considered the founder of Western physics. He was the first Greek to predict the eclipses of the sun and moon. He traveled through Asia, Phoenicia, Egypt and Crete and established relationships with the most distinguished men in those countries, particularly with priests who were repositories of science in those days. In Thales' opinion, water is the material principle of things, but only God produces it, being the mind or spirit that makes it fertile. Therefore, it would be unfair to consider him an atheist. He admitted the simplicity and immortality of the soul.

A contemporary of Thales was Pherecides, a Syrian philosopher, of whom Cicero says he was the first to support the soul's immortality in writing. Pherecides was one of the first philosophy writers, but Thales can be considered the first founder of a philosophical school.

Anaximander, a Thales disciple, said that things originated from chaos, a confused mixture of all elements. Everything comes out of chaos and returns to it through an eternal movement of composition and decomposition. Far from advancing the master's doctrine, it disfigured it. We no longer see the action of an intelligence that fertilizes and orders chaos but a blind movement. Instead of supreme intelligence, as Thales taught, Anaximander admitted an innumerable series of gods born and dying. He thus paved the way for atheism on the one hand and polytheism on the other.

Anaximenes' system resembles that of his master Anaximander and further corrupts that of Thales: Everything is born from the air and returns to it; the condensation and dilation make everything of the same element; there is nothing but the difference between solids and liquids. If condensation is high, we have stones, metals, etc.; and fire if the dilation reaches the highest degree. Diogenes of Apollonia followed the doctrines of his master, Anaximenes. He attributed the fullness of being to air and considered it as the cause of everything, including the human soul.

Anaxagoras of Clazomenes did not follow in the footsteps of his master Anaximenes. He accepted two principles: spirit and matter. The physical world was formed from matter, but the spirit disposed of and ordered it. The world is not the child of chance or a blind force but the work of an infinite force's power

and wisdom: "*Omnium rerum descriptionem et modum, mentis infinitae vi et ratione designari et confici voluit,*" says Cicero.⁴

Sophists

The philosophical taste propagated by the schools of Ionia and Italy, and the progress in arguing, which reached the state of the art in Zeno's dialectic, naturally produced a spirit of disputation. What used to be a serious investigation, accompanied by the love of truth, became puerile truth and an object of speculation. Enter the sophists, who delighted in arguing on the spur of the moment on all subjects, supporting pros and cons on all issues. That ingenious game brought philosophy into disrepute on the one hand.

On the other hand, it gave greater scope to skepticism, making it a valid school. Anyone who gets used, even jokingly, to supporting everything's pros and cons is in danger of doubting everything. Just as they get used to swinging, they eventually contract a need to swing.

Protagoras of Abdera stands out among sophists and skeptics. He maintained that there is no absolute truth, everything is relative, and knowledge is only of appearances and not of reality; therefore, man is the measure of all causes. Protagoras' skepticism is linked to his sensualist ideological doctrines. "The theory of relative truth leads to absolute falsehood."

Italian or Pythagorean School

Pythagoras, the founder of this school, was born on the island of Samos around 560 BC. He met Pherecides, Thales and Anaximander in succession. He traveled through Phoenicia and Egypt, where he learned astronomy and geometry and became initiated into religious mysteries through communication with priests. He then moved on to Chaldea and Persia, where he perfected his arithmetic and music. After touring Greece, he settled in Crotona (Greater Greece), Italy, where he began to teach.

Among Pythagoras' disciples, there were two classes: initiates and publics. The initiates formed a kind of religious community and lived together. They were subjected to many tests and brought before the master to receive his mysterious doctrine. That had a significant effect on the disciples' minds. That is why they looked upon the master as a kind of divinity. The Pythagoreans' formula is well known: "The master said it." The numerous public disciples received a common teaching rather than instruction in the school's mysteries.

We find in Pythagoras' doctrines the dual characteristics of the schools in which he was trained: 1. The Orientals' elevation, mystical and symbolic spirit; 2. The simultaneously beautiful and positive character that distinguishes the Greeks.

The philosopher from Samos admitted a great unity from which the world springs, and considered the world a set of subordinate units. He attached great importance to numbers and claimed that our soul is a number.

⁴ *De Natura Deorum*, Book 1.

His expressions' symbolic nature can be seen in how he explained the world's formation. He said that the great Monad or unity produced the binary number, then formed the ternary, continuing through a series of successive units and numbers until reaching the set of units that make up the universe.

Pythagoreans believed in the transmigration of souls, divided into inferior and superior, meaning passion and reason. The former must be directed and governed by the latter, from whose harmony virtue results.

The Eleatics (from the city of Elea) was born in Italy alongside the Pythagorean school. It had two branches: pantheistic and atomistic. The pantheistic error came from exaggerating the idea of unity; the atomistic from the narrowness of views about the experience of multiplicity. Both took something from the Pythagorean school: the pantheistic took numbers and unity; the atomistic took numbers and multiplicity. They would have avoided errors by combining and harmonizing these things.

Socratic Period

This second period was undoubtedly the most brilliant in all of Greek philosophy. It brought together the three greatest Greek thinkers: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Unlike the first period, the philosophers of Socrates' time left aside their knowledge of the nature of things to delve into studies of the human soul. It was a reaction against the fruits of the sophist spirit, which regrettably disfigured philosophy. Those who mocked religion and morality found a brake in Socrates' doctrine.

Socrates taught the immortality of the soul and the existence of a supreme being. His doctrine had a moral background, as the great Greek philosopher tried to combine the cult of beauty with that of goodness, combining morality with religion.

After the great Socrates appeared Plato, his greatest disciple, his fame was such that Tullius stated: "If the gods wanted to speak the language of men, they would use Plato's." However, he was not just a disciple of Socrates. He was passionate about his theory. Philosophy was arguably never so brilliant before nor after Plato. Plato's philosophy is a mixture of philosophy, science, and poetry, hence the difficulty in understanding him. They called his school the Academy because he taught in the garden of a citizen called Academus. His discussions were in dialog, imitating Socrates. It is often difficult to know his real opinion, as it is hard to tell whether a doctrine is his or one of the characters he introduces.

Soon after Plato, Aristotle created the Peripatetic school. Aristotle's great merit was the creation of a new science: Logic, the science that teaches how to think correctly. He divided philosophy into all present departments except for comparative logic.

Post-Socratic Period is the third and final period of Greek philosophy and comes at the time when Greece began to receive Eastern influence. Three philosophers stand out in this period: Zenus, Epicurus and Pyrrhus.

Zeno founded the Stoic school. According to his theory, virtue alone is good and only vice alone is bad. Virtue is happiness, and vice is misery. He sought to combat human passions, accepted defeat, and justified suicide.

Epicurus considers pleasure to be the criterion for our actions. His philosophy has had many followers. Nothing could be more natural: it's comfortable. This philosopher has little merit. Had he focused on understanding, he could not have founded a school. He followed Democritus in the atoms or corpuscular theory but crippled as he tried to improve it: *"Ut ea quae corrigere vult, mihi quidem deprovare videatur"* (Cicero). His was called the Epicurean school.

Pyrrhus

Who would have thought that skepticism could be born of a virtuous idea? But that is how Pyrrhus of Elea was dragged to a deplorable extreme. We find in his doctrine the two maxims of Socrates: 1. virtue is the supreme good; 2. I only know that I know nothing. But Pyrrhus was very insistent on the latter. He tried to defend it with his dialectic without realizing that, by undermining all truth, he undermined all virtue, as truth is also a great virtue.

Greek philosophy penetrated Rome mainly under the influence of Zeno (Stoicism). After several transformations, Greek philosophy was transmitted to Europe and became the primary source of European philosophy.

Greek Art

Greece surpassed all other peoples when it came to the arts. The Hellenes' artistic progress was rapid and extraordinary and culminated in the time of Pericles. That culmination of Greek art is called the century of Pericles. The three arts that stood out the most and achieved the most excellent brilliance among the Greeks were architecture, sculpture, and painting. The Greeks had three main architectural styles: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian (characterized by the shape of columns and capitals).

The Doric Style is the oldest and simplest, characterized by a severe column supporting a severe capital without ornamentation.

The Ionic style derives from the Doric style and is characterized by graceful capitals volutes (spiral-shaped ornaments).

The Corinthian Style is much more ornamented and has capitals with acanthus palms. It marks the splendor taking hold of Greek customs.

Sculpture and painting flourished at the same time as architecture. In sculpture, one can identify four periods corresponding to the four styles that can be seen. The first period predates Phidias and shows great concern with ornament and an oriental influence. With the first phase's remarkable progress of sculpture, we come to the second, where the marvels of Phidias, Praxiteles and Polykleptus emerge and give a new aspect to sculpture by uniting the beautiful with the sublime. Phidias's most famous works are the statues of Apollo, Diana, and

Minerva and Jupiter's gold and ivory statues. Polycletus has the colossal statue of Juno. We should also mention Athenodorus, the author of the "Laocoon" group.

Painting was also extensively developed in Greek civilization, although less cultivated than architecture and sculpture. Painting took off in the century of Pericles. Among the painters is Parrasius, who is admirable for the perfection of his contours and beautiful human portraits.

The Greeks also cultivated music, although to a lesser extent and with less development.

Summary

Architecture

Doric - Simplest and oldest - severe column with severe capital - Temple of Minerva and the Pantheon.

Ionian - More elegant columns, with more ornamentation, capital with volutes.

Corinthian - Very ornate columns, capitals with acanthus leaves.

Sculpture

First period - Before Phidias - Art is affected by the influence of the East, which is why ornamentation is more important than form. The form generally became coarse, while the ornamentation was very delicate.

Second period - The wonders of Phidias and Polykleptus appear. Phidias' bronze statues of Apollo, Minerva and Diana; ivory and gold statue of Jupiter. Polykleptus' colossal statue of Juno.

Third period - Started by Praxiteles.

Fourth period - Athenodorus, with the "Laocoon" group.

Part Nine

Italic Civilizations Before Rome

Like the Greeks, the Romans knew nothing precise about their origins. However, some excavations have revealed that Italy's primitive inhabitants, who probably occupied the entire peninsula during the chipped stone and polished stone periods, lived in round or oval huts, with the only holes being a door and a slit to let smoke escape. These people buried their dead on their left side, with their legs bent and their bodies painted. They were small, dark,-skinned and belonged to a race established throughout the western Mediterranean basin in Spain, Algeria, or Italy.

It seems that, in historical times, their descendants were the Ligurians, so called because they inhabited the Gulf of Genoa. These peoples were later repelled or subjugated by invaders of Indo-European origin closely related to the Greeks, who invaded Italy a thousand or two thousand years BC and introduced the use of bronze and iron. These invaders are called Italiots.

These populations inhabited villages built like lake towns but located on dry land and usually surrounded by a water trench and an enclosure to defend in case of war. [They set up a type of scaffolding and] threw debris through the space between the planks onto the ground. When the waste reached the height of the

planks, they drove new stakes into them and built a new habitable terrace. Thus, these villages often had one debris-covered foundation, supporting several others. Such dwellings multiplied throughout the Italian peninsula. In the rubble, we find various objects characteristic of that period, such as combs, weapons, etc.

After a while, the Italiots split into various groups, including the Samnites, Umbrians, Lucanians, etc. However, these peoples were barbarians and lacked a developed civilization. The Etruscans and Greeks civilized them.

The Etruscans' racial origin is unknown. They left 8,000 inscriptions, which have not been deciphered to date. Specific decorative motifs suggest that they came to Italy from Asia. Drawings such as lions, tigers, sphinxes, etc., and some details of their clothing and religious habits confirm that impression. Their racial type and origin do not allow for any conjecture and are a real enigma.

The Etruscans built fortified posts high up in the mountains surrounded by great walls similar to those of Mycenae. They directed the populations under their yoke from the top of those fortified posts.

In the cities, there were two classes: the aristocracy, of Etruscan origin, and the plebs, descendants of the vanquished. The magistrates, elected by the aristocracy, sat on small seats without backs and with crossed ivory feet. They walked through the streets preceded by 12 lictors who carried bundles of sticks from which an axe emerged. Roman tradition perpetuated that as the "curial seat," proper to magistrates. The lictors and the bundle also remained in Roman custom. The bundle (*fascio*) remains the emblem of Italy's fascists.

The Etruscans made admirable use of the resources of Etruria, the Italian region they occupied. They were skilled farmers and craftsmen who made many different kinds of objects. Early on, Etruria established intense relations with Magna Graecia, which we'll discuss in a moment. That is why Etruria's artistic production was generally Greek-inspired. The Etruscans are reminiscent of the Phoenicians, given their lack of originality in creative work and metal industry skills.

The Etruscan religion was unique. Tremendous gods awaited men after death. Mantus burned the dead with a torch after they received a severe blow from the elderly Charon (another mythological figure). Tuculcha, another deity, had an eagle's beak, donkey ears, and hair that rose to torment the living. To appease them, they made human sacrifices of gladiators who fought over the grave. The spilled blood (supposedly) calmed restless seas. Some Etruscan tombs have been preserved to this day but have nothing interesting from an artistic point of view. Their appearance is sometimes reminiscent of Egyptian and Greek buildings. The Etruscans practiced divination of the future.

From the Etruscans, Rome kept gladiatorial combats and a passion for fortune-tellers and omens, also confirmed by the Greek influence.

Few in number, the Etruscans were eventually dethroned by other peoples from the privileged position they had conquered in Italy. Latins, Samnites, Gauls, and, finally, the Romans brought down the Etruscan empire. The decline probably began in 500 BC.

Like the Greek cities, the Etruscan cities never constituted a large unified empire. They had alliances with each other but were entirely autonomous. This was perhaps one of the causes of the collapse of Etruscan power, to which Rome later dealt the final blow.

Magna Graecia

In addition to the Etruscans, the Greeks who settled in southern Italy greatly influenced the Romans. It was called "Magna Graecia" because of its civilization's entirely Hellenic character. The Greeks founded numerous flourishing cities there, including Crotona, Sybaris, Tarentum, Cumes, Naples, and Pesto (Pesto's temples are famous for their beauty). Hellenic civilization shone there in all its splendor. Wealthier than the Athenians, the inhabitants of Magna Graecia even enjoyed a luxury Athenians regarded with contempt as ostentatious "nouveaux riches."

City-to-city rivalries, common in Greece, also existed in Magna Graecia and caused that region's political ruin under the blows of Italian and Carthaginian soldiers.

The Greeks had a providential mission in Italy. They civilized Italians, advanced civilization among the Etruscans, and thus prepared the advent of Roman civilization.

In Latium, a region of the Italian peninsula on the Tiber River plain, Italians and Ligurians mixed and formed the Latin people. The inhabitants of Umbria, Etruria and Magna Graecia influenced these new people. In Latium, they formed small settlements such as Lavinium, Tusculum, Tabur and Alba, and the central region of Latium later became Rome.

Story and Legend

Romans knew nothing about their city's origins, so they explained it with mythological legends supplemented by ancient traditions that might contain some truth.

According to this set of legends known as "Roman tradition" and designed to flatter Roman patriotic pride, Latium's early inhabitants had Janus, son of Apollo, as their king. He founded a city on the Janiculum hill. When the god Saturn was expelled from Olympus, Janus offered him hospitality in Latium, and the god settled on the Capitoline Hill. As a token of his gratitude, Saturn taught agriculture to the Latins. Evander, a Greek, later settled on Mount Palatine and made civilization flourish there. Hercules killed Cacus, the bandit on the Aventine hill and built an altar on the banks of the Tiber.

In the early period of its history, Rome was thus civilized and inhabited by gods. Later, the famous Aeneas arrived in Latium. He was an illustrious Trojan warrior who fled from the Greeks and landed on the Italian coast after countless adventures. Welcomed by the Latin king, Aeneas married the latter's daughter and founded the city of Lavinium. His son founded the town of Alba, the kings of which descended from him.

King Nimitor, a descendant of Aeneas, was dethroned by his brother Amulius, who had Nimitor's daughter, Silvia, and her two sons, Romulus and Remus, killed and

thrown into the flooded Tiber. A series of circumstances favored the young princes who landed on dry land instead of dying. They were suckled by a she-wolf and finally raised by a couple of peasants. When they came of age, they restored their grandfather Nimitor to the throne, who gave them land on which they built the city of Rome. After a quarrel with Remus, in which the latter perished, Romulus became king of the new city, which adventurers and runaway slaves immediately populated on his invitation.

However, the city couldn't survive its exclusively male population. Hence, you had the famous abduction of Sabine women by Romans during a public game they held with the Sabines. That kidnapping triggered a war which the Romans lost. The Sabine women intervened as they wanted to stay with their kidnappers. They interposed themselves between the fighting armies and prevented the fight from continuing and exterminating their kidnappers. Both peoples decided to merge, and the kings Romulus (Rome) and Tatius (Sabine) reigned over them jointly. Sometime later, Tatius was assassinated. Romulus also mysteriously disappeared while reviewing his troops and was worshipped by the Romans as the god Quirinus.

His successor was the Sabine Numa Pompilius, a just and pious high priest and king. He was of Roman origin but conducted himself much more as a religious than a political leader. He gave the Roman aristocracy great power. Numa Pompilius' successor was Tullus Hostilius, under whose reign the war between Rome and Alba took place, immortalized by the famous fight between Horatius and Curiatius. The Roman victory over Alba's inhabitants gave them supremacy over the Latium region.

Tullus Hostilius, a Roman, was succeeded by Ancus Marcius, a peaceful Sabine who created a port in Ostia and fortified the city. He also built a bridge called Sublicius.

Ancus Marcius was succeeded by Tarquinius the Elder, who seems to have been the son of a Greek and was a teacher of Ancus Marcius's son. Having dethroned his pupil, Tarquin went on to rule over Rome. He introduced the science of fortune-telling and the customs and insignia of Etruscan magistrates. He built the famous temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, a circus at the foot of the Aventine hill, and the famous *cloaca maxima* [city sewers], which still serves Rome today.

Sergius Tullius, who may have been the son-in-law of the previous king, succeeded him on the Roman throne. He worked actively on building the city and made social reforms that deeply displeased the aristocracy.

He was replaced by his son-in-law, Tarquinius the Proud, who reduced the Latins to Roman subjects and oppressed the nobility, conducting himself like a true Greek tyrant. An aristocratic riot deposed Tarquinius, the pretext for which was the suicide of the famous Lucrezia, who preferred to end her life rather than give in to the demands of her cousin, Tarquin's son. The deposition of Tarquinius marked the end of the monarchy.

Critique of the traditional legend - Although it does have some truth, it has been distorted by popular imagination, and it is impossible to say with certainty which of the facts it tells are true and which are false. This tradition has some historical

interest because it reveals the struggles of the kings and the plebs against the aristocracy in nascent Rome.

Early Italy

Pre-Roman Civilizations

There are contradictory versions about the early inhabitants of Italy, who populated the peninsula before the foundation of Rome. Southern Italy was inhabited by Greeks, who founded flourishing cities endowed with a high degree of civilization. In them, Greek people and culture predominated so exclusively that this region was called Magna Graecia.

Another group of people of considerable importance in pre-Roman Italy were the Etruscans. There is a complete mystery about their origin. Their racial type has elements characteristic of many very different peoples. Their almond-shaped eyes and stature make you think of the Far East. However, their tan color suggests another origin.

Etruria's political institutions and social habits strongly influenced nascent Rome. It seems the Romans copied from Etrurians the organization of the senate, the most essential body in Roman political life.

Certain insignia of power come from there. The use of bundles topped by an axe, carried by soldiers, which preceded high state dignitaries in the streets, as well as the use of curule stools, also seems to have been imported from the Etruscans.

In addition to these populations, there were Ligurians, Semites, etc.

Rome and Legendary History

According to ancient legends, Rome was founded by Romulus and Remus, both suckled by a she-wolf. An aristocratic monarchy was established, which ended with the proclamation of a republic. Although the legend of Romulus and Remus probably contains a grain of truth, it was adapted to flatter Roman patriotism.

Evolution

The history of Roman civilization has two distinct phases:

1. At first, the Romans were a poor and rustic people notable for the purity of their customs, the almost Spartan rigidity of their civic virtues, and their military qualities. As the scope of its conquests widened, Rome grew richer and began to develop a cultural, artistic and social life that soon transformed it. The city of Romulus and Remus entered a second phase.
2. The second phase was characterized by the absorption of Greek culture by the Romans, as well as the cosmopolitanization of Rome.

First phase

When Rome was just a small municipality that sought to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles to bring the surrounding villages under its yoke, its civilization was as fledgling as you can imagine.

The still-small town had haphazardly laid-out streets that provided no beauty whatsoever from an urban planning point of view. The houses lacked beauty and luxury and lent themselves exclusively to very modest family life. Festivities were so simple they would have filled the educated and wealthy populations of Magna Graecia with disdain. People's minds, not very cultivated, were only interested in economic or military issues.

True, Romans were excited about politics like all more or less important municipalities and even the most insignificant populations of Greece and Italy. However, this was due exclusively to the furious class struggle pitting the aristocracy against the plebs everywhere. A long series of gradual advances was necessary for Rome to move from that initial situation to the heights of power and glory it later reached.

Rome retained its primitive appearance to such an extent even after the republic's great conquests; Augustus, who transformed it, boasted of having found a city of bricks and replaced it with a city of marble.

In its first phase, Rome did not stand out culturally and economically. However, its future greatness was germinating in the virtue of its children.

Family life was of a model purity characterized not only by the wives' modesty but also by the austerity of men. The upbringing of children vigorously maintained very pure morals, and those well-organized families provided the state with model citizens capable of becoming real heroes in wartime.

In its second phase, Rome began to grow more prosperous. The scope of its conquests was no longer confined to small surrounding towns but extended over ever richer and more distant regions whose wealth flowed to Rome as war spoils worth more than anything imaginable.

Rome further enriched itself with taxes collected with unique rapacity and arbitrarily whenever the Roman treasury threatened to run out. Finally, the number of slaves, obtained through wars or trafficking grew so much that, at one point, one paid less for a slave than for a nightingale.

The cause of Rome's political success lay in its sons' domestic and military virtues and in the precarious situation of all Eastern peoples. The world at the time felt old and worn out, and this feeling culminated in the time of Augustus when chroniclers tell us that the entire ancient world was waiting for a savior to heal humanity and lift it out of its situation. The great monarchies seemed to be afflicted by an inner corruption that undermined the entire political and social structure while maintaining an appearance of strength.

While colonies of the great empires could not shake off their yoke, the monarchies that oppressed them could never stand up to a well-organized uprising. A general preoccupation with enjoying life made all kings, princes, generals, governors and men of the people indifferent to their duties and to the attraction of glory. They turned all their attention to the immediate enjoyment of pleasure. Rome's victory over the East and Greece was primarily the triumph of a strong, pure and young people over a corrupt world.

However, that victory marked the advent of a new order of things in Rome. Contact with the fanciful monarchies of the East, and above all with Greece, gave Rome a taste for luxury, and that taste determined an entire transformation of the city. Sumptuous palaces, large squares and valuable monuments appeared everywhere. The growing influence of Greek culture, brought by slaves from Greece who often were men of great culture and value, meant that the city's material aspect and the way its inhabitants thought and felt rapidly became Hellenized.

At the same time, the city became cosmopolitan due to the importation of slaves from all over the world, the continuous influx of illustrious travelers, and the importation of treasures and riches from everywhere.

Simultaneously, a profound moral transformation was taking place. In the words of an illustrious Roman, the East took revenge on Rome by injecting its vices into it. The cult of immoral deities from Greece and the East spread irrepressibly in Rome. Lust perverted customs, and after a while, Rome was nothing but an immense pleasure house. From that moment on, Rome allowed itself to be dominated by the germs of corruption that caused its final ruin. The noble Roman spirit was entirely transformed. Free love replaced domestic virtues, and civic virtues disappeared.

Imperial Rome retained republican tribunes, consuls and senators. But since the emperor held the key to all favors, dignitaries in high public office were mere instruments of imperial despotism. In reality, the emperor was the source of all power. Since those close to him inevitably influenced him, ultimately, the world's fate depended on his favorite court jesters and freed slaves, who were the usual companions of many emperors.

With patriotism damaged and eliminated, Romans could no longer be good soldiers. Hence the decline of the Roman army, which began to become denationalized. The Romans contracted an absolute horror of military life and began to fill their army with foreigners, slaves (prisoners of war or their descendants) and gladiators (very often slaves or their children). Within a short time, the foreign element had climbed to all levels of the hierarchy.

With the army's habit of putting the imperial throne up for auction, practically foreigners took the crown. As that often happened even before the Roman Empire disappeared, Rome gradually ceased to be Roman.

Roman Law

We've already seen two characteristics of Roman civilization: its cosmopolitan aspect, which made it a harmonious synthesis of all civilizations that existed up to that point, and its Hellenic character, which led a writer to say that Roman civilization was the perfect realization of everything the Greek genius conceived in the political, economic and social order but could not achieve. Let's look at the third, the Romans' legal sense.

Roman Law, the noblest production of Rome's entire culture, has stood up to the admiration of the ages and is studied by all peoples because it not only reflects the political and social interests of a given people at a given time but is, above all

the expression of the rights and duties conferred on men by nature and reason even before any legislation by the state.

Human nature is invariable at all times and in all peoples and places. For this reason, universal principles of morality and law must always govern human societies everywhere. Hence, the easily verifiable fact is that all civilized peoples' laws have common fundamental traits at all times and in all places. Roman Law had the incomparable merit of imperishably understanding and defining these rights. That is why it is called "the written reason." That is also why Roman Law is still of interest to scholars.

In addition to this primordial quality, the Romans had other qualities which helped to give their law considerable value. The characteristics of the Romans' legal mentality were a great precision in thinking and writing, a prodigious ability to interpret texts, and a marvelous logical rigor in applying general principles to particular cases.

The Twelve Tables Law

The earliest written document of Roman legislation was the Law of the Twelve Tablets, drawn up when the class struggle began to reach its acute phase. Until then, Roman Laws had been passed down orally from generation to generation. The nobles were the only ones who knew the text of the law, which gave them obvious superiority over the commoners. The latter then demanded that a written law be drawn up. Rome appointed people to study the legislation of the most eminent peoples. The fruit of these studies was the Law of the Twelve Tables, a moral triumph for the commoners of the time.

Evolution of Roman Law

The development of Roman Law consisted of softening the rigor with which ancient Roman Law established early legal concepts. Due to a series of religious or legal concepts, early Roman Law was extremely strict towards certain categories of people. It protected nationals against foreigners to the point of considering the latter excluded from the beneficial protection of Quiritarian Law.

Hence, two distinct social classes were formed: 1. Patricians, whose veins of Roman blood flowed; 2. Foreign plebeians and descendants of foreigners who had only certain rights granted by nature and not by Roman Law, such as the right to life and liberty.

Part Ten

The Evolution of Politics and Customs in Rome

Roman civilization covers an immense period stretching from 754 BC, when tradition places the foundation of Rome, to 485 AD, when Romulus Augustus, the last ruler of the Western Roman Empire, was stripped of the imperial purple.

During this immense period, which spans well over a thousand years, Rome underwent a vast religious, social, political and economic evolution. It would take a year of accurate study to give you a precise idea of Roman history. We will be forced to cover only the critical points in these lectures.

Internal Politics

We've already said something about Rome's internal politics when we looked at Greco-Latin municipalities and their history. Adding a few peculiarities to the four revolutions mentioned by Fustel de Coulanges in Rome will suffice.

First Revolution

We saw how this revolution occurred when we studied Rome's early history and legends about its kings. In Rome, the aristocracy's growing discontent against the kings translated into the murder of many of them. Finally, an aristocratic uprising suppressed monarchy as a political power by deposing the king and establishing the consulate. The kings used to be civil and religious leaders. Once they were deposed, the religious duties, usually attached to royal functions, passed to an official who retained the title of king, "rex sacrorum," but no longer had a political

position. Kingship was abolished in Rome, and the political functions of kings were transferred to two elective and temporary consuls who governed Rome.

Second Revolution

In Rome, as in other municipalities, the right of primogeniture disappeared in the organization of the aristocracy. Consequently, there sat in the Roman Senate not only the heads of great aristocratic lineages, called "patres" due to their authority's paternal and familial character, but also aristocrats from non-first-born branches, called *conscripti*. Thus, there were two kinds of senators in the aristocratic senate: 1. Heads of first-born noble lineages, called *patres*. 2. Noble senators belonging to non-first-born lineages, called *conscripti*.

This political transformation produced an economic change. The non-first-born branches had their own patrimony and an economic life entirely distinct from that of the first-born branches. All this led to a fractioning of the main aristocratic lineages, which meant that each family lived for itself, and the primitive organization of the gens, having lost its political, economic and social significance, only retained its religious meaning, grouping families descended from the same branches around the cult of common ancestors.

Third Revolution

The plebs in Rome were numerous from the earliest periods of Roman history. That is because Rome attracted all political exiles from neighboring cities, foreign merchants who considered their geographical position favorable to exercise their trade, and especially inhabitants of municipalities conquered by the Romans and brought en masse to the victorious city. As a rule, all these foreigners joined the ranks of the plebs.

According to tradition, Tullius was the first king to support the political and social demands of the plebs. He began by giving them real estate property in the territories of the conquered municipalities. That was equivalent to facilitating the formation of a new wealthy class of plebeian origin alongside the existing aristocracy.

Alongside the old division of classes that made up the aristocracy and the plebs, this same king established another division in which all inhabitants were no longer classified according to their genealogy but their domicile. This innovation led to the formation of plebeian tribes with their own rights alongside the aristocratic and traditional tribes. These tribes were made up indiscriminately of nobles and commoners and included all inhabitants of any social status who lived within the district whose population was to make up the tribe. Therefore, each nobleman belonged to two types of tribe: the aristocratic tribe and the mixed semi-plebeian tribe. The new tribes also had new gods, and the plebs began to have a religion officially recognized by the state alongside the old exclusively aristocratic religion.

Sergius introduced another division alongside this: Those who had some wealth and those who had nothing. In the first class, which comprised nobles and plebeians, he established subdivisions according to the amount of each person's fortune, noble or plebeian, and subdivided the Roman army into units

corresponding to this organization and no longer to the old aristocratic organization.

But Roman Law allowed the inhabitants, formed into combat units (*centuria*, or battalions as we would say today), to vote on the main political issues on certain occasions (they called such votes *comitia centuriata*). It so happened that the Roman people began to vote in assemblies in which there was almost no difference between plebs and nobles and in which the plebs' vote was counted just as much as the nobles'. Thus, the plebs entered the political life of the city of Rome.

The Aristocratic Reaction

Aristocrats were hostile to these profound changes, which the kings of Rome tended to make increasingly detrimental to the aristocracy.

When Servius was assassinated and Rome's last king was later deposed, the aristocracy began to destroy the entire democratic work of the kings. They began to surround political-military assemblies - *comitia centuriata* - with such formalities that the vote's result practically depended on the aristocracy. They annulled Servius' reform, and the plebs lost their influence in the city's political life, although not in law.

One of the aristocracy's first acts was to take away from the commoners the land Servius granted them. For the aristocrats, who adhered to the political and social principles stemming from the old religion of the dead, it was sacrilegious for commoners to own property on land where their ancestors were not buried; they were not entitled to that land.

As for the clientele, the patricians tried to reduce all plebeians to the status of clients or the like. However, their attempt failed as the plebs decided to leave Rome rather than fall into the trap offered by the nobles. The aristocracy used a subtle process to reduce the plebs to cronies. Deprived of land, the commoners had to borrow money to live. The nobles provided the necessary money on the condition that the commoner would be reduced to servitude if he failed to pay back the money on the due date.

At this point, all free plebeians started trying to abandon Rome, leaving it to aristocrats, clients and slaves. The results of these attempts are well known, and you have already seen them in your high school course.

The institution of the Tribune stemming from these events was quite interesting as a guarantee the nobles granted the plebs. The nobles could not admit plebeian magistrates because a magistrate was bound to the city's cult, and you had to be a patrician to be bound to that cult.

So the nobles agreed that some commoners called tribunes would undergo a special religious ceremony under which they would become "sacrosanct." This word had an exact meaning. Sacrosanct objects became intangible because they were dedicated to the cults of the gods. Like any object, tribunes could go through

this ceremony. Once "sacrosanct," they became intangible and could not be the object of sacrilege: they could not be arrested, beaten, injured, etc.

That is why a tribune had the right to interpose himself between any aristocrat and a plebeian, preventing the plebeian from being arrested or mistreated. The tribune was intangible, and the aristocrat could not do him violence. Accordingly, the tribunes were valuable instruments for the plebs to defend against aggression from the aristocrats.

Having studied the tribune's "sacrosanct" nature, we will now look at the development of his dignity and the expansion of his powers in Rome.

As we have seen, a tribune was not a Roman magistrate. He didn't have the right to sit in the curial chair or to wear the crown and purple, reserved exclusively for dignitaries of the aristocracy. Nor did he have the right to be preceded through the streets by lictors carrying the *fascio*.

The Plebs' New Conquests

However, the tribunes' powers gradually extended through successive conquests and usurpations. Without anything authorizing them to do so, they began to summon the plebs to meetings, to show up at the Senate (at first sitting outside by the door, and later going inside to follow the proceedings), to judge patricians, etc.

The plebs' meetings, called by the tribunes, resulted in them starting to make laws for themselves. These decrees, called "plebiscites," only applied to the plebs. The aristocracy was governed by Senate-issued laws, an aristocratic body whose authority was the only one exercised over the nobility and whose decrees were called "senatus-consultus." Between these two opposed legislative powers, one aristocratic and the other plebeian, there was a mixed legislative power: the famous *comitia centuriata*, army assemblies to which I have already referred, in which both nobles and plebeians took part. It was a common ground where the two classes could meet without giving up their rights and prejudices.

As I told you in previous lectures, wealthy plebs began to appear in Rome, which today we would call the bourgeoisie. These plebs started to cultivate and civilize themselves, and after a while, they acquired a sense of their importance that made them easy rivals for the aristocracy. The aristocrats were forced to have some contact with these plebs because, since they worked in the same professions as the rich plebs, they had to meet each other frequently, and this led to personal relationships that forced them into close contact. In these contacts, wealthy plebeians could expose the plebs' views to aristocrats outside the hectic atmosphere of political meetings and inspire in them a certain feeling of tolerance toward plebeian demands.

At the same time, seeing among the commoners men with equal education and sometimes superior fortune, the aristocrats lost some of that old class pride that had given their resistance such firmness. On the other hand, wealthy commoners had the opportunity to get to know the aristocracy's way of thinking more closely,

to receive some expressions of sympathy from the aristocracy and, finally, to understand that there was something respectable about the noble class, which the commoners wanted to fight at all costs.

Hence, the rich plebs played an eminently conciliatory role between the poor plebs and the aristocracy, a role also explained by the rich plebs' desire to assimilate and merge with the aristocracy rather than destroy it.

A class struggle episode in Rome was about making the Law of the Twelve Tables. The plebs wanted written and public laws rather than laws preserved by oral tradition known only to the patricians, as Roman Laws had been until then. Their demand caused extreme revulsion among the aristocracy, but they finally had to give in. The Code of the Twelve Tables was submitted to the approval of the *comitia centuriata*, which included nobles and plebeians. For this reason, that law applied indiscriminately to both classes and brought Roman Law an entirely new principle: the equality of all free men before the law.

A provision of the Law of the Twelve Tables prohibited marriage between nobles and commoners, a ban later repealed so that marriages between nobles and wealthy commoners became commonplace.

Once the popular demand had been met, another appeared, as was to be expected. The commoners wanted to be admitted to the Consulate. They waited for the aristocracy to grant them this right for 75 years. Finally, the nobility was forced to give in, and they determined that one of the two consuls would be a plebeian and the other a patrician. After that victory, barriers fell one after the other, and plebeians became governors of Rome and commanders of legions.

Democracy in Rome

The evolution of the republican regime thus transformed Rome from an aristocratic municipality into a democratic one.

When we talked about Athenian democracy, I told you that it differed from today's democracy or what we imagine a democracy should be. The democratic regime in Athens was seemingly egalitarian but enshrined a fierce class difference between slaves and free men. The same observation applies to Roman democracy. Rome paid lip service to its children's equality before the law but maintained slavery— a most ferocious social difference—until the fall of the Western Empire.

Note, however, that the difference between social classes in Rome, even among free men at the height of the plebs' power, remained more evident than in Athens. Rome was always an aristocratic city; when legal differences between nobles and plebs disappeared, a substantial difference between rich and poor remained. People in the *comitia centuriata* were sometimes divided according to wealth. Poor tribes in the *comitia* numbered only four, and landowners 31. As each tribe had one vote, the free but propertyless inhabitants were an insignificant minority. As for the Senate, in theory, it had to be periodically renewed as its members would lose office after five years. But it was customary to reappoint them, so senators were generally elected for life.

As it turned out, the senators' children were usually appointed to succeed their parents on their death. So, in practice, the Senate became a hereditary corporation.

On the other hand, social customs were even more aristocratic than the institutions. In theaters, senators had reserved seats; in the cavalry, only wealthy people were allowed to enter; high positions in the army were usually reserved for young men belonging to high-ranking families, so much so that Scipio, of the high Roman aristocracy, commanded an army before he was 16.

The Romans' innate respect for their city's aristo-plutocracy meant that when struggles between the poor and rich began (which characterized the last revolution), the plebs went along loosely with the revolutionaries. The Gracos had only precarious support from the lower plebs. Even the agrarian laws to divide the land among the poor plebs left the latter rather indifferent. They preferred to live peacefully in the shadow of the rich, enjoying in their company the many privileges that the great city's immense fortune city could offer all its inhabitants.

As you may know from your high school studies, the struggles between the upper and lower classes were quite lively, with episodes expressing the irritation of the parties, which I will report on later.

The Roman Empire

The Empire ended these struggles and offered a comfortable and easy solution to the social problem, which its classes, exhausted by so many battles, gladly accepted.

Today, the title of emperor seems much higher than that of king. However, among the Romans, the title of emperor was much more modest as it did not mean sovereignty but was conferred on some republican dignitaries. Caesar and his successors never dared or wanted to take the title of king. They preferred to call themselves *imperator* and enjoyed the political-military authority that came with it by being at the same time consuls, tribunes, high pontiffs, etc.

Seemingly, the republican administration under the Empire was still in place. There was a Senate, consuls, people's tribunes, etc., but these positions were purely decorative. All authority passed into the hands of the emperor, who ruled the state at his discretion. The contempt with which the emperors treated the old offices of the republic was immortalized by one of them who asked the Senate which sauce was best for eating fish.

The aristocracy willingly accommodated itself to this system, finding it more pleasant to enjoy their immense fortune under the social peace that the Empire imposed. The aristocracy enriched itself immensely by holding the very lucrative posts of provincial governor, generally entrusted to them. In such a position, a governor could confiscate all the treasures he liked that belonged to that province's inhabitants for the benefit of his private pocket. As governor, he owned everything in the province, with the precious privilege of taking whatever he liked back to Rome to fill his chests or palaces at the end of his term. You can easily understand how lucrative these positions were. As a result, the aristocracy became

extraordinarily rich and didn't miss the times when the government of Rome was in their hands.

Commoners were also consoled. Although they no longer ran public affairs, they lived in Rome in idleness among public feasts, gladiatorial games and theatrical performances, receiving daily from the hands of the nobles the food and sometimes even the clothes they needed. They did not mind being reduced to zero politically. Their life was full and pleasant, and they wanted nothing more.

The aristocratic families had further compensation. They occupied first place in the splendor of the imperial court, privy to the emperors, with unimaginable influence over many of the imperial deliberations. But for this proud aristocracy - which withstood the most varied struggles for more than a thousand years facing Rome's external enemies and then irate plebs, dominating the former and retaining its superiority over the latter - the time finally came for the inevitable decadence that befalls human classes and institutions. The emperors themselves brought about that decadence.

It's not hard to imagine how proud the Roman aristocracy's very old and wealthy families were under the Empire. Many dated their origins back to times before Rome and to aristocratic branches from cities before Rome. Owners of immense fortune, and shining at the court of the most powerful monarch on earth, their position seemed to be definitively consolidated by the annihilation of the plebs and Rome's external enemies.

After a while, the emperors began humiliating the aristocracy by introducing people from the lowest social ranks, disqualified plebeians, slaves, etc., into the highest functions of the court and its closest circle. As a result of imperial munificence, these freed slaves acquired immense estates and were on a par with the richest aristocrats. On the other hand, as the nobles were entirely dependent on the emperor, they had to humbly flatter his favorites even if they had been their slaves.

Most astonishingly, the nobility apparently didn't oppose this as one might imagine. On the contrary, many noble families, at the height of their fortunes, willingly married these commoners. The aristocracy was committing suicide but still retained its prestige for a long time.

Then, the barbarians came and destroyed the Empire. The aristocracy was decimated or had to flee, and after a thousand years of splendor, those ancient bloodlines disappeared from history for good.

Rome's Customs and Social Life

It would be interesting, if we could, to study the social transformations that Rome went through, from kingship to the fall of the Western Empire, as we did with its political evolution. We have only seen social changes related to political organization, the long democratization process Rome went through, and the final victory of the aristocratic class. Alongside this transformation, it would be interesting to study the evolution of domestic life, social customs, literature, etc.,

through the various periods of Roman history. Unfortunately, however, we don't have the time for it and will be forced to summarize.

Under their former kings, and for a long time after the republic was proclaimed, social customs in Rome were very simple. The Romans were then peasants mainly engaged in agriculture, fiercely hard-working, and very greedy. In addition to being very hard-working, they were very practical and positive, endowed with a high sense of discipline and remarkable military qualities, which would produce their greatness. Methodical, orderly and thoughtful, the Roman had all the qualities of an excellent administrator that would elevate him to the rank of king-people of the whole world.

Roman customs, however, were extremely simple. Rising with the first light of dawn, a Roman spent the whole morning working in the fields. After a meal and a short "siesta," he returned and worked until sunset. Then, he eats dinner and goes to bed. Only market or assembly days are exceptions to his strict and regular life.

The houses were simple. They generally consisted of a single room, called an "atrium," simultaneously a kitchen, bedroom, living room, etc. The diet was extremely sober. They used wine and meat only when offering sacrifices to the gods. They wore clothing whose simplicity matched the austerity of their social life: a simple tunic, over which, on big days, a piece of cloth called a "toga" was placed.

The Romans were ardent patriots capable of great personal sacrifices for the good of their country. Content with their austere life, they were not avid for public office and honors but served their land for the love of their gods and fellow citizens without desiring any reward.

Unfortunately, that situation changed completely after the Second Punic War. The Romans' habit of plundering conquered cities mercilessly and giving the booty to their generals or the public of Rome meant that after the Punic wars, as the republic's borders expanded, an ever-increasing amount of gold began to flood into the eternal city. Of course, so much wealth had to bring about a change in customs. Initially rude and straightforward, the Romans quickly became sensual, dissolute and fond of luxury often taken to excess.

Houses began to change. The wealthy completely abandoned the old one-room homes and began building luxurious residential neighborhoods and places with numerous compartments or rooms, each with a particular purpose. You first entered a vestibule, then you would find the "atrium," a room with an opening in the ceiling through which rainwater fell into a reservoir called the "impluvium." This gutter was reminiscent of the single room in ancient Roman dwellings at the top of which there was a hole to let the smoke from cooking pass through.

Once you had crossed the atrium, you accessed the *tablinum*, a reception room the same as modern houses' halls and offices. The "tablinum" was a reception room where the house owner welcomed people to do business. Once past the tablinum, you entered the more intimate part of the residence, comprising several adjoining rooms: dining room, bedroom, library, bathroom, etc. None of these

rooms had windows overlooking the street. They led directly onto an internal garden through which they received air and light. That garden was surrounded by a colonnade called a "peristilum."

The house sometimes had two floors. Sometimes, they rented out the front room of the first floor for commercial establishments, with families living on the upper floor and in the back of the first floor, just as it used to be in São Paulo when its city center was both a residential and commercial district, with families generally living in the houses' upper floors and renting out the first floor for commerce.

Many houses were built with the richest materials and decorated with marble, mosaics and paintings of the highest value. Objects of great value began to appear to complete the luxurious atmosphere of Roman homes, such as precious furniture, priceless fabrics, etc. As you can see, all this was a far cry from the old, glorious simplicity of Rome's early days.

Men's attire didn't undergo any significant changes. The fabrics became much richer, and elegant men made sure to give the folds of their wide toga a mark of distinction, which was difficult to achieve. For this reason, an elegant first-century man went so far as to sue an acquaintance for having bumped into him in a very narrow street and messed up his toga's artistically arranged pleats. We'll still see something about feminine luxury, which, as you can imagine, was not far behind masculine luxury.

At the same time as their customs were becoming increasingly civilized, the Romans' intellectual life was progressing. Their increasing contact with the Greeks resulted in a veritable invasion of Greek civilization in Rome. The Romans liked to be served by Greeks in all professions—doctors, tutors, teachers of rhetoric, cooks, actors, soothsayers, domestic servants, etc. That is easily explained because the Greeks had privileged intelligence and were masters of an extensive culture combined with an exquisite civilization. The Romans had a lot of money, but the civilization was still in its infancy. In contact with the Greeks, they adapted to their culture. With all that and Hellenistic literature, the Greeks completely conquered Rome and, behind the Roman legions, the immense empire they had conquered.

As Rome's power grew under the Empire, so did its luxury. With it, such a corruption of customs spread over Rome that it is fair to say that this corruption was the main cause of the fall of the Roman Empire.

That is not to say that a nation can't progress in literary, artistic and social terms without falling into immorality. Money and knowledge are not harmful to man when appropriately used but can help splendid achievements without harming people's morality.

Yet, while one can put money and culture to excellent use, they can also be employed for unworthy purposes, and wealth often harms its holders from a moral standpoint. A rich man can remain pure of character, but he has more occasions to do evil than a poor man.

The same is true of peoples. They can be rich and virtuous, but a wealthy nation finds occasions to go astray and decay morally much more often than a poor one.

That's what happened to the Romans. They became extraordinarily wealthy. On the other hand, through a long process of religious decadence, which we'll see in a moment, they lost the beliefs and principles that supported their morality. Finally, they received civilization precisely from the Greeks, a people in frank moral decay. All these circumstances combined to drown the Roman Empire in a flood of gold and mud that suffocated it.

Let's look at some of the most characteristic features of this series of circumstances, and then I'll give you something about Roman literature, philosophy, and law.

Luxury

Luxury in Rome knew no bounds from the late Republic until the fall of the Empire. High society ladies notably led a life of ostentation and waste, which is hard to imagine today.

As a rule, early in the morning, the matrons of the Roman patriciate were awakened by female slaves carrying silver vats containing finely flavored milk. This liquid was intended for "toilette," as it was common knowledge that milk could soften the skin.

Numerous slaves entrusted with maintaining her beauty would enter the matron's room. They made up what we now call a beauty salon. Each had a specialty. One was an expert at extracting eyebrows painlessly or almost painlessly; another specialized in treating hands and feet; yet another was an incomparable hairstyling artist who knew how to create the most astonishing works of hair architecture.

Some female slaves had the secret of preparing ointments that gave their mistresses' faces a youthful or sad appearance, as requested. Especially appreciated were slaves from the most remote provinces of the Empire who prepared rare and delicious perfumes. In addition to this veritable army of "technicians," assistants carried the mirror, tables and other objects necessary for the matron's make-up. It seems that the art of dyeing hair had not yet reached the level of development it has today in Rome. For this reason, the matrons were very fond of the blond hair sold in certain Rome stores and imported from dangerous and distant Germany.

It was time for the walk once her "toilette" was over. In general, a lady of the Roman patriciate would go out in a litter surrounded by glass, lying on precious cushions and tapestries. One or two slaves followed, carrying huge and expensive fans to keep insects away. On either side of the litter walked a crowd of sycophants who said pleasant things to the matron during the ride.

Slaves dressed in rich livery carried the litter. Horses trimmed with gold and purple pieces pulled carriages with ivory wheels. Eventually, some ladies dispensed entirely with the litter, the carriage, and the entourage, announcing their presence to commoners in an extravagant and expensive way. The Romans widely used certain pearls, which, placed on their feet, produced a characteristic noise well

known to the crowd, indicating that a lady of the high aristocracy was approaching. These pearls served as a horn and required no slaves or lictors to make their way through the crowd, amazed at such luxury.

It would be wrong to assume that such excessive luxury was only seen in women. In Rome, men rivaled women in vanity and ostentation. They wore vibrant and often priceless garments. The "chic" people of the time meticulously regulated a garment's various folds and parts. Altering a fold caused such an inconvenience and perceived damage that one of Rome's "elegant" people sued an acquaintance demanding compensation for intentionally bumping into him while passing through a very narrow street and messing up his tunic's beautiful folds. Wearing a toga with folds descending to their hands and rich belts was the distinguishing mark of high society boys. All the other details of their attire reflected what we said about their aesthetic concerns. They wore carefully curled hair.

Inevitably, as soon as people consider beauty their leading quality, they begin to sacrifice their most cherished affections. Mothers are terrified of large offspring to preserve youth's glow for a long time. Some criminal "tricks" were applied at the time. Very often, after her child was born, a mother would send him far away and entrust his upbringing to any willing peasant for a fat fee. The reason for such infamous deals was apparent: When the child grew up, he could become a living testament to his mother's old age. Once a child was hidden for good, his mother would "not grow old" for many years. Of course, the child was handed over to his new "parents" so that neither they nor the child knew his hidden identity.

If the nobility were so luxurious, it's not hard to imagine the excesses the emperors indulged in. Heliogabalus carpeted his palace's portico with gold sand so everyone entering the imperial building would leave with marked feet. The same emperor wore tunics of gold and purple covered by a cloak so overloaded with stones that he could not move, covered in jewels from head to toe. He ate on solid silver platters with gold and agate vases. His bed was made of solid silver and covered in gold. Even his animals lived in luxury. The beasts in his zoo ate parrots and pheasants, and his horses were fed rare grapes.

Curiously enough, while surrounded by all the material elements that would make someone happy, he was tormented by a constant worry of suicide. He had a tall tower built from which he could throw himself at any moment. Embedded in the ground at the foot of the tower was a sun made of gold and stones. The sun was meant to receive the imperial body when it came crashing to earth. To make his suicide even easier, Heliogabalus had a sword made out of stones, under which he constantly had at his disposal the poison needed to end his brilliant and unfortunate existence.

This story suggests tremendous but comforting reflections. Tremendous because they show that those who base their happiness on fortune and life's pleasures are cruelly deluded. Comforting because they show upright and pure people that happiness does not lie in lust but in a pure life's orderly and methodical tranquillity.

Unfortunately, the Roman world lacked the supernatural light of Christianity and could not see that, so luxury grew more and more. There are accounts that a famous Lolita Paulina attended a small, intimate gathering covered in emeralds

valued at forty million sesterces. In our currency, that would be more than four hundred thousand dollars.

Gambling is an inseparable companion of luxury. In Rome, it had no bounds. Rome ravaged its colonies to support both. I've already explained the complicated legal and administrative apparatus by which the governors of the Roman provinces had the right to confiscate whatever they liked from their provinces.

The same happened with victorious generals. Paulus Emilius, returning from Macedonia in great pomp, entered Rome with a procession of 250 executioners with confiscated gold statues. To give his soldiers some satisfaction, he allowed them to sack 70 cities, taking whatever they wanted. Events like this were commonplace.

Once, traveling through Gaul, Caligula gambled with friends to fill his long leisure time. Having lost all his money in the game, he ordered a register of the province's richest inhabitants, sentenced them to death, and confiscated their assets for the imperial treasury. He explained to his friends that he would thus restore his fortune and losses during long gambling hours in a few minutes.

The use of violence to fill the Roman magnates' insatiable pockets did not date back to the empire. Rome was a theater of rapine and murder already during the Republic, intertwined with amorous complications and financial struggles that were the scandal of the world.

Silas, having defeated Cina and Marius at the battle of Preneste, had more than a thousand inhabitants of Rome put to the sword. He promulgated such radical and widespread confiscation and proscription laws that they were reminiscent of the horrors of the French Revolution and the Russian Revolution. Then, sitting triumphantly in the Roman Forum, Silas sold off the fortunes of the outcasts and exiles at auction and the very title of Roman citizen the ancient Romans were so proud of. He gave the entire city's income as a gift to prostitutes, mimes, freed slaves, etc.

All it took to immediately decree an owner's death and the confiscation of his property was for one of the powerful people to covet his property. A famous case is that of Quintus Aurelius, a quiet and wealthy Roman living far away from politics. Seeing his name on a famous list of proscriptions, he simply said: "My plot of land is killing me." He was right.

Since Roman Law awarded the accused's property to the whistleblower if the accusation was proven true, whistleblowing became so widespread in Rome that even fathers and sons denounced each other, hoping to increase their assets.

A general feeling of disregard for human life spread through the world's glorious capital, giving rise to frequent political shenanigans involving reciprocal permission to murder. Augustus, for example, carried out one such scam, the victim of which was the immortal Cicero. The genius orator's enemies wanted him dead at all costs, which disgusted Augustus, an admirer of his incomparable talent. However, Lepidus consented to the killing of his brother Paul, and Anthony sacrificed his uncle Lucius Caesar. Augustus agreed to sacrifice Cicero in exchange for these two lives.

On the streets, it was not uncommon to stumble across the bodies of people victimized by violence. If his head did not separate from the body, it was an indication his executors had killed the wrong victim and did not cut the inert corpse's head in homage to the person's innocence.

Even maternal affection, the most enduring and selfless love Providence has inscribed in the laws of nature, became slack in Rome. I've already told you what certain mothers did with their children. Let me tell you about another case, perhaps more worthy of censure.

Having reached puberty, a young Roman was visiting various temples in Rome with his friends and giving thanks to the gods for that circumstance, as was customary. As he was immensely wealthy, his friends were very numerous. But someone plotted against him in the shadows, probably to seize his fortune. While the young man was making his visits, someone came to inform him that, by government order, he had just been sentenced to death. You can easily imagine that his friends immediately dispersed.

Terrified, the young man ran to his mother's house, which was, of all places, the one that should be most welcoming to him in such a difficult situation. But a law condemned to death anyone who took in someone sentenced to capital punishment. Having been warned, his mother locked the doors of her house to prevent her son from entering in search of protection. The young man knocked in vain on his mother's door; she was not moved.

Seeing that he couldn't find refuge and protection even with his mother, he fled into the bush, where a gang of robbers reduced him to slavery. His life became so miserable that he decided to tell his identity to the first group of soldiers he encountered. When he came across some soldiers, he did so, and they immediately carried out his death sentence.

Many soldiers took advantage of the general disorder to burst into the homes of wealthy lords and forced the latter to adopt them as sons and heirs. Thus, a boorish militiaman was introduced as a son into the luxurious and exquisite homes of senators. For his adoptive father, he was not an object of affection but panic.

Such was the disorder and waste of money that Brutus and Cassius decided to collect taxes from Asian provinces ten years in advance. That is why the great Cicero said: "All the provinces groan, all the free peoples lament, all the world's nations cry out against our violence. There is not a single place where our fellow citizens' tyranny and injustice have failed to make their home. Judges, do the current customs please you? Are you satisfied with such a state of affairs?"

Republican despotism was great, and so was imperial tyranny. There is something childish about the arbitrariness, cruelty, and even naive refinement with which the emperors treated all social classes. Nothing holy, dignified or respectable escaped the contempt with which the emperors looked at the whole world. As we shall see, the gods were no exception to this rule.

Domitian ordered the patrician Glabrius to confront a lion in the arena. Glabrius did well in that painful and difficult task and thanked the gods. He then received a message from Domitian condemning him to death for having dishonorably

fought in the circus as a gladiator, a job unworthy of a member of the Roman nobility.

During a show, it was raining cats and dogs. Domitian changed his clothes to avoid discomfort but forbade the audience to do the same, so everyone had to watch the show in wet clothes.

When he went to the Senate, Caligula would give his foot for the senators to kiss, a habit that became widespread.

After murdering his mother, Nero wrote a letter to the Senate justifying the crime. Except for one who timidly withdrew when the vote was taken, all senators approved the imperial crime. Nero then ordered the Senate to try the senator who had withdrawn. They did so, and the senator was sentenced to death.

Nero committed countless other crimes besides the matricide, which sufficed to make him sadly famous. Among them was the murder of his wife Popea's son for the simple reason they caught the boy playing emperor just as children play soldier today. Nero's crimes were so numerous that Tacitus devoted an entire book to recounting them.

Galba was only allowed to bury dead soldiers of the legions that opposed his ascension to the imperial dignity on condition that the chariot taking him triumphantly to the Capitol passed over their corpses.

Curiously, a glaring proof that this moral corruption existed in the imperial palace and among the people is the immense popularity of some of the most sadly famous Roman emperors. They dampened people's moral sense by distributing large donations to the populace. Heliogabalus, of deplorable memory, was extremely popular in Rome. Caracallus, a cruel and debauched ruler, was very popular because he distributed new clothes to all Roman inhabitants. Commodus, who fought as a gladiator dressed as a woman, was frantically applauded by the populace. Nero organized a triumph of his own, in which the crowd exclaimed: "Oh Olympic victor! Oh heavenly voice! Happy are those who listen to you!"

Despite all his crimes, Nero was so popular that a "Sebastianist" party was formed in Rome when he died. They claimed the emperor's death was untrue and that he would reappear to reign over his people sooner or later. Superstitious voices claimed to have heard his voice on Pontius Hill. Nero's successor had to impose severe penalties on those who claimed he had not died.

The secret of the popularity of so many emperors worthy of hatred was their liberality towards the people, reflected in the construction of sumptuous public buildings such as theaters and circuses, the distribution of clothing, and public banquets that sometimes reached truly astonishing proportions. In Rome, free food distribution to the people once took the form of a lavish banquet attended by 66,000 diners.

Sexual Depravity

No wonder that, amid so much luxury, customs were dissolute. Divorce spread alarmingly in Rome. Augustus, who wanted to set himself up as a champion of

morality against the growing wave of corruption (he called himself an enemy of divorce), married a divorced woman without waiting for the legal deadline—the birth of the child she conceived from her previous husband. Julia, Augustus' daughter, earned Velleius Paterculus' claim that she had committed all the infamies of which a woman is capable.

Emperor Caligula violated the honor of Roman patricians. Agrippina, Nero's mother, could have been her children's grandmother; Messalina, Claudius' wife, frequented houses of tolerance and made sure to receive money in exchange for selling her body to feel the “pleasure” of being a real harlot. Messalina's corruption went so far that she married the aristocrat Silius, who held the high office of consul in Rome while Emperor Claudius was still alive.

Some patricians officially enrolled as harlots, while others married eunuchs. The young men of the plutocracy married old women of repellent physical appearance with the sole aim of inheriting their estate. And to satisfy their vile instincts, matrons of the aristocracy, sometimes married to illustrious senators, searched not only of young men of good position but even slaves and gladiators. Many abandoned their homes to live with their lovers.

However, it seems no one could surpass Caligula in cynicism. He dared to set up a pleasure house in the imperial palace itself. Whenever Caligula passed through the Gulf of Baiae, the most illustrious ladies built temporary huts on the banks and invited the emperor to use them. At a lake party, they built houses of tolerance where patrician girls gave themselves freely to whoever wanted. Commodus, who used to appear in public dressed as a woman, lived with a gang of friends and girls in utmost debauchery. He brought his concubines to the circus' imperial tribune. Heliogabalus said he didn't want to have children for fear that one of them would turn out to be honest.

Emperors Destroy Traditions and Encourage Immorality

Naturally, amid such a general collapse of public morality, religion and tradition would be the most efficient pillars on which society could rest to avoid complete ruin. Religion and traditions were closely linked to social customs, held great sway over the public mind, and reminded the Romans of the virtues of their ancestors, to which Rome largely owed its weapons' prodigious success. Accordingly, the two pillars could serve as precious auxiliaries to the emperors to work for the country's moral preservation.

However, that did not happen. Driven by a suicidal rage, the Roman emperors destroyed the foundations on which their faltering society could still stand, at least for a while. They were the first to discredit religion and destroy the ancient traditions inherited from their ancestors.

A thousand facts prove this assertion. Roman traditions attached a note of infamy to those who fought in an arena or performed in theaters. Yet, numerous emperors forced people from the highest aristocracy to perform in the city's theaters to satisfy their imperial whims. Serious senators and dignified matrons were suddenly forced onto the stage during a performance to play the sad role of jesters.

On one occasion, an octogenarian patrician was obliged to dance in the theater to amuse the audience, which neither pitied her old age nor respected her dignity. Members of the aristocracy were also forced to go down to the arena to fight against beasts or gladiators, thus acquiring the notes of infamy that the law applied for such behavior.

The scandal didn't stop there. Emperor Commodus used to go down to the arena dressed as a woman to fight as a gladiator. Another emperor joined a troupe of artists on a tour throughout the Empire and went to Greece for theatrical performances with them. The emperors' mighty hand blew all Roman traditions to bits.

On the other hand, mimes, jesters, actors and freed slaves became increasingly influential in high society and at the imperial court. Although Roman Law considered all these characters infamous, emperors and aristocrats showered them with magnificent gifts and numerous possessions such that some had fortunes ranking among Rome's greatest. They also became linked by blood and marriage to the most aristocratic and wealthy families in the world's capital.

All ancient Roman writers unanimously state that introducing these extraneous elements into Roman high society profoundly harmed people's morality. None had a defined position to defend or a traditional name to protect from scandal. They were adventurers who owed all their fortune and splendor to imperial munificence or the generosity of some aristocratic tycoon. They could be overthrown from one moment to the next, so they tried to use their immense wealth with shamelessness and cynicism, filling the whole city and Empire with their ruckus scandals.

The emperors preferred such characters for their amorous adventures despite their being legally infamous. Messalina, Faustina (wife of Marcus Aurelius) and Domitian's wife had illicit liaisons with well-known people in Rome. Gladiators became so trendy that even senators' wives often left home to live with them.

Family Decline

That general shipwreck severely undermined the family. A large number of wealthy people preferred not to get married to enjoy the false delights of lust unabashedly. By not marrying, they had no children, or at least no children legally recognized as theirs, so they could leave their fortune to whomever they pleased. That triggered a real hunt for bachelors' fortunes. All were besieged night and day by a veritable army of young men who courted them with the most scandalous and cynical attentions and tokens of affection to see if they could move the bachelor's heart and obtain some testamentary liberality. This trend became so widespread in Rome that it was written about in books of the time.

Sterility in senatorial households became so alarming that Popea's Law to curb birth control was published. But it was useless, and that abominable abuse continued.

As I said, public opinion was not as outraged by these excesses as we might have hoped and expected.

Nero received a dazzling popular welcome upon returning from Baiae, where he had killed his own mother, with women and children throwing flowers at him. When they learned he had committed suicide, a sect of "Sebastianists" was formed, hoping that he would return. These nostalgic people claimed someone had heard his voice in Pontus. Even during Domitian's reign, adventurers claiming to be Nero were severely punished.

Harsh Customs

Gladiators

That Sybarite⁵ population became unbalanced and unfit to fulfill its duty. Yet, by a curious but explicable paradox, cruelty and bloodlust increased among them. Gladiator fights in the arenas witnessed a most atrocious carnage.

As you already know, gladiatorial combat came from an ancient tradition according to which two men had to fight over a dead man's grave so that the victim's blood would appease the soul of the deceased. However, as time went by, this cruel and monstrous religious practice became a real social scourge. People no longer sought gladiatorial combat with a purely religious concern but with the primary or exclusive aim of enjoying the shedding of human blood. The greater the massacre, the more abundant the blood, and the more grievous the wounds, the greater was the popular pleasure.

At the start of gladiatorial games, they sacrificed a human victim to the gods, and the combat began. Under Trajan, there was a gladiators' battle in which ten thousand men fought until no more combatants were in the arena. There were gladiators in a category called "without remission." They could not leave the arena alive once they had entered it. Aware of this gloomy predicament, one can understand the gladiators' poignant sadness as they saluted when beginning their combat: *"Ave, Cesar, morituri te salutant!"*

Amid average-height fighters, there were sometimes groups of dwarf gladiators who jousted with each other. After some games, all spectators - senators, gentlemen, emperors, matrons - would go down to the arena for a hideous *saturnalia* in which all social categories mixed.

To give you an idea of the exceptional cruelty of such spectacles, it is enough to remember the torments suffered by Christians, who died under the tremendous torture whether they belonged to the highest or lowest social classes, whatever their age, sex, culture, or fortune. The crime of being a Christian had no mitigating factor and was only expiated in atrocious torments that seem to have exhausted everything that a most fanciful imagination could conceive.

Slaves

If that was the situation of gladiators, the slaves had it even worse. In general, slaves were prisoners of war or descended from prisoners of war. They had no

⁵ A person who is self-indulgent in his fondness for sensuous luxury.

rights. A slave was considered an object that his master could destroy at any time by a simple act of the will. Slaves were so numerous that their price was extremely low. At one time, a slave cost less than a nightingale. There was in every rich house an official called a "Carvifex," who was the slave's executioner and had to apply tremendous penalties constantly.

When Christianity began to radiate its influence over Rome and guide even its adversaries in a charitable direction, they passed various laws in Rome to protect the slaves' lives and physical integrity against abuses by their masters. However, these laws were ineffective and never applied to provide slaves with a sufficient guarantee.

Usually, the general public was entirely indifferent toward slaves. Tacitus, for example, proposed expelling 4,000 freed slaves to Sardinia to die there because of its unhealthy climate. Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem with enormous cruelty and reduced all Jews over the age of 17 to captivity, was nevertheless called by his contemporaries "mankind's love and delight."

If it weren't for the fear of making these points too long, I would tell you countless other sadly significant details about the situation of Rome's slaves, which was just as dire as in all other countries of the ancient world except for Palestine.

Religion

Disorder and Decay of Ancient Cults

In Rome, far from serving as a factor of social preservation, pagan religion was a tremendous vehicle to corrupt customs in all social classes throughout the Empire.

The Roman's primitive religion—their belief in sacred fire and the dead—had disappeared. Only a reminiscence remained from the early worship—the cult of the vestals' fire. From the latter until Augustus and even later, funeral meals that noble families held at their ancestors' graves remained. But no one believed in those things anymore.

As for gods not belonging to these early religions, immense confusion reigned from the beginning of Rome, given the extraordinary number of divinities that the popular imagination constantly produced. These gods were vague beings about whom nothing was known except that they were endowed with the power to help or harm humans. Hence, the worship they received was entirely self-interested.

The gods in this ancient period of Roman history had nothing in common with the Greek gods. Instead of being vague entities, they were supermen with brilliant aesthetic qualities and great power. The number of these gods in ancient Rome was immense. Each only dealt with one thing: acting within a highly restricted sphere. There was a particular god for the door, but another for the door hinges and yet another for the threshold. Each man had a personal god. In addition, there was a god who made the child cry its first cry, another who taught it how to eat, another how to drink, another how to leave the house, another how to return to it, etc. There was a particular god for a peasant when he cultivated the land, another who protected him when he fertilized, another when he sowed, etc.

Gods multiplied to such an extent that there were more than 30,000. A Roman once joked that it was easier to find a god than a man in Rome. Such was the number of gods, and so vague was the Romans' knowledge of them that many feared they wouldn't even know their name upon invoking them. So, after invoking the god, at times, they would add: "Would you prefer me to call you by another name?"

Roman gods, particularly the older ones, were very often not statues and therefore could not be housed inside temples. The population assumed that they lived inside certain objects.

Foreign Gods Invade Rome

That abundance of gods grew out of the Romans' habit of promising the gods of the city they were fighting against that they would bring them to Rome and dedicate a special cult to them if they abandoned their faithful at the moment of combat, giving Roman arms the upper hand. These faithfully kept promises resulted in Rome being filled with deities from all over the world.

Even before this great invasion of oriental deities, Rome was invaded by Greek gods, who came in the victory parade of generals who defeated Greece. This happened at the same time and for the same reasons as the infiltration of Greek culture into Rome. When the prestigious Greek gods of incomparable material beauty arrived in Rome, the old Roman gods were relegated to one side, including those entirely fictitious and the ancient clay statues the Romans had worshipped. The Greek gods became quite fashionable.

The emperors added to that immense gallery of gods. For many days, Tiberius allowed eleven Asian cities to dispute the honor of erecting a temple to him like a god. Finally, that dubious distinction fell to Smyrna. Caligula declared himself a god and set up a temple where he placed himself at the place proper to the gods to receive the worship of his faithful. Sometimes, he would talk to the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus and put his ear right next to the idol's stone mouth, pretending to hear an answer whispered to him. At other times, he would speak loudly, insulting the god and treating him as an absolute equal.

Adulteresses like Empress Popea, Nero's wife, and Empress Faustina, who lived with clowns, were declared goddesses and had their own temples. Even [Astoldus], Hadrian's favorite, was proclaimed a god by imperial decree.

Skepticism and Disbelief

Of course, no one could take those gods seriously. The overproduction of gods, the immorality that tradition attributed to them, and the divinization of most corrupt emperors brought religion into such disrepute that even it was the object of worldwide derision in plays. As a result, with the general spread of atheism and skepticism, Rome plummeted into an abyss. Lucian depicts Jupiter in conversation with Vulcan in his *Dialogue of the Gods*. The former complains of unbearable headaches and asks Vulcan to behead him. Vulcan, without hesitation, grants the request, and with that, Jupiter dies.

Religion Aggravates Corruption

The Romans realized the damage that importing foreign gods was doing them and tried to stop it, to no avail.

Worship of Greek gods provoked a lot of reaction. In 186, they held a monster trial against Bacchus worshippers who, quite rightly, were accused of corrupting public morals because Bacchus' cult was so immoral. More than 3,000 worshippers were condemned to death, and the Senate banned bacchanals, tremendous orgies celebrated in honor of Bacchus.

However, the writers who had the most significant influence on the Roman minds tolerated the immorality of the Greek gods. Plato condemned drunkenness but explicitly exempted the excesses practiced at Bacchus' feasts. Aristotle harshly censured immoral statues but exempted statues of gods, who were happy to be honored that way. The cult of Venus, established in her honor, was inseparable from prostitution.

In Greece, government officials turned to Venus in times of trouble. After Xerxes was defeated, Athens had a painting placed in the temple of Venus depicting prostitutes making vows and processions for their homeland's salvation. Underneath the inscription of the great Simonides one reads: "These prayed to the goddess Venus, who, for their sake, saved Greece." Solon established in Athens the temple of impure love to Venus, the prostitute.

While Greece was bursting with temples to Venus, not a single temple was erected in her territory in honor of the goddess of conjugal love. Although Greek writers knew how to emphasize the dignity and greatness of married life in their writings, it seems that their moral sense was obliterated when it came to religion, and so they never worshipped the goddess who protected the love of husband and wife.

All this religious corruption penetrated Rome and deeply corrupted the city. This is why Juvenal could truthfully say that "the vanquished world has taken revenge on us by giving us its vices." Roman priests practiced such immoralities in the temples that the Christians called the pagan temples places of prostitution. Ovid, very knowledgeable about shady matters, indicated that pagan temples were very suitable places for courtship.

Intolerance

What is curious to note, however, is that these very harmful religious cults, which hardly anyone believed in anymore, were extraordinarily intolerant of their enemies. That was already evident in Greece. As Socrates was sentenced to death, one of the reasons given to justify it was that he was corrupting people by saying that stone gods were not the true God. If some philosophers dared to teach that the statues were not gods, as people supposed, the famous Aeropagus condemned them as impious and sentenced them to recant and go into exile.

For this reason, the Greeks knew no freedom of conscience. Socrates taught that everyone should follow their country's religion. Plato, his disciple, said that "nothing should be changed about the established religion because trying to do it is to have lost one's mind." Socrates, accused of denying the gods he denied, disputed that denying gods was a crime. And Plato, speaking of the one true god

who had created the universe, said he was hard to find. They forbade him to declare it to the public.

In Rome, that intolerance persisted even when playwrights or comedians propagated irreligion in theaters. Although there was indulgence for impiety and atheism, being a Christian in Rome was an inexcusable crime which, as I said, brought the most severe penalties.

Religious formalism

It was no wonder that souls became increasingly deformed as religion declined.

Roman Religion, like Greece's and most pagan religions, was nothing but a series of rites and imposed no moral precepts but only the correct practice of certain ceremonies. The faithful could be guilty of the greatest crimes and harbor the greatest possible hatred against the gods they worshipped in their hearts but would not incur the deities' wrath if they faithfully performed those rites. On the other hand, the faithful could practice the most excellent virtues but would not be heeded if they involuntarily became distracted and made a mistake in executing the rite.

Those rites were extraordinarily complicated and irrational. Some prayers had to be recited by pirouetting from left to right. They meticulously regulated the way victims were hanged, the color of their hair, the shape of the knife used to immolate them, and the type of wood used to roast the meat. No matter how insignificant, any mistake would inevitably lead to the god's indifference to the faithful's request.

Of course, such unfounded requirements should irritate more enlightened minds, inspiring utter disbelief in such a capricious, despotic and irrational religion. All this contributed to the dissolution of customs and political life in Rome. In the next lesson, we will see how military errors brought that general disorganization to its peak, resulting in the fall of one of the most flourishing empires history has ever known.

Part Eleven

Civilization in the Roman Empire

Influence of Greek Civilization on the Roman People

In the early periods and after the Punic Wars, the Greeks connected with the Romans several times. However, that early influence was small and was only felt after the invasion of Greece by the Roman legions. Many reasons can explain their great influence afterward, but it was primarily because the Roman people had a completely different and inferior civilization to the Greek one.

That influence gradually grew thanks to Greeks who came to Rome - sometimes free, sometimes slaves - and to Romans who visited Greece. Note that the greatest influence came from Greek teachers and tutors who, by educating children from an early age, gave them a very Hellenic formation, an influence Rome called Hellenism. We should also highlight the various branches of human activity in which it was felt: arts, literature, language, and sciences.

Arts

Such was the influence of Greek art on Roman art that someone once said that Rome was a hotel where Greek art stayed. Early Roman art, which came from the Etruscans, was crude. The Greek influence gave it a Hellenic character.

Rome's first painters came from Greece. In architecture, the Greek influence was great: the use of columns and marble came from Greece. In sculpture, the Greeks also made their influence felt by introducing marble and techniques. Romans adopted Greek models with great success.

Greek influence on Roman civilization was also great in literature, so much so that Rome's first writings were actually in Greek. Numerous Greek writers were translated, and anyone who studies Latin literature will notice that it has no originality, as it is strongly accentuated by Hellenic influence.

Theater, drama, and short stories were only introduced to Rome by the Greeks.

Religion

The Romans' primitive and simple religion absorbed all Greek teachings. Numerous cults that did not exist in Rome were introduced. The Roman gods took on the appearance of Greek gods, and the Roman religion was significantly altered by Greek influence.

Language

The influence of Greek on Latin is significant both lexicologically and syntactically. Latin gained a lot in terms of vocabulary.

Science

Due to the great difference in culture between the two peoples, the Greek influence on the Roman people was great when it came to science. A great deal of geographical and astronomical knowledge was introduced. Philosophy and other sciences began to be cultivated.

The influence of Greek civilization on Rome was great and beneficial. However, it was partly detrimental because it also introduced Greek vices—for example, luxury and so on, alongside rude Roman customs and ostentation alongside sobriety.

The Roman Family

The Roman family is not a natural family but a creation of civil law. The Romans attached no importance to natural kinship. Civil kinship was everything to them and produced civil effects, conferring family rights. Authority in the family belonged to the *paterfamilias* and extended to the wife, children and slaves.

Once the head of the family had died, many small families formed, led by a *paterfamilias* without breaking the bond of kinship. The "*paterfamilias*" represented the religion of the home and the ancestors and was the custodian of the worship.

In Rome, religion was the foundation of the family. Each family had its own gods and worshipped its ancestors. The family was the basis of society. Family discipline, exercised within the family, benefitted political and military life, inoculating citizens with the habit of order and obedience to the authorities. Fathers could only emancipate their children when they had been slaves three times. Once emancipated, the father's authority over the child ceased.

Women were held in higher regard than in Greece and were interested in political events.

As for marriage, there were stringent laws regulating it. Marriages between uncles and nieces, stepdaughters and stepfathers, etc., were not allowed. Minor orphans were entrusted to suitable guardians responsible and accountable to special courts.

Law in Rome

Roman Law is undoubtedly the greatest of the many legacies that Rome has left us. It is greatly influential to this day. This extraordinary work of the Roman Empire is worthy of its influence and the precious and wise teachings in its compositions.

Characteristics of Roman Law

It is a precise law emphasizing clarity as a necessary legal characteristic and avoiding confusion, which is harmful and sometimes fatal.

Origin and Evolution

This legislative monument was built gradually through successive phases, from law strictly linked to religion to independent legislation. We can consider seven stages in the evolution of Roman Law: 1. Papinian Law; 2. Decenviral Law; 3. Praetorian Law; 4. Imperial Law; 5. Codification Law; 6. Decadence Law; 7. Christian Influence Law.

First phase: Papinian Law

It is customary law, not made up of written laws but only traditions the nobility keeps. For this reason, this first phase is characterized by having arbitrary laws based on inequality, hence the countless revolts of the plebs, who were always at a disadvantage.

Second phase: Decenviral Law

In this second phase, the plebs impose the "Laws of the Twelve Tables," whose origins are not yet well known. However, it is thought they were partly based on Greek legislation. They constitute a major step toward personal and collective guarantees.

Third Phase: Praetorian Law

With the proclamation, Praetorian law was founded in Rome. Laws are debated, and the law becomes more lenient and with greater tendencies toward equality.

Fourth Phase: Imperial Law

As in the previous phase, there were discussions about the texts. However, the Empire's influence began to be felt with the creation of new laws.

Fifth Phase: Codification Law

This is the most critical phase. It is the golden age of Roman Law. It begins with Hadrian, who orders the organization of the "Edict Perpetual," thus forming a code that is the basis for interpreting laws. It is the phase of great jurisconsults such as Julian, Paulus, Marius, Gaius and others. New changes were made to Roman Law during this period under Greek philosophical influence.

Sixth Phase: Law under Decadence

Significant government instability during this time profoundly impacted the Code's interpretation, thus influencing Roman Law.

Seventh Phase: Law Under Christian Influence

Christianity was introduced to Rome with Constantine after many persecutions that lasted for several centuries. There was then a formidable Christian influence on Roman Law.

Sources of Roman Law

Like all laws, Roman Law was based on the people's customs. However, this was not the only source of Roman Law. The voice of the Senate and praetors, the prince's decision, the influence of Greek philosophy, etc., all played a part in its formation.

People's Situation Under Roman Law

Roman Law divided people into two categories: 1. *Suo Jure* - the rights of each person; 2. *Alieno Jure* - the rights of others. *Suo jure* concerned free men, and *Alieno jure* included women, children and slaves. *Suo Jure* is divided into "*jus latinus*," referring to Latins, and "*jus gentium*," referring to migrants.

Division of Roman Law

Roman Law is divided into: 1. Civil Law; 2. Latin Law; 3. Law of Nations. Civil law embodies all current civil law and all relations between an individual and the state. Civil law is divided into 1. Private law; 2. Public law. The latter comprises various sub-divisions, such as: "*jus suffragii*," "*jus honorem*," etc. Private law is divided into: "*jus canulii*," "*jus comercii*," etc.

Roman Law's Codification

The first attempt to codify Roman Law was made with the "Laws of the Twelve Tables." Then, in Hadrian's time, the edicts of the praetors were put together. These were followed by the Gregorian and Verdorian Codes. Justinian did most of the codification, called "*Corpus juris civilis*," already in the Byzantine Empire.

Lawyers and Jurisconsults

In Rome, with the organization of Roman Law, a large number of lawyers and jurisconsults began to appear and became highly regarded by society. Excellent and authoritative jurisconsults imposed themselves with their opinions. So did great orators, inflaming and stirring up the masses.

The Institute of Slavery Among Romans

The Concept of Slave

Roman Law considered a slave to be an object. As such, they had no rights whatsoever and were utterly subject to their master's will. This concept, however, underwent notable changes as the various eras in Rome passed. It was too rigid at the time of royalty and even under the republic but grew softer at the time of the Empire until it came under the beneficial influence of Christianity when they sought to improve the condition of slaves, facilitate their liberation, and reduce their enslavement.

Like the Greeks, the Romans justified slavery. Aristotle conceived of slavery as "*jus naturalis*," and the Romans (because they were stronger) believed that the stronger had the right to enslave the weaker. Cicero defended this thesis. However, by the end of the Empire, they already recognized that man had the right to be free and stated that slavery was an attack on the "*jus naturalis*."

Sources of Slaves

In Rome, the slaves' sources were wars, debt, children's illegitimacy, self-selling, slave births and imports.

War

Every prisoner became a slave. The conquests brought many waves of them into Rome. The slaves were sold by the generals or distributed among the troops. War was Rome's primary source of slaves.

Other Sources

Debtors who could not redeem their debt became slaves of the creditor. Illegitimate children, as well as children sold by their parents, became slaves. The children of slaves were slaves. Imports were also a significant source of slaves. An individual lost his rights to slavery by debt, birth, illegitimacy and sale. That was not the case with war slaves, to whom Roman Law granted no rights whatsoever.

Slave Types

There were three types of slaves in Rome: 1. domestic servants, 2. rustics, 3. slaves of the state. Domestic slaves were the best treated, as they lived with the family. A rustic slave was the worst treated; he worked in the fields. State slaves were generally employed in public works.

Freed Slaves

At the beginning of slavery in Rome, there were only two processes for freeing slaves. However, as customs evolved, those procedures increased and later became much easier under Christianity. Those released were called "freedmen" but usually stayed with their families and could often become slaves again.

The Slave's Situation

The situation of slaves significantly improved with Rome's political evolution. Christianity's entry into Rome greatly accentuated that improvement. The slave was considered a thing and was subject to his master's will. They were generally oppressed, with different punishments depending on the fault. Penalties often went to absurd extremes, and a slave could even be crucified. The number of slaves in Rome was enormous, and their sale price varied according to physical and intellectual capacity.

Consequences of Slavery

The work of rustic slaves led to the complete disappearance of the farmer class, who generally sold their properties and often practiced self-selling. That brought

about the middle class's fall and led to several civil wars. The slaves revolted, and many were subdued after great efforts. Those who rebelled most were the rustics due to their poor living conditions.

Development of Literature in Rome

Characteristics of Roman Literature

Roman literature was inferior to Greek. It had little originality, and Roman writers usually drew inspiration from Greek sources.

There are two phases in Roman literature:

1. The first lasts until the Punic Wars when Greek influence is almost nonexistent;
2. The Hellenic influence can be seen after the Punic Wars.

Roman literature was poor in the first phase, with no essential works or great writers. At that time, poetry was rustic and usually took on a funeral or triumphal aspect. As for prose, a few pieces of jurisprudence remain, such as the "Laws of the Twelve Tables," only fragments of which are left. In the history of those times, we find daily notes made by priests.

In the second phase there are three major periods: formation, apogee and decadence. One can distinguish two important periods in the apogee: that of Cicero and that of Augustus.

Formative Period

From the Punic Wars to Silas, the Romans began to receive influence from Greece in the formative period. Under the influence of an already formed literature, Roman literature showed a relative development during this period, with prose and poetry appearing simultaneously. Some of the aristocracy opposed Greek influence, while others favored it. In poetry, Titus Livy, Hervius and Enius appeared at this time. Plautus and Terence appeared in fables. That is when satire began with Lucilius. In prose, we have Flavius, Quintus Claudius and others. In oratory, let us mention Cato, Cornelius Gracchus, etc. Jurisconsults include Lucius, who was also an orator.

Apogee Period

From Silas to Augustus, we can distinguish two phases in this period. In the first phase (from Cicero), eloquence was given great impetus; in the second (from Augustus), it was poetry. In this period, Catullus stood out in poetry; Cicero gave a formidable boost to rhetoric; Varrus also appeared with many works, as did notable historians such as Caesar, Cornelius Nepos, and others.

Period of Augustus

It was a time of splendor for Roman letters. Peace and prosperity replaced civil wars. Literature received a great boost with the protection given to men of letters. Eloquence declined to some extent, but poetry reached its highest point. Virgil,

Horace and Ovid, who stand out among others, are from this period, while Titus Livius and Rutilius Lupus appear in prose.

Decadence Period

During this period, the fable appears, with Phaedrus as its primary representative. In history, Tacitus, Quintus Curtius, Pliny. In romance, Petronius. After Marcus Aurelius, decadence became more pronounced. However, some literary figures in poetry, such as Claudius, were still far inferior to the heyday poets Marcellus, Donatus, and others.

This period stands out the most in legal writings, with notable juriconsults such as Ulpian, Papinian and Paulus. Numerous codes were drawn up during this period, including the Gregorian Code.

Christianity's Influence on the Roman People

Christianity is the religious doctrine Jesus Christ preached in Palestine in the year 33 of our era. This religion was not particularistic like all the others until then. On the contrary, it had a universal character. Little by little, the religion developed in Roman circles, and by the time of Nero, there were many Christians. The emperors widely opposed Catholic doctrine until Constantine, but it gradually began to influence Roman life. The wisdom of the new law was such that even Romans who fought it often accepted its principles. It is known that referring to mutual assistance among Christians, a Roman senator exclaimed: "If only we were like the Nazarene." But the transformations wrought by Christianity were much more profound than they seemed at first glance. After the victory of Christianity in the "lower" Empire, Roman civilization ceased to exist, and Christian civilization began.

Social Changes

The family was the basis of Roman society but with a special religion at its heart: the cult of the ancestors transformed into gods. They were the household gods who formed the family's *raison d'être*. With Christianity, the family gods disappeared entirely. The Christian religion did not accept this cult but affirmed one's obligation to respect our ancestors while not making them gods.

The Christian justification for the family is more profound and emanates from the very organization of Christian society. Changes within the family were complete. The power of the head of the family has not remained the same. The father must be respected in the Christian family, but his authority is much more regulated than it was among the Romans. Children are no longer dependent on his will. The organization is more harmonious and less arbitrary. Women's roles are elevated, and all their privileges are no longer concessions from their husbands but the right of partners. A woman's rights derive from her role. Women's natural rights are more respected than in Roman times.

The Christian family's entire organization is based on justice. To show the importance of the home, Christianity affirms the indissolubility of the marital bond,

denies divorce and shows that homes cannot be destroyed at people's whims. Their organization involves more than just personal advantage. Marriages are no longer done in many ways, but only in one.

On the other hand, Christianity fought against exaggerated social inequalities and sought to reduce the suffering of slaves. The transformations that occurred in this regard were profound: they limited the authority of masters, gave slaves privileges, halted the death penalty for them, and multiplied processes for freeing them.

Political Transformations

Christianity gave authority another justification: it comes from God but under some conditions. The head of state is the trustee of people's happiness by divine will. However, those who carried out this function had to know they would be accountable for their actions, and no matter how powerful they were, they would not escape from divine punishment if they violated their mission. They would appear before God as mere mortals.

The most profound transformation in political matters was the distinction between Church and State. Until then, all religions were confused with politics, and religious leaders were also high-ranking political authorities. In Rome, the consul was the head of the church, and the emperor was a god. Christianity showed that the functions, although similar because they seek the same end, are distinct. It did not separate the Church from the State because both seek the people's happiness by collaborating. However, it showed that there must be a difference between temporal and spiritual power; the soul is free and not subject to political power. With this, the Church laid the foundations for freedom.

In the international area, by affirming that all men are equal before God and that peoples are brothers, she transformed Roman bellicosity by placing the homeland above the citizen and humanity above the motherland. Thus, without denying patriotism, she affirmed the need for justice and peace.

Economic Transformations

Christianity gave private property a doctrinal foundation. It affirmed that it should exist as a gift from God, not as a concession from the State. But it limited property to a reward from God for honest work. As such, it did not allow property to diminish other men.

On the other hand, it affirmed charity: It is lawful for a man to enjoy his income, but he must supply what his neighbor lacks. These concepts completely transformed customs. In Rome, work became an element of subsistence, even in trades considered degrading.

From an intellectual point of view, Rome underwent major changes. Literature took a different direction; a new philosophy appeared; Roman Law also changed. More than ever, the Romans realized it was impossible to discriminate against people before the law. The law gave slaves more guarantees and more shelter to

people. However, the most important transformation was the freedom provided by law.

Part Twelve

The Barbarian Peoples

Barbarians Infiltrate the Empire

The Greeks and Romans called all foreigners barbarians. In history, however, this name is used mainly to designate savage or semi-wild tribes who lived a rough and primitive life outside the Roman borders and made several attempts to defeat the First Empire or the Republic by seizing its treasures and conquering the mild climate region in which Rome was established.

The first great barbarian invasion occurred during Marius' time. After having invaded Italy, the invaders [Cimbri] only failed to defeat Rome thanks to the Romans' prodigious military valor. They drove back the barbarians as far as the Rhine and Danube and extended the Empire's boundaries as far as those rivers. However, the barbarians were a constant danger even when defeated. The Romans never managed to establish their power beyond the banks of those rivers durably. They were often repulsed by the barbarians, who invaded the Rhenish or Danubian banks belonging to the Romans.

Rome, however, bent on enjoying its luxury and pleasures, failed to perceive the danger and accumulated mistakes upon mistakes. Much more than a victim of the barbarians, Rome was a victim of her own carelessness. Its first mistake was to put the imperial throne at the disposal of the legions, who either conquered it by force or sold it at auction. There were as many as sixteen candidates for the imperial purple at one time. To defeat their competitors, candidates for the imperial throne made alliances with barbarian peoples by making them fight alongside the legionaries against the other candidates. In this way, the barbarians learned the Romans' war tactics and infiltrated their army.

On the other hand, the Romans and Italians, descendants of the heroic soldiers who had built Rome's greatness, no longer wanted to fight. Thus, Italians were exempted from conscription, and the Roman armies began to admit slaves, gladiators and barbarians rather than proud, patriotic and free citizens. It's easy to understand the recruits had no interest in sacrificing themselves to the last drop of blood to defend Roman wealth. To top it off, the Romans entrusted their general posts to barbarians, to the point that barbarian blood flowed in the veins of some emperors. Long before the barbarians invaded the Empire with arms in hand, they had already fully infiltrated the Empire from the imperial throne to the lowest ranks of the military. The army was Roman in name only.

The Barbarian Invasions

In the middle of the fourth century, when another invasion of barbarian peoples occurred, Emperor Valentinian made the ultimate mistake of opening the gates of the Empire to them.

Asia had seen a great series of wars. The Chinese clashed with the Topes and drove them back, throwing them into the hands of Eastern Tatars. Cornered by the Topes, the Eastern Tatars came up against the Huns, who invaded Europe. In turn, the Huns attacked barbarian peoples from the rear. The latter, led by Bishop Ulfilas, asked the emperor for permission to penetrate the Empire's territory. When they received approval, over a million Goths crossed the Danube and settled in Thrace, where they began cultivating land, etc. It wasn't long before the Goths clashed with the Romans. Terrible reprisals from both sides worsened the situation. The many semi-latinized Goths in the Roman army sympathized with the newly arrived Goths. The danger was immense.

Finally, in 376, the Roman army suffered a stinging defeat at the Battle of Adrianople. Two generals, Stylicon and Rufinus, both barbarians, still had the strength to resist. General Rufinus was the tutor to Arcadius, Emperor of the East. General Stylicon was the tutor of Honorius, Emperor of the West. Both emperors, very young, were mere "puppets" in the hands of their respective generals. Rufinus and Stylicon were rivals. Rufinus crossed his arms to take revenge on Stilicon and allowed the barbarians to invade Italy and attack Rome. In 410, Rome fell to the barbarians for the first time. The whole world cried out in horror at that spectacle.

When the Huns attacked Rome, Theodosius II, Emperor of the East, made a treaty with them and sat on his hands. At the tremendous battle of Châlons, where the Romans defeated Attila, the victors were afraid of the vanquished, so they didn't stop them on their way to Rome, where Attila finally arrived. Although the pope stopped him in his tracks, Attila was the winner. When he died, the Roman world was shattered.

Crucial to the barbarians' victory over Rome was their cruelty toward conquered provinces. Rome taxed the whole world to feed its luxury and levied taxes per head. Parents were often unable to pay the amount demanded, so they sold their sons as slaves and gave their daughters to pleasure houses. One historian said that when the time came to collect taxes, the Roman world was filled with tears and weeping. One day, an honest tax collector appeared. He was the father of

Emperor Vespasian. Thus, cities in Asia erected a monument to him with the inscription "To an honorable publican" because publicans were usually thieves. Not even the gods escaped. Often, they collected statues of gods as taxes and took them to Rome, leaving temples empty. Thus, We can understand that the provinces' inhabitants were poorly committed to defending Rome against barbarian invasions.

Attila died in 453. Meanwhile, the barbarians ravaged and seized the provinces of the Empire. The Alans, Vandals and Suevi took over Spain, where they fought each other. Lusitania was conquered by the Alans and then taken from them by the Suevi. The Vandals invaded flourishing North Africa, where they practiced cruelties that are still famous today. The Visigoths later entered Spain. The Bretons waged war against the Anglo-Saxons. The Heruli created a monarchy in Italy. Romulus Augustus was granted a pension by Odoacrus, king of the Heruli, and died in prison. Franks, Gauls and Burgundians divided France. Scenes of bloodshed and mind-boggling cruelty plagued Europe everywhere. The modern world was to emerge from this deluge.

Barbarian Customs

What were the customs of those barbarians? They were usually tall and muscular, with bloodshot blue eyes, long hair and beards that reached their chests. They jumped like snakes and painted themselves like beasts, making a tremendous impression. On top of their helmets, they placed the heads of wild animals. In general, they only "decorated" themselves to terrify the enemy. The Aryans fought with their bodies painted black and red. The Getae and Sarmatians shot arrows soaked in snake venom. The Catas wore long wigs, completely covering their faces, which they only uncovered after killing the enemy, for they felt worthy of showing their faces in the sunlight. Those who were shy spent their entire lives with their faces covered by their hair. Many drank water from human skulls and collected their opponents' skulls, like today's hunters collect deer heads or tiger skins. Young men were trained in robbery. They would go into combat with tremendous roars and infernal cries and then jump on their enemies.

Barbarians despised education. Gothic kings, the most cultured of the savage kings, couldn't even read.

When the Huns passed through Gaul, they burned down seventy cities and beheaded their inhabitants. Blood flowed so profusely at the Battle of Châlons that the wounded quenched their thirst in bloody streams. The Huns, although courteous, were crueller than other barbarians. When Attila died, as a sign of grief, the Hun warriors stabbed their faces in honor of the deceased.

The Barbarians' Religion

The barbarians' religion was purely and simply a series of superstitions. They worshipped forests, birds, water, sacred stones, sacred trees, sacred fountains, etc. They took an oath on the head of an ox or boar instead of an elevated symbol like the Cross, as we do.

Punishments for those who committed desecrations of sacred places were tremendous. Anyone who stole a holy object was taken out to sea and left on the beach, ebbing and flowing. They were castrated, had their ears cut off, and were immolated to the gods. The Franks drew omens from the sneeze, the flight of birds, the way horses walked, and the drool of cows. A priest would cut a tree branch into small pieces, place them on a towel and throw them three times into the air, then look at the drawings that had formed and interpret events according to them.

Some women – called Alumen - lived in remote caves and underground dwellings, where they made predictions. Small wooden idols, sometimes made from the roots of certain plants, were also called Alumen and represented the lower part of the human body. They were kept in boxes and treated like children. They were bathed, fed and dressed with the utmost care. It is said that they sometimes spoke.

Some magicians cured illnesses with mysterious words or talismans hung around their necks. Witches met high up in the mountains, holding banquets with human flesh around burning fires. They made poisonous drinks to sterilize women, disturb someone's intelligence or weaken his body. At the feasts of the god of war, the altars were sprinkled with animal or human blood. An ancient text tells us about a princess, daughter-in-law of the Frankish king Sigmund. The king's son, Siegfried, the princess's husband, was burned to death. The princess decided to die too, so she killed herself and had her body incinerated along with two slaves and two falcons.

Barbarian Laws

Barbarian peoples, for example, the Franks, were familiar with savage procedures used in the Middle Ages, such as torture to establish guilt, judicial duels, etc. Sometimes, the accused would be thrown into a container full of water with his right hand tied to his left foot. If he got out, he was innocent. At other times, he was forced to look for iron rings among burning coals, carry a red-hot iron for a while, or walk on a red-hot iron.

When someone was murdered, his heir was obliged to avenge him. Anyone who refused to do so had to make an eternal break with all their relatives. Accepting the task of taking revenge was a declaration of war on the aggressor's family. When caught, the aggressor was killed cruelly, his head hung on stakes, and his mutilated corpse left as food for crows and beasts.

Criminal law was tremendous. According to Breton and Scottish law, a murderer must pay 150 cows. A foot was worth one mark; a hand, one mark; an eye, half a mark; a wound to the face cost a golden image. A king of Scotland was worth 1,000 cows; an earl or king's son, 150 cows; an earl's son, 100 cows; a "thane," 100 cows, his son, 66, and his nephew, 44 cows. A married woman was worth at least a third of her husband's.⁶

⁶ Henri Robert, *Bani Macbeth*, 220.

At this point, I can anticipate a little about the subjects we will be dealing with shortly, to leave you once and for all with an issue of capital importance to study and understand the Middle Ages.

When you come into contact with the Middle Ages, two things that strike you very unfavorably are the cruelty of laws and the strength of superstitions. I would draw your attention to this indisputable historical fact because I don't want to be either a systematic detractor or an unconditional apologist for the Middle Ages. One often finds one of these states of mind among writers who deal with the Middle Ages, but both tendencies are extreme and partial. The truth is that the Middle Ages had things worthy of the highest praise and also serious flaws. It is our task to study both, to see what they consist of, to investigate their causes and to observe their consequences.

The cruelty of laws and people's propensity to accept superstitions were evident in the Middle Ages. If we study the penal laws of the time, we can see that they were initially extremely strict. Only over time did they become more benign, with a notable improvement in the last centuries of the Middle Ages.

Studying the cruel provisions of medieval criminal law, we see that it was a revival of the extremely inhumane criminal laws of the barbarians. Many of the punishments that seem excessive today were the same as those adopted by the barbarians before they became Christianized and civilized. That leads to the conclusion that the cruelty of penal laws in the Middle Ages resulted from barbarian influence, not Christian influence. That is so true that the laws became more benign as Christian influence grew in the Middle Ages. Paganism was dying, and Christianity was growing in influence.

The same applies to superstitions. Medieval superstitions were very often old anti-Christian beliefs dating back to barbaric paganism. The habit of medieval peoples of practicing an extremely superstitious religion for centuries on end before becoming Christianized meant that Christianity found it extremely difficult to dislodge the tendency towards superstition from people's minds in the Middle Ages. That tendency, peculiar to pagan religions, was constantly combated by the Church. There are countless minutes of councils held in the Middle Ages in which all superstitions were vigorously condemned in the name of the Church, stating that the old ghosts of barbarian religion, their amulets and grotesque rites were vain and that Christians should believe only in the Catholic faith, which was incompatible with such debasements of the human spirit.

With this, it is clearly established that, although the Middle Ages deserve censure on the two points I have mentioned, that censure is not due to Christian influence but to the remnants of paganism the Church laboriously extirpated. These were far fewer than in the early centuries following the barbarian invasions.

Part Thirteen

Medieval Social and Economic Organization

Factors of Medieval Civilization

Three essential factors contributed to the formation of medieval civilization: 1. The barbarians; 2. The remnants of Roman civilization; 3. The Catholic Church.

The Barbarians

As for the barbarians, we've already seen their habits, beliefs and laws, so there's no need to return to the subject.

Greco-Roman Civilization

We also have studied Greco-Roman civilization in detail. I have shown that the Roman Empire, especially that of the West, was like an immense gangrenous body, incapable of resisting its external enemies because its civilization was in full decay. As I said, a moral crisis completely undermined the Empire and threatened to ruin its power's main pillars.

The army, the main factor in Roman greatness, recruited from among slaves and gladiators who disposed of the imperial throne at will, making the monarchy unstable and subjecting it to an immensely damaging discredit. The aristocracy, which could have remedied this state of affairs, was deeply depraved and cared only about its pleasures. They did not feel capable of undertaking politics with a capital P they had to develop to rebuild the Empire. Public finances were in anarchy. Incessant extortions by the imperial treasury deeply disturbed the private economy. Rome's power had genuinely come to an end.

This explains the tremendous eclipse of civilization that Europe suffered at the beginning of the Middle Ages. If Roman society still had its early vitality, it would have imposed itself on the invading barbarians. Instead of falling to the very low level at which the barbarians were, Europe would have raised them to the cultural and social level at which the Romans lived. Civilization fell to pieces wherever it came into contact with them.

The conduct of imperial officials during the barbarian invasions was simply deplorable. Many fled or tried to seize the opportunity to declare themselves sovereign of the provinces at whose head the emperor had placed them and broke with him. Finally, after a weak resistance, they surrendered to the adversary. The emperors, insistently called upon by the inert populations to intervene in the threatened territories, sat on their hands in a mixture of indolence and panic. The Roman Empire's formidable administrative and political apparatus collapsed like an old building whose stones fell under heavy storms. As we will see below, the populations of the invaded Roman provinces would have had no protection if the Church had not come to their aid.

When the invaders reached the capital of the Western Empire, the whole of Europe was submerged in a sea of barbarism. Not even the name of the old Empire remained since Romulus Augustulus was deposed and imprisoned by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, in 476. Small barbarian kingdoms were springing up everywhere, some of which proclaimed themselves independent, while others claimed to be nominally dependent on the Roman emperor of the East, although they never allowed this theoretical dependence to translate into any form of political obedience.

With all that, the Empire of the West disappeared entirely from Europe's political map, not just politically. Roman civilization began to crumble in provinces such as Gaul, where it had once flourished most splendidly. Thanks to the barbarians' carelessness and contempt, all the great Roman monuments began to crumble. Theaters, baths, aqueducts, imperial roads, palaces, everything disappeared with the implacable action of time without the barbarian leaders trying to preserve them because they despised or ignored the advantages of such works.

Roman culture also disappeared. The barbarian invasions brought the most crass illiteracy into the Roman Empire's most cultured provinces. No one studied anymore, and the Greco-Latin classics began to fall into oblivion. For Europe, Roman culture and civilization were distant memories no one knew how to admire or cherish. The Middle Ages dawned for Europe under the relentless weight of such painful and inevitable circumstances.

The Roman factor had little influence on the development of medieval civilization. However, Roman influence was felt once again when that civilization developed and moved from the elaboration stage to perfection. In the leading universities, they studied the Greco-Latin culture with great care, which had taken refuge in convents during the barbarian era. As we shall see, that culture had the most pronounced and profound influence on medieval thought, especially humanism and the Renaissance.

The Catholic Church. The Church was the third major factor that contributed to the development of medieval civilization. It was the soul of medieval civilization, which owed it its most characteristic features in politics, economics, science and literature.

One should not assume that the Middle Ages were a strictly and completely Catholic civilization. We will examine this issue in due course.

Since it's not possible to understand the Middle Ages without knowing how the Church acted during the thousand years it lasted, and since it's not possible to properly know and understand the Church's actions without knowing its doctrine, I'd like to remind you of some fundamental aspects of the Church's political and social thought.

As you have seen, selfishness was the characteristic of all civilizations before Our Lord Jesus Christ. Although, from time to time, all peoples produced great heroes who sacrificed their individual interests to the greater interests of their homeland, before Our Lord Jesus Christ, selfishness inspired people's political and social organization and their international relations.

The despotic power of kings, the cruelty with which they exercised it, the depravity, excessive wealth, idleness and brutal contempt the aristocracy professed toward the plebs; the latter's furious spirit of revolt, which exploded in Rome, Greece and Phoenicia in bloody popular revolutions; the poor classes' horror of work, aggressive indiscipline, and unspeakable hatred against all authority; the unspeakable cruelty with which aristocrats and commoners treated slaves, given a fate worse than animals; all this, seen in all civilizations before Our Lord Jesus Christ, is ultimately the fruit of selfishness.

Instead, Our Lord Jesus Christ preached love of neighbor to the world and renewed it on this entirely new basis to such an extent that He divided history into two great periods or eras—the Christian era and the era before His birth.

What was the political and social doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ? Certain writers who don't understand Christianity often call Our Lord Jesus Christ a revolutionary. Revolution is, by definition, an insurrection of subjects against authority, a struggle between inferiors and superiors in which one side emerges victorious. The transformation Our Lord Jesus Christ brought the world was not a revolution because it did not involve revolt against any authority, nor did it raise up oppressed against oppressors. Christianity did not bring about a revolution but a renewal.

Instead of taking sides with authority against anarchy or with despotism against the oppressed, Christianity transformed the oppressed and the oppressor. It took the weapons they were hurting each other with from their hands and united them in an affectionate embrace. This moral transformation and reconciliation between classes or interests that seemed hopelessly disunited was the basis of the great political and social change that Our Lord Jesus Christ brought to the world.

But that transformation was not the aim of Our Lord Jesus Christ's mission, which was essentially religious. The political and social change the fulfillment of this work brought about was only a consequence of Our Lord's religious doctrine.

The ancient world seemed to vacillate between equally reprehensible excesses: on the one hand, excessive despotism; on the other, demolishing anarchy; on the one hand, the exaggerated concentration of wealth; on the other, its indirect consequence—a pauperized and revolted plebs; on the one hand, extremely powerful empires living in complete luxury and, on the other, pauperized peoples groaning in misery and oppression under their yoke. Christianity brought a balance that solved all these excesses.

On the political front, Christianity affirmed authority but condemned despotism. On the economic front, it affirmed property but condemned the excessive concentration of wealth in a few owners' hands. In the family sphere, it affirmed monogamy against polygamy and, while subjecting the wife and children to the husband, proclaimed the eminent dignity of both wife and children and forbade the family head to treat them as slaves or servants.

Let's look at the doctrinal basis of all these points of view.

The Problem of Authority

Humans tend toward sociability and thus live in society in human groups. Only exceptionally do people isolate themselves from their fellow human beings to live like an anchorite in the desert or like Robinson on his island. As they live in groups, people need authority to govern them because it is impossible for many people to coexist at any time or place without authority. Associations, for example, no matter how insignificant, need an authority. Could one conceive of a philatelic, recreational, musical, literary, sporting, political, charitable, scientific, religious or any other society without a board of directors or at least a director? Of course not. Society would be dead the day it was deprived of a directing authority.

Why is authority necessary? Firstly, opinions can vary on how to protect a company's interests. In a sports company, for example, members can have very different opinions about how it should be run. Should they take part in this or that championship? Should a mortgage be taken out to build a swimming pool? Should part of the land be sold to pay off debts? Should the social tax be raised? Opinions on all these issues can vary enormously.

So, who decides? Someone must have sovereign authority to impose their will. Otherwise, society will dissolve. Once made, a decision must be executed. Who will sell the land? Who will hire the engineer to build the pool? Who's going to collect the fees you've decided to impose? There must be an authority to decide and to execute a decision.

If this is true for purely private societies like the ones listed above, what about the State? Who is going to solve the significant problems of the community? Who will implement the decisions made? Of course, there must be an authority to do that. This authority may vary from country to country, from century to century, but it always remains indispensable. A people can replace a king with a president, a democratic parliament, a chamber of aristocrats, a corporate chamber, or a dictator without dying. But if they dismiss the authorities and abolish all

government instead of replacing the authorities or reforming the system of government, they will inevitably perish.

As we have seen, governments would be necessary even if all people were upright because even very good people can have different opinions. Moreover, consider that very many people are bad and even terrible, and they may seek to impose erroneous or immoral attitudes on their fellow citizens to serve their individual interests; that they can harm the rights of others for their advantage; that they can go so far as to suppress the lives of others, and then you understand to what extent the existence of an authority in all countries is indispensable.

Why do people need authority? Because of the circumstances of human nature. But why is human nature like that? Because God wanted it that way. He could have given human nature another shape in His omnipotence, but that is how He willed it.

If man needs authority because of his nature, and his nature has this need because God willed it, man needs authority because God willed it. Authority, therefore, exists by God's will, and by obeying authority, man does not obey another man but God himself.

Authority does not need to be monarchical. It can be that of a king, emperor, president, congress, dictator, etc. But it exists because God wanted man to need some authority, which one must obey with the utmost respect.

While Catholic doctrine vigorously upholds the principle of authority, it does not justify abuse and despotism.

Why does authority exist? Because humanity needs it. Therefore, it exists for the good of man because it would not be necessary if it existed for evil; not being necessary, God would not will it; not being willed by God, it would not have the right to be obeyed.

Therefore, suppose a person exercising authority in a command position uses it for his benefit and not the country's; he is overstepping his functions and carrying out an act he does not have a right to do. It is an abuse of authority and a betrayal of God, who wants authority for a different purpose. The Gospels are full of threats to the rich and powerful who abuse their influence and power against the collective interest. The rich and powerful who misuse their power will be condemned to eternal punishment in the next world if they don't make amends and atone for the evil they have done.

We see how this doctrine introduces admirable harmony into the State. It removes disorder, a monster with two heads: despotism and anarchy. Take a State in which rulers and ruled are obedient to the doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and we will have the ideal State, with ideally docile subjects and ideally disinterested rulers.

The Problem of Ownership

God created the world with all its plants, animals and other riches, and on the other hand, the human race. Of course: 1. His intention was that mankind use all these plant, animal and mineral riches to satisfy their needs; 2. The right to use

these riches was given to mankind only by God, their author, and not by the State, which did not exist in the early periods of humanity; 3. This right belongs to all humanity and to each human being in particular.

As a result, people were fully entitled to appropriate the things they found to satisfy their needs. But since human needs are constantly renewed (hunger, cold, etc.), man has the right to appropriate not just the fruits but also the source of production. For if his needs are recurrent, it is only fitting that he should have a means of permanently securing what is necessary to satisfy them. Thus, man can own not only the fruit but also the tree, not only animals but their offspring, etc.

Moreover, man can generally fully utilize these riches when he adapts them to his needs through work. Crops must be planted and harvested through human labor to be eaten. Some fruits are sometimes harvested with work and even danger; some fish are caught with work and danger; certain animals are hunted with work and danger. When man appropriates something through risk and effort that does not yet have an owner, he acquires a right of his own over the object of his effort, and no one can deprive him of it without grave injustice.

To carry out all these tasks, man often needs working tools. Considering only their material, these tools can be worthless. Sometimes, it's a rough stone, sometimes a simple piece of wood. But man transforms that object into a handy, valuable working tool with effort and ingenuity. A man who changed a rough stone into an excellent axe has a right over it that no one else has since the axe is the fruit of his very personal work, and the stone belonged to no one else.

Thus, we see that man has the right to appropriate things necessary for his subsistence and which have no owner; he has the right to appropriate not only these things but also the source of production and the instrument of labor. We have thus justified the system of full individual ownership based on God's will. God gave man his needs. God created the objects with which man can satisfy those needs. God, therefore, gave man the right to appropriate these objects.

However, note that, as we said, God wanted everything to suffice for the whole human race. If, therefore, the distribution of property is such that some people are swimming in riches while others need what is indispensable for them to exist and protect their health, riches are distributed contrary to God's will. Those who have too much are obliged to give the destitute what they need to live. That is not just a handout that anyone may or may not do. It is an imperative obligation. The indigent has the right not to be indigent, and the rich only have the right to be rich insofar as their possessions do not come at the expense of a poor person's life and health, which they threaten when they take such an immoderate amount of possessions that some people starve to death.

You can see from the above that if we had a profoundly Catholic State, the social problem wouldn't exist. The poor would respect the wealth of the rich, and the rich would respect and remedy the poverty of the poor. Once again, the admirable harmony typical of the Church's social doctrine is evident.

The Family

God wanted men to perpetuate the human race by exercising a physiological function. There is no immorality in that act directly willed by God, who commands "grow and multiply." But God wanted this function for procreation, and therefore it should only be exercised in conditions favorable for procreation to occur and for parents to be able to educate their children properly. To exercise the sexual function while avoiding procreation is to violate the desire of the Creator, who instituted this function for this purpose alone.

But procreating children entails, for both parents, clear obligations that they can only exercise appropriately within the family. If so-called "free love" were implemented, women would become the custodians of numerous children whose fathers would perhaps desert them before they were born, so you have a very imperfect or even impossible upbringing of children, the flight of fathers from the task of feeding a child, a woman's desire to avoid birth; and, finally, sexual intercourse without procreation, which is profoundly immoral and would lead to the final disappearance of the human race.

Lest you think that this danger is chimerical, I need only tell you that in France, where divorce with remarriage has now reached the point of free love, the number of births is less than the number of deaths. So, according to statistics from the French government, France is doomed to disappear if this evil is not remedied.

The Creator clearly wills that men and women only exercise the sexual function within marriage, as otherwise, this function would not have the consequences desired by the Creator: the perpetuation of the human race and the education of offspring.

Sexual function does not only impact the area of procreation but also has a bearing on people's psychological and affective realms. Men and women complete each other, and their inclinations require lasting affection and mutual solidarity throughout their lives. This cooperation, mutual trust, and family stability would be impossible if a man could have several wives at the same time (polygamy) or if he (or she) had several spouses in succession (through divorce, i.e., polygamy in installments). It is enough for one of the spouses to figure that the other might break off the marriage to marry someone else for their offspring to be less numerous. And the possibility of a break-up is enough for trust to be incomplete. The perfect union of man and woman is a monogamous and indissoluble marriage for life. And children can only benefit from this.

Peace

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that the great consequence of all these principles is the introduction of peace among men, family members, rulers and the ruled, bosses and workers, rich and poor.

St. Thomas Aquinas defines peace as the tranquility produced by order. The definition is perfect. Imagine a State where everyone obeyed the above principles. Perfect order would reign in it, and that order would produce tranquillity, which is peace. Now look at this troubled contemporary world in which we live. It is full of strife and discord. Research the causes of this, and you will see that they lie in the violation of the principles I have listed. Take any struggle in any sector, go from

reflection to reflection, and you will find the breach of one of these principles at the root of that struggle.

For example, how is it possible to keep a family happy when the false morality out there allows men to love freely even after marriage and obliges women to be faithful as if the husband should not be the model of purity in the home. This morality which declares that a man can squander his wife's assets with other women and that a woman can deceive her husband with his closest friends... There can be no peace in such a world without order.

The Life of Feudal Lords

We saw earlier that the feudal lord was generally a descendant of an imperial official who made his authority over the provinces he administered hereditary or of a large landowner who, in exchange for protecting people without resources from enemy invasions, acquired over them political and social superiority proper to a lord. When he did not descend from a high-ranking imperial official or a large landowner, he descended from an individual who received the land on which he lived as a fief from a great lord. In reality, when the feudal regime reached its full development, a fief was almost a small kingdom, and as such, its feudal lord was a small king.

Castles

The castle was the seat of the feudal lord and, therefore, the heart of the fiefdom. It was both a fortress and the lord's residence. Throughout the Middle Ages, castles underwent a gradual transformation that made them more and more capable of fulfilling their dual purpose.

Castle architecture was straightforward in the early Middle Ages, offering a relatively weak defense against adversaries. The primitive castle essentially consisted of a fortified field surrounded by a ditch. To penetrate the field, the adversary would have to cross two obstacles: a. the ditch filled with water. b. The wooden parapet, behind which stood warriors armed with arrows or swords. The attacker's situation was thus much worse than the defenders' because while the latter fought sheltered by the parapet, the latter had to fight without any shield.

In general, they built such fortifications on top of elevations in the terrain, and a winding path led to the gate. The advantage of these arrangements was obvious. High up made it easy to see an approaching enemy from afar and protect the castle from surprise attacks. As the path through the mountain was winding, the enemy was forced to walk for a long time in the open to reach the parapet behind which the defenders were sheltering, making it easier for them to counter-attack.

Inside the castle was a fortified tower surrounded by a ditch with water. It was the last stronghold to which the defenders of the square had recourse if the besiegers managed to break through the wooden parapet. That tower, also made of wood, generally served as a dwelling for the feudal lord and his family. In times of siege, they covered it with skins of recently killed animals to prevent arrows from burning the tower.

Over time, the castle's architecture became more complicated. The wooden parapet was replaced by a thick stone wall, which, in addition to being much more solid, was non-combustible. The walls were topped by battlements, which made the defenders' position more secure. A drawbridge was placed at the castle gate, which could easily be lowered or raised as required through improved mechanical devices. Numerous towers distributed along the wall facilitated the defense of the fortress.

Finally, a set of towers that were a small fortress defended the castle's gate. If the assailants managed to lower the drawbridge, they would have to break down a very strong door. If they managed to break it down, a robust iron grating would descend from atop a gallery connecting the two towers to contain the besiegers. Meanwhile, boiling water, boiling oil, molten lead, flaming objects, etc., were thrown at them from the towers. Invading such a castle was extraordinarily difficult.

You can get a very clear idea of the progress of architecture and military art in that period by comparing the very complicated, solid and majestic set of towers, turrets, ramparts, etc., of a stone castle from the late Middle Ages with one of the poorly and imperfectly fortified wooden camps from the early Middle Ages.

Residence

At first, the manor house was elementary, as was the life of the early lords, still close descendants of barbarians who felt ill at ease in cities and preferred to live in the countryside. Later, however, the manor house transformed when civilization developed, and the taste for comfort and luxury began to increase.

On the one hand, the castle's central tower was no longer a wooden tower but a formidable stone tower. One of these towers of the castle of Coucy (13th century) was 64 meters high, and its walls were 7 meters thick. The tower's diameter was 30 meters, and the ditch surrounding it was 20 meters wide.

As in its wooden predecessor, that tower contained a series of superimposed rooms connected by staircases. However, in stone towers, these were concealed in the thickness of the wall. The prison was located in the tower's basement.

But the tower was no longer the master's home. For the sake of convenience, he moved to a neighboring building with large rooms and expansive windows instead of the narrow arrow slits that replaced the windows in the castle's central tower out of strategic necessity. Furnishing gradually became more sumptuous in rooms equipped with large stoves to heat the inhabitants and prepare food. Rich tapestries began to cover the walls. Finely crafted furnishings of valuable wood decorated the place. They used glass instead of the old opaque panes that covered the windows, giving way to beautiful stained glass windows. In short, the feudal dwelling contrasted mainly with the poverty and rudeness of manor houses in the earliest medieval castles.

Sometimes, the best-built castles had two concentric enclosures around the central tower, meaning that attackers had to overcome three places before they

could seize the fortress' inhabitants: 1. Cross the first wall; 2. Cross the second wall; 3. Penetrate the tower. Domestics lived in the first enclosure, which also had warehouses with the goods needed for the lord's and everyone's subsistence in the event of a siege. The second enclosure contained the chapel, the lord's home, etc.

Since the castle housed the feudal lord, his family, servants, and soldiers, it became a village. In times of war, the castle's population grew with all of the fief's inhabitants, who took refuge behind its walls in the lord's shadow.

Education

A feudal lord's upbringing stimulated him to have piety, faith, energy, combativeness and leadership qualities. The castle chaplain gave him proper religious training, while his active and hectic life developed his physical attributes.

By age 15, a noble boy had to be an expert in riding, bowmanship, hunting, raising and training falcons and dogs, etc. He could serve a feudal lord as a squire or valet with that knowledge. At 15, they would send him to some lord who was a friend of his father's and usually belonged to a higher rank in the nobility. In that castle, far from his and placed exclusively among strangers, he would serve as a squire or valet, working as a domestic and an orderly. He cut up the meat at mealtimes, helped the master dress or undress, and kept his weapons in perfect condition. In his spare time, he learned to fight in the castle courtyard, fencing with mannequins. In wartime, the squire's life changed: he went off to fight with his lord, riding behind him and carrying his shield.

His training was complete at the age of 18 or 20. Then, he was knighted in a solemn ceremony, and his godfather put a spur on his right foot, girded him with his sword, and gave him a little slap on the neck from behind, signaling the end of the ceremony. Only the rich could be knights. The poor gentlefolk couldn't afford the ceremony or the social costs of knighthood.

A Knight's Life

War - Feudal lords were extremely combative and violent due to the restless and turbulent temperament inherited from their near ancestors, almost all barbarians or semi-barbarians. This defect was mitigated over time by the influence of the Church and the civilization it created, but it didn't disappear entirely until the end of the Middle Ages.

Given their temperament, feudal lords were very fond of war, which they waged not only with foreigners but also with their neighbors and patricians. In addition to being an appreciable source of profit, since the feudal lord often confiscated the loser's property in war, the war provided great entertainment for the medieval nobility.

Given the obvious drawbacks caused by the countless and constant wars between feudal lords or monarchs, the Church endeavored to make them rarer and less harmful. She was very fortunate in achieving this goal, as she obtained the support of most European sovereigns. Once again, they willingly chose the pope as

arbitrator in their disputes to peacefully settle an issue that would inevitably lead to conflict without papal intervention.

On the other hand, recognizing the severe damage that wars between feudal lords could do to their states, monarchs strove to make war between them as difficult as possible. The "peace of God" and the "truce of God" were the means the Church used to mitigate the horrors of war. The Peace of God was a war regulation proscribing and forbidding actions that made life particularly painful for the population. By virtue of the "peace of God," during the war, it was forbidden to assault buildings dedicated to divine worship or priests and religious; destroy an adversary's livestock; arresting commoners who had nothing to do with the war, such as peasants, merchants, etc; burning dwellings of the peaceful population; destroying crops, etc.

The Church also sought to make wars more difficult. She initially forbade waging war on Sunday, a day Christians should devote to praying and resting, and never to kill their brothers and sisters. The Church then extended this period by ruling that wars should be forbidden from Wednesday afternoon until Monday morning in memory of the Redeemer, whose Passion and Death on the Cross had taken place on those days. Finally, when these numerous and obligatory "God's truces" became widespread, the Church banned all warfare between feudal lords. Kings Louis and Philip the Fair enforced this prohibition in France.

So we see that war, resulting from barbarian influence, was gradually mitigated and limited by the influence of the Church, backed by kings.

Tournaments

In peacetime, feudal lords entertained themselves with tournaments, which were simulated battles. Initially, they were real fights between two large groups of contenders. In the time of Philip Augustus of France (1165-1223), for example, there was a tournament in which three thousand knights took part. When one of the parties felt defeated, it fled, and its opponents continued the chase no longer in the tournament arena but through fields and vineyards. As in modern car races, accidents and deaths were very numerous in such exercises. Also, as in modern races, the winners made huge profits. They not only became owners of all their opponents' armor but had the right to imprison them until they received an appreciable sum as ransom for their freedom.

With the passage of time and the Church's civilizing influence, the tournaments became softer and softer and were reduced to mock combat in which only two men fought each other on a closed field. Just as there are professional champions today, in those days, there were noblemen who lived exclusively from the proceeds of tournaments.

Hunting

As well as being an excellent "sport" for turbulent and combative feudal lords, hunting was a way of life for them because, as the number of animals in the European forests was very large (forests were much denser and more extensive than today), they hunted without any official "control" or limitation, and could be an excellent source of income when they slaughtered a large number of animals.

Feasts

Feasts were usually complements to great ceremonies (weddings, etc.) or great tournaments. In general, when a feudal lord invited his friends from the surrounding area to attend a tournament, wedding or any other religious event, the invitation was not just for one day but several days because guests coming from far away would be unwilling to travel to enjoy themselves for just one day. Furthermore, at that time, the roads were poorly maintained, and travelers exposed themselves to many risks, such as accidents, robberies, inclement weather in the middle of a forest, etc. Feasts were long to compensate for the inconvenience and fatigue of such journeys. No one would think of economically adding to a modern wedding invitation that "the bride and groom will say goodbye in the sacristy."

They ate astonishingly at such feasts with very numerous guests. Being semi-barbaric and of Herculean physical complexion, the medieval man seemingly had an appetite worthy of making dyspeptic stomachs of our time envious. In general, food was brought to the table on the shoulders of lackeys, who carried a whole ox or large platters containing swans, peacocks, pheasants, etc. They brought birds with beautiful plumage to the table with their feathers. At that time, there were no forks or knives; people ate with their hands.

During meals, troubadours, minstrels, and players of harps and other instruments appeared to entertain the guests. They sang the long and famous exploits of medieval heroes like Charlemagne and his peers. Sometimes, there were very varied surprises. They consisted, for example, of bringing several pies containing live birds into the room; when they opened a pie, the bird escaped, and the gentlemen present, bow in hand, hunted them down in the castle room. That annoying interruption was considered very entertaining.

It was customary for a host and his guests to exchange rich and extremely expensive gifts during the feasts.

Chivalry

As I've said, medieval states were very disorganized in their early days due to the tremendous collapse that Europe suffered with the barbarian invasions, which destroyed the Roman political and social edifice to its foundations. For this reason, all public powers functioned precariously. Involved in frequent wars, the lords often didn't have the time or means to maintain order within their fiefdoms by punishing crimes and defending the innocence of the weak against the arrogance of the strong. Small villages located far from the manorial castles, or commoners living in the woods, isolated by duty in small huts, were entirely unprotected from any attack or aggression by brigands.

Because of the great misfortunes that situation generated, which monarchs could not remedy because they lacked the necessary administrative and police apparatus, the Church set about creating the knight-errantry. The knight-errant was a nobleman who vowed to travel the roads in search of widows and orphans to defend, injustices to punish, and good people to award them prizes. He did this noble task while fighting people he was supposed to punish. Errant chivalry was

an admirable means of protecting the poor, always so loved by the Church. At the same time, the Church consolidated the social order by making the nobleman sympathetic to the commoner he protected, and finally, it gave a derivative to the feudal lords' combativeness by making them use for the good the leftover energy of their exuberant temperament.

Not all knights, however, were wanderers. The Church conferred the title of knight on every nobleman who, having finished his training course in the castle of some feudal lord, was willing to enter the career of arms then followed by the aristocracy. In the ceremony I have described, in which the nobleman was knighted, he committed to using his authority, weapons, and prestige only for good and never evil. With that ceremony, the Church made it clear to the new knights that, far from being barbaric oppressors of the people, as their grandfathers had been, they should be peaceful, orderly and disciplined, transforming their manliness and energy into constructive and civilizing activity, rather than a source of anarchy.

All historians recognize the admirable fruits of the Church's intervention in the knighthood ceremony (12th century). That is not to say that customs immediately changed utterly. Profound political and social transformations are slow. Customs gradually softened, and by the end of the Middle Ages, the mentality of knights was entirely different from 300 years earlier.

Peasants

Having studied the situation of the nobles, let's look at the conditions in which the peasants lived. You may remember that, in ancient times, slaves were considered beings deprived of rights for whom there were only duties. Slaves were denied the right to life, property, and the right to form a stable family whose union no one could disturb. In short, the most basic rights. In the expressive words of Roman Law, they were considered "res," i.e., things, not people.

The Middle Ages also saw slavery for a long time, but the fate of slaves gradually mitigated so that, in the middle of the Middle Ages - a period supposedly hostile to any feelings of pity for the poor - they achieved an event entirely unprecedented in history: the peaceful abolition of slavery by mutual agreement between masters and slaves. That glorious achievement of civilization happened not just in one country but on an entire continent.

Slaves in the Middle Ages enjoyed an incomparably better situation than their unfortunate colleagues in ancient times. A slave had numerous rights. The first was the right to life. The second was the right to a family. A slave could not be killed freely and without cause by his master. He was entitled to start a family, a right recognized and guaranteed by law against any abuse.

Furthermore, a medieval slave could not, like slaves before Christianity, be sold to distant lands. The serf of the glebe - that's what the medieval slave was called - was, so to speak, fixed to the land plot he cultivated. Whoever sold the land sold the glebe's slaves with it. But it wasn't possible to sell only the slave while keeping the land, so the slave was guaranteed against the frightful danger of exile to distant regions where he would lose all contact with his family and loved ones.

Finally, a slave could own part of the proceeds of his work and leave the savings to his children when he died.

However, that does not mean that a slave was the same as a free man. A free man had the right to leave the land he farmed whenever he wanted, marry freely, pass on all his possessions to his children, etc. For his part, when a slave died, he left his master part of what he owned to have the right to bequeath the rest to his children (incidentally, this is not very different from modern and confiscatory inheritance taxes). In addition, the slave could never leave in search of another master. Finally, he was obliged to pay the master a particular tax every year, levied on the produce he planted and harvested on the master's land. He was obliged to cultivate certain plots of land free of charge for the master, the proceeds of which reverted entirely to him; he also paid another tax, which the French called "taille," and the master levied individually on each slave.

As you can see, while some taxes are justified, others are utterly unjust. If a slave lived on the feudal lord's land and lived off its produce, it is reasonable that he should pay the rightful owner a fixed rent for the land, the fruits of which he harvested. It is also reasonable that he should pay the lord a tax to help pay for the fief's defense and law enforcement, services which benefited the slave. But it would be hard to justify the slave working for free on the master's land, the master intervening in his choice of a wife or denying him every man's inalienable right to rent out his labor to whomever he wants.

In short, the situation of slaves was more benign than in ancient times but far inferior to that of a free man. Accordingly, the Church worked with all its might to free the slaves by showing to all the faithful that few deeds would please God as much as freeing those unfortunate people. She also explained that they deserved complete freedom and prepared people's minds, so they finally abolished slavery throughout Europe except for schismatic Russia. In France, slavery was abolished in the 14th century by Louis X.

Given the difference between the situation of slaves in antiquity and the Middle Ages, it is appropriate to call medieval slaves servants of the glebe rather than slaves, indicating that servitude and slavery were entirely distinct.

Free men also had obligations substantially similar to today's. Like us, the Middle Ages's free peasants were obliged to answer their masters' summons to war. They also had to provide some public services, such as properly maintaining the water moat surrounding the castle, as the lord's peace of mind and their own depended on the security of the fortifications.

Free peasants paid taxes, sometimes in money, in goods, to cover the other costs of running the fief. But they were also subject to some obligations that were difficult to justify. Like the serfs, they had to work for the lord in his fields and for his exclusive benefit. They were very often barred from using the services of anyone other than the lord for specific purposes, for example, to grind their wheat or bake their bread in a mill or oven that did not belong to the lord. The lord set the price of the service rendered by the stove or mill, and thus, he could charge extortionate sums. Furthermore, free peasants were often forbidden to sell their

crops or buy groceries before the lord had made his purchases and sold his agricultural products. Of course, all this was to the great advantage of the lord.

As you can see, it's not just us who have great reason to complain about formidable taxes often diverted to purposes other than the public interest, which afflict most contemporary peoples. Wherever there is man, there is abuse. This abuse has happened in feudal administrations and contemporary states, although probably more in the latter than the former.

Peasant Customs

I have already described the rustic and almost barbaric simplicity with which feudal lords lived in the early centuries of feudalism, occupying a single room that served for everything from sleeping to cooking. If that was the life of the lords, it's not hard to imagine what it was like for the serfs. In general, peasants lived in a house with a single room used for everything. In that room, apart from a large stove for preparing food and keeping the family warm during the winter, there were only meager beds with sacks of small straw as a mattress and a wooden chest for storing clothes. Piles of straw served as seats instead of chairs. People usually ate off wooden plates. Windows had no glass because it was too expensive. The floor was clay.

Over time, as civilization progressed, peasant life also improved. By the 14th century, it significantly improved. Spacious and comfortable houses were furnished with simple but solid and often artistic furniture, abundant food, ample clothing and sometimes even rich jewelry. All this was often found in peasant dwellings.

Cities

In the Middle Ages, the legal situation of cities was no different from that of a rural fiefdom. Cities were massive fortresses led by a feudal lord to whom the city's inhabitants were bound by duties and rights similar to those of countryside inhabitants. It was not uncommon for a city to have two lords simultaneously, such as a bishop and a count. A reminiscence of these semi-ecclesiastical and semi-civil governments is still found today in the tiny Republic of Andorra, between France and Spain, which has two sovereigns called co-princes: the Bishop of Urgel (Spain) and the President of the French Republic.

City inhabitants were either nobles or commoners. The nobles, of course, enjoyed many advantages in addition to the social pre-eminence their nobility conferred. The commoners, who practiced the most varied professions, were sometimes merchants or industrialists richer than the feudal lord who ruled the city. As soon as a class of wealthy commoners began to form within the medieval city, it sought to free itself from the lords or at least reduce their rights over the inhabitants of the "burg" as much as possible. To this end, the bourgeoisie gathered in powerful guilds stood up to the feudal lords, who were usually wholly defeated.

At the end of the 11th century and during the 12th century, the bourgeoisie in many cities, after having formed a pact to support each other in the fight against

feudal authority, tried to get the lord to set their monetary obligations fixedly so they would be free from unforeseen, irregular and sometimes excessive tax increases. After forcing the lord to explain himself clearly and positively in this regard, they wrote what they had agreed, and both the lord and representatives of the bourgeoisie signed the document, called a "charter." It was a fundamental limitation on the powers of the feudal lords. Undoubtedly, we would have much lower taxes to pay if today's taxpayers were just as energetic.

The cities obtained against the lords' guarantees were called franchises or liberties. Note that these franchises were often granted spontaneously by feudal lords or kings. Thus, in 1155, Louis VII of France granted the inhabitants of Lorris a "charter," which was later extended to about 300 French villages.

Of course, the charters of various cities were very different, granting the lords either greater or lesser powers depending on the place and circumstances. Sometimes, however, instead of limiting the lords' control, the cities suppressed those rights entirely, so they became real republics in which the bourgeoisie elected the magistrates in charge of the city's administration. In them, the feudal lords had not the slightest power.

These cities reached a high level of prosperity and political power in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and France. Over time, however, royal absolutism completely overpowered their desire for independence. In some cases, the free cities or communes—the name given to the cities that had entirely freed themselves from the manorial yoke—bought some fiefs from feudal lords, so these cities established themselves as fiefs, sometimes rather big—a significant indication of the high degree of power and influence they had achieved.

Agriculture

In the Middle Ages, modern agricultural processes were not known, so production was much lower than today. Yet, the work done by the Middle Ages regarding land cultivation was remarkable. Just consider that, after the collapse of civilization caused by the barbarian invasions, gradual and methodic cultivation started in all regions of Europe, from Portugal to the Urals, from Sweden to Hungary, while most of these regions were still completely barbaric when the Middle Ages began and the Roman world came to an end.

Industry

In the Middle Ages, European industry reached a very high level of development as several new industries were introduced and existing ones were greatly improved. People in the Middle Ages didn't have great industry because they couldn't use steam, electricity or the resources of modern mechanics.

Each industrialist generally worked in his own home with a small group of assistants. The formidable difference in social status between workers and bosses today was nonexistent. They all lived as a family in very close contact, which cemented a most solid friendship between bosses and workers.

Corporations were one of the great features of industrial life in the Middle Ages. The guild was an association comprising employers and workers from the same industry. The purposes of the guilds were manifold:

1. They bought raw materials needed by industry, obtaining cheaper prices and defending workers against exploitation by producers;
2. The guilds maintained mutual aid houses, and in this respect, as in others, they were very similar to some of today's employers' or workers' associations. Their funds kept widows and orphans of the corporation's members safe from poverty.
3. The guilds settled disputes that arose between bosses and workers or between bosses alone, according to internal laws the guilds made;
4. The guilds regulated working conditions by prohibiting work from becoming excessive and stipulating that no one was allowed to work after sunset until dawn the next day. How many contemporary workers would envy this determination...
5. The guilds supervised industrial production and prohibited unfair competition between traders, speculation, or the sale of inferior but good-looking products that could deceive the public and cause the honest traders' good merchandise to remain unsold.
6. The guilds used to examine people who wanted to set up a "workshop" or industrial establishment to avoid having too many professionals and rendering the profession unprofitable. It would be wonderful if modern lawyers could enjoy similar advantages.

Guilds sometimes paid for the studies and travel of people who went around different cities to find out what they had to offer to the guild's future industry to select the people who wanted to work in the profession and allow talented ones to acquire knowledge and skills. Only after a candidate presented what they called a "masterpiece"—whatever he could do best in his profession—was he allowed to set up an industrial establishment and have his own workers. The corporations also provided other services to members, which I won't list for brevity.

There is a real fever for corporate studies, and countless sociologists call for restoring the guilds. Last year, at the invitation of the University of São Paulo's College of Philosophy, Prof. François Perroux presented a magnificent study on corporations in several successive lectures under the auspices of our University.

Trade

As in ancient times, the means of communication in the Middle Ages were obviously inferior to those of today, so trade was much less intense. In any case, trade made great progress during the Middle Ages. To put it bluntly, Roman trade was entirely destroyed at the beginning of this historical period. As time went by, the situation changed, and large roads cut across Europe in all directions, making it easier to travel through regions the Romans had never known. On these roads, less and less infested with robbers, trade developed as quickly as the conditions of the time allowed.

The Middle Ages were characterized by an eminently organizational and corporate spirit. For this reason, merchants came together in powerful groups or associations, the *hansas*, which offered merchants all sorts of advantages. In particular, they effectively ensured the transportation of goods by river or sea. The most famous of these *hansas* was Germany's Hanseatic League, which included merchants from different cities and efficiently ensured the transportation of goods by sea to the most diverse points in Europe.

Fairs were the most common way of obtaining a large circulation of goods. At fixed times, merchants already knew that there would be a large influx of people looking for the products they needed in this or that city. For this reason, merchants from the most varied regions and with the most different products would gather in the city and attract a huge mass of people from various surrounding provinces and sometimes even from distant countries.

Literature and the Arts

The intellectual effort made during the Middle Ages was immense. It is enough to compare the cultural situation in which it found itself at the beginning with that at the end of this historical period to assess what Europe achieved intellectually during the Middle Ages.

It is fundamental in the study of the Middle Ages to keep recalling the situation in which the barbarian invasions and the devastating collapse of the Western Roman Empire left Europe. I have already mentioned that the barbarians were totally illiterate and that, in general, not even their kings could read and write. Furthermore, they were so alien to any idea of civilization that they could neither understand nor care for the artistic and intellectual treasures that Greco-Roman civilization had accumulated. The barbarian invasions were significant outbreaks of illiteracy in Europe.

In the last centuries of the Middle Ages, Europe was in a diametrically opposite situation after a long and painful artistic and intellectual rise. Numerous magnificent universities spread across almost every country in Europe. Suffice it to mention Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Salamanca, Heidelberg and Prague to give you an idea of the intellectual development of higher education in the Middle Ages. Most of these universities, if not all, still exist in Europe, and the old medieval universities still are some of the world's most famous.

What happened with universities is more or less what happened with corporations. After being abandoned as impractical in many countries, people started to restore them. In Brazil, the founding of recent universities, including ours, is a very expressive index of how the idea of forming great centers of higher culture is gaining ground.

It won't be idle for me to remind you in a few words what a university means from a cultural and didactic point of view. Before the University of São Paulo was founded, we had several colleges here, including our Law School, the School of Medicine and the Polytechnic School. These higher education establishments had no ties between them. Since our Law School was federal and the other two colleges

were state schools, each lived independently under the direction of different public authorities.

The situation changed with the creation of the University of São Paulo. The Law School ceased to be a federal teaching body and became a state one. The Law School, the School of Medicine, and the Polytechnic School became part of the same cultural group subject to a single management—the University's Rectorate—without prejudice to their autonomy.

At the heart of this organization is the idea that all educational establishments must have a certain unity of thought and orientation so that the culture produced by the higher schools in the most diverse sectors of human knowledge is homogeneous. The university receives that homogeneity by studying philosophy, which is genuinely medieval and scholastic. The great medieval universities were leading centers of higher education where all sciences progressed under the shadow of scholastic philosophy.

As you can see, guilds and universities came back into vogue. That proves once again that the Middle Ages were not the time of obscurantism and backwardness, as is often claimed. Popes and kings powerfully stimulated the creation of medieval universities. The popes, in particular, worked hard on this project, and pontifical decrees founded numerous universities that still exist today.

The universities gave medieval culture the magnificent unity that characterized it. If a common philosophy brought together the efforts of everyone's intellect, just as scholastic philosophy brought people's minds together in the Middle Ages, we could have a single, uniform culture instead of the fragmented culture we have today, with principles considered true in Law and false in Medicine. Many jurists elaborate conceptions on philosophical bases they repudiate because of personal convictions.

I will refrain from giving you notions about scholastic philosophy, the work of the great St. Thomas Aquinas, or the works of St. Bonaventure, St. Anselm and others because you will see that in greater depth next year when studying the History of Philosophy.

Primary education was also widespread. In many parts of Europe, free elementary schools were operating alongside every parish church to provide elementary education to all individuals from all social classes.

In the Middle Ages, elementary schools, like higher schools, were under the high guidance of the clergy and the Church, which maintained the unity of thought in the Christian world and, therefore, its political and cultural unity through the spiritual authority of the Catholic Church.

The last centuries of the Middle Ages were characterized by an extraordinary flowering of literature and the arts. Artists and intellectuals appeared who could stand shoulder to shoulder with the greatest that humanity has known at any time.

Writers

Let's move on to the literary field without referring again to St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest philosopher of all time, or to St. Bonaventure, St. Anselm, St. Albert the Great, Duns Scott and many others whose names you should remember right away.

The leading three names in the literary field are Italian. Dante (1265-1321) wrote the Divine Comedy, which makes him one of the greatest poets of all time; Petrarch (1304-1374), whose songs and sonnets deservedly earned him immortality; and Boccaccio, author of the Decameron, a famous collection of stories. These three writers are in no way inferior to the greatest the world has produced. Froissard, Joinville, Velle Hardouin, Pérez del Pulgar, and others were also valuable medieval writers.

Artists

The names of many medieval artists are not known to us. The marvelous cathedrals of the Middle Ages, especially those of Reims (destroyed by the Germans in the Great War and recently rebuilt), Chartres, Paris, Cologne, Westminster, etc., are full of works of art of the highest value, especially statues worthy of being among the most famous in the world. Unfortunately, however, they didn't leave their name to posterity because they worked without the concern of gaining fame.

The architectural works of the Middle Ages are among the most famous in the world, and their proportions far exceeded those of the great Greek or Roman monuments. For example, Paris' famous Notre Dame cathedral, the work of Maurice de Sully, is incomparably bigger than the Parthenon in Athens.

Among the most famous names in the arts in the Middle Ages is Claus Sluter, of German or Dutch origin, who worked at the court of the Dukes of Burgundy (1389-1405), where, among other famous things, he sculpted the famous "Well of Moses."

Technological Progress

The Middle Ages saw truly remarkable inventions. Three of them deserve special mention: the compass, gunpowder and the printing press. There is not much certainty as to how medieval Europe came to know about these crucial factors of civilization. The Chinese certainly knew about them from a very early age. In any case, if you can't say that the Europeans discovered them without making use of Chinese know-how—which they could have learned from the Arabs—it is certain that the Europeans significantly improved the compass, gunpowder and the printing press, giving them an extraordinary usefulness unknown to the Chinese.

The medieval people were the first to take full advantage of navigation of the magnetized needles that always pointed north. The compass was born by making full use of this property.

The medievals were the ones who managed to use gunpowder as a highly efficient means of combat (unfortunately, without any significant advantage for civilization), and not just as Chinese-style fireworks. It is debated whether Albert the Great, Roger Bacon or Bertold Schwartz deserves the glory of inventing or

introducing gunpowder to Europe, nor is it known for sure whether they started using gunpowder in combat during the Hundred Years' War or before that.

The medieval people also invented the printing press. Europe had known the woodcut printing press since the 12th century, but its most significant development occurred in the 15th century, when Gutenberg, a native of Mainz, invented metal movable type. It was also in the Middle Ages, in the 10th century, that paper began to be used in Europe instead of parchment.

Note that while these inventions mean very little in themselves, they made substantial technological progress possible, for which they were almost indispensable instruments.

Take the compass, for example. The great navigations that led to the discovery of America and contact with Asia would not have been possible without it. The same happened with paper and the printing press. The general dissemination of letters wouldn't have been so easy had the printing press and paper not been invented—the same with gunpowder. The formidable evolution of military strategy, which replaced the Middle Ages' old-fashioned, immense castles with today's modern, underground "Maginot Lines," would not have been possible without the invention of gunpowder, which prepared all the changes that the warlike arts have undergone, not to mention the tremendous industrial benefits of using gunpowder.

These inventions are very characteristic of the Middle Ages, which in the field of progress was a period of fruitful elaboration and preparation. Without this elaboration and the innovations that took place during the Middle Ages, the world's material progress would not have been as magnificent or as rapid, and it indeed would not have reached the splendor it did.

Part Fourteen

Medieval Political Organization

Factors of Medieval Civilization

Medieval civilization had three factors: the Romans, the barbarians and the Catholic Church.

Roman Factor. Romans referred to all foreigners as barbarians, whatever their cultural level. At the time, 'barbarian' did not have the pejorative meaning attributed to it today. On the contrary, it could apply to every civilized people. But modern historians reserve this word for the savage tribes that inhabited the banks or forests of the Rhine and Danube.

The struggle the Roman Empire sustained against the barbarian peoples lasted many centuries. Although arduous, it resulted in a brilliant victory for the Romans, who managed to subdue Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula.

The Romans' obvious superiority was due primarily to their perfect military technique and the military qualities of their soldiers. These elements of victory led the Romans to obtain such results. The barbarians, lacking all means of resistance that civilization confers, succumbed to a great people's methodical and intelligently developed action.

Cultural penetration followed Roman military penetration. Rome civilized almost the entire European territory of its empire. Its cultural penetration in Gaul was so deep it became linked to Rome with an indissoluble and affectionate union. They

built Gaulish cities in Roman style and copied everything from Rome. People in wealthy homes spoke Latin. They dressed, lived and thought in Roman style and often held high political office in Rome.

That complete fusion brought Gaul and the Iberian Peninsula two influences that had clashed in Rome: The moral corruption of paganism and, on the other hand, the Catholic Church. When the barbarian hordes attacked Gaul, Iberia and Italy, they encountered a double set of obstacles. On the one hand, the Roman Empire's political organization with its traditional cadre of higher and lower officials; on the other hand, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, with its dioceses governed by bishops and parishes governed by parish priests.

The conduct of imperial officials facing pressure from barbarian hordes was most deplorable. Some tried to react against the barbarians while taking the opportunity to proclaim themselves sovereigns independent of Rome. Others abandoned any vein of reaction.

Thus, the whole empire, including Rome itself, fell to the barbarians because of the treacherous rebellion of impromptu little monarchs, the flight of others crushed by the barbarians, or the cowardice of those who remained faithful but lacked the courage to fight.

Roman civilization disappeared in Gaul, the Iberian Peninsula, and North Africa. Scrubland invaded abandoned roads everywhere. The weather gradually destroyed theaters, temples, pools, aqueducts and palaces, without anyone caring to upkeep or repair these public monuments because they didn't understand what they were for.

Thus, in the Roman Empire's once cultured and flourishing territory, the coarsening of minds was such that Roman civilization disappeared almost completely. Its last literary monuments took refuge in monasteries in the shadow of the clergy, the only social class that still cultivated the life of the intellect.

The Barbarian Factor

The barbarian peoples did not invade the Empire as a simple military incursion but intended to reside there. They took over society by force and caused such brutalization that the Middle Ages began with the most terrible collapse of civilization recorded in history.

What is a savage? To gauge the extent of that collapse, one needs to consider what differentiates a savage from a civilized man.

Utter ignorance of everything or almost everything that constitutes civilization creates in the savage an almost complete unsuitability for civilized life. That is why many savages, as can still be seen today in the missions to catechize our Indians, cannot resist a sudden transplantation of their entire existence into a fully civilized environment.

As a result, many suffer irreparable damage to their health. The few who survive the shock abruptly flee after living a civilized life for many years. The same happens, albeit more rarely, with children of already catechized savages when

transplanted to a big city environment. This inadaptability ultimately results from profound opposition between the habits of civilized people and those of savage people.

Barbarian habits. The barbarians, uniquely similar to our natives in some respects, had habits that easily explain the above.

In times of war, they painted their bodies to frighten their opponents. The men of certain tribes would attach skulls of wild animals to their heads for the same purpose. Howling and hissing like animals, they attacked their enemies in compact hordes whose half-drunk members performed ferocious leaps. Some distance away, the women sang warlike melodies urging the combatants to sacrifice their lives in defense of their nation.

One of the habits of these tribes was the so-called judgment of God. Based on the true principle that God prefers the innocent to the guilty, they wrongly concluded that the winner of a fight was always right because he could not have won without divine protection.

The same idea inspired the process of proving the innocence of individuals concerning the crimes they were accused of. Hence, the accused underwent specific tests such as walking barefoot on incandescent metal or carrying bars of incandescent metal for some time. Criminal law also enshrined the obligation of mutilations for certain crimes.

The penalty often consisted of paying a certain amount of money. Some barbarian peoples of northern Europe had curious tables specifying the price of an eye, an ear or an arm or calculating the price of the life of a king, a prince or a nobleman using heads of cattle as currency.

Certain tribes were so savage that when they invaded the Roman Empire, they wouldn't overnight in cities because they felt suffocated. They had great chivalrousness, respect for women and impeccable hospitality.

Civilization suffered for many centuries from barbaric customs such as judicial dueling, torture and corporal punishment.

The Christian Factor, or the Catholic Church

Between the two extreme dangers that threatened humanity - on the one hand, the exquisite corruption of decadent Roman civilization, and on the other, the devastating barbarism of the invading hordes - a force arose that sought to rebuild a new world by taking advantage of the barbarians' simplicity and relative purity of customs while saving all that could be saved from the cultural achievements of Roman civilization. That factor was the Catholic Church, an unyielding enemy of the moral depravity that deeply affected Roman culture.

Despite suffering the harshest persecutions, the Church grew so that, when Constantine gave her freedom, she emerged from the catacombs to the sunlight as one of the greatest forces of the time. However, she could not bring Rome's

early morality and virtues back on track, so the Empire's decadence increased until the catastrophic barbarian invasion.

But while unable to extend its moralizing action throughout the Roman world, the Church was admirably vigorous among those who had joined her. For this reason, while Roman governors, generals and officials fled everywhere, dismantling the organization of the state, the bishops, parish priests, and faithful remained firm in their posts, and the barbarian wave passed over them without disorganizing them.

The Church's task consisted of the following points:

1. Moralize, evangelize, and therefore civilize the barbarian hordes;
2. In this evangelizing task, take advantage of and develop certain qualities of the barbarians, such as their respect for women, their chivalrous and heroic spirit, and above all, their great capacity for accomplishment, profoundly different from the effeminacy of decadent Romans;
3. Prevent as much as possible Roman corruption from contaminating the barbarians;
4. Save Roman civilization's cultural and artistic values from utter destruction.

The task of evangelizing barbarians developed in two directions:

1. Evangelizing those who invaded the Empire;
2. Disseminating the apostolate throughout Europe.

As experience with the savages of our day amply proves, it is impossible to suddenly raise barbarians from their deficient condition to the fullness of civilization. This task only came to fruition when those undertaking it understood it had to be gradual. As we shall see, the history of the Middle Ages is a sure, profound and therefore relatively slow ascent from a barbaric world to a high degree of civilization.

Criminal law gradually lost its early barbarian rigor so that, while retaining many barbarian vestiges at the end of the Middle Ages, it was incomparably more civilized than the cruel barbarian laws. Among other Christian-derived factors, this was due to a concern to regenerate criminals, which had never been so developed in previous eras. Furthermore, people imbued with the romantic and sentimental liberal mentality considered savage many aspects of medieval criminal law, such as corporal punishment, which modern penalists now deem appropriate.

While partly civilizing the barbarians by mitigating their customs, the Church also sought to take advantage of their exuberant activity and strength using institutions that channeled their violence to ends helpful in society. The work of Chivalry was characteristic in this sense.

While the historical origins of this institution have been much debated, it is inevitable that the Church gave it a religious character and made the new knight swear that he would devote himself entirely to the work of defending Catholic Civilization by maintaining justice and fairness in the daily lives of Christian

peoples and fighting against great heresies giving rise to large revolutionary movements, and against aggressions by pagans and Muslims.

The Church thus found a way to transform the most turbulent barbarian elements into maintainers of order and champions of civilization. That was particularly commendable in the case of the knights-errant, whose members, acting as lawyers and policemen simultaneously, toured cities and countryside searching for injustices to repair. To this end, they freely committed to using force, even at the cost of their own lives, without any material reward.

Evangelization of Non-Roman Europe

Not content with establishing a vigorous new civilization in the territory of an empire struck by the most terrible of catastrophes, the Church evangelized the whole of Europe beyond the Roman boundaries through the work of missionaries. The latter are responsible for integrating Central Europe, Russia, the Scandinavian countries and almost all of Scotland and Ireland into the map of civilization, which coincided with the territories in which missionary deeds occurred.

Feudalism

To give you a concrete idea of what feudalism was like, imagine one of our farmers who, as well as owning an extensive area of land, exercised the powers of mayor, judge, sheriff and military chief. Obviously, within his domains, this farmer would be a veritable miniature king. The situation of feudal lords was similar. Farming landowners exercised all the rights inherent in property over their land.

Below, I will explain how they acquired additional rights. They made laws for their fiefdoms, levied taxes, minted currency, fostered economic life, declared war and made peace, fortified the fiefdom, led its forces in battle, and generally exercised the broadest range of governmental functions. Among these functions, it is important not to forget that of a judge. The feudal lord embodied almost all of the king's authority within his fief.

Origin of Feudalism

Historians are not unanimous on how to explain the origins of feudalism. Among the various possible hypotheses, some prefer some, and others opt for others. However, it seems more appropriate to admit that most of those possible causes came together to give rise to the feudal regime.

First Cause

In previous lectures, we have observed the terrible disorganization that crept into civilized European peoples' entire political and social structure due to barbarian invasions. The old Roman imperial administration was dismantled and collapsed everywhere. Public administration fell to a hard-to-imagine level. Aqueducts broke down, roads disappeared under the invading vegetation, temples and palaces collapsed, public squares filled with rubble, and no one knew how to end such decadence with an unwavering spirit and effective administrative continuity.

In that general disorganization resulting from barbarian influence, Europe began to suffer misfortunes of a different kind. The barbarian peoples were in the habit of fighting each other incessantly and made looting a regular way of life. They did not lose their habits after invading Roman Europe, so small fragmentary wars between tribes continued to prevail among them. They thus brought all peoples of occupied Europe into an atmosphere of constant warfare. A king had to be constantly at war with his neighbors. Otherwise, his warriors would abandon him, as they were not interested in serving a peaceful lord who failed to provide them with the profits of successive lootings. Many kings could not declare war on their neighbors but didn't want to lose their warriors, so they gave them carte blanche to plunder this or that province. Roman Europe fell to such shame due to the barbarian invasions.

These strange and deplorable systems of entertaining troops may have contributed to the formation of feudalism. In fact, instead of plundering entire provinces entrusted to them, many warriors would likely have preferred to acquire property willingly given by its inhabitants to avoid the horrors of complete devastation and exercise absolute power. Feudalism was thus practically inaugurated.

Second Cause

It is also very likely that several barbarian tribes that settled in the Roman Empire left their nomadic ways and began to practice agriculture. Each of these tribes had their own chief, who became the highest authority among those established populations.

The road's terrible disrepair in wartime prevented a chief from always asking the king for help. The enemy was at the gates of his farm, and he had to defend himself immediately. To this end, most of the large landowners began to build fortifications behind whose walls the surrounding populations would take shelter in the event of war and bring their treasures, i.e., the heads of livestock and household items they could carry.

Naturally, the great landowners were not content to serve as defenders of their neighbors; for that vital service, they demanded compensation consisting of bonds of political dependence and economic obligations. The feudal lord's authority was thus born out of the very nature of things as an inescapable consequence of the disorganization of royal power brought by barbarian invasions. It seems very plausible that this cause also contributed to creating the feudal regime.

Third Cause

Every kingdom is divided into territorial circumscriptions, commonly called provinces. For various reasons, which would be too long to list, certain sovereigns at the beginning of the Middle Ages felt the need to make provincial heads governors for life, renouncing the right to dismiss them whenever they wished. Later, these governors made their positions hereditary, constituting real provincial dynasties under the royal dynasty. These regional dynasties, generally made up of large landowners, became feudal families.

This cause clearly generates feudalism. I don't think that any of these causes entirely exclude each other. They complement each other as factors that gave rise to feudalism.

The Feudal Hierarchy

The owners of large fiefdoms also broke them up for the benefit of other lords. That dismemberment had several causes:

1. Just as it was difficult for the king to defend the entire kingdom, the great feudal lord could not defend his whole fiefdom, so he dismembered it by creating smaller fiefdoms within it;
2. When he died, the great feudal lord left the fief to his first-born son while bequeathing to his other sons, small fiefs dismembered from the first-born's inheritance;
3. In response to financial needs, they sold their feudal rights over part of their land to third parties.

In any case, the lords of broken-up fiefdoms were subject to the great feudal lord whose fief was divided, just as this great lord was subject to the king, establishing a hierarchy of feudal lords subject to each other. Hence the origin of the nobility titles, in ascending order: baron, viscount, count, marquis, duke, prince, not to mention intermediate titles such as baronets (England), margraves and landgraves (Germany), archdukes, grand dukes (Germany, Austria, Russia), etc.

Great lords were directly subject to the king. Small lords were subject to the great lord, part of whose fiefdom they received. Finally, a small lord could still be subject to lords of an even lower rank, reaching the lowest degrees of nobility in descending order.

Complexity of the Feudal Hierarchy

Relations between the great feudal lords (suzerains) and the small lords who owed them dependence (vassals) were not always good. When institutions were still beginning to take shape, and reciprocal rights and duties lacked the sharpness and fixity typical of perfectly organized societies, the way people interpreted relationships of vassalage and suzerainty varied greatly. Vassals often understood their duties restrictively, while suzerains tended to consider them very broadly. It's not hard to imagine that this situation often led to tense relations on both sides.

On the other hand, relations between great lords were also susceptible to difficulties. There were, of course, rivalries of interest between them. In the early Middle Ages, the feudal lords' habit of fighting each other as if they were independent heads of state added to the situation's complexity.

That said, big feudal lords tended to ally with small lords who were vassals of their rivals to limit the latter's power as much as possible. In turn, the former also allied with vassals of the great lord they were fighting. Thus, feudal politics were therefore highly complex.

Marriage Politics

Marriage was naturally the way to develop a system of alliances. For example, the great feudal lords A and B are fighting. A has a vassal C, with whom he lives in a tense situation. This vassal, in turn, has only one daughter and no sons. It is very convenient for B to marry his first-born son to C's daughter. This way, B's first-born son will acquire a fiefdom right in the heart of A's lands.

Through this marriage, B's son has a double situation: 1. Through the fief inherited from his father, he will be a great feudal lord. 2. Through the small fief he inherits from his father-in-law, he will be a vassal of A.

"A" feels the blow and strikes back: he marries his son to the daughter of D, a small feudal lord whose lands are in B's fiefdom. Thus, A's first-born son will be: 1. A great feudal lord by inheritance from his father A. 2. A vassal of B's first-born by inheritance from his father-in-law D, whose daughter A's first-born married. In other words, the children of A and B will be reciprocally vassals and suzerains.

It's not hard to see how complex this state of affairs made feudal life. These combinations took place between feudal lords and kings, who, through a marriage game identical to the one above, became each other's vassals and suzerains.

That shows the dominant influence marriage had on a lord's political life. Hence, he paid a heavy tribute in the public interest. While any private individual could choose his wife freely, the feudal lord had to choose not the one who would make him personally happy but the one who would best suit the greatness and prosperity of his subjects residing in the fief.

For you to understand what fabulous results this marriage policy could achieve, it is enough to consider that the world's greatest empire was undoubtedly that of the House of Austria, which culminated with Charles V. However, that empire's greatness was made much more by the abnegation of countless generations of princes and princesses, who married according to the state's interests, than by the power of arms. That is so true that this famous Austrian motto became universally known: "*Gerant allia bella, tu felix Austria, nube!*" - Let others make war: you, happy Austria, marry!"

It was a cruel process of territorial enlargement for princes but a gentle one for their peoples.

Feudal Lord Prerogatives

We find a series of provisions specific to the feudal regime extremely irritating and unjust, but we would understand better and fully justify if we knew their foundations.

In the fiefdom, the feudal lord embodied all state authority and exercised all public functions without receiving a penny from the king. Of course, he could not bear the burdens of administration except through taxes since these have always been the ordinary means of subsistence for all administrations, at all times, among all peoples.

The feudal lord had to fight in times of war, bringing the king the support of a certain number of men. How did he obtain these men, who were indispensable to the service of the homeland? The Middle Ages did not have compulsory military service as we have today. For this reason, the nobility was the warrior class par excellence. In the Middle Ages, you would often see the nobility of two peoples fighting while plebeian populations outside the combat zone, whether urban or rural, remained in peace. In addition to the tribute of affection, the nobility paid the state through the marriage policy; they had the harsh privilege of shedding their blood on the battlefield, while commoners could always stay home.

How did the nobleman get the contingents he was obliged to offer the king in wartime? By paying them and sometimes paying them well. Thus, the nobleman paid the soldiers, bought their horses, armed them and acquired all the necessary equipment. For what? For a public service. How are public services funded? Through taxes.

The feudal castle was not just a sumptuous dwelling. Much more than that, it was the supreme guarantee of the fief's inhabitants against incursions of all kinds. It was a guarantee of life and also money and property. When troops entered a fief, the invading forces would cut everything down, loot and destroy everything just as they do today. For this reason, when an invasion was imminent, all of the fiefdom's inhabitants found safe shelter behind the gigantic walls of feudal castles.

The feudal castle was, therefore, a work of public utility and a means of collective defense just as the Siegfried or Maginot Line are today. The castle's security, the integrity of its towers, the inviolability of its walls, and the depth of the water moat surrounding were not about the feudal lord's comfort or splendor but about the collective security of all the fief's inhabitants. For the feudal lord, constructing a large castle was not an advantage or right but, above all, a duty—perhaps the most fundamental of his duties—an issue of paramount importance for the whole fiefdom.

So nothing was more natural than the obligation imposed on all the fiefdom's inhabitants to work for free in the castle for a few days a year to repair its walls, raise its towers and dig deeper into the castle ditch, which, due to droughts or a thousand other circumstances, could easily be crossed on foot if the silted earth at the bottom wasn't constantly removed.

How are military defense works paid for today? Through pecuniary taxes. Let's say I pay \$30,000 a year for the maintenance of the armed forces; as long as I'm a worker and earn \$300,000 a month, that only means I've worked five days for free for the country's military greatness. Who would dare call this an injustice?

Another privilege of the feudal lords seen as annoying by eighteenth-century liberal and demagogic writers was the right to collect taxes from all those who passed through the fief's roads. However, that is easily explainable. Today, all countries have a particular public budget to pay for the maintenance and development of the road network. How is that budget maintained? Through public taxes. In those days, roads were very often, if not always, opened by the feudal administration, with each fief taking a share. How do you collect the tax for maintaining the road or opening it up? Obviously, by taxing passers-by. Toll is the

ultra-modern, very fair and reasonable system used to cover the costs of certain routes, such as our country's Santo Amaro highway.

Another means widely used today to cover administrative expenses is known as a monopoly. The state acquires particularly profitable industries and gives itself the privilege of exploiting them while denying that privilege to private companies. In this way, the state's profits allow it to levy less onerous taxes on the public.

Hence, in many fiefdoms, the feudal lord had the right to grind (cereals) or some other monopoly. At first glance, that seems odious, but you only have to remember that the feudal lord was not just any private individual but an incarnation of the State, and then everything becomes clear.

The same goes for the feudal lord's right to a percentage of cereals ground in other fiefdom's mills. Today, you stick a stamp on a bag and say it's a consumption tax. Previously, consumption tax wasn't levied by a stamp or money but on goods. That was the only difference. Who would deny the right of the State to charge consumption tax?

If we examine all prerogatives of feudal lords one by one, we will see that they amount to reasonable things like that. The image of a starving, poor commoner going to take his tax money to a rich and well-fed feudal lord is as childish as depicting some contemporary head of state as a tyrant just because he collects taxes from the people. Who fails to pay taxes in any contemporary country?

Hierarchy and Social Inequality

This brief description of the burdens placed on the feudal lord in the Middle Ages shows us that the nobility occupied an exceptional position in the organization of that time. It was a class that existed for the service of the State and found its *raison d'être* in the exercise of military functions and the performance of government duties.

At first glance, one might think that giving the feudal nobility all responsibilities of government was much more a privilege than a duty, so one should not say that the nobility had an obligation to govern their fiefdoms but rather a right to do so. However, that is not the reality. Governance is an arduous task that requires considerable energy. Indeed, all contemporary states consider paying officials appointed to exercise the highest state functions as an elementary moral duty. Thus, kings, emperors and presidents are all entitled to a salary. Why should this be the case if the governmental function were merely an advantage and not a burden?

As I've mentioned, we can get an idea of what a feudal lord was like if we imagine a farmer who simultaneously exercised the functions of municipal mayor, judge, sheriff, tax collector and head of the local military detachment. Which farmer today would be willing to carry out such duties without remuneration? Ask those comfortable farmers living in São Paulo who entrust their farms' administration to trusted representatives to avoid work or worry if they would give up the delights of a leisurely life in the capital to go deep into the hinterland and exercise so many complex functions without any remuneration.

The feudal nobility could also lead a more leisurely life. Although the capital didn't have as many attractions as the big capitals do today, it would undoubtedly have been smooth and easy for them to do what the nobility of Louis XIV's time did, i.e., abandon the countryside and castles, renounce the simple life and the worries of feudal functions to live in the delights of the court. The feudal nobility wisely and selflessly avoided this grave mistake, which the French nobility made in Modern Times, by renouncing the easy life in the capital to fulfill their duties.

Moreover, while exercising governmental functions at the helm of a country of considerable importance is indeed interesting and sometimes exciting, governing small territorial units forces you to delve into prosaic issues that take all the charm out of public life.

What should a feudal lord be concerned with daily? Firstly, what we might call the fief's foreign policy. A war between fiefdoms was considered tolerable for much of the Middle Ages, given the strength of barbarian nations, still so new in Europe. Thus, a feudal lord had to keep a close eye on his neighbors and maintain active "inter-feudal" diplomacy, which secured him allies and assets while weakening his adversary as much as possible. All the fief's inhabitants' entire personal and property security rested on this.

Secondly, it was a question of constantly maintaining the castle in conditions of maximum military efficiency by gradually and attentively following technical developments to keep it at the highest level of military efficiency. Finally, it was about opening and maintaining roads, levying and collecting taxes, overseeing the entire administration of the fief and distributing justice.

The feudal lords paid officials to help them when functions became too numerous and complex. That was the case, for example, with the feudal lords' judicial function. At first, almost all of them exercised it personally. However, as Christian principles penetrated society more deeply and ideas of morality and justice took root in the public mind, feudal lords better understood their responsibility as judges. Fearful of taking on that responsibility, which required special abilities they lacked and time they couldn't afford, feudal lords used paid officials - judges - to replace them in that role.

Note, however, that the king did not disburse the smallest amount of money to cover all these expenses. How would you act? Obviously, by levying taxes. Encyclopedists and conspirators ignobly exploited this very just tax collection to promote the sadly famous French Revolution of 1789.

As I said, all these functions were highly costly. For example, in most cases, the judicial role did not consist of resolving interesting disputes but deciding whose cow got lost in a field or what compensation A owed B for A's horse having trotted over B's vegetables. It was necessary to see if a mill had ground more than it was entitled to, if peasant X wasn't hiding agricultural production to pay less, etc. All this was down to earth and just as tasteless and onerous as jury duty is today. No one likes to do it; most people only do it to avoid paying a heavy fine if they don't show up.

"Noblesse oblige," the famous expression of great legal value at the time, derives from the situation of a feudal nobility overburdened with duties. Nobility is a social condition that burdens nobles more than ordinary individuals. It should be added that, in general, and always with inevitable exceptions, the nobility performed their obligations reasonably and magnificently.

The entire upbringing of a feudal lord's heir was to equip him to serve public interests in the best possible way, meaning that a nobleman was a born civil servant. Noble children were separated from their parents at an early age for the benefit of the community. After a solemn betrothal, a noble girl, whose marriage was usually arranged in early infancy, was handed over to her future husband's family, who educated her until reaching marrying age. Then, the strict separation between the two future spouses ceased, and their wedding was celebrated. Thus, a noble girl was brought up in her in-laws' house, where she would spend her entire life getting to know all the particularities of fiefdom life and fully adapt to them.

Families sent their boys, still in infancy, to the court of the most potent lords or the king to serve as pages. That separation had a significant advantage: away from their family, the future knights' spirit of struggle, initiative and independence became highly sharp. As a result, their psychological training significantly developed, while the feudal lord at whose court the pages served gave them military training.

Born servants of the state, boys and girls had to be trained in their "métier" from an early age, and their mother did not think she had the right to complain: she too was a servant of the state.

If we wanted to look at things in depth, it might almost seem cruel for the burden of fighting, warring and dying to have weighed so much more heavily on the nobility. However, the nobility did not just jovially endure such a harsh burden but boasted of it as their highest title of glory. The nobleman's distinguishing virtue was military heroism—dedication to collective interests taken to the highest degree. He died on the battlefield with enthusiasm. On cold winter nights, as minstrels leisurely filled long evenings singing about heroic exploits, the noblemen hearing deeds were not frightened by the realistic and sometimes brutal description of the future that awaited them. Instead, their hearts beat faster with an ever greater desire to die for the common good and especially for Christendom, threatened by the Moors.

In other words, a nobleman was educated to perform throughout his life, at no cost to the king, functions now exercised by the departments of War and Justice at the expense of the public coffers and regional administrations in most contemporary countries.

One should not forget that the nobility, constituting the country's elite, was not only obliged to perform these functions but also had another peculiarity to all elites: developing a country's artistic, cultural, intellectual and social life. Woe betide the country that doesn't have elite classes capable of performing these functions!

While defending sword-in-hand the now Christian Western civilization in the open field, administered and raised decadent Europe from the rubble of the barbarian invasions, the nobles (who were nothing more than semi-barbarians in the process of gradually civilizing themselves) honed their distinction, elegance, and true nobility; and by elevating themselves, they lifted the whole tenor of the social life of the time.

Once crude wooden fortifications, European castles became magnificent monuments that still attract tourists worldwide. Admirable stained-glass windows, luxurious tapestries, handmade pieces of furniture of inestimable value, precious goblets, jewels, silk and precious upholstery, chandeliers, enamels, silverware - all of this began to adorn the home of the feudal lord, once a mere barbarian, coarse and ignorant chieftain. A subtle, refined, complex etiquette replaced the barbarians' early rudeness. In short, artists, intellectuals, and exponential elements of cultural life generally received the most precious stimulus from that nobility. And in peacetime, these successive generations of heroes became generations of sponsors.

The Clergy was another class entirely dedicated to public service, which was also God's service.

The organization of this class in the Catholic Church, which is still the same today, was curious. In all or almost all countries of antiquity, the clergy of pagan religions was a hermetically sealed social caste whose positions were passed down through heredity. The opposite was true of the Catholic clergy. Even if they belonged to the lowest social strata, anyone could ascend to the highest ecclesiastical offices. It was not unusual to see people from the lowest strata on the world's highest throne—the Throne of St. Peter, the papal throne.

Albeit democratic in how it formed, this class was very aristocratic in its internal organization. The pope, bishops and parish priests made up an extremely hierarchical and disciplined organization to the point that Edison wrote in his will that the world's most perfect organizations were the Catholic Church and the Anglo-Mexican Oil Company (if I remember the name correctly).

I cannot stress enough that the clergy's primary function in terms of public service was to Christianize the masses.

As I have already explained, the principles of Catholic doctrine necessarily and inescapably have political, social and economic consequences of the most transcendental importance. Thus, a profoundly Catholic people's political, social and economic constitutions and domestic organization are inspired by Catholic principles. That is called Catholic Civilization.

To this day, even heads of state sometimes hostile to the Church are quick to say that ours is a Christian civilization. What does that mean if not that Christian principles are still the foundation of our civilization?

Who spread Christianity throughout Europe, civilized the invading barbarians, softened their savage customs, opened their minds to the charms of intellectual life, and inspired the first artists, literati and statesmen who emerged among

them? The Church. If we want to know the Catholic clergy's primary task in the Middle Ages, let's look at Anchieta's work in Brazil. It was the same task.

Secondly, all charitable services were the responsibility of the clergy—hospitals, orphanages, isolation centers for lepers, and safe houses for travelers in the uncertainty of barely passable roads. This admirable array of charitable works was nowhere to be seen in pagan antiquity; it sprang from the Church's charitable spirit. In other words, the Church spent all the money earmarked today for social assistance without any help from the State.

The Church was also responsible for public education. There is a lot of talk about the ignorance of medieval men. It is not easy to combat illiteracy, and the Brazilian experience shows how difficult it is to overcome this evil despite all our modern resources, which did not exist in the Middle Ages. However, when the Middle Ages ended, almost all churches had a free elementary school for the poor next to them. And they claim that the Church encouraged illiteracy! What a bunch of laughable tales!

There is here an extremely curious contradiction. Some claim that the Middle Ages were an age of illiteracy. Others say that the immense popularity of the Bible's successive editions immediately after Gutenberg's invention led to such a transformation of minds that it gave rise to the pseudo-Reformation. But how did illiterate people consume monumental editions of books? What for? Claiming that the publication encouraged everyone to learn to read is pure nonsense! Don't millions of books come out today? And yet, has illiteracy disappeared?

One could never speak of the Church's doctrinal influence without mentioning the universities. The popes founded Europe's most famous universities, enriching them with all sorts of privileges. Never before the Middle Ages did Europe have an organization of higher education comparable to that of medieval universities.

Likewise, the clergy was responsible for the entire budget for public education, a costly department in most countries today. How did the Church meet these expenses? By collecting taxes? No. By receiving subsidies from the State? Rarely. The means came from the public charity. The state exempted the clergy from taxes in exchange for so many services. Tax exemptions for temples or charitable works still exist in almost all states today. Such was the very understandable privilege against which the Encyclopedists protested!

The Plebs' Situation

The concept of social classes in the Middle Ages was that the clergy prayed for the country, instructed and educated the population, and protected the poor in their indigence and the sick in their misfortune. In short, the clergy should create the most promising moral and intellectual conditions for a country's greatness.

The nobility had to administer the country and live in public service, from public service, and for public service, and eventually die for the country on the battlefield. In short, government and military functions fell to the nobles.

These functions are so absorbing that they don't allow for the exercise of other functions. But while it is true that "man does not live by bread alone," it is no less

true that he cannot live without bread. There should also be an economically productive class if there were a teaching, administrative, and warrior class. That function fell to the third class - the plebs.

The Middle Ages' commoner is often portrayed as the most unfortunate man of all time, reduced to an unjust and harsh condition, deprived of all rights, burdened with all duties, and obliged to perform such humble functions that any ascent in the social hierarchy was absolutely forbidden to him.

That accusation would be childish if it weren't perfidious. One of the characteristics of the Middle Ages was the formation of a wealthy bourgeoisie, a plebeian class that rose to a high level of prosperity to the point of rivaling kings and nobles. But how did the commoners achieve that if they were nothing but miserable slaves? Even Marx's unsuspected testimony that the Middle Ages were the golden age of European workers was no match for anti-medieval prejudice.

Agriculture was the only remunerative activity allowed to a nobleman in many countries, while industry and commerce were the preserve of commoners to guarantee that the commoner could exercise his economic functions. In other words, only a commoner could get his hands on the most important sources of wealth.

In all countries with a well-organized economy, intelligently exercised commerce and industry provide considerable profits many times greater than agriculture's. A commoner earned money while a priest preached, taught and prayed, and a nobleman administered, judged, fought, and died. Hence, the formation of a very wealthy plebeian class whose prosperity did not detract from the happiness and material well-being of the plebs' lower layers, as Karl Marx recognized by praising the excellent conditions in which the medieval worker lived.

Therefore, it was perfectly understandable that those who made money paid the taxes. Who else should pay them? Those who made no money and lived only for public service? Thus, while the "privileged" classes' contribution was to work for the State, the commoner paid the tax in money rather than work. Yet, revolutionaries rose against this.

Equivalence of Rights and Duties

The revolutionaries didn't understand or didn't want to realize that the Middle Ages' social organization conferred unequal rights but also unequal duties and that one established absolute justice not by assigning equal rights and responsibilities to everyone but by giving greater rights to those who performed more significant tasks, and lesser rights to those who performed more secondary tasks.

Let's clarify this thinking. Nowadays, we all have equal duties towards the State. It is, therefore, only fair that we should also have equal rights. But if one of us has greater duties towards the State, the State should recognize greater rights. Otherwise, someone will suffer.

If the state entrusts me with the duty to teach, which obviously doesn't concern everyone, in addition to my duties as a citizen, it must pay me a salary that it doesn't pay everyone. As state employees, teachers have greater duties than the

general mass of citizens. On the other hand, they have greater rights and earn a salary.

The priest was, first and foremost, a servant of God. But as such, he implicitly provided the State with the most precious of services. The state received more from him than ordinary citizens and thus owed him more. Hence, the priest, who worked without pay for the public interest, also enjoyed tax exemption and was the first class in the country, as the dignity of his duties demanded.

The nobleman also had privileges stemming from the "noblesse oblige" principle, whereby he was a state servant.

Thus, duties unequal to those of the mass of citizens also corresponded to different rights. Justice lay in the proportion between the services rendered and the reward received through honors and tax exemptions.

Formation of Feudalism

Medieval peoples had very varied political organizations in which monarchical, aristocratic or democratic tendencies prevailed depending on the circumstances.

Monarchy was the most widespread form of government. France, the Iberian Peninsula and England were hereditary monarchies. The Holy Roman Empire and Poland were elective monarchies in which, when one ruler died, another was elected by assemblies made up of members of the aristocracy.

Holland and Germany's free cities were pure bourgeois democracies without any monarchical character. The Republic of Venice, on the other hand, was an exclusively aristocratic state in which only patricians had political rights. In England, the monarchy evolved toward democracy, limiting the crown's powers. In France, Spain, Portugal and most of the units that made up the German-Roman Empire, the monarchy evolved into absolutism. In Poland, the monarchy existed in name only since, in reality, the nobility ruled. In Venice, the monarchy didn't even exist in the name because the nobility was omnipotent, didn't accept a king, and didn't care about people's participation in government.

Feudalism was one of the major political characteristics of Europe in the Middle Ages. As you have seen, they also practiced feudalism in Egypt, China and Japan. So, medieval feudalism was not an entirely new regime but the European application of a field-tested regime in other peoples of great civilization before the formation of medieval Europe. Feudalism lasted so long in Japan that it only came to an end in the 19th century.

The origins of the feudal regime in Europe are not precisely known. Perhaps it can be explained by the ancient laws of barbarian peoples; maybe it resulted from a deformation of Charlemagne's administrative organization; perhaps it came from the natural desire of poor populations to shelter under the protection of rich men during periods of great social calamity; perhaps all these factors converged to form feudalism. Historians have no unanimity about the causes of feudalism, and the last hypothesis seems the most plausible to me.

As you may know from your schooling, Charlemagne's empire was divided into several provinces, at the head of which the Emperor appointed governors he could dismiss at any time. Itinerant imperial officials inspected these governors to keep a close eye on how they were carrying out their duties.

With the weakening of royal powers and the disorganization of European states during the reigns of Charlemagne's successors, it seems the provincial governors managed to make their positions lifelong. They could no longer be dismissed once the king appointed them. A governor's position only became vacant when he died. Later, they hereditarily held the position, and the kings lost direct authority over their kingdom's provinces.

Provincial governors, hereditary for life, were little kings with the task of governing their territory at will. They were obliged to assist the king only in the event of war with foreign countries and to pay him taxes in some instances.

Another fact that may have contributed to the formation of the feudal regime was this: Since the kings were not strong enough to oppose the constant invasions Europe sustained from Saracens and barbarian Germans nor to deal with internecine struggles between European and Christian peoples, large landowners were left entirely to their own devices. In the event of an invasion, they could no longer rely on public authority or the king's troops, so they tried to organize their defense exclusively with their resources. They built fortifications on their lands and defended themselves against the common adversary with the help of poor people in the surrounding area.

Of course, at such times, the situation of a large landowner was much better than that of a poor peasant. Once his land was invaded, the landowner could entrench himself with his flocks and relatives in a fortification and overcome the assault. But the peasant, who couldn't build fortifications for himself, was utterly helpless because the invaders usually set fire to his house and took possession of his flocks and whatever food they found in his pantry. He lost his furniture and, worst of all, his family, who suffered extremely harsh treatment, and especially the women, who often lost their honor in such calamities.

For this reason, when an invasion was imminent, a man of the people would ask the great landowner for protection. The latter authorized him to lead his family, his few possessions and heads of cattle into the fortification, saving him from complete financial ruin and the destruction of his home. The feudal lord thus received a soldier but had to feed many useless mouths. It would be preferable for him to have mercenary soldiers instead of defending himself with the help of his peasants. So, he demanded political submission from the peasantry in exchange for the protection he gave them in wartime. As a result, relations of political dependence formed between the big landowners and their peasants, alongside the existing ties of economic dependence.

As you can see, because of the deformation of Charlemagne's administrative regime or the need to defend rural populations against external enemies, the people no longer depended directly on the king (as happens in modern monarchies or republics, where we all depend on the state). Instead, they relied on governors or territorial lords who depended on the king. This system spread throughout

Europe to such an extent that it was no longer acceptable for a commoner not to have a lord.

In general, not all of a country's land was given over to feudal lords. There were two types of land in every kingdom: 1. Land directly dependent on the king, on which there were no feudal lords. 2. Land dependent on feudal lords, on which the king only had indirect authority exercised through the lords.

Feudal rule began to spread in Europe from the 9th century onwards.

Feudal Hierarchy

Over time, the feudal regime became more complicated as great feudal lords broke up their lands and granted parts to other people with full authority; these new lords were also hereditary and for life. The new lords owed the feudal lord who had granted them land: 1. Military aid in the event of war. 2. Payment of certain taxes. Under these conditions, the great feudal lord who ceded was to the minor lord who received the concession just as the king was to the great feudal lord. There were thus two types of land in the great fiefdoms: 1. Land on which the great lord exercised his authority personally. 2. Land on which the direct authority lay with a small feudal lord who received it from the great lord and over which the great lord had only indirect authority.

You can easily imagine the complexity of such a political and social organization. The great feudal lord who granted land to a small lord was called a suzerain. The small lord was called a vassal. In this way, a real feudal hierarchy was formed, with the king at the top, then the great lords who depended on him, and then the small lords who depended directly on the great lords and indirectly on the king.

In a war with a foreign country, the king would ask for help from all the great feudal lords. The latter, in turn, asked the small lords or vassals for help, so the whole country went to war.

Considered in itself, this organization could provide excellent services, and indeed it did. Since kings were powerless to defend themselves in wars, one could not have invented a more ingenious system than this. Thanks to the feudal lords' resistance, Europe overcame the great external enemies it had to fight. Muslims and barbarian Europeans had not yet converted to Catholicism and civilization. Feudalism was one of the most important means of defending European, Western and Christian civilization.

The feudal hierarchy became even more complicated as time went on. First, many kings inherited fiefs in other countries as an inheritance from a female ancestor or a more or less distant collateral relative. The king thus became lord of a considerable expanse of land in another country and a vassal of another king. For the vassal, that vassalage did not imply a moral decline but an increase because vassalage only existed concerning the inherited fiefdom and not the monarchy of which the king was sovereign. Instead, for the king who inherited the fief, that vassalage was a valuable means of weakening the king whose vassal he was because he acquired direct authority over a large part of the other king's domains. Such was the case, for example, with the kings of England, who were always

fighting with the kings of France and managed to inherit many fiefdoms in French lands. In doing so, they also became kings of France.

What happened between kings also happened between feudal lords. Many great feudal lords inherited small fiefs on the lands of a rival great feudal lord. They thus became vassals of the great feudal lord, but that vassalage only existed concerning the small fief. And by gaining direct authority over part of his rival's lands, the great lord who had become a vassal weakened the latter. It could and did happen that great feudal lords were suzerains and vassals, respectively, and the same happened with kings.

Deformations of the Feudal Regime

Like all regimes, the feudal system also lends itself to deformations. Although very wise as such, in practice, it was so distorted as to generate the most significant abuses. Through marriages and skillfully studied genealogical combinations, many great feudal lords concentrated a vast number of large fiefdoms in the hands of a few descendants, thereby making kings too weak to exercise their authority over them.

In France, there were times when the king was the smallest of the great feudal lords, i.e., he had smaller lands than any great lord in his kingdom. Under these conditions, the feudal lords' discipline toward the crown was very precarious. In reality, each fief constituted a country utterly independent of the king. As a result, kings and feudal lords very often fought an endless series of battles, which you studied in high school.

It was common to find feudal lords who allied themselves with foreign sovereigns to defeat their king more easily. And so feudalism, instituted to guarantee national territory against external enemies, was turned on its head.

Minor vassals also allied with their liege's enemies to defeat him. Disorder invaded all levels of the feudal hierarchy. Kings often contributed to aggravating this situation, which was so unfavorable for them, by breaking up their domains when they died, leaving large fiefs to their youngest sons and the royal crown to their firstborn. In this way, the lands over which the kings had direct authority became smaller and smaller.

Marriage Politics

The kings began to develop a series of well-studied marriages seeking to merge neighboring monarchies into their own or reabsorb the kingdom's great fiefdoms by marrying the heirs to the throne to the heiresses of great feudal lords. On the other hand, they made this policy even more energetic by repressing the feudal lords' revolutionary outbreaks as much as possible and at gunpoint.

In France and Spain, the results of this policy were excellent. At the end of the Middle Ages, Spain was achieving its unification (as you know, this unification took place with the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic, which led to the disappearance of the small kingdoms of Aragon and Castile, into which Spain was divided), while France had almost wholly abolished the great feudal lords, ushering in the era of absolute monarchy in both countries. In France, King Louis XI was

the greatest champion of the country's unification and the destruction of the power of feudal lords. You may remember his wars with the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Temeraire.

No dynasty gained more from its marriage policy than the Habsburgs. This family originated in Swabia and, with Robert the Rich, conquered large territories in Switzerland and Alsace and came to the German imperial throne with Rudolph of Habsburg. Heads of the then archduchy of Austria began such an active marriage policy that they achieved for their dynasty the most astonishing expansion recorded in the history of this continent. Austria had two exciting mottoes. The first expressed that people's imperialism, abbreviated with the initials A.E.I.O.U., which stood for "*Austriæ est imperare orbi universo*," in other words, "it is up to Austria to rule the whole world." The second indicates how they achieved that universal domination: "*Gerant allia bella; tu, felix Austria, nube*" - "Let others wage wars at will; you, happy Austria, marry!"

The Habsburg family succeeded in forming an empire that extended as far as America, as we will see in a moment.

Rights and Duties of Feudal Lords

Feudal lords owed the king certain sums of money and military assistance in the event of war. With people who lived in their fiefdoms, they were obliged to exercise judicial power, administer the entire fiefdom, watch over its security and the prosperity of its finances, maintain public order and carry out all the works of public utility that became necessary, such as bridges, roads, etc.

In turn, the king or the people living in the fief had to help the feudal lord in the event of external aggression. The men of the people were obliged to pay certain sums of money and perform certain services, which I will discuss later.

Medieval Society

Medieval society was based on social inequality. There were two privileged classes: 1. the clergy. 2. the nobility. In addition, there was a third class, the people, who had no privileges. They were the plebs.

The clergy were obliged to maintain divine worship, watch over public morality by preaching the healthy principles of religion, and visit the sick, poor, and imprisoned. In addition to these functions, the clergy exercised two others, which are today exercised by the state, at least in certain countries—first, public education, and second, social assistance.

As I will say later, the medieval universities were created mainly by the popes and operated under the high guidance of the Roman pontiffs and the Church. Popes in the Middle Ages founded many universities that exist today. The famous Sorbonne was founded in the 13th century by Robert Sorbon, chaplain and confessor to King Louis of France.

In addition, the clergy spread public education among the population, and extensive European regions had a free school for poor children next to each parish

church, maintained by the pastor. The clergy, therefore, carried out all the tasks currently carried out by the Ministry of Public Instruction or Education.

In addition, the clergy provided all social assistance and maintained hospitals, asylums for the disabled, institutions that distributed food to the poor, etc. It's only fair that such high and meritorious functions should correspond to great social consideration and that, since the clergy did so much benevolent work for the population free of charge, they should not be obliged to pay taxes as the expenses those functions entailed were already a tax.

As for the nobility, it exercised all the functions that now fall to the ministries of War, Agriculture and Justice. They organized all the country's military forces free of charge. They were the first to shed their blood in war, always occupying the positions of greatest personal risk. The nobles administered and kept the whole country in order, policing it, etc. They exercised judicial power. They cultivated the entire country because the aristocracy was essentially agricultural. They built and maintained a fiefdom's bridges, roads and sidewalks, isolated lepers, etc. It was also only fair that this class did not pay taxes because the feudal lord was an unpaid public servant.

On the other hand, the plebs did no public service except to go to war, which they did with much less risk than the nobles. The plebs held the least risky jobs or positions and thus suffered much less from war. It was, therefore, right that they should pay taxes, especially as a class of highly wealthy commoners formed in medieval Europe living in cities or "burghs," as they were called in Germany at the time, which is why they were called "burghers."

The bourgeoisie had become extraordinarily wealthy in emerging commerce and industry and were sometimes richer than the king. The plebeian class led a plush and comfortable life and held no public office. For their part, the nobles had no right to exercise industry and commerce, which would have enabled them to become as rich as the bourgeoisie. The latter was thus a class in excellent condition and could and should pay many taxes.

We will see how this class later gained supremacy in the European states and how it worked to free itself from the authority of the feudal lords in the municipalities.

The fundamental observation you should remember is that in the Middle Ages, the various social classes had unequal rights and duties. That was not unfair because there was a perfect proportion between the rights and duties of each class, and greater rights always correspond to greater responsibilities. Today, rights and obligations are equal under the law. Both equality and inequality can be fair. It would be unjust if great rights corresponded to minor duties or vice versa. But there is no injustice as long as inequality is balanced.

The Courts

The various social classes in most European monarchies had elected representative chambers intended to limit royal authority. These chambers, called "Cortes" in Portugal and Spain, "estates general" in France, parliament in England, and Diet in Germany and Poland, were generally made up of representatives of the three classes: clergy, nobility and people. Each class had its own

representatives. The courts or diets greatly intimidated the kings and determined what taxes the people should pay to prevent abuses of authority. These courts' audacity went so far that, in Portugal, they even decided which qualities the king should prefer for his wife: 1. virtue; 2. nobility; 3. beauty, wealth, etc. No contemporary parliament would dare to do the same.

Political Trends in European Monarchies

I've already mentioned Spain, Portugal, France, Germany and Poland. England deserves a mention. English feudalism never posed a risk to royal power since fiefdoms were never more extensive than the land available to the king. That is why the nobles joined forces with the people to limit the king's powers, as they were powerless to do so on their own. Hence, the series of struggles that culminated in the Magna Carta. I won't go into these facts here, which you must have studied in high school. It will suffice to point out that since then, England has evolved unceasingly in a democratic direction, with kings and the nobility increasingly losing their prerogatives for the benefit of the people.

Part Fifteen

Civilization in the Middle Ages

The Catholic Church's Role in the Middle Ages

Medieval Problems

Some authors claim the Middle Ages was civilization's 'dark night' while others claim it was only a step backward. It seems to us that both statements are unjustified because these authors compare the Middle Ages with modern and contemporary times. However, as it was a more distant era, civilization was naturally inferior. For this purpose, comparing the beginning and end of the Middle Ages would be valid. If its end shows superiority, we must conclude there was progress during the Middle Ages. And if there was progress, we should use the same criterion to assess its importance.

Having made this comparison, we cannot deny the 14th century's superiority over the 5th. From a chaotic situation resulting from the invasions and a beginning in which even emperors were illiterate, at the end of the Middle Ages, we reached an economic, social and political organization and an affirmation of morals, which can be considered the most perfect that man has ever possessed. It was also a period of schools, universities, leading names in the sciences, and letters.

As you can see, during the Middle Ages, civilization evolved. It preserved many elements of Greco-Roman culture, which took another form. We can say without exaggeration that the Middle Ages possessed a unique civilization distinct from both previous and later ones. That civilization developed mainly by the action of the Church, as we will demonstrate.

The Church's Contribution to the Development of Medieval Civilization

The Church's first role was to unify culture. If it hadn't been for her actions, Europe would have seen the formation of countless states and cultures. By expanding Christian culture and making the barbarians assimilate it, the Church forced them to come closer together and made all those populations a single people - the Christian people. This phenomenon brought greater understanding and collaboration among men.

Intellectual Contribution

The Church fought medieval illiteracy everywhere. Clerics sowed the seeds of monastic schools that educated both ecclesiastics and laypeople. On the other hand, the founding of universities that brought together thousands of students was almost always the work of the Church and its professors, mostly ecclesiastics. Convents were centers of culture where people studied in depth, and intellectual relics were kept, consulted and commented on. They were also where great figures developed. Let it not be said that the Middle Ages lacked notable sages and thinkers. It did have them, and most were clerics such as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis of Assisi.

Moral and Political Contribution

Some people criticize medieval politics, especially feudalism, claiming that the division observed at the time caused countless wars. However, one could not violently transform a decentralized organization into a centralized one. Feudalism was an intermediate phase, decentralized by the presence of feudal lords and centralized in the king's person.

Here again, the Church played an important role. Justifying and supporting the king's authority profoundly contributed to regular and continuous centralization. The constant wars between feudal lords were still the product of the barbarians' bellicose genius and should not be blamed on the regime. There would have been no fewer states than feudal lords, and the fighting would have been the same if the Church had not acted and the barbarians had organized themselves in Europe at will.

The Church also sought to justify kings' authority doctrinally, contributing significantly to the formation of modern states. However, a king's authority was subject to his duties as a Christian. Often to its own detriment, the Church took to the field to fight kings who strayed from their duties. It fought against people who failed to understand the beneficial actions of Christianity. The Church was the greatest supporter of virtue and morality in general. It vigorously fought against all unworthy customs and often had to confront clerics who neglected their duty. She was unshakeable and uncompromising with the distortion of its principles.

Social Contribution

In keeping with its principles, in the Middle Ages, the Church worked to improve the living conditions of the lower classes. She thus fought against slavery. However, as it was impossible to move abruptly from slavery to freedom, the Church improved the slaves' situation on an ongoing basis. First, by giving them greater guarantees, then by making the sources of slavery dwindle, and finally by preventing the selling of slaves with the establishment of the serf or the glebe, who represents a transitional state between the Roman slave and the free man. That servant was tied to the land and thus no longer a slave to a master.

Economic Contribution

The Church organized or at least worked hardest to organize trade guilds. This economic system viciously attacked during the French Revolution, is now considered good by many modern countries, albeit modified.

On the other hand, the Middle Ages were characterized by the clearing of European lands. The historians who fight it forget that, in ancient times, only the shores of the Mediterranean were cultivated and that by the end of the Middle Ages, all the lands of Gaul and even northern Europe came into the agricultural heritage and were advancing into eastern Europe with the clearing of Poland. The Church was no stranger to this expansion movement and helped it along. As well as teaching the barbarians about agriculture, the monks owned farming land almost everywhere in Europe.

The Church's first role was to protect civilized populations. As is known, when Roman authorities fled under barbarian pressure, bishops and the Church generally went to meet and convert the barbarians and spare local people and relics. Often, the clerics themselves took charge of the armed defense. There are examples of many bishops and priests killed while defending cities.

In addition to defending the people, the Church sought to defend Greco-Roman civilization and achieved this thanks mainly to catechization. Monks set out to conquer souls everywhere. By making themselves respected as religious authorities, they also imposed respect for what the Greeks and Romans had built. Confusion in the early Middle Ages was great but would have been greater had it not been for the Church's measures. Its action transformed medieval art and literature. It supported the great writers and artists as far as the medieval economy allowed. That is why all significant figures are linked to the Church. On the other hand, the life of Christ was a new source of inspiration.

Indirectly, the Church prepared a great movement against the Muslim East - the Crusades - allowing Western and Eastern civilizations to be linked. The Crusades also drove the Moors away from the Mediterranean and reconquered that important communication and trade route for Europeans. The fruits were not long in coming, and we soon saw the emergence of merchant navies in Italian cities. Thus began the restoration of the economy, on which the Renaissance would later rest.

Europe's Intellectual Life in the 13th Century

From the 11th century onwards, the Middle Ages had an original civilization, which was remarkable in the 13th century, especially in France. Schools multiplied even as economic, intellectual and artistic life revived and took on a wonderful momentum. The universities, a 13th-century creation among which the one in Paris stands out, had thousands of students. Seventeen universities were created in Europe in the first 50 years of the 13th century. As a result of this development, the pre-Renaissance emerged in Italy in the early 14th century and culminated in the figures of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.

There was no less artistic activity. Artists began to build churches in the Roman style, replacing ogival art, that wonderful creation of the Middle Ages. Cathedrals were decorated with statues and bas-reliefs. At the end of the 13th century, painting received a notable boost. In Italy, Giotto's works date from this period. However, Christian culture is the essential characteristic and hallmark of this civilization and masterpieces. Instruction in the universities was in the hands of monks and priests. Art was expressed mainly in cathedrals, where all artists, without exception, gave the best of their inspiration.

Studies in the Middle Ages

Several attempts were made in the Middle Ages to raise the population's cultural level. One example is Charlemagne, who tried to gather the most outstanding scholars of the time in his schools. However, not all attempts were successful. Some initially worked but later succumbed to internecine battles. Another policy was required, as they needed to start transforming society profoundly. That was the Church's policy, planting countless schools throughout Europe. Thus, by combating the prevailing illiteracy, she prepared and cultivated the field for the great culture of the 13th century.

State of Culture in the 13th Century

There were many schools during the 13th century. There was always a teaching center next to convents where great intellectuals often taught. However, universities were the leading educational bodies then, notably the one in Paris.

Universities arose from the spirit of the time, i.e., which tended toward corporations and organized as corporations with teachers and students subject to laws and regulations. They were simultaneously a corporation for work and aid, "*Universas Magistrorum et discipulorum*." Pedagogically, the universities were divided into four colleges: Theology, Canon Law, Medicine and Liberal Arts.

Liberal arts schools were the most important numerically. You could only enter a medicine, theology or law school after passing through a liberal arts school. It was a school of general culture that also trained teachers. Its students and teachers were divided into groups.

The schools of Theology, Law and Medicine had their own dean. The Liberal Arts School dean was called the rector. He usually was a leading aristocrat and ran the university's administration, but governments did not support universities.

There was a great interest among students at this time. One of those teachers, the philosopher Abelard, had to teach on farms in the open air to fit everyone who

wanted to listen. The studies were in Latin, with teachers reading books and students memorizing and commenting. There were also debates between students chaired by the masters. The liberal arts school divided the study into two parts: 1. trivium, in which grammar, rhetoric and dialectic were studied; 2. quadrivium, covering arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music.

Students obtained a degree at the university that gave them the right to teach.

Many universities were founded, especially in the 13th century. Some became famous for the number of students and the influence they exerted. The most notable was that of Paris, which brought together 20,000 students, was a noteworthy force, and became a separate organization protected from government attacks by privilege. Still in France, Montpellier, the Sorbonne and others stand out. The famous universities of Cambridge and Oxford already existed in England. In Italy, there was Bologna. A little later, the University of Salamanca appeared in Spain. There were also numerous universities in Germany.

Lyrics in the 13th Century

Lyrics took on a particular character in the 13th century. Poetry featured famous songs, including three famous books: *Canções de Gesta*, *Cancioneiro de Dom Dinis* in Portugal, and *Romanceiro* in Spain. These songs were mainly glorifications of heroes. In prose, we have historians and some philosophers. In history, we have Villecharvain, Gilbert de Nogent, Robert de Vandovert, Joinville. The time's philosophy was Aristotle-based Scholastics. Notable thinkers such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Bacon and others appeared during this period. Roman Law made its reappearance because Germanic law was insufficient. The Italian pre-Renaissance can also be traced back to the 13th century, although this is not chronologically true. Using Latin was the great intellectual difficulty of the time; people soon began to write in neo-Latin languages.

English Institutions in the Middle Ages

The central institutions observed in medieval England are royalty, nobility, the Magna Carta, Parliament and the Jury.

Royalty

In England, the king had absolute power. Thanks to the organization given by William the Conqueror, politics was centralized in the king's person. He was the supreme leader politically, militarily and judicially. The king was assisted in his government by councilors divided into two groups: Councilors of Justice and Councilors of Account. The Councillors of Justice functioned whenever the king's interests were at stake. The country was divided into counties headed by shills (counts), but the king had noble "sheep" (viscounts) responsible for reporting any irregularities.

Economic Life

A perfect census ordered by William the Conqueror regulated taxes. The "sheep" and councilors were appointed and dismissed at the king's will, but while in office, they were representatives of the king and could judge and condemn the great

lords. They were in charge of the "king's peace," i.e., preventing fights between feudal lords. In England, feudal lords were not allowed to fight as in other countries. No one was allowed to take the law into their own hands.

Nobility

The English nobility was entirely established and based on property. The nobles held the so-called "manor," but in varying numbers. Knights generally had one, while lords had up to six. However, in England, they didn't worry so much about titles. In general, they were content with the title of "squire," but this nobility differed from others for many reasons.

The king enforced peace, and the nobility was not warlike. On the other hand, when a nobleman owned a large amount of land, it consisted of plots distributed throughout the country. There was no powerful fiefdom or feudal lord of a province. Thus, only a coalition of feudal lords could challenge the king's authority. That continuous peace led to an indifference to militarism, so the knighthood much sought after in France was a nuisance for the English. Whenever the king allowed taxes to replace military service, most nobles paid them.

On the other hand, property was the only distinction between nobles and bourgeois. The richer you were, the more highly regarded. There is, thus, a difference between the French nobleman and the gentleman. While the Frenchman descended from a noble family and had a fine education, the Englishman was merely wealthy. Therefore, unlike in other countries, the English nobility was not closed off and did not set itself against the other classes. The distinction between gentry and yeomen (smallholders) was only in the amount of possessions.

Magna Carta

In England, royalty had absolute power. That power was often arbitrary, and the nobles and lower classes had to pay hefty taxes to satisfy the significant needs of the wars the kings promoted. Hence, a spirit of reaction began to emerge; weak at first, it gradually brought together all powerful lords. Taking advantage of Jean Sans Terre's defeats, the barons imposed conditions of government on that monarch. In 1215, abandoned by the nation, he had to accept those impositions. The Magna Carta contained the nobles' wishes and was considered the foundation of the "English Constitution." The Magna Carta has notable advantages over previous royal concessions. It is not the king's concession but an imposition of the nobility on the king. It is also much more far-reaching in removing much of the king's power and placing them in the nobility.

The Magna Carta is rightly regarded as the foundation of English freedoms. It consists of 63 articles, which seek to guarantee the following six principles:

1. Church rights: The Magna Carta covers the Church's rights and prerogatives. The king could not attack it without breaking what had been established. Among the rebels were many prelates, some of whom were quite powerful;
2. Individual guarantees: The arbitrariness of the king and his subordinates ceased;

3. Freedom to trade: It established free competition, making monopolies disappear in English economic life;

4. Tax Regulation: It ended the king's abuses by limiting his right to ask for taxes and submitting them to the Grand Council.

5. The kingdom's noble notables established the Grand Council, and the king could only levy taxes with its authorization. This Grand Council expanded its functions and soon began issuing reports and making proposals to the king, so much of the royal power shifted to it.

6. Right of resistance: The Magna Carta also established the right to protest whenever decisions were not under what had been established.

As you can see, England was a long way along the road to liberalism. The Magna Carta was expanded shortly afterward (1258) by the Oxford Statutes imposed on the king by Simon de Montfort. Under these statutes, Parliament, i.e., the Grand Council, expanded the number of its members and was given broader functions.

Parliament

The English Parliament originates from the great noble council established in the Magna Carta and expanded by the Oxford Statute. In 1257, Simon de Montfort imprisoned the king and summoned the great council while adding non-voting county representatives. That Grand Council was called Parliament. It then became customary for all kings to convene Parliament every year.

As its functions expanded, Parliament gradually became the master of power in England. The Great Council only had tax functions, while Parliament became a true legislative assembly even though royal power was above it in the Middle Ages. During the Middle and Modern Ages, the conflict between royal power and that of Parliament was constant. At times, the latter completely dominated the king, and at other times, he prevailed. However, note that during Edward I, II and III, all social classes were summoned to Parliament, now divided into two chambers: the Lords and the Commons.

The Jury

Another notable institution was the jury, whose origins lie in the so-called assizes, courts of justice. The English kings, wishing to distribute justice more widely, sent representative judges to various regions of their dominions to preside over trials. At first, these men only conducted civil trials, but later, they also tried crimes. Thus, a dictatorship of the judges was avoided by summoning jurors. The Institute of Judges was so crucial that it soon spread throughout Europe.

Islam

The Arabs did not form a nationality. They were tribes scattered throughout the generally arid regions between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. They formed various tribes and also had various religions. Mohammed organized the Arabs politically by grouping scattered tribes into a single nationality through a strong bond: religion.

Mohammed came from a poor family and began life driving caravans across the deserts. He later married a wealthy widow, Cadija, and devoted himself to meditation. Knowledgeable about various religions, intelligent and well acquainted with the Arab people and customs, he conceived a political organization of the different Arab tribes based on a single religion. Once he conceived this plan, he carried it out and began preaching in Mecca. However, as he preached the destruction of idols, he was poorly received by the religious people of Mecca and was forced to flee to Medina. This flight, called the "hijrah," took place in 611, later adopted as the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

Muhammad was welcomed in Medina, as there was commercial rivalry between the two cities. He quickly managed to establish his doctrine in Medina and attracted a large number of followers. He then took Mecca and caused all Arabs to adopt a single religion. In this way, united by belief, the Arabs formed a single nationality.

Mohammed's doctrine. Islam is not original. On the contrary, it combines various doctrines, including Christianity and Judaism. Mohammed preached the existence of a single god, Allah, who determines people's destiny. It is, therefore, a fatalistic doctrine.

Islam justified and consented to polygamy and conceived of a paradise with material pleasures. It preached the immortality of the soul, fasting, pilgrimage at least once in a lifetime to Mecca, and forbade the use of pork and wine.

It ordered the faithful to pray five times a day facing Mecca and to keep their hands, face and feet relatively clean. If there was no water, they should wash with sand.

Muhammad's doctrine is in the Koran, the holy book of the Mohammedans. The Arabs, forming a single nationality and united by the strong bond of religion, soon expanded their domains, successively conquering Syria, Palestine, Persia, Egypt, North Africa and Spain. They would have gone much further had they not been defeated by Charles Martel at Poitiers.

Predestination

Whenever someone is born, Allah writes down their birth and their good or bad fate in a book. If believers sacrifice themselves for the religion, they will be absolved; if not, they will go to hell.

Notes:

1. God gave Ishmael, Abraham's son, and his mother Hagar, the Ka'ba (black stone) to rest their heads on in the desert they inhabited.
2. Mohammed received the angel Gabriel, who urged him to preach Islam.
3. Islam means submission to God's will.
4. Domas or Alms. Ten percent of all that has been rightfully obtained, and 20% when unjustly obtained.

Part Sixteen

Modern and Contemporary Ages

The Invention of the Printing Press

The 13th and 14th centuries marked a great intellectual effort in Europe, but the high price of books held back that development. Two factors contributed to this: 1. the lack of material. 2. the difficulty of the work. This second factor was so important that it created a social class entirely dedicated to copying books: the copyists.

The introduction of paper by the Arabs and its expansion, thanks to the use of white clothes, remedied part of the problem. However, another, more important problem remained: labor. People made many attempts to simplify the work, all geared toward finding a way to make a template to make many copies. This model, or rather the material for it, presented difficulties. They made trials with wood and printed with this material. The Chinese were the first people to work with wood in ancient times. They also used two types of wood already known in Egypt, but with two defects: 1. They engraved page after page on wooden planks, and the work only served for that book. 2. The entire plank was lost when a letter showed a minor defect.

Then, they attempted to achieve isolated types. Wood was not yet suitable, lacking strength and durability, and Laurens Janszoon Coster's experiments were unsuccessful. Then, the search was on for a material to replace wood. According to most historians, Gutenberg found it in the alloy of lead and antimony. Some historians claim that Johan Fust, a capitalist who subsidized Gutenberg's work for some time, discovered this alloy.

The problem was not yet solved, as they needed molds to case the isolated types made from the new alloy. The Dutch-German Paresst invented them. Isolated types of lead and antimony alloy were cast thanks to these molds. After this work, done at great sacrifice, the Bible was printed on the new system in 1455.

Despite everything we've said, Gutenberg is credited with the discovery because of his persistence and dedication to this work, which would bring so many benefits to humanity. There are many discussions about Gutenberg. While Mainz claims him as its son, Strasbourg feels the same way.

Expansion of the Printing Press

The printing press quickly spread throughout Europe. In 1470, G. Fichst, rector of the University of Paris, set up a printing press. Three illustrious printers worked there: Gering, Friberzert and Kaantz. In two years, that printing house printed 21 works, preferably classics. By 1500, 54 cities in Italy alone had printing presses, so the press was developing at a dizzying pace.

Consequences of the Printing Press' Invention

The world went through deep thanks thanks to this invention. From a social point of view, it revolutionized classes, led to the disappearance of copyists and caused the intellectual movement to supplant everything imaginable. Intellectual elites quickly superseded blood elites. Many mentalities appeared, and the printing press played an indisputable role in the advent of the Renaissance. The Bible spread everywhere, giving rise to discussions about its interpretation and preparing the Protestant Reformation in some minds. Book prices dropped, and culture became within reach of any purse. Its influence was also great in the political and economic spheres. Political ideas and economic experiences became known to everyone through books and newspapers. Profound consequences emerged from this expansion during the modern and contemporary age.

The Discovery of America

While the Portuguese searched for a route to the Indies by advancing south to bypass Africa and find a passage to the east, the Spaniards moved with the same objective and inadvertently discovered a new continent—America, a feat accomplished by Christopher Columbus.

Christopher Columbus was from Genoa and was born in 1451. His father had a small fortune, and Columbus showed a great interest in sailing from an early age. Some say that his first voyage took place at 14, but it seems that he was still working in Genoa at 21. He traveled extensively and wrote the Catholic kings: "I've also sailed everything that has been sailed so far." He visited England and Iceland and was on the coast of Guinea. In 1478, he settled in Lisbon, where he

continued his studies of geography and astronomy and married a nobleman's daughter.

The project seems to have arisen during his stay in Portugal. He formulated it thus: "Look for the East by the West and pass through the West to reach where spices grow." It seems his work was inspired by Pierre Daily's book and his theory on earth's sphericity, which was shared by many wise men of the time. It is also known that Vasconelli, with whom Columbus corresponded, had written to the King of Portugal about this thesis in 1474. To Columbus, that seemed easy, especially since geographers thought that Asia was much larger than it was and gave the earth a smaller size than it was.

Columbus insisted the king of Portugal allow him to go on the expedition, but he refused. Columbus reportedly went on a tour of European courts, but this has not been proven. In 1484, Columbus presented his plans to Spain's Catholic Kings, asking for their help. He waited seven years for a reply. The project is said to have been accepted thanks to the influence of the queen's confessor at the end of that period. A treaty was signed between Columbus and Spain, giving him the title of Grand Admiral and Viceroy of the lands he discovered, a monopoly on trade, etc. He was provided with ships and a grant of 300,000 francs. The rest of the money needed, more or less 700,000 francs, was supplied by a shipowner from Palos and, to a small extent, by Columbus himself.

The First Voyage

Columbus set sail from Palos on August 3, 1492, with three caravels - Santa Maria, Pinta and Niña - and 120 crew. He stopped in the Canary Islands, from where he set sail on September 9. On October 10, the sailors no longer wanted to continue. Columbus is said to have replied that "they had left to go to the Indies and would continue until they got there."

On the night of October 11, Columbus noticed signs of land, which appeared distinctly in the early morning of October 12. Columbus had reached the island of Guanaani, which was named San Salvador. It was one of the Lucayas in the Antilles. It is said that Columbus sought out the king of Zupanga for three months to give him letters from the king of Spain, convinced that he had reached the Indies. During his explorations, he visited Cuba and Santo Domingo. However, having lost a caravel, he returned to Spain to announce his discoveries. He arrived in Palos on March 15, 1493, seven months after his departure, and was received triumphantly.

Columbus' Other Voyages

He discovered the rest of the Antilles in three more voyages. On the third, he even reached the continent itself; on the fourth, he touched Central America. He died in Spain in 1506. He lost all popularity after his second voyage. For a while, the discoveries didn't yield everything they had hoped for. An attempt to colonize Santo Domingo failed. Columbus was held responsible for these disasters, and the Catholic kings decided to remove him from the post of viceroy.

His successor, without orders, imprisoned him and sent him to Spain. Ferdinand and Isabella made amends for this affront but did not restore Columbus to his

former position. Indeed, some rights the Holy See treaty granted him were contested shortly before his death, but the version that Columbus died in misery is not true. He died convinced that he had discovered the Indies. Soon afterward, people began to assume these were other lands, confirmed by the voyages of Balboa (1513) and Magellan (1519). The Spanish expanded rapidly throughout the continent thanks to Cortes, Pizarro, Almagro and other conquistadors.

Consequences of Discovery

The great discoveries have always had greater or lesser repercussions on people's lives. They ceased to be specific to the discovering nations (Spain and Portugal) and became universal. Their economic, social, political and scientific consequences were profound.

Initially, much of America's territory could not contribute to trade, agriculture or industry. Its lands were still in a wild state, and most of its inhabitants were at a low level of civilization. In Mexico and Peru, the Spanish found well-developed civilizations, of which they took advantage.

But America provided new agricultural elements: those who arrived opened up fertile lands exploration; unknown plants and animals provided subsistence. It would be too long to list all the species the Europeans got to know when they came into contact with America: corn, potatoes, manioc, etc.

In general, trade only developed after a preparation period, i.e., after European immigrants began to produce sufficiently and buy. For some Spanish colonies, this trade came about more quickly due to the presence of gold and other metals. Little by little, a new trade hub was formed in America, so the world no longer had two trade hubs (the Far East and the Mediterranean, with all of Europe), but a third one formed in these lands.

Mining was the first industry. A large part of the treasures taken by the Spanish were indeed the product of confiscating the treasures of the Incas and Aztecs. However, the extractive industry progressed rapidly, albeit primitively. Little by little, America became a warehouse to supply raw materials: wood, cotton, sugar (mainly from Brazil), and many others that would be too long to list.

From a social point of view, the influence was significant if we consider that in medieval times, wealth was based on land and that in the modern age, trade, largely American, enabled the rapid progress of the bourgeoisie.

New colonial problems were created in the political field, and the discovering countries (Portugal and Spain) developed.

Science reaped no small harvest. Geography gained in breadth and depth. The natural sciences discovered new elements: ethnography, anthropology and all man-related sciences found in America some problems which have yet to be solved. The discovery of America also contributed to the development of navigation, astronomy and medicine. One can thus say that this event had repercussions in all fields of human activity.

The Renaissance

Concept

The Renaissance is the great transformation and evolution of literature and the arts that took place in the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century.

As we have seen, the Middle Ages were not completely useless in terms of the arts and letters, which is why the word Renaissance is inappropriate because it gives the impression that the arts and letters had disappeared during that period, which was not the case. There was a significant transformation and development, but the arts, letters and sciences always appeared in the Middle Ages (13th and 14th centuries).

Causes

There were several causes behind these transformations and developments. The main ones are:

1. The great intellectual development achieved in the 13th and 14th centuries, and therefore, the emergence of remarkable men who were the forerunners of the Renaissance;
2. The discoveries of art objects in Greece provide new models and elements for study;
3. The fall of Constantinople caused wise men who lived there to head for Europe, developing the so-called humanism to an extraordinary degree;
4. The most important cause was economic development.

Thanks to the actions of the Crusaders, at the end of the 14th century, Europe resumed trading in the Mediterranean. At that time, ships from Genoa and Venice were plying the seas and bringing Europe into contact with the Orient. Trade development fostered the economic situation, and large amounts of capital accumulated. Princes and the Church were able to protect artists and literati, and patrons appeared everywhere. This protection began as early as the Middle Ages, with the Valois, the Medici, the Visconti and others.

Renaissance Precursors

The Renaissance cannot be isolated from the great writers and artists who preceded it, as they wielded significant influence. In France, we can mention Joinville, author of *The Life of Saint Louis*; Froissart, author of *Chronicles*.

While France had great artists and writers, most of them were anonymous. Some known ones are Claus, Jeanfan, Eicy, and Jean Fouquier. In Italy, in the 13th and 14th centuries, great figures such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio would already be forerunners. Names of Italian artists are well known: Brunelesco, Gilberto Della Robbia, Giotto and others. Italian artists presented works different from those of their contemporaries and made the Greco-Roman influence felt.

The Renaissance

Ancient art was very influential even before the Renaissance. Italian artists, forerunners of the Renaissance, were influenced by works they found in Roman ruins. Artists were beginning to call Gothic art barbaric. All Greek ornaments were gradually restored; Doric, Ionic and Corinthian capitals appeared, marking a return to Greco-Roman art. The ruins of Rome, with their bas-reliefs and Trajanic columns, were sources of the model.

It is known that, from 1500 onwards, successful research revealed countless Greek works that artists later used. The Christian religion was also a remarkable source of motifs, and Renaissance artists were well-versed in religious and mythological subjects. They knew Homer and Virgil, but also the Bible.

It is interesting to note that some artists decorated churches with pagan motifs. More than the arts, ancient literature in all genres was influential: prose, poetry, history, science, etc. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the works of Cicero and Tacitus, found mainly in convents, were restored. Boccaccio and Petrarch were scholars on the subject. Plato became known in the 15th century. After the capture of Constantinople, many wise men who fled to Italy brought and spread a taste for Greek and Roman studies, forming the so-called humanist class of scholars in Greek and Latin.

The Renaissance was thus an authentic restoration of the ancient mentality. One should remember the role played by the patrons of the time. Many influential people, including some heads of state, had monuments, palaces, etc. built. They bought statues and paintings and revived a taste for the arts. They created libraries and granted pensions to scholars, trying by all means to develop the arts and letters. Lorenzo de Medici made Michelangelo the companion of his sons and nephews. Pope Leo X wanted to give Raphael the title of cardinal. Cellini was acquitted of murder because Pope Paul III understood that "men who are unique in their art should not be subject to the law." The Medici in Florence and many popes stood out in Italy as protectors. In France, it was Francis I.

Renaissance in Italy

The literary Renaissance in Italy in the 16th century stands out for the work of four notable writers: Ariosto, Tasso, Machiavelli and Guichardin. Ariosto is the author of "Orlando Furioso;" Tasso wrote "Jerusalem Liberated;" Machiavelli is the author of "The Prince," in which he sets down a realistic analysis of a political society. Machiavellianism entered all languages, meaning skillfully unscrupulous politics. Guichardin wrote the history of Italy's wars. We can also highlight the names of Giordano Bruno, with his vigorous prose, and Galileo Galilei.

Among the countless Italian artists, we can chronologically highlight Bramante, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Benvenuto Cellini and Paulo Veronese. Bramante is the greatest architect of the Renaissance; Leonardo da Vinci practiced all the arts, knew many sciences, and was a physicist, musician and engineer. Michelangelo is considered the most potent genius of the Renaissance; he was a painter, sculptor and poet. In sculpture, he produced *La Pietà*, *Moses*, the famous Medici tomb and the statues named *Aurora*, *Dia*, *Crepuscle*, and *Nights*. His paintings of the Vatican Chapel, *Prophets* and *The Last Judgement* are noteworthy, as is his architectural work, the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

Raphael is the greatest painter of his time. His works include *School of Athens* (summarizing the history of philosophy), *The Parnassus*, and *The Disputation of the Holy Sacrament* (summarizing the history of the Church). Raphael's works stand out for the beauty of images, the grace of expression, and the science of his compositions. He was a romantic painter, as can be seen in his *Madonnas*.

Renaissance in France

In France, the Renaissance took place later than in Italy. While the Italian Renaissance occurred in the late 15th century and early 16th, the French Renaissance occurred during the 16th century. The French Renaissance was indeed inferior to the Italian one, especially in the arts. It lacked notable painters almost completely. Among the sculptors, we can mention Marot, Ronsard, du Bellay and the prose writers Rabelais, Calvin and Montaigne. The first three are the creators of French poetry. Rabelais wrote *Pantagruel*, his major work and a burlesque book. Its adventures reveal the life of the time burlesquely but with human truth. It brings sorts of men onto the scene, especially those from liberal professions; priests and lawyers get their share of beatings. Calvin wrote the "Christian Institution," and Montaigne the "Essays." He created this form of literature; however, others appeared before him if we accept the speeches of Aristotle and Cicero as essays.

The most prominent arts practiced were Architecture, where Pierre Lescot and Jean Bullant stood out, and sculpture, where Germain Pilon and Goujon shone. All these works were produced during the reigns of Henry II and Catherine de Medici. Lescot left *Louvre* and *Saint Eustache*; Goujon left some famous works such as *Diana* (sculpted for the Annet palace) and the nymphs of the *Fountains of the Innocents*. Germain Pilon authored eight statues in the tomb of Henry II and the group of the "Three Graces." The French Renaissance is felt first and foremost in architecture. The buildings constructed were almost always civil monuments. In the 16th century, with rare exceptions, only palaces were built. There were two schools of architecture in the French Renaissance: some continued medieval art, while others took on classical and Italian influences.

German Renaissance

The German Renaissance occurred more or less at the same time as the Italian Renaissance. It did not get off the ground at first, and didn't develop until after the 16th century. Among the artists was Albert Durer, an engraver who excelled as an oil portraitist.

In Holland, we have the writer Erasmus, the greatest humanist of the time. On the Iberian Peninsula, we have Cervantes and the poet Lope de Vega in Spain, and in Portugal the poet Luís de Camões.

The Colonial Regime in the 18th Century

Colonizing countries - Portugal and Spain were the first countries to create colonies at the end of the Middle Ages. It wasn't long before the Netherlands followed in their footsteps. The wars of independence in the Netherlands gave reason for this.

France also took care of the problem. England became a maritime and colonizing power after Elizabeth, especially after Cromwell's Navigation Act.

A New Concept of Colony

In the modern age, the term colony has a different idea to that of antiquity and differs in many respects from the contemporary notion of colony. In ancient times (Phoenicia and Rome), colonies were foundations in uninhabited regions.

Contemporary colonies, if not to remedy a demographic surplus (Italians, etc.), always have a commercial aspect. They are markets sought for production (English, etc.). The modern colony is a source of exploitation. European nations carried out all sorts of extortions, always using the monopoly regime as the most practical means of achieving this result among uneducated peoples. In modern times, the colony was a fiefdom of the state, so extortion usually benefits the metropolis.

While many private individuals enriched themselves at this time at the expense of the colonies, they were always lessors or envoys of the state. In the 18th century, this colony system (maximum extension, state domination, monopoly regime) was known as the colonial regime.

Trading Companies

Often unable to do it independently, the state gave commercial exploitation to private individuals. That was the system of "*encomiendas*," among the Spanish and trading companies. The first company originated in Holland under the name "East India Company," its purpose was to undermine Spanish and Portuguese trade in the Orient.

It was a typical company, a partnership whose shareholders were private individuals, cities and the government. Operated by squadrons organized by ships owned by private individuals, the company provided a war fleet that protected the merchant fleet.

Numerous companies were formed. The "West Indies" trading company was also founded in Holland with the same characteristics to damage Spanish and Portuguese trade in the West. The colonizing countries also ceded trade in certain regions to private companies, thus imitating their adversaries, with one difference: trading companies in these countries were set up to exploit conquered regions, not regions to conquer.

One can cite some examples of the many companies formed at the time. We've already seen two in Holland. In England, there were those of "North America." In Portugal, there was the Brazil trading company and that of Grão Pará. In France, there was one for the Indies, Guinea, Cape Blanc, etc. In 1769, there were 55 trading companies in France. In Spain, the "*encomienda*" system prevailed. These trading companies paid high dividends.

Colonial Regimes

Portuguese Colonies

The Portuguese founded establishments solely for commercial purposes. Their warships were also commercial vessels, but this system was very costly. Private individuals were not allowed to enter the trading areas unless authorized by the state. Officials, appointed for three years, tried to get rich quick and often mismanaged, preventing private individuals from trading.

The establishments on the coast of Africa were penitentiaries where convicts were deported. The port of Luanda exported around 70,000 slaves in one year. Brazil, having no productive population, was abandoned in the early days. It was convicts and a few Jews who introduced sugar cane. Adventurers explored the mines, and in the 18th century, the Portuguese government could not impose guidance on the men who had climbed the plateau. However, a trade monopoly was granted to trading companies when Brazil became a productive colony.

Spanish Colonies

The Spanish government had numerous possessions in America and didn't want to create a new Spain populated by Spaniards. It tried to win savages over to the Christian faith by increasing its domains. The colonies were like large estates. To come to America, you had to get permission from the state, and ships couldn't leave unless their captain proved that he was only taking authorized people. To obtain that authorization, you had to have a just reason and be from a Catholic family. Even so, authorization was almost always given for two years.

That made it difficult to settle in the colonies. In 1550, there were no more than 15,000 Spaniards, which is why the Indian element made up a large part of the population of Spanish America. The government was run solely by Spaniards: of the 160 viceroys Spanish America had until the 19th century, only four were "Creoles," and of the 369 bishops until 1673, only 12 were Creoles. The Spanish divided the Creole class into blue-blooded Creoles, people of color, etc., to prevent them from acting in common.

All colonies organized the Spanish way: a feudal system with "*encomiendas*," payment of taxes on the same basis as in Spain, censorship of publications, full action of the Inquisition. In short, it was an old society in a new country. Native Americans had no rights whatsoever: "Learn to read," said a viceroy, "learn to write and say your prayers, and that is all an American should know." As the crown of Castile had discovered and occupied America, it had a monopoly on trade, which naturally went through its ports. Every departing ship had to pass through Seville. Later, the monopoly moved to Cadiz. Ships always formed caravans, traveling together, and there were two caravans a year.

Dutch Colonies originated from the herring fishery in North America. In the 18th century, the Dutch-owned most of Europe's trade but preferred to play the role of middlemen as they had little to sell. Their colonies belonged to trading companies, which usually had conquered them from the Portuguese. They tried to be more liberal in trade, seeking friendly relations with sovereigns. They sold at a lower price and bought at a good price. Their principle was to earn little but in high gear. The Dutch didn't have to spend any money on establishing occupations but adopted processes of other countries by destroying the indigenous people of the Moluccas. The war with England put an end to this trade.

French Colonies were organized like France's provinces. They couldn't manage themselves; an intendant decided all matters. They brought to America censorship and religious persecution. Protestants were not welcome in the colonies, and the settlers were in a poor situation; they had no freedoms, and the trade monopoly went entirely to companies that forced their products on them. It was forbidden to set up factories, and goods were quite expensive. So, settling in America became difficult.

English Colonies

England's colonial tendencies began with Elizabeth, but Cromwell, in the "Navigation Act," dealt with the problem most thoroughly. They took a different direction, establishing a colonial regime as a model. They moved away from monopoly to seek free competition. The Company of the Indies was founded, and trading posts were gradually set up. Later, the Treaty of Paris brought many colonies to England.

The Ottoman Empire's Development

Formation of the Ottoman Empire

During the Middle Ages, Turkish tribes from Asia organized under Osman's orders and began to advance toward the West. As Constantinople resisted, they took Gallipoli on the Balkan Peninsula and made it their home. In 1453, Constantinople was taken by the Turks, who quickly expanded into the south of the Balkan Peninsula and the Mediterranean. The Turks had a vast territory, including a large part of the Balkan Peninsula in Europe, Asia Minor, Central Asia, and Egypt in Africa. Their first invasion of the West was halted in Belgrade, but they were established in Europe by then.

The Turkish Empire in the Middle Ages

The Janissaries' indiscipline, the sultan's tendency towards luxury, and palace intrigues began to weaken the empire. The small percentage of Turks relative to the number of empire inhabitants was also a factor. Prime ministers (grand viziers) were the last Turkish conquerors. They went as far as Crete and tried to establish themselves in Hungary. They even threatened Vienna but were beaten at St. Gotthard. Later, they took Crete and invaded the Austrian empire again. Besieged, Vienna almost surrendered but was rescued by Poland, forcing the Turks to retreat. Soon afterward, the Duke of Lassa defeated them in Budapest, and Prince Eugene later defeated them at Ponte di Zenta. With these defeats, the Turks lost a large part of their territory.

The Turkish Empire in the Contemporary Age

In the contemporary age, the Turkish empire is under great threat. Despite its solid looks, it was undermined from within. Its position between three continents and vast size seemed to show that the Turks were still well-established inside. However, serious problems arose: They could not assimilate Christians; the Janissaries formed undisciplined troops; the sultan's auxiliaries possessed great power. At the end of the Modern Age, Austria and Russia were preparing to

dismember the Turkish empire. Those nations later forced the break-up of the Ottoman Empire.

Serbian Revolts

The Serbs, provoked by Janissaries, revolted, but that revolt was against the Janissaries and not against the Turkish Empire. However, the pressure exerted by the sultan was so violent that the Serbs later rebelled and gained their autonomy.

Greece's Independence

The Caliph of Constantinople fought with the Pasha and asked the Greeks for help. The Greeks came together and decided to proclaim their independence. All of Europe supported them morally, but the Pasha of Egypt sent his son Ibrahim against the Greeks. The Europeans responded by helping Greece materially, and the Franco-English fleet destroyed the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Navarino. France and England considered this battle accidental and decided to change their policy, but Russia then set itself up as the defender of the Greeks. The Turks were defeated in several battles, and the campaign ended with the peace of Adrianople.

With this treaty, Greece became independent (at that time, it was smaller than it is today). Serbia and the Russian provinces became autonomous. Russia received the mouth of the Danube and the right of passage through the strait. Wallachia and Moldavia, tributaries of Turkey, were occupied by the Russians as payment for war debts.

Turkish-Egyptian War

The Pasha of Egypt clashed with the Sultan. The Turks lost many battles. The Russians sought to help Turkey, but the Egyptians became independent. Turkey prepared a second war to reconquer the lost territories and was defeated again. In 1840, England and Austria, fearing losses from the Russian-Turkish alliance, decided to negotiate the Treaty of London. The Crimean War came to Turkey's aid and saved it from being entirely dismembered by Russia. The peace of London was then signed, which introduced several changes, and France and England guaranteed the survival of the Turkish empire. The question of the East remained uneventful until the Franco-Prussian War.

Russian-Turkish War

The Serbs revolted around 1875. Taking advantage of this incident, Russia invaded Turkey, which was in disarray, and imposed a treaty by which Russia received Bessarabia. Serbia and Bulgaria became independent, and Romania received the south of the Danube. It was an almost complete dismemberment of Turkey. Romania became autonomous, Austria received some territories, and Serbia became independent. In 1911, the Italo-Turkish War broke out, in which Turkey lost its remaining territory in North Africa and several islands in the Mediterranean. From 1912 to 1913, taking advantage of Turkey's embarrassment, the Balkan countries attacked it. Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians fought for Macedonian independence. Turkey was left with Constantinople and little else by the peace of

London. In the First World War, won by the Allies, it had to sign the peace accord. By then, all it had left in Europe was Constantinople, with a small territory, hence the capital change to Angora. In Asia, its territories shrank. Later, under Mustafa Kemal, Adrianople returned to Turkey under the Treaty of Lausanne.

Modern Industry

The last 80 years of the Contemporary Age were characterized by great economic, industrial and commercial development. Several factors contributed to this, including scientific development. The sciences, especially experimental sciences, made astonishing progress during the second part of the Contemporary Age. Steam engines, electricity, aviation, automobiles, radios, telephones, internal combustion engines, etc., gave man significant advantages in industrial production. Industry sought to take advantage of every scientific innovation, and discoveries were put to good use. Unfortunately, this great industrial and material development has largely caused people to abandon their spiritual side.

The Formation of Big Industry

Economic transformations and great development led to the organization of a new type of industry. In the Modern Age, the industry was home-based and generally dispersed. In the contemporary age, forming large capitals and entrepreneurial companies has meant that the industry concentrates by establishing itself in more favorable locations.

In this concentration, industry has been one of the causes of the settlement and development of specific urban centers. A new problem also arose: unable to be in contact with the workers, prominent industrialists had to set up intermediary bodies. And the growing mutual estrangement between the working classes and bosses led to an increase in the "class struggle."

The Tendency to "Create" Needs

Industrial advertising and the need to sell products led to countless "needs." Given industrial development, people are becoming more demanding every day.

Development of Contemporary Trade

Like industry, trade underwent a major transformation in the second half of the Contemporary Age. "World trade" became much more critical than "local trade," previously the preferred form. This great transformation is mainly due to the evolution of means of transportation. In fact, scientific discoveries and the development of science in general have made transportation much more accessible.

Land Transportation

The railroad, which has seen great development, was the first important means of land transport. As you can see, all countries have contributed to its increase and improvement by perfecting and electrifying locomotives, etc. The invention of the

automobile, which has greatly improved in recent times, has also added to the development of land transport.

Maritime Transportation

Navigation has made remarkable progress. In 1838, they fitted ships with propellers; in 1877, they built steel ships; submarines appeared in 1890, followed by diesel engines. As a result, from the middle of the 19th century, they could establish maritime routes and respect delivery calendars. The opening of several canals, such as Suez and Panama, also contributed to the development of shipping.

Air Navigation

Communications also gained a lot with the invention of the airplane and airships, accepted in 1929 with the flight of Count Zeppelin. They also improved the creation of the telephone, telegraph, submarine cables, etc. The increase in trade took place in three directions: 1. Extension of the field, i.e., increase in relations; 2. Entry of new goods; 3. Intensity of circulation.

Commercial Consequences

The development of trade brought an increase in production and consumption, and industrial development brought commercial progress. Its significant expansion further increased and developed the industry. The new fields of commerce required industrial development, i.e., increased production and cheaper products. Industrial development has had consequences in all fields of human activity.

Economic Consequences

Economically, it has allowed for an increase in trade, the formation of large capitals and greater consumption. The world's population has increased, as has its production capacity. Trade, however, has not always provided an outlet, causing severe problems due to overproduction, which has worried almost all governments.

Social Consequences

The separation of classes has led to struggles, and large industries have had to consider this problem. The demographic transformation that the industry has brought about is also fundamental. We know there are populations whose average growth has been fantastic. The United States is a good example: in 1850, there were 23 million; in 1929, there were 120 million. Europe, which had 260 million people in 1850, reached 460 million in 1929. Demographically speaking, there is another phenomenon: the increase in the urban population to the detriment of the rural population.

Other factors have arisen, such as the severe problem of unemployment caused by the uncontrolled use of machines. While this is undoubtedly more economical than the human arm, it comes at great expense to the latter.

From the point of view of the family, a worker's family, especially in big cities, where life is difficult, is practically nonexistent. As a result, many children, from their earliest years, are sent out to search for means of subsistence. The wife often works in factories, in most cases leaving her children—the men of tomorrow—abandoned. We can see the scale of this problem by the attention paid to it in terms of social welfare.

Political Consequences

Big production also requires big consumption, hence the need for markets, i.e., the struggle for commercial imperialism, the greatest threat to peace today. The industrial powers need colonies to guarantee the purchase and supply of raw materials. That influences politics and competition between the great powers, leading to the policy of protectorates, conquests, etc. Social classes gradually become increasingly interdependent and establish concessions, thus contributing to the development of democratic and socialist regimes.

Lords of World Trade

Japan became a trading country during and after the Great War when it organized its industries. Today, it dominates large parts of the Pacific and Asia, especially China. Italy is now entering world trade through its colonies, but its industrial sector still suffers from poor organization.

Democracy

Origin

The first attempts at democracy appeared in Athens, Greece. Although the Roman Republic was not a democratic form (there were no limits on power), it showed something in that direction. Feudalism in the Middle Ages and absolutism in the Modern Age prevented the development of democratic ideas. However, they decisively established democratic power in the Contemporary Age with the French Revolution and national revolutions, and today with the Great War.

Concept

Democracy is a political organization that gives equal opportunities to individuals on equal terms.

Within democratic forms, there is only one power from which all other functions emanate: The sovereignty of the nation or popular will. That sovereignty establishes by a Constitution the limit of the power it grants authorities.

Universal suffrage and the separation of functions are established to defend that limit, so one regulates the other's operations. There are two main types of democracy: liberal and social. In liberal democracy, the interests of individuals are the priority; in social democracy, the interests of communities are the priority. Democracy is based on the power of the majority and has provided an opportunity for excesses of individualism.

Democracy in Europe

The great attempt to establish democracy in Europe occurred in 1789 with the French Revolution, which sought to realize the ideas of Rousseau, Montesquieu and Voltaire. With the Congress of Vienna, democracy suffered a great loss, but its ideals remained latent, as the 1848 revolution later demonstrated. In fact, 1848, Europe was shaken by a series of revolutions that some historians have grouped under the name "Family of Democratic Revolutions." They manifested themselves most strongly in France, Germany, Italy and Austria. In many places, democrats were defeated by absolutism, but most monarchical nations were already evolving towards the democratic form, as they were constitutional monarchies. Democracy definitively took hold in France in 1870 after the Franco-Prussian War. The Great War destroyed the remaining absolutist thrones in central Europe (Germany and Austria).

Democracy in the Americas

American nations adopted the democratic form soon after their independence. Even Brazil, which maintained the monarchy, also established a constitutional regime. The United States founded a republic straight away. The golden age of democracy in the United States lasted from 1829 to 1860. After that, the industrial class led the United States and distorted democratic principles, favoring an imperialist policy. Today, there is a great democratic reaction in that country.

In modern times, democratic doctrines have come under fire as incapable of solving today's world's political and social problems. The criticism, stemming from [left-wing] extremism, has not found a sufficient echo in the Americas, but democracy has already lost some ground in Europe.

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