THOUGHT AND CULTURE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES:

A SELECTIVE STUDY OF THE LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

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Understanding of early medieval thought and culture has in recent years superseded the misconceptions of historians, who since the fifteenth century have given minimal attention to what they considered to have been several centuries of 'darkness'. This lack of appreciation for the thought and culture of the early Middle Ages has in the past been in response to the historian's desire to place his own age in greater relief. During the Renaissance, Reformation and Enlightenment the historian provided prestige for the epoch in which he lived by contrasting it with the "follies" of the Middle Ages. Historians of the nineteenth century sought to establish a long and distinguished pedigree for his nation by recovering and romanticizing the deeds of its heroes in the medieval past.

In this century the historian has turned to the study of the early Middle Ages with the hope of finding there the laboratory data from which he can formulate cures for contemporary problems. Throughout the past four hundred years historians have built a very considerable library from which scholars of this and future decades will draw to round out

and mature present judgments of a culture that succeeded the three centuries of turmoil associated with the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Within the last decade historians have identified the early Middle Ages as a distinct culture. The novelty of this conception has and should continue to provoke discussion and generate research that will help to close the still discernible gaps in our knowledge of early medieval thought and culture. Some of the most serious gaps are to be found within the specialized studies of medieval art and philosophy. Historians in these fields could be of great assistance to early medieval historians of thought and culture should they attempt to find a distinct art or philosophy belonging to the early Middle Ages.

Thought and Culture in the Early Middle Ages:
A Selective Study of the Literature

by

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PREFACE

What follows in this thesis is essentially historiographical in nature. For that reason I have upon occasion introduced the ideas of philosophers of history and of certain historians with which I have little formal acquaintance with but I think will be useful as background material for the reader. If the background material excites the reader's interest, the bibliographical essay which appears after the text will give the reader indication of a few of those books to which he might turn.

Some of my readers may find the chronology difficult to follow, and, especially in chapters two through five, may become confused by the cross references to the many authors discussed there. To reduce the seriousness of this confusion I have added an appendix that gives an orderly account of each of those authors by the year in which they wrote the book or books discussed in those chapters.

The writing of a text of this length would have long ago exhausted my meager talents had it not been for the constant encouragement of my wife, Karen. Perhaps an even greater debt is owed to Dr. Richard Sullivan, who has spent hours he could ill afford to spare in emending the thesis of errors, and in asking me questions that led me to a deeper understanding of my material.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Historical writings are generally undertaken to provide the author with a vehicle through which he might present his views with respect to a certain set of selected topics. To a limited extent this is true of this project. It is true in that this author's opinions have inevitably been interjected among its various pages. However, no attempt has been made to use this thesis to advance a certain point of view. On the contrary it represents a chronicle of the author's attempt to gain some insight into the cultural and intellectual life of the early Middle Ages through readings in the secondary sources which reflect upon this subject.

There is no need to defend the validity of making such a chronicle, but it does seem appropriate to give the reader an impression as to the method by which the chronicle is to be presented to him. Since historians have been and will no doubt continue to be influenced by the historical attitudes of their predecessors, the first chapter endeavors to present the disposition of historians since the fifteenth century towards the early medieval period. In anticipation of that chapter, the reader should be warned that until the nineteenth century the early Middle Ages, and the Middle Ages more generally were rarely investigated by historians, and in fact were rarely mentioned at all except in a depreciative manner.

After the first chapter, which serves in the capacity of an introductory exploration, this thesis assumes a much different and more specific nature. The historians of the past century and the themes they emphasize are presented individually and to the depth they seem to justify. To the extent an historian reflects a philosophy of history that resembles that of other historians writing in the generation in which he lives, each historian will be grouped according to his generation. Chronologically there have been three such generations in the past century, intellectually there have been as many as three, or perhaps four. It is about each of these "generations" that chapters two through five are arranged. Within each chapter the order in which an historian is presented, is often purely arbitrary, but behind the arrangement of each chapter is the organizing principle that each succeeding historian should be in some way dependent upon those preceeding him.

If it is true that historians of culture reflect the attitudes of the generation in which they live, it may also be true that specialists in art history and the history of philosophy reflect these same attitudes. To find if this is in fact the case will be the purpose of chapters five and six.

CHAPTER I

CONCEPTIONS OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES: FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

Historical thought after the fifteenth century may be characterized as a series of reactions to the recognized conceptions of a preceding epoch. For the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the epoch to which historians, and intellectuals generally, reacted was the Middle Ages. Inasmuch as each of these centuries has a distinct personality of its own, it must be dealt with separately, but it should be stressed that it was against the Middle Ages to which the intellectuals of each century were ultimately in reaction. Historians of the nineteenth century were not nearly so inclined to measure all things against the Middle Ages; they were much more in reaction against their own predecessors, the "enlightened" historians of the eighteenth century. Their reaction took the form of "Romanticism", and it is with this intellectual and artistic movement and its effects on historical writing that the chapter closes.

As the chapter progresses it will become clear why historians of the early modern period did not find the Middle Ages worthy material for serious study. Each age added to the reasons given by the 'humanists' of the fifteenth century, further prejudicing men's minds and

drawing the attentions of historians away from medieval scholarship. There were exceptions to this generalization, and these exceptions are of great importance, for they make possible the great advance in the nineteenth century, when medieval studies were seriously undertaken.

Although The City of God is by no means the first history written, or for that matter the first Christian history Augustine does mark a significant departure in historiography. Augustine viewed history as movement of God's creation from its source to its goal. As such, events in the secular world are obscure indications of God's design, a design intelligible only when viewed in the perspective of the Christological myth presented in the Bible. History was for Augustine and for Christians of the thousand years which followed him cloaked in a theodicy that made most events super-natural in meaning. This conception of history was discarded only when the Renaissance challenged religious authority in certain areas of life and culture. Both the literary and religious humanists, Johann Huizinga points out, "were permeated by a nostalgia for the old primeval purity and an aspiration to renew themselves from within."[1] Whether it was to return to the earlier age of the pagan or of the early Christian era of the Apostles, the Renaissance man of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries wished to revive classical learning

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[1]Quoted from Johann Huizinga by Page Smith, The Historian and History (New York, 1964), p. 23.

as a means of turning himself away from the God-centered universe of the scholastic to the man-centered world of Pico della Mirandola.

Pico gave a classic expression to the new spirit when he explained why "man is the most fortunate of creatures." "To him it is granted to have whatever he chooses, to be whatever he wills." And this grant comes from the "supreme generosity of God the father".[2] Pico expresses in words the thoughts and the exuberance of man concentrating on his own and not God's potentialities. To find a parallel attitude Pico and his associates turned to the ancients. They recognized the kinship of their ideas to those they found in the Classics, and to these they gave unquestioned obedience.

Pico represents the literary movement named 'humanism', so-called because of its preoccupations with humanity and the individual capacities of men. Humanism is not as such a philosophical tendency or system, but rather a cultural and educational program emphasizing certain scholarly disciplines, namely grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry and moral philosophy. The study of each of these subjects was understood to include the reading and interpretation of the standard Latin and Greek writers. By definition Humanism excludes the study of logic, natural philosophy, astronomy, medicine, law and theology. The significance of these exclusions rests in the fact that these were the fields

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[2]Ernst Cassirer et. al. (ed.), The Renaissance Philosophy of Man (Chicago, 1965), pp. 223-35.

emphasized by the scholastics of the later Middle Ages.[3] Inasmuch as scholasticism can be associated with the Middle Ages and more importantly with Christianity, it follows that the Humanist who was generally hostile to the subjects taught by the 'schoolmen', would also be hostile to the culture of the Middle Ages. Thus Humanism can properly be viewed as a departure from its medieval predecessors.

What made this dèparture possible had been the diminishing power of the Church, weakened by the Babylonian captivity, the Conciliar Movement, the Great Schism and the corruption of the Papacy itself. Left without the authority of the Church in secular matters it was necessary for statesmen such as Machiavelli to provide principles which would guide men through the resulting anarchy and disorder. Often the principles offered by statesmen assumed a preëminence over those of the Church as they did for many in Florence after 1340. As will again be the case in the nineteenth century, justification for man's secular activities were found in study of history and the virtue of statehood. Machiavelli hit upon the idea of historical analogy of the Italian states with those of Livy's Rome. His use of the past as a model for the present was a most important innovation not only in political thought but also in historiography. Until the end of the eighteenth century analysis by analogy was the dominant instrument of historical thought. Flavio

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[3]Paul Oskar Kristeller, Renaissance Thought (New York, 1961), pp. 8-17; Cassirer, pp. 2-6.

Biondo,[4] contemporary of Machiavelli, used the same principle in the writing of Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum imperii decades. Later in the same fifteenth century Sigonius wrote two histories of early Italy in which he tended to idolize the achievements of Rome and Italy. His History of the Western Empire from Diocletion to the Death of Justinian and History of Italy from 565 to 1286, were the first attempts at critical historical scholarship.[5]

Sigonius and Biondo believed, as Machiavelli had declared, "whoever considers the past and the present will readily observe that all cities and all peoples are and ever have been animated by the same desires and the same passions."[6] The Italy of their day in no way differed from antiquity; thus the glory that once had belonged to the Romans was also theirs. Their only regret was the misappropriation of energies during the Middle Ages. They felt this would also inevitably be the fate of their own descendents, for "such is the circle which all republics are destined to run through."[7]

Throughout the Renaissance the decline of the Medieval Church continued apace. This decline prompted many to long

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[4]Flavius Blondus in the Latin. See Harry Elmer Barnes, A History of Historical Writing (New York, 1963), pp. 103-08.

[5]Barnes, p. 243.

[6]Quoted from the Discourses of Machiavelli by Michael Curtis (ed.), The Great Political Theories (2 vols., New York, 1961), I, p. 214.

[7]Curtis, I, p. 214.

for the pure Christianity of the Apostolic Age. Appalled by the corruption of Christianity everywhere visible within the Church, Wiclif, Hus, Erasmus of Rotterdam, and many others called for reform. Although they had wide followings, the very inertia of vested interests made such a correction, if desirable, impossible. Out of this stalemate was spewn the Protestant call to combat. Luther, Calvin and Zwingli were evidence of the growing conviction that the doctrines of the Catholic Church were wrong in principle, that no amount of reform would correct the ills accompanying the Church; only a complete change in the very nature of the Church would accomplish this end.

Once more Christ was placed at the center of historical events. The Protestants insisted that God's 'providence' ruled the world of man, and that man unless assisted by God was depraved and lacking in religious motivations. To justify the policy of the reforming churches they employed the principles of historical analogy developed by the Renaissance humanists. Every activity of the Christian community was to be scrutinized for meaning so that God's directions be better understood, and this life mastered, but this concept returned them in effect to the philosophy of history advanced by Augustine much earlier. It did not, however, restore an interest in the intervening centuries of the Middle Ages.

In reaction to the Protestant Reformation, Catholics set their own house in order, and in the latter half of

the sixteenth century assumed the offensive. They utilized wherever possible their vast historical tradition to advance their cause. In order for these traditions to become a part of the intellectual weaponry of the Catholics it was necessary to return to the documents in which they were recorded. Thus Baronius, the early Bollandists, Du Cange, Mabillon, Sirmond, Labbe, Petanius and Thomassin collected and carefully annotated volumes of documentary material. Frequently they used these collections to produce the first "scientific" histories. The most significant of these were prepared by Lenain de Tillemont. So thorough was his Histoire des Empereurs that Gibbon would write a century later, "It is much better to read this part of the Augustan history in so learned and exact a compilation than in the originals."[8]

A third reaction to "the inflexible rationality of medieval thought"[9] was the Scientific Revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As early as 1543 Copernicus propounded a cosmology predicated on "brute fact". The implications of his world view were elaborated by Brahe, Kepler and Galileo during the first decades of the seventeenth century. After Newton wrote Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica in 1687 there remained

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[8] L. M. Angus-Butterworth, Ten Master Historians (Aberdeen, 1962), p. 66.

[9] Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York, 1960), pp. 15-16.

little doubt that the universe was governed by 'laws', thought to be discernable if man used his rational faculties in a scientific manner. Turning away from the realism of the Renaissance and the theism of the Reformation, intellectuals, responding to Newton, drew a picture of man who through the power of his reason, was progressively advancing in harmony with the 'laws' of nature in an effort to free himself from the ignorance and superstition of medieval Christianity.

Beginning with Descartes, who exalted reason and insisted on the invariability of mathematical laws, and extending to Voltaire and Montesquieu, who together enunciated the applications of reason to the writing of history, the 'Age of Reason' eventually freed history from the domain of theological disputation.

Because the 'philosophes' of the enlightenment believed that modern man stood at the highest point in history, they favored recent history over the history of the more distant past. Moreover, recent history could be more readily verified. The materials for composing it lay near at hand, but as one went further into the past, the more he encountered the myth and legend that often made truth incomprehensible. In his definition of history Voltaire said: "History is the recital of facts given as true, in contradiction to the fable, which is the recital

of facts given to be false."[10] For Voltaire, only the "incontestable records" were worth the historian's attention. Before the fifteenth century there are few such records available to the historian, and those that do exist are often chronological in nature and have held little interpretive value.[11] What especially attracted Voltaire was the study of the human mind in seventeenth century France, as he demonstrated in the case of his Siècle de Louis XIV (1751) or of the world in his Essai sur les moeurs. In the latter book he exalted the Chinese for their four thousand years of uninterrupted cultural maturity. In the former he remarked: "Whoever thinks, or (what is more-rare) whoever possesses taste, only counts four centuries in the history of the world."[12] These four ages in which "the arts were perfected" were the age of Pericles, the Augustan age of Rome, the Italy of the Medici and the century of Louis XIV.

Voltaire echoed the humanists in his confidence that history has a highly instructive value. By comparison with the past or with other centuries modern men can emulate their laws, customs, and arts. They can also be reminded

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[10] J. B. Black, The Art of History, quoted from Voltaire's entry in the Encyclopedia edited by Diderôt (New York, 1926) p. 62.

[11] Black, pp. 61-65.

[12] George Peabody Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (Boston, 1959), p. 11.

of their errors. People, Voltaire taught, could not be reminded too often of the disasters and crimes which make up the greater part of history. The horrors of such scandals could be forestalled in the future if only the reader of history took to heart the lessons they indicated.

History could be instructive for reasons explained by Montesquieu in 1734. In his Considerations sur les causes des la grandeur des Romains et de leur decadence he set forth the following principle: "There are general causes, moral or physical, which operate in every monarchy, raise, maintain it, or overthrow it."[13] In the preface to another work, De l'esprit des lois, he showed that it is absurd to suppose "blind fate has produced all the effects which we see in the world."[14] Since all that occurs is subject to the same causes, there exists an inner logic to history which man in his infinite wisdom is able to unravel.

The selective application of Reason to historical and scientific subjects evidenced elsewhere was also used to examine the religious foundations of the eighteenth century. The philosophes set up as criteria for determining truth only those facts and theories which could be arrived at by employing the scientific methods of reason. It was perfectly clear to men like Voltaire that theological propositions were not arrived at in accordance with rational criteria.

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[13]Edward Hallett Carr, What is History? (New York, 1963), p. 114.

[14]Carr, p. 115.

It soon became the 'cause célèbre' to condemn as irrational most of theology. Christianity came to be regarded as a pernicious plot hatched by the priestly class. The annals of Christianity were to these critiques a chronicle of "lies and crimes". Voltaire, the leader of this movement, pleaded that bigotry, intolerance, superstition and the organized clergy be replaced by "natural religion" and "natural morality." "Ecrasez l'infâme". In his Essai sur les moeurs he argued Christianity to be a social phenomenon created by human opinion, but no longer of any use in a rational society. Hume supported Voltaire from his home in Scotland. In his Treatise on Human Nature, he provided the rationale for a "natural religion" based upon the "Science of Man".

Both Voltaire and the 'philosophes' more generally were also hostile towards the Middle Ages, the centuries in which the "ignorance and superstition" of Christianity were predominant. Voltaire believed the Middle Ages to be a vast cultural trough. Hume in his history of England dismissed the Anglo-Saxon centuries as a "battle of kites and crows". Voltaire also declared the Middle Ages to have been an abyss deserving "as little study as the doings of wolves and bears."[15]

Consequently when Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) conceived the plan of the great work to which he dedicated his life,

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[15] Gooch, p. 11

he fell heir to the traditions of this environment. In some respects he was the last of the humanists. To them he owed his love for the Roman Republic, his distaste for the later Empire, the barbarian and Christianity, and his comparative method of historical analysis. In other ways he was the product of the thought and culture of the enlightenment. From Montesquieu, he gained his conviction that there were causes for Rome's decline. And from Voltaire came the faith that knowledge of these causes would have value in his own time. He aspired as Voltaire had taught to recite only proven facts, and maintained throughout his eight volumes an admirable sense of appropriate evidence. But he also had inherited the snobbish attitude of the 'philosophe' towards historical epochs lacking in artistic achievement. Of the ten centuries he narrates, only one, the "Golden Age" of the Antonines, the "most happy and prosperous" in the annals of mankind, is fitting for praise.[16]

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[16]Christopher Dawson reflected upon Gibbon's debt to his age as follows:

> "No man could belong more utterly to his own age, He is the perfect representative of the eighteenth-century spirit in all its strength and weakness: its self-confidence and self-satisfaction, its classicism and formalism, its mature and cosmopolitan civilization."

The Dynamics of World History, edited by John J. Mulloy (New York, 1962), p. 321; Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ed. John B. Bury (London, 1897), I, p. 78.

Calling upon magnificent stylistic resources Gibbon narrates with infinite detail "the greatest, perhaps, and the most awful scene in the history of mankind",[17] the decline of the civilization that once was Rome. His skill in combining precise and accurate scholarship was the marvel of his age, and he applied this skill to an attack on the very repository of Christian eminence, the history of the Church just prior to and after the Peace of the Church in 313.[18] With tolerant, saddened and resigned aloofness he writes the history of peoples he disliked, even despised.[19] He describes with monotonous regularity the "crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind"[20] under the Christian leadership of the Byzantine East and Christian West. Gibbon treats Byzantium with a contemptuous indifference possible only for a man who shared his own identification with classical Rome. Towards the Christian West he shows a slightly greater sympathy born of his cosmopolitan maturity, but compromised by his ignorance of Christianity.[21] His

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[17]Gibbon, I, p. 56.

[18]Dawson has a particularly good account of Gibbon's attitude towards Christianity and furthermore an explanation as to why Gibbon chooses "to reduce its place in history by treating it with irony and seeking to discredit it with sneers and innuendoes.", pp. 327, 326 and 333-35.

[19]Dawson expresses this opinion, pp. 330-34. In this he does not stand alone. Black arrives at a similar estimation, pp. 69-71; and Angus-Butterworth intimates this to be a weakness of Gibbon's mental framework, pp. 67-68.

[20]Angus-Butterworth, p. 70 quoting from Gibbon.

[21]Above, note 18, p. 15.

strong sense for the historic caused him to realize the civilizing influence of Christianity on the barbarians (a group for whom he had nothing good to say). He could, however, follow praise of the Church with a devastating characterization of monasticism.

The real value of the Church was not related to the religion it espoused, but to its preservation of elements of classical culture. He praises, for example, its use of Latin and of Roman law and its universal nature. As a result of its authority the Church "preserved in the downfall of the empire a permanent respect for the name and institutions of Rome."[22] Through constant correspondance and frequent pilgrimages, the Popes were able to acquire the means by which they "cemented the union of the Christian republic, and gradually produced the similar manners and common jurisprudence which have distinguished from the rest of mankind the independent, and even hostile, nations of modern Europe."[23]

As to the nature of decline of the Empire, Gibbon believed it to be related to the very heights Rome had achieved. Like Voltaire, he observed that those rare moments in which man reaped the rewards of his genius and virtue were inevitably followed by centuries of decline where genius is no longer evident and virtue negligible.

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[22]Gibbon, IV, p. 80.

[23]Gibbon, IV, p. 80.

Thus Carl Becker says that the Decline and Fall is "something more than a history." It is "a memorial oration: Gibbon is commemorating the death of ancient civilization; he has described, for the 'instruction of future ages,' the 'triumph of barbarism and religion.'"[24]

The spirit of Gibbon's great work was the very antithesis of Augustine's defense of Christianity. For Gibbon the Roman Empire was a symbol of civilization succumbing to the joint assault of barbarism and Christianity. The eighteenth century had discovered history to be autonomous and self-sufficient, independent of the need for God to direct its course. As scholars of the "enlightenment" applied their discovery, they were the first historians to be concerned exclusively with the imminent as opposed to the "transcendent". They had an historical consciousness quite distinct from whatever religious views they might owe respect. To find the fruit of historical laws they employed rational, and not theological concepts.

In the nineteenth century the enlightened rationalism of Voltaire and the humanistic rationalism of Gibbon were reflected by the philosophies of history advanced by the Germans Johann Herder and Georg Hegel and their disciples. Herder believed history to be "a purely natural history of

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[24]Carl L. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven, 1963), p. 118.

human forces, actions, and instincts, according to time and place."[25] And Hegel, in his Lectures on the Philosophy of History, asserts that the story of mankind shows continuity and unity from beginning to end, for history like nature, is subject to rational laws.[26]

However, Herder and Hegel and the rationalism they reflect do not dominate the thought of the nineteenth century. As the Ancien Regime fell before the combined forces of industrialization and the French Revolution, there emerged after 1815 a proliferation of doctrines and movements of many sorts. One of these movements was "romanticism" which was primarily a theory of literature and the arts. As a theory of art it raised basic questions on the nature of significant truth, on the importance of various human faculties, on the relation of thought and feeling, and on the meaning of the past and of time itself. Representing a new way of sensing all human experience, it principally affected the reliance of the 'philosophes' on reason and the scientific method.

Possibly the most fundamental romantic attitude was a love of the unsystematic--or moods or impressions, scenes or stories, sights or sounds, personal idiosyncracies or peculiar customs, which the intellect could never reduce

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[25]Hans Meyerhoff (ed.), The Philosophy of History in Our Time (Garden City, New York, 1959), p. 4.

[26]R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (New York, 1956), pp. 113-15.

to an abstract generalization. Romanticists insisted on the value of feeling as well as reason, the importance of the subconscious alongside observable experience. They loved the mysterious, the unknown, and hence contributed a new interest in strange and distant societies and in strange and distant historical epochs. Where the 'philosophes' had deplored the Middle Ages as a time of intellectual absurdity, the romanticists looked back upon them with esteem and even nostalgia. They found in them a fascination, a colorfulness, or a spiritual depth which they missed in their own time.[27]

In medieval art and institutions the romantics saw the expression of an inner genius. The medieval writer was original in his literature, inventing the fairy tale and developing the vernacular romance and lyric. Literature which fascinated Herder, Tieck, Arnim, Brentano and Jacob Grimm inspired a whole generation of German and French lyricists. Medieval law was also thought creative, making possible, as it was developed by the medieval genius, the growth of the nation-state. The Germans Karl Eichhorn and F. C. von Savigny detailed this concept in their histories of law. Within their histories they developed a second conception present in romanticism, the idea of progress. History was the development of humanity, or the education of mankind; thus past stages of historical growth, such as the Middle Ages, would necessarily lead to the present.

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[27]Collingwood, pp. 86-87; Walter Kaufmann, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (Garden City, New York, 1960), pp. 77-78; Barnes, pp. 178-80.

Further the Middle Ages had intrinsic value not only as an unique achievement of the human mind, but also because it held a significant place in the course of evolution leading to the even greater present. This in principle differs from the humanists who despised the past as such, but would regard certain features of the past as transcending the debilitations of time by having an excellence of their own, that would serve them as permanent models of classic perfection. For romanticists all the past was worthy of study as opposed to a few select centuries, such as the four enumerated by Voltaire.[28]

Alongside the illusionistic possibilities of Romanticism there were also very realistic tendencies. No less essential than the possibility of losing oneself amidst fantasies, or a total surrender to all passions, was the effort to break away from the constructions of rationalism which had led to misleading generalizations and abstractions. In either case the romanticists were seeking to free the mind of obstructions and thereby opening it to the manifold manifestations of reality that could be directly experienced. This appeal to direct experience led directly to the conversion of history to an empirical discipline under German leadership. As such empiricism reinforced the romantic revolt against philosophy, or more specifically those philosophers like Voltaire and Kant who were speculative in their approach to history.

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[28]Barnes, pp. 177-80.

It was Leopold von Ranke (1795-1896) who successfully advocated the use of empirical methods and critical standards. He felt logical and analytic studies of human nature would lead to a systematic and non-speculative philosophy of history. Soon archival research, philology, numismatics and archaeology were developed as tools and analytic techniques to supplement traditional fields of historical investigation. Critical methods were devised or improved for sifting, testing, collating and evaluating documentary sources, and rigorous standards were employed for judging the impartiality, objectivity and truthfulness of historical work.[29] As these techniques were taught in the Prussian historical schools by Ranke and his students, academicians from all over the world flocked to their seminars. The recipients of this training emerged as the scientific historians of the later half of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century. N. D. Fustel de Coulanges and Ferdinand Lot of France, and J. B. Bury, Sir Samuel Dill and William Paton Ker of England and Henry Osborn Taylor of the United States strove to use the new methodology of historical scholarship to make history the equal of any of the sciences.

It was a short step from the concepts of romanticism to those of nationalism. Just as the Romanticists had reacted to the rationalism of the enlightenment and of the

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[29]Gooch, pp. 95-97; Barnes, pp. 239-242; Smith, pp. 48-52.

Napoleonic system, so they as nationals reacted against the internationalism of the eighteenth century. In both cases the movements were led by intellectuals, the nationalists seizing upon Herder's concept of the "Volkgeist" or national spirit. They began with the principle of progress, applied it to the culture of a people and then argued that every society had a language, history, world-view, and culture unique to itself. This often became associated with political nationalism which maintained all persons of the same nationality or language should be encompassed within the same state.[30]

To the Germans, divided and frustrated as they were, the idea of national unity became almost an obsession. Jacob Grimm went about Germany with his brother collecting folk tales which he thought indicated the ancient, native spirit of Germany. Herder discovered anthropology and concluded that the special peculiarities of various physical types of men were racial in nature, and that among a race the pyschological characteristics were fixed and uniform. Hegel saw evidence in the Napoleonic conquests of the need of a people to possess a potent and independent state if they wished to enjoy freedom and dignity. His evolutionary conception of reality suggested that existing affairs were temporary and therefore the disunity of the German nation need not remain unchanged.[31]

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[30]Barnes, pp. 207-10.

[31]Gooch, pp. 49-57; Collingwood, pp. 88-93.

Ranke, who had founded the "scientific school" of historical writing, never lost sight of the Germany in which he lived. He believed the greatest asset of Europe to be the individuality of the nations within it, nations which refused to be subjugated by any single power in the manner attempted by France of Louis XIV or Napoleon. He wrote:

> History was not such chaos as it appeared at first sight. There were creative forces, moral energies at work which gave it value and meaning. States were intellectual entities, creations of the human spirit, thoughts of God. No people could live for itself, and the character of each only developed in contact with the whole.[32]

In addition to creating an interest in the study of the Middle Ages as a whole, the national spirit so evident in the nineteenth century encouraged scholars to take their first serious look at the "Dark Ages" which followed the "fall" of the Roman Empire. Among the Germans there were several "Carolingian" scholars. They were inspired by a conviction that Charlemagne was the "founder" of the Empire from which modern Germany descended. Other historians returned to the centuries of the invasions to find the origins of Germanic tradition. Karl von Savigny, for example, went back to the fifth century to begin to trace the survival of Roman law in every part of what had been the Empire. He concluded his <u>History of Roman Law in the Middle Ages</u> by arguing that the Germans never destroyed or

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[32]Gooch, p. 80.

even attempted to Germanize the Romans. Furthermore the Romans were better able to express themselves once the Germans had freed them of the stifling, decaying Empire.[33] Earlier Eichhorn had written a History of German Law and Institutions that provided an estimate of the varied sources of law that went into the making of the German nation. Roman, barbarian and Church laws were considered as elements of equally important stature.[34]

A contrary opinion was reached by the French historians, who were, unlike the German scholars, interested in the pre-Carolingian period, because Gaulic history extended back prior to the conquests of Caesar. In his History of Southern Gaul under the Franks, Claude Fauriel argued that the Germanic invaders brought nothing to the Gallo-Roman civilization but ruin and chaos. What was of value in post-invasion Gaul was what was retained from Latin antiquity. In emphathetic denial of the German studies of this issue, he maintained that the invasion in no way rejuvenated a supposedly corrupted Roman province. Sismondi came to similar conclusions in his History of the Italian Republics, the story of Italy from the fall of the Western Empire.[35]

Augustin Thierry who like Fauriel took up the study of the Merovingain epoch, pronounced in Récits des temps

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[33]Gooch, pp. 47-49.

[34]Gooch, pp. 40-41.

[35]Gooch, pp. 158-62.

Mérovingiens that it was a mistake to dismiss this era as the most confused and arid period of French history. In anticipation of William Paton Ker he judged the narratives of Gregory of Tours superior to any history written before Froissart. Thierry was also an advocate of the race theory present in many German and English histories. He portrayed the Gallo-Romans as a race struggling against the barbarian Franks. In this they were in part successful and as a result "the core of the nation, by blood and laws, by language and ideas, was Gallo-Roman."[36] Acknowledging that the Frankish influence almost obliterated the earlier Roman social order in the North, he explained the eventual dominance of the Gallo-Roman tradition was transferred to the North through the growth of cities which were governed by the Roman models of law.

There had existed among French historians of the Middle Ages a strong current of Catholicism since the sixteenth century, and in the nineteenth century this current was manifested in massive studies of the medieval church. Catholicism had suffered considerable setbacks in prestige under the attacks of the 'philosophes' of the eighteenth century and it seems reasonable to think of much of the Catholic scholarship in the nineteenth as a belated response to these earlier reversals. A master of apologetics, Vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), following his own

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[36]Gooch, p. 165.

religious conversion, wrote the Génie du Christianisme (1802) and Les Martyrs (1809). In these he gave word pictures of the beauties of Christianity emphasizing its dogmas, legends, mysteries, ritural and art. He believed the beauties of Christianity were eternal truths. These truths, he argued were best captured by the Church, and at no time did the Church have greater glory than in the France of the Middle Ages. His writings inspired a whole generation of French historians.[37]

Among the most notable of those influenced by Chateaubriand was Jules Michelet (1798-1874), who undertook a large scale history of France. In the early volumes of this work he supplied an imaginative narrative of French history during the Middle Ages which reflected his national sentiments and also exalted the role of the Church in a manner which echoes Génie du Christianisme. He presages Henry Osborn Taylor in arguing that the French nation united the Roman, Celt and Teuton races, each with its distinctive character, into a people in love with liberty. That within the nation there are provinces with peculiar features suggested to Michelet that these races were unevenly blended in France just as they were in Europe at large. The soul of France matured as a result of complex events which "modified, smelted, transmuted these elements

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[37]Gooch, pp. 156-57.

made them into a body."[38] There is no one French race, and no number of conquests created France. Rather a mysterious combination of events gave France to the world.

Count de Montalembert, also inspired by Chateaubriand and friendly towards Michelet, represents the heights of Catholic scholarship in his The Monks of the West from St. Benedict to St. Bernard (1846). His book which begins with a dedication to Pope Pius IX was, in his words "intended to vindicate the glory of one of the greatest institutions of Christianity. . . ."[39] To him there was no doubt that the monastic orders played a great part in the history of European civilization, and as Jean Décarreaux will claim more than a hundred years later, the monks of the west "must be regarded as the first to lead the nations from the darkness of paganism and savagery to the light of the Christian faith and the blessings of a civilized life."[40]

Montalembert shows no sympathy with Gibbon's Romans, the "masters and tyrants of the world."[41] Antiquity had been bankrupt, and "in order that the Church should save society, a new element was necessary in the world."[42] This new element was the barbarian. The barbarian restored to civilization the freedom and honor the Empire had taken

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[38]Gooch, quoted from Génie du Christianisme, p. 172.

[39]Count de Montalembert, The Monks of the West from St. Benedict to St. Bernard, (ed.) F. A. Gasquet (London, 1846), I, p. v.

[40]Montalembert, I, p. viii.

[41]Montalembert, I, p. 46.

[42]Montalembert, I, p. 205.

away.[43] "The Roman Empire, without the Barbarians, was an abyss of servitude and corruption. The Barbarians and the Monks united recreated a world which was to be called Christendom."[44]

Unlike their predecessors, historians of the nineteenth century were quite willing to study the Middle Ages. During the four previous centuries, intellectuals had been in revolt against the "inflexible rationality of medieval thought"[45] and the religion they associated with it. By the eighteenth century Voltaire could summarize the attitude of his "generation" by observing the Middle Ages deserved "as little study as the doings of wolves and bears".[46] In the nineteenth century, intellectuals were in revolt against the 'inflexible rationality of enlightened thought'. Appealing to what is called romanticism, the reactionaries found in the man of the Middle Ages kindred spirits.

Reaction to the eighteenth century rationalists also took the form of nationalism. Searching for the origins of their nation, historians discovered the early Middle Ages of the Merovingians in France and of the Carolingians for Germany. Delight in the past for its own sake, and as the source of one's nation was combined with an emphasis

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[43]Montalembert, I, p. 207.

[44]Montalembert, I, p. 210.

[45]Above, p. 13.

[46]Gooch, p. 11.

upon empirical, as opposed to rational or speculative, evidence to produce "scientific" histories on medieval subjects.

Yet a third reaction to the "Age of Reason" could be found in the reassertion of Catholicism, and in history, study of Catholic institutions. In some cases, such as those of Eichhorn or Michelet, an emphasis upon the role of the Church was combined with legal or political history. In other studies, Church or monastic history alone was the object of the historian. Chateaubriand wrote of the "genius" of Christianity and Montalembert of the medieval monk.

It is clear that out of several centuries of hostility towards the Middle Ages and its study, a counteracting movement among scholars restored the image of the Middle Ages, and gave impetus to medieval studies. Within the first four decades after the Congress of Vienna historical studies had undergone a change of major proportions, and the way was prepared for a modern appreciation of the early Middle Ages.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTIONS OF THE POSITIVE HISTORIANS

During the last half of the nineteenth century a movement called positivism, for want of a better name, dominates the historiography of the Middle Ages. Positivism arose out of the rejection of romanticism after 1848, and represents a stronger emphasis upon the spirit of empiricism and nationalism that had developed alongside and within the romantic movement. The historians motivated by positivism decisively reject the pose Gibbon assumed towards the early Middle Ages. And it seems quite clear, that whatever the form of reaction historians might take towards their predecessors, there will be no reversion to the attitudes associated with the rationalists.

Intellectuals of the Romantic and more so of the Nationalistic persuasion hoped to find in the Revolution of 1848 the fulfillment of their ideals. They had envisioned a humanitarian nationalism, the achievement of a liberal order without violence. These visions were crushed by the failure of the Revolution not only in Germany, but also in Hungary, in Italy, and in France. Everywhere the cry for the freedom of nations from foreign rule or for self rule by national groups had been stifled, at least for the moment. With the passing of the Revolution, idealism faded. It was replaced by realism of a new sort. This realism discarded

Romanticism, but not the objectives of Romanticism. Retaining the same objectives, an emphasis was placed on finding new means by which they might be attained.

This emphasis upon how to attain legitimate ends turned the minds of Europeans to the methodology of science. In no sphere had the nineteenth century been more successful than in that of science and technology, and for this reason the European community in the second half of the century was particularly susceptible to ideas purported to be scientific in nature. The growing prestige of science led many people to believe that it could explain the mysteries of nature and solve all human problems. This belief took two forms: Darwinism and positivism. According to positivism, only natural phenomena and their properties can be known scientifically, and other types of explanation, be they theological or metaphysical, are by definition "unscientific". By using science, both nature and man would ultimately be understood and hence subject to scientific manipulation. According to Darwinism, all life was the product of evolution. Differences among the species and variations within any species were explicable as adaptations to the creatures environment through a process of natural selection and the struggle for survival.[1]

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[1]Collingwood, pp. 127-33; H. Stuart Hughes, Consciousness and Society (New York, 1958), pp. 33-40.

Responses to Darwinism and positivism were manifold. Champions of Nationalism and imperialism used Darwinism to justify the survival of the fittest in war and the rule of weak by the strong. Racist argued the white man superior to the black, or, as Kingsley expressed it, the Teuton to the degenerate Roman. Socialists argued that by greater organization society was assured of even greater advancement, and Spencer pointed to education as the key to social organization.

Positivists no less than the Darwinists stressed the progress of man through science. They believed, as had their founder, the French philosopher Auguste Comte, in the inevitable progress of human knowledge. Comte promised a happier future would be provided by inventive technicians and by sociologists and that by using the methods of science it would be possible to adjust societies imperfections. His faith in science as the means to progress dominated European thought after 1870. In this sense positivism was also a popular ideology. All that was needed to produce a "Great Society" was to discover the general laws governing particular phenomena, and then these laws could become instruments to aid human progress.[2]

Predicated upon the assumptions of positivism the new fields of social science, anthropology, psychology, and political science were originated. Of an importance equally

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[2]Collingwood, pp. 128 and 222; Hughes, pp. 36-8; Smith, pp. 93 and 136.

great to the creation of these new fields, was the manner in which positivism and Darwinism affected conventional studies such as economics and especially history. It was commonly argued, after Darwinism, that historical epochs were akin to organisms, descending from some pre-existing species. Following the pattern of Hegel's dialectic, development of an organism presumed a synthesis at a new level of the elements of conflicting forces at a previous level. Evolution had succeeded revolution as the basic pattern of historical process.

As understood by the historian of the nineteenth century, however, the product of this evolution was determined by the parental elements. Thus positivists thought they had found the key to the law which governs history. Since the parental elements of any historical enterprise indicated, or rather determined, the nature of that enterprise, historians needed only to analyze the nature of the parent to discover what the child would be.

The principles of determinism, of evolution and of nationalism are evident in most historical works written in the fifty years following the Revolutions of 1848. Of those historians directly concerned with the early Middle Ages, positivism was represented by a generation beginning with Charles Kingsley in 1864 and ending with Henry Osborn Taylor in 1911. To demonstrate how each member of this important generation, did in fact reflect the principles mentioned above, they will in the following pages be given opportunity to "speak for themselves".

In his The Roman and the Teuton (1864) it was the ambition of Charles Kingsley to resolve the contributions of the good Teuton, the civilized Roman and the civilizing monk to the medieval world. He poetically portrayed the barbarian as a child of the forest, "of a royal race, and destined to win glory for all time to come."[3] But, he noted, had the Teuton destroyed Rome earlier the loss would have been immense:

> Christianity would have been stifled in its very cradle; and with Christianity all chance--be sure of it--of their own progress. Roman law, order, and discipline, the very things which they needed to acquire by a contact of five hundred years, would have been swept away. All classic literature and classic art, which they learnt to admire with an almost superstitious awe, would have perished likewise. Greek philosophy, the germs of physical science, and all that we owe to the ancients, would have perished; and we should have truly had an invasion of the barbarians, followed by truly dark ages, in which Europe would have had to begin all anew, without the help of the generations which had gone before.[4]

Kingsley reaches a conclusion diametrically opposed to that proposed by Gibbon. He makes no admission of a "Dark Ages." Events after the "Fall" were orderly, progressive and evolutionary, and quite obviously not catastrophic.

Conspicuous among the French historians of the latter half of the nineteenth century was a disciple of von Ranke, Numa D. Fustel de Coulanges. In a major departure from existing interpretations, Fustel de Coulanges declared the

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[3]Charles Kingsley, The Roman and the Teuton (London, 1864), p. 6.

[4]Kingsley, p. 13.

German invasions of the fifth century to have had no influence on the history, religion, customs or government of Roman Gaul. They did bring with them the confusion which eventually accelerated the development of feudalism already existing 'in germ'.[5] At the moment of the Frankish invasion, the central authority in Gaul had already passed from the Romans to the great landowners who had little governing or fighting ability. Since the aristocracy held economic control of the land the invasion proved to be a pacific settlement of Germans whose institutions had already been Romanized, and was in no way a conquest. Except for the change in governance from the Emperor to Frankish king, the Gauls were unaffected. In most externals the Merovingians were merely an extension of the Western Empire. Although the Germans did not introduce political or economic change, their presence was followed by momentous transformations. Feudalism altered individual and property relationships, and a new aristocracy arose out of these alterations in social combinations. The process of change had been evolutionary not revolutionary, and for that reason France retained its Gallo-Roman character in face of the Frankish "onslaught".[6]

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[5]Fustel de Coulanges made use of the "germ theory" then fairly current among German historians. The theory is a natural outgrowth of the dialectical process explained above (p. 33) . If the parental element of an institution determines the nature of that institution, then the institution itself exists "in germ" in the parent.

[6]Smith, p. 48; Gooch, pp. 200-04; Barnes, pp. 250-53 and 275-77.

With Fustel de Coulanges' theories so contrary to the weighty tradition of European historiography it seemed for a time possible that his gallant break with Gibbon would soon be forgotten. Since it was possible and perhaps all too accurate to accuse Fustel de Coulanges with an unscholarly hostility to traditional icons, what was necessary to secure his departure was the support lent by someone of solid reputation. This was forthcoming from J. B. Bury (1861-1927), a distinguished English historian. Bury had built his reputation upon works ranging from a History of Greece and the editorship of the first six volumes of the Cambridge Ancient History to original application of the use of Russian and other Slavic languages in his studies as a professor of Modern History and successor to Lord Acton. He was well known as the definitive modern editor of Gibbon's Decline and Fall and he established himself as an interpreter of the Gibbon thesis in his own History of the Later Roman Empire (1889) and The Invasions of Europe by the Barbarians (1928).[7]

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[7]Dawson cites Bury from his introduction to his edition of Gibbon, pages xxxix and lii-liii:

> Neither the historian nor the man of letters will any longer subscribe, without a thousand reserves, to the theological chapters of the Decline and Fall, and no discreet enquirer would go there for his ecclesiastical history.

And with respect to the later Empire:

> Gibbon's account of the internal history of the Empire after Heraclius is not only superficial; it gives an entirely false impression of the facts. The designation of the later Empire as a 'uniform tale of weakness and misery' is one of the most untrue, and most effective, judgments ever uttered by a thoughtful historian.

Where Fustel de Coulanges had challenged the cataclysmic interpretations of Gibbon as not applying to Gaul, and furthermore had denied that the invasions in any way explained the changes that occurred there, Bury leveled a direct attack on the concept of the Empire's fall. Bury contended it misleading and fallacious to use 476 as the year in which the Empire "fell". He argued that in fact no one event can be cited for that purpose. What had confused Gibbon and others was their assumption that the same factors 'caused' both the changes observable in the Empire during the fourth century and the reductions of the ability of the Empire to resist the invasions of the fifth.[8]

There is no reason, states Bury, to believe the number of the invaders, the weakness of the army or the alleged disintegrative effect of Christianization explain the inability of Rome to resist the barbarians. If any such factors were present in the fourth century, they cannot be taken as causes for what happened in the fifth. As Bury puts it, "the gradual collapse of Roman power in this section of the Empire was the consequence of a series of contingent events."[9] By this he meant that each event was independent of some general cause or causes that might be used to explain all aspects of the decline or the alleged

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[8] J. B. Bury, The Invasions of Europe by the Barbarians, ed. F. J. C. Hearnshaw (New York, 1928), pp. 167-72; J. B. Bury, "The Later Roman Empire," The Fall of Rome: Can it be Explained, ed. Mortimer Chambers (New York, 1964), pp. 13-16.

[9] Bury, "Later Empire," p. 15.

"fall". The examples Bury gives for his "series of contingent events" resemble both a description of the events and a summary of causes, and this is Bury's purpose. Rome, in his judgment, lost her provinces not as the result of some "inevitable effect of any of those features which have been rightly or wrongly described as causes or consequences of her general 'decline'",[10] but because there had been a long series of such "causes" none of which were "fatal" alone, but together overwhelmed the frustrated leaders of the Empire.

Once confidence in Gibbon's theory of causation had been undermined if not destroyed, Bury, on constitutional grounds, "proves" the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in 476 to be meaningless. Actual power in Italy rested with Odovacar until 489. A certain Nepos who lived to 480 was the recognized Emperor of the West by all except the Visogoths in Italy. Constitutionally there was only one Empire at that time, Bury argues, and it was ruled by Zeno in Constantinople, as had been the case whenever a Western Emperor was not recognized in the East.

> The events of A. D. 476 have been habitually designated as the "Fall of the Western Empire." The phrase is inaccurate and unfortunate, and sets the changes which befell in a false light. No Empire fell in A. D. 476; there was no "Western Empire" to fall. There was only one Roman Empire, which sometimes was governed by two or more Augusti.[11]

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[10] Bury, "Later Empire," p. 16.

[11] Bury, "Later Empire," pp. 18-19.

As Bury goes on to explain, the Empire ruled by Zeno in 476 did not "fall" in that century, or for that matter until 1453. Bury is identifying Empire with what Gibbon recognized as the Eastern or Byzantine Empire.

Bury also uses his arguments to acknowledge that the important power shift in the West was the military one accomplished sometime earlier than 476. Thus the only event of consequence in 476 was the assumption of kingship by Odovacar, a role which established him as the leader of the Visogoths, the holders of military power in Italy.[12]

As the nineteenth century was coming to a close it became obvious to many that Gibbon had after all left the history of the Empire and its successor states undone. Besides Bury this fresh awareness led Heinrich Brunner, Albert H. Post and M. I. Rostovtzeff to make new inquiries into the causes of the Empire's decline.[13] Others followed the direction of Fustel de Coulanges into a more intensive and "scientific" investigation of the limited areas which had been under Roman rule. Examples of this trend are T. H. Hodgkin, Italy and the Invaders, Robin George Collingwood, Roman Britain, and Samuel Dill, Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age.

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[12]Bury, "Later Empire," pp. 17-20; Bury, The Invasions, pp. 167-73.

[13]Heinrich Brunner, The Sources of the Law of England trans. W. Hastie (Edinburgh, 1888); Albert Hermann Post, Der unsprung des rechts (Oldenburg, 1876); Mikhail I. Rostovtzeff, Rome trans. J. D. Ruff (New York, 1960).

Merovingian studies had been distinguished by a number of French historians in the nineteenth century, among them Guizot, Thierry and Fustel de Coulanges. Dill hoped to provide an up-to-date synthesis of these studies in English. He particularly wanted to give support to the anti-invasion views of Fustel de Coulanges and his own mentor, Bury. Thus he writes:

> It is true that the great event which we call the Fall of the Western Empire, though it is superficially marked by the disappearance of the last holder of the Imperial title, was not a sudden, cataclysmic change, affecting a radical revolution in the material condition and moral tone of the old population.[14]

Dill strove to explain that while on the political level a major upheaval occurred when the Frankish military made inroads on the imperial control of Gaul, the Church and ordinary people lived without noticing the disturbance. "Even the keenest and most civilized minds in the fifth century were little conscious of the momentous revolution which was going on around them. . . ."[15]

As Fustel de Coulanges had made clear the invasions did not affect the Gallo-Romans. Nor were the invasions a cause of Rome's decline. Following Bury's lead, Dill points to the nature of the Roman state as source of its own demise. Since this was so, Dill welcomes the change of power in Gaul, but only because it was balanced there by the moderating

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[14]Samuel Dill, Roman Society (London, 1926), p. 3.

[15]Dill, p. 26.

influences of the Church and monastery. In an echo of Kingsley, he writes:

> Above all, the institution bridged the gulf between the ancient and the modern world, and saved from the wreck of a classical civilization some of its more precious treasures. It is difficult to imagine what form modern civilization would have taken, or how long its development might have been delayed, if ancient literature and the fading tradition of its culture had perished utterly.[16]

Kingsley, Fustel de Coulanges and Dill are visibly advancing theories associated with the German or French national schools. Each makes use of the deterministic principle and each emphasizes evolution over the older conceptions of revolution. To this extent they can be associated with positivism. Bury is also a professer of positivism in that he is convinced of the evolutionary order of events in the Later Empire to the point that he writes of "contingent" events. But another influential historian, John Edwin Sandys, is an exception. He is not a positivist. Indeed he seems to return to Gibbon for inspiration, although actually he is one of a continuous line of classical scholars, who since the Renaissance, have studied and edited the writings of the Greeks and Latins.

Sandys, author of a History of Classical Scholarship, was an intellectual historian concerned exclusively with classical literature. He could, and did, presume it

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[16]Dill, p. 368.

unnecessary to provide more than a minimal historical background for his subjects, since the authoritative narrative for most of the period he covers was provided by a history which was common knowledge for his readers, Gibbon's Decline and Fall. It is possible that Sandys viewed his work as a supplement to the Gibbon and similar narratives, as it is certain his knowledge of history was largely derived from Gibbon's work.

Furthermore he also thought it was safe to assume the readers of a history of classical scholarship would be familiar with many of the writings of the authors studied. Therefore a survey which is otherwise superficial would have value as a reference they might turn to for bits of information. No doubt his sympathy with a potential readership was accurate. His book went through four editions in rapid succession, and his idea gave rise to a series of similar surveys of classical literature just as it was itself a product of such a series.[17]

Of relevance to our theme is his attitude towards and interpretation of the letters of the Later Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages. During the fifth century he notes a shift in authorship in Latin letters from pagan to Christian,

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[17]For example, examine Hector M. and Nora K. Chadwick, The Growth of Literature (New York, 1932); Pierre C. de Labriolle, History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius (New York, 1925); Frederick J. E. Raby, A History of Christian Latin Poetry; from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages (New York, 1927); and to the more recent works of Ernest Robert Curtius, European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages (New York, 1953); and R. R. Bolgar, The Classical Heritage (New York, 1954).

although he attached no particular significance to this shift. In the fifty years following the "fall" of the Western Empire in 476, he believes a transition from the ancient to the medieval world occurs. The keys to this transition are Boethius and Cassiodorus. Boethius is the last of the Romans still able to understand classical language and literature. He is also the first to interpret his understanding in a manner useful to the Middle Ages.[18] Boethius is an "intermediary". He is nostalgic, favoring the declining days of the Empire. Cassiodorus, in contrast, "looks forward to the dawn of the Catholic Middle Ages."[19] They are alike, however, in that they both prevent the tradition of the past from being eclipsed by the onrushing barbarians. With the death of Boethius in 429, Sandys believes the ancient world can properly thought to have ended and the Middle Ages begun. From that date and until the revival of scholarship under Charlemagne, an irreversible decadence set in, which reached its greatest depths during the seventh century.[20]

While the gaze of Sandys looks to the flowering of classical scholarship during antiquity, that of Ker 'looks forward to the dawn of vernacular literature in the twelfth century'. For with the twelfth century the term "Dark is no longer applicable to medieval literature. The intervening period between then and the

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[18] John E. Sandys, History of Classical Scholarship (New York, 1958), I, p. 253.

[19] Sandys, I, p. 269.

[20] Sandys, I, p. 450.

invasions was also not, without importance. Ker believed the sixth and ninth centuries to be periods in which considerable creative literature was written. The turn of the sixth is one of decline and the ninth one of growth. Each is measured against the themes of freedom and individuality Ker finds characteristic of the vernacular writings of the twelfth century.[21] Boethius and the other writers of the sixth century are important in that they sustain something of the classical tradition. The Irish and English of the seventh century are important in that they kept this tradition alive. But what was of real value during these "Dark" centuries were the efforts of the Teuton to free himself of the bonds of a crippled latinity, and express his native creativity.[22]

His success in the use of allegory, mythology and legend distinguished the Teuton from the Roman, who was slavishly devoted to classical models. Fulgentius and the Moralia by Gregory are examples of the allegorical artist and art, an art that Ker defends as only slightly inferior to the more brilliant literature of the Greeks or the Renaissance. No literature of the "Dark" ages is more revealing or more representative of the early medieval mind than that of the historians of that era. The genius of Gregory of Tours or of Bede is often revealed by the

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[21]William Paton Ker, The Dark Ages (New York, 1958), pp. 13-17.

[22]Ker, pp. 26-33.

history they write, but they are unfairly penalized by labels of mediocrity for faults in language, composition or poor judgment. These were limitations imposed on them by the adverse conditions of an age in flux. Comparing their talent for history with that of the Romans after the second century, Ker praises their originality and their sense for the "free idiomatic narrative" that distinguish Froissart or Snorri Sturlison.[23]

Ker like Sandys is an intellectual historian, but his inspiration comes from the German and French historians, who under the influence of Romanticism, had intensively studied medieval literature. What historical background Ker provides, is, however, drawn from the positive historians of his own generation. He proposes that early medieval writers were transmitters striving to assume the freedom of literary expression evident among medieval men of letters. He implies that historical processes involve the struggle between thesis (a stifling latinity) and antithesis (Teutonic genius) which eventually produce a synthesis (free, popular vernacular literature).

Taylor attempts to describe the "medieval mind" as the result of a similar historical process, this time concerning a more complicated combination of "elements" than those which make up literature alone. For Taylor sudden or cataclysmic reversals are impossible in history. He observes: "Nothing

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[23]Ker, pp. 33, 76-77 and 85-100.

passes away, and very little quite begins, but all things change; and so the verity of social and political phenomena lies in the 'becoming', rather than in any temporary phase--"[24] The significance of the decline of the Empire is not that the Ancient world is coming to some sort of end, but in that it signals a transition of major proportions during which another era is "becoming".

It is Taylor's contribution to document the movement of medieval beginnings from its lower level of potentiality (during the early Middle Ages) to the higher level of actuality (under the Carolingians). During this transition cultural life was depressed and decadent, but within it were the elements which constitute the Middle Ages. There were three of these elements: Pagan antiquity, Christian antiquity and the "diverse and manifold capacities of the medieval peoples." Beginning with the Patristic Age these elements co-existed but were not as yet co-equals. The Middle Ages began when all three were joined in active participation under the Carolingians.[25]

Cultural history becomes under Taylor's guidance the measurement of interaction between three cultures ("elements") within the diverse political divisions of 'Europe'. He observes that the 'Bas Empire' was the center of

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[24]Henry Osborn Taylor, The Medieval Mind, A History of the Development of Thought and Emotion in the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1949), I, p. 121.

[25]Taylor, I, pp. 4-6.

Christian and Pagan Antiquity but was never barbarized. Rather Classical civilization declined as it absorbed the invaders, and remained degraded until the Renaissance of the thirteenth century. Spain resembled closely the pattern of Italy until the Moorish invasions in the early eighth century altered the scene. Southern France developed in the fashion of Italy while Northern France was wholly barbarized in the Merovingian era. But the Franks willingly imitated the language, law and Religion of the Latins; the result was a mixture of both antiquity and the Barbarian. Germany and England were influenced to the least extent by Latin antique culture and for a time Christianity was only partially assimilated as a foreign and alien culture.[26]

Christianity was the key to unification of the three cultures. The Patristic writers infused the pagan with the Christian sources, eventually combining the two cultures into a new 'Empire'. In the north the barbarian looked upon this Empire with "awe" making antiquity everywhere acceptable. The energies of the Christian "transmitters" were used "neither to produce an extension of knowledge, nor originate substantial novelties either of thought or imaginative conceptions."[27] They extended themselves rather in creating new forms in which the old could be presented

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[26]Taylor, I, pp. 6-12 and 88-120.

[27]Taylor, I, p. 13.

to a Christian world, in the making. Until the seventh century these contributions added to the content of Christian literature, but after Gregory, learned men attempted only to digest this literature. Carolingian scholars merely reshuffled this material without recasting it.[28]

Taylor's essay completes the first great juncture in the scholarship of the early Middle Ages. With him the nineteenth century comes to a close. For the first half of the nineteenth century romanticism and nationalism were the predominate motives dictating the nature of historical exposition, but with the revolution of 1848, called by some the "watershed of the nineteenth century",[29] intellectuals tended to reject romanticism. Until the First World War historians looked to the empirical and scientific suppositions behind positivism for the basis of their historical interpretation. Historical positivism was generally nationalistic, but perhaps its most visible characteristic was the deterministic form of evolutionism it alone espoused. With the exception of Sandys, a series of historians advanced interpretations of early medieval history that incorporated the deterministic principle within an evolutionary explication of events.

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[28]Taylor, I, pp. 15-16 and 207.

[29]See Geoffrey Bruun, who in the very title of his monograph, Revolution and Reaction, 1848-1852: A Mid-Century Watershed (New York, 1958), give evidence of this thesis.

CHAPTER III

EARLY APPLICATIONS OF THE TRANSITIONAL INTERPRETATION

As the Romanticism and Idealism of the earlier part of the nineteenth century proved unwarranted, Newtonian physics and Laplacian determinism were smugly accepted. Reinforced by Darwinism and positivism, science even in history dominated the latter half of the nineteenth century. But just as positivism featured the application of the new fields of social science, anthropology, psychology and political science to society the fruits of scientific discoveries, its very presuppositions were called into question by advances in science and the discoveries of new fields of investigation. Biologists advanced the theory of 'sport' undermining the purely deterministic nature of Darwinism. Certain cultural anthropologists discovered that societies were in all externals equals rather than somehow arranged in a hierarchy as the Darwinists had predicted. Sir James Frazer, The Golden Bough, found that many Christian practices had their counterparts in more primitive societies that were otherwise unrelated. The Russian Ivan Pavlov, while working with dogs, found animal behavior could be conditioned by its environment, implying that human responses were not dependent upon an individual's heredity alone. A Viennese physician,

Sigmund Freud, discovered that many types of behavior among humans were motivated by the subconscious desires of the mind, revealing man was not a purely rational being after all.[1]

From the view that man was not essentially a rational being, which in itself was only a scientific attempt at better understanding human behavior, it was but a short step to emphasize and cultivate the irrational, to stress the will, intuition, impulse and emotion--in a word return to Romanticism. Psychologists seemed to teach that what was called reason was often disguised rationalization. Ideas were the products of conditioning and thus were controlled by one's class or race or nationality. Once these ideas become fixed, no amount of reason is likely to change them. Thus man was not only irrational in some of his behavior, he was basically "anti-intellectual".

Romanticism, irrationalism or 'anti-intellectualism' do not reflect, however, the complete revulsion early twentieth century intellectuals directed towards the 'materialism', 'mechanism' and 'naturalism' of nineteenth century positivism. They proceeded to demonstrate the patent falseness of the philosophic assumptions of positivism. They abhorred materialism, although there were few positivists, including Ludwig Feuerbach, who were unqualified

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[1]Hughes, pp. 105-113; Crane Brinton, The Shaping of the Modern Mind (New York, 1959), pp. 213-23; Hector Hawton, Philosophy for Pleasure (Greenwich, 1961), pp. 138-153; I. M. Bochenski, Contemporary European Philosophy, trans. Donald Nicholl and Karl Aschenbrenner (Berkeley, 1961), pp. 10-29.

materialists. Around 1900 new theories of physics brought into question the belief in a mechanistic universe governed by fixed laws. Scientists like Pierre and Marie Curie and Wilhelm Roentgen discovered that some forms of "matter" had radioactive properties that behaved outside the laws of Newtonian physics. In 1901 the German physicist Max Planck suggested that energy was matter composed of atoms or particles called quanta. Planck noted light was composed of such quantum matter. The need for revision of the mechanistic cosmology was satisfied in 1915 when Albert Einstein advanced his theory of relativity which denied the immutability of space and time in which physical events occur. Advances in the life sciences during this same time span were also revolutionary. Naturalism was no longer considered tenable as science increasingly penetrated the elementary composition and functioning of living things.[2]

With the discovery that positive science was both vulnerable and in need of change, a reassessment of the nature of historical thought became necessary. Such a reorientation was initiated by Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897), a Swiss historian, who rejected outright the idea of progress so familiar to Bury and Taylor. "Neither man's spirit nor his intellect has demonstrably improved in the period known to history," he wrote.[3] It is the historian's

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[2]Hughes, pp. 392-404.

[3]Jacob Burckhardt, Force and Freedom: Reflections on History, ed. James H. Nichols (New York, 1953), p. 21.

task to discover the "style" of a particular period. He should find the quality of cultural life and relationships among institutions which give a distinctive character to that period. If the historian would rise above his petty partisan national feelings he might discover "the great and grievous riddle of life", which is what history is all about.[4] But in his own day, Burckhardt found only a world in crisis, tottering on the brink of decay and certain disaster. He hoped that out of the disorder and chaos, a new dwelling would be built in which the human spirit could live freely, a hope he sustained without the consultation of history.[5]

Wilhelm Dilthey, a student of the Ranke school and a German philosopher, insisted that historical study gained nothing from the imitation of scientific methodology. The historian applying scientific observation to the study of man presumes history to possess the same inner sense of order others have observed in nature. But history has never any order, other than that imposed on its externals by the historian. True history is that which is discerned by the "living, artistic process of understanding",[6] as opposed to that by some pseudo-scientific method. Events of the past gain their meaning when re-lived by the artist-

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[4]Burckhardt, p. 88

[5]Burckhardt, p. 369

[6]Wilhelm Dilthey, Pattern and Meaning in History, ed. H. P. Rickman (New York, 1961), p. 44.

historian, because they enlarge his understanding of the milieu in which they once occurred.[7]

The influence of Burckhardt and Dilthey were transmitted to the English-speaking world by the English philosopher and historian, Robin George Collingwood, author of the Idea of History. For Collingwood the historian's task was to discover the thoughts which motivated the events of the past. To do this the historian must re-think them in his own mind. "The history of thought, and therefore all history, is the reenactment of past thoughts in the historian's own mind."[8] Man is only rational "in a flickering and dubious manner", but what he has in place of rationality is an awareness of himself as an historical creature.[9] He must affirm the prejudices of his own day rather than fear them as had Ranke. For the very questions he wishes history to answer are provided by contemporary events. By recapitulation of the thoughts of the past, the historian will achieve a deeper awareness and a possible useful solution to present problems.

Collingwood retained confidence in the secular nature of society and in the empiricism of the positivists, but he discarded their scientific and deterministic preconceptions. Just as the French revolution had signified the destruction of a society predicated on custom, class and tradition, so

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[7]Dilthey, pp. 152-58.

[8]Collingwood, p. 215.

[9]Collingwood, p. 227.

the First World War signified a similar erosion of society. For thinking men the First World War dramatized the product of secularization and democratic aspiration to be political and economic nationalism and a new barbarism. During the nineteenth century the absence of a firm moral authority to direct the passions of men forced intellectuals to seek authority from the destiny of his nation or class. The nation replaced the Church as the institution which gave men purpose and meaning. And the World War showed with inescapable logic the tragedy of man's devotion to nationhood.[10]

Historians writing after the war are noticeably less insistent upon tracing the fortunes of single nations through history. Nor do they approach historical subjects prejudiced by a national point of view. Often they assume a contrary position, pleading internationalism. The benefits of this new attitude with respect to early medieval studies are considerable. After 1920 an increasing number of historians will be concerned with the development of a medieval or European civilization in the centuries following Rome's collapse. Interest in intellectual and cultural history will become everywhere more apparent. Also considerably less emphasis will be placed upon the chaotic nature of the early medieval period, and more upon its transitional nature.

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[10]Smith, pp. 95-98; Hughes, pp. 336-91.

Once the historian has purged himself of the cataclysmic theory of historical change, it is possible for him to assume one of several transitional interpretations. During the twentieth century at least three distinct hypotheses as to the nature of one such transitional period, the early Middle Ages, may be discerned. The first two of these are evident in the following chapter. The first portrays transition without creativity and the second suggests transition to mean change, but makes no estimate of whether the change is progressive or retrogressive.

One of these transitional interpretations was provided by Fredinand Lot, a Frenchman who wrote his history in a neo-Romantic fashion. He first published the study under consideration in 1921 some eight years after it was begun. In time and in mental outlook he is the first of the post-war generation. Like J. B. Bury, his emphasis is upon the late Empire, its collapse and subsequent division. His major contributions are made in understanding the third and fourth centuries, but after that he assumes the conventional response of his predecessors. For example, he insists, in opposition to Bury, that by 476 the Roman Empire in the West had ended.[11] And he concludes his discourse on the Franks with these words:

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[11]Ferdinand Lot, The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages, trans. Philip and Mariette Leon (New York, 1961), p. 215.

> Hence the entry of the barbarians into the Roman World, under whatever form it took place, did not succeed in regenerating the ancient world or replacing it by better political forms. . . . after we have had a glimpse, in our texts, of the terrible corruption of these times, it is impossible to see in it more than a theme for declamation. . . . The history of their petty kingdoms and their feuds contains nothing which deserves to detain us.[12]

However conventional Lot may have been, he is no apologist for the Empire. He readily recognizes its weaknesses and its failures. At one point he writes:

> The Empire was destined to perish through its internal sores and through the dissolution of all its vital forces and not through the fault of any military organization. Ten centuries of corruption and three of despotism had brought the old society to a state of moral and material destitution. . . . To sum up everything in a word, Rome had been ruining herself constantly for four centuries and in her pecuniary ruin were dragged down all her political resources.[13]

Lot goes on to argue that in the third century a crisis occurred from which there was no return. That crisis precipitated a dramatic change in the constitution of Roman society, annihilating some institutions, and giving certain others which later presume a medieval nature their beginning. "This return to natural economy, after the arrest of monetary economy, already marks the economic middle ages. Politically and socially, it is the introduction to the Middle Ages."[14] Similarly the establishment of Christianity as a state

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[12]Lot, pp. 406-07.

[13]Lot, pp. 84-85.

[14]Lot, p. 84.

Church by Constantine proved to be the factor which led to the Roman ecclesiastical organization and potent political responsibilities of the Church in following centuries. It is Lot's point that with the crisis of the third century institutions began to change into their medieval form.

If social, economic and political institutions were greatly altered in response to the crisis of the third century, this was even more true for Roman thought and culture. "Speaking generally, after the second century A.D., art lost its qualities of purity and taste extremely rapidly."[15] Classical art, even in imitative forms, did not endure the onslaught of the third century. Its technique underwent profound changes, and finally was extinguished under Constantine. "In this respect, the Middle Ages began in the fourth century."[16]

The deterioration of literature was no less rapid than that of the arts. "The third century is a literary Sahara."[17] But from Constantine forward to the beginnings of the fifth century a renewal in Latin literature rescues an otherwise disappointing literary period for Lot. But there existed no possibilities of sustaining even there brief renewal. As in art, literature was a pastime for a very small circle of initiated persons, and this group was given to the dissipating

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[15]Lot, p. 137.

[16]Lot, p. 137.

[17]Lot, p. 151.

tedium of imitating existing masterpieces. The group itself grew smaller as Christianity made inroads into its numbers. And Christianity was not only re-employing the best Latin writers for its purposes, it remolded the tastes of mankind, making ancient literature unworthy of study in Christian homes.[18]

Christian literature suffers from the same malady which destroyed that of the pagans. It succeeded a literary heritage too great to be equaled, and too great to be altered. Classicism dictated the single worthy subject of contemplation. It thrived on generalities, while rejecting the particular and the personal. By elevating the objective, over and above the subjective it was assured an early death, a death of monotony and barreness. Christianity perpetuated this fault by contemplating the universal, God.[19] All that sustained Classicism in the last centuries of the Empire, was its feeling for the unity of civilization defended by the otherwise decadent grammarian or rhetorician. When in the sixth century they recede from view, "the unity of 'Romania' was to disappear for ever."[20]

Ancient science was even more dependent than art or literature, upon the Greek genius for speculation, chiefly in mathematics. It was, however, a creature of reason, detached from observation and experimentation, and like

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[18]Lot, pp. 135-57.

[19]Lot, pp. 150-56.

[20]Lot, p. 166.

philosophy, its twin, it was subordinated to the presuppositions of classicism. When confronted with religion, both philosophy and science were unable to compete on equal terms. Christianity and the other religions coming from the East could stir men's minds and at the same time offer them answers to the problems of life and death that were far more satisfying than those of the Greeks. The new and soon victorious religious spirit was after the first century intolerant of Greek thought and submerged it beneath its more vital mysticism.[21]

Classical Latin literature had begun to deteriorate with the Antonines. From then forward the rare examples of literary production are "masks concealing decay." "It seems that the men of this period are incapable of producing anything whatsoever out of themselves, and that they have nothing to say."[22] The Church Fathers disapproved of classical letters, and this attitude continued throughout the Middle Ages. But as they produced literature of their own, the Christians, were influenced perhaps to too great a degree by the classical commentaries on history, philosophy and science. No effort was made to preserve these commentaries, however. Only the Irish gave refuge to the culture of the ancient world.[23]

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[21]Lot, pp. 167-70.

[22]Lot, p. 372.

[23]Lot, pp. 371-85.

After the sixth century and extending into the tenth and twelfth centuries there existed an unrelieved pattern of stagnation and indifference to thought and letters. Lot inventories in turn philosophy, theology, science, language, literature, education and art. All are dismissed as without progress and in most cases suffering from even greater declines. In this estimation, Lot is above all consistent with what he observed earlier with respect to the later Empire. He is not unusually hostile to Christianity or to the Church, and whenever possible gives it high praise. He does have a point of view, however, which like that of Gibbon, or more recently of Sandys, measures art or letters against fixed and rather high standards. It would appear that Lot uses the pure classical forms of the Greeks and Augustan Romans as the backdrop to which all else is compared. This is only in part true. For those aspects of culture which pretend to be classical he draws the obvious comparison. But his ultimate standard is not classicism, but a neo-romanticism which is subjective, contemporary and in most particulars opposed to classicism.

Lot is a child of the intellectual revolution suggested elsewhere to have taken place after 1890. To it he owes his comparative method of historical exposition and his preference for the subjective. He also demonstrates the unusual attitudes of Bergson towards cultural change. The experience of change is a progressive and an irreversible process, a succession of experiences of a very special sense. One

experience does not follow the other, the first ceasing to exist when the next begins. They interpenetrate one another, the first living on into the second, and perhaps becoming fused with it. Thus the ancient world passed into the medieval, became a part of it, and never really ceased to exist. Likewise the beginning of the medieval world was not sudden; rather various medieval institutions began at different times alongside the decline of ancient culture.

A contemporary to Lot, the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne (1865-1935), developed in the last twenty-five years of his life a thesis which will forever be associated with his name. At once unique and rather easy to grasp, it has caught the popular imagination on a level which approximates that of Gibbon. A great part of Pirenne's success is due to his novel use of economic instruments which after the First World War were held in great esteem, as exampled by the writings of Beard in the United States. Pirenne was a prolific writer, and his interests were broad. The one feature common to all his work seems to be the great emphasis he is willing to put on economic issues. Of particular and representative value is his shorter Medieval Cities, which is based on a series of lectures delivered before American universities in 1925, and the more detailed Mohammed and Charlemagne, which was his last effort and was left incomplete at his death in 1935.

Comparison of the two texts suggests that as early as 1925, and some claim as early as 1910, Pirenne had arrived

at his essential conclusions regarding the nature of early medieval history. The major advantage of the later work is in its fuller elaboration of details Pirenne believes will give substance to his theory. Both works start with the observation made earlier by Montalembert: the Empire was essentially a Mediterranean "commonwealth". This situation required the Empire to defend its economy by maintaining its mastery of the sea. Since to Pirenne the economy of a nation is the best and perhaps only important measure of well being, he is willing to disregard political, social and cultural events as indicators of Rome's "fall".[24]

Scattered depositions of emperors do not inform one of the fortunes of the Empire, just as political control of the West did not mean de-Romanization, as Bury and Dill had clearly established. The civilization of the Empire "outlived its authority." "The Germanic tribes were unable, and in fact did not want, to do without it. They barbarized it, but they did not consciously germanize it."[25] Important Roman institutions such as the Church and certain political structures, the law and language and most visibly the commercial activity of the Empire were uninterrupted by the influx or political success of the Teutons. They as much

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[24]Henri Pirenne, Medieval Cities (New York, 1925), pp. 1-6; Henri Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, trans. Bernard Miall (New York, 1963), pp. 18-19 and 68.

[25]Pirenne, Medieval Cities, p. 5.

as the Romans were interested in maintaining the order which gave wealth to the conquered civilization.[26]

In the midst of the troubles, insecurity and misery accompanying the invasions, the vitality of the ancient world suffered unmitigated decline. Thus in the seventh century a second series of invasions, those of Islam, were able to engulf much of the Mediterranean, and thereby decisively divide the world about that sea into three parts, and leaving to the Moslem the commercial and military power. So great was the impact of these invasions that they "changed the face of the world. Its [Islam's] sudden trust had destroyed ancient Europe. It had put an end to the Mediterranean commonwealth in which it had gathered strength."[27] After 732, the resources of the East no longer available to them, the center of western civilization was shifted to the north, to the minor but growing power, the Frankish Empire.[28]

In Mohammed and Charlemagne, Pirenne shows the profound influence Lot, with whom he regularly corresponded, had upon his theory. It had been necessary for Lot not only to formulate a thesis, but also to survey all aspects of a civilization to see if that thesis held true. To this mandate Pirenne was willing to comply. He responded in his

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[26]Pirenne, Medieval Cities, pp. 5-6; Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, pp. 33-45.

[27]Pirenne, Medieval Cities, p. 15.

[28]Pirenne, Medieval Cities, pp. 15-18; Pirenne Mohammed and Charlemagne, pp. 147-64.

final study of the period with various chapters devoted to intellectual, cultural and social parallels to his general theory.

Beginning in the third century the classical world entered into a period of long and continuous decline. The invasions in no way initiated this decline although they may have helped to perpetuate it. The attitude of the barbarians was the same towards the intellectual and cultural affairs as it had been towards the political or economic system. They wished to maintain the existing order of things. Scholars before, during and after the invasions read "no literature but the traditional literature."[29] After the third century there continued a common interest in the study of grammar and rhetoric, and in the use of Latin both in the ancient and in the new monastic schools. At the same time the efforts of the writers were directed either to preserving or to emulating the "traditional literature", assuring continuity with ancient thought.

> In short the invasions did not modify the character of the intellectual life in the basin of the western Mediterranean. It we cannot say that literature continued to flourish, it did at least continue to vegetate. . .although no new element made its appearance until the moment when the influence of the Anglo-Saxons began to make itself felt. The decadence of this literature was manifest, but the old tradition survived. But the contribution of the Germans to this life of the intellect was nil.[30]

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[29]Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, pp. 118-19. Pirenne refuses to become more explicit on this as to what constituted traditional literature.

[30]Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, p. 123.

Pirenne makes no effort to apologize for the "Dark Ages". It is his theory that "the Frankish Empire was fated to lay the foundations of the Europe of the Middle Ages. But the mission which it fulfilled had as an essential prior condition the overthrow of the traditional world-order."[31]

It would appear that Pirenne's sole purpose in his brief sketches of the Church, art and the 'secular character of society' was to demonstrate, as he had with literature the continuous Roman constitution of western culture until the eighth century. The personnel of the Church, for example, was not only Roman but recruited from the aristocracy. Monasticism was a creation of the Mediterranean world, and was also peopled by the Latins when it began its conversion of the north. "The home of living Christianity" remained in the south, where the Romanized and "highly cultivated" missionaries such as "Augustine and his companions" were trained. Of the new Christian literature Pirenne admits a rather singular departure from the past. Nonetheless it had originated in "Romania", and was used to edify the clergy and common folk with respect to the Christian-Roman tradition.[32]

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[31]Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, pp. 17-18. Moss makes the same contention in 1935, but for the Catholic historians such as Schnurer and Pickman, the overthrow of the "traditional world-order" must occur in the fifth century to be consistent with the "new" status of the Church, and to throw the Church into proper historical relief.

[32]Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, pp. 124-29.

As in other respects the Germanic invasions did not precipitate any change in the art of the Mediterranean basin. The Germans once installed in these lands did not evolve an original art, as had the Irish and the Anglo-Saxons in their distant kingdoms to the north.

> In short, the wholly Oriental art which came by way of the Mediterranean encountered the art of the Barbarians, which was also Oriental, so that there was a mutual interpenetration, the art coming from the South exercising a certain predominance, as its technique was more highly developed.[33]

Pirenne has but one difficulty here, and that is assuming Oriental art is what he says it is, to explain how the obvious absence of classical influences corraborates his general theory. His solution involves two assumptions. After the third century classical art forms were largely replaced by the oriental mixture most evident in Byzantine art in the later centuries. And secondly, this continuity of oriental influences was interrupted once a break was affected with Constantinople under the Carolingians, and the Irish and Anglo-Saxon arts assume greater importance.[34]

As Pirenne's books appeared in the 1920's they had an electric effect on the historical scene. As had Fustel de Coulanges in 1872, Pirenne challenged the conventional. His studies demanded intense and immediate attention. For many there was much that was suspicious about the simplicity of

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[33]Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, p. 132.

[34]Pirenne, Mohammed and Charlemagne, pp. 129-135.

Pirenne thesis, and others were stimulated by its freshness. Thus a debate which still in progress today began.

There is little doubt as to the importance of this debate. It is not over recondite or insignificant issues. Generally it represents an older position being challenged by a younger generation. The older position is sympathetic with the humanistic position of yore, giving all possible credit to the Graeco-Roman civilization, and is hostile or at best neutral towards Christianity. For Lot and his predecessors it was a tragedy that classical models were compromised by the barbarian. Resulting from this attitude was a rather indifferent attention given to the early Middle Ages, and a steadfast refusal to give to it a character of its own. For some it was the mere extension of the empire (Bury, Dill, Sandys and most notably Pirenne) and for others a period of confused change and chaos justly earned by the barbarian who had interfered with the workings of the ancient world (Lot). Nothing of value was accomplished by the barbarian (Dill, Sandys and Lot), and for Pirenne they seemingly did not even exist.

Contemporaries of Lot and Pirenne made a serious effort to combine the better points of both positions into a cogent interpretation of what happened during the early medieval period. It seemed fairly evident that there had been decline in the intellectual and cultural standards of the classical world after the third century, but that this

decline did not involve a complete collapse until some later date. It seemed to these historians, to be investigated in the next few pages, that they must find some date after which the collapse is rather marked or at least unrelieved, and to provide some meaning for the period preceding that collapse.

Among the first to address himself to these problems was the American historian Edward Kennard Rand, a Professor of Latin at Harvard. Not very familiar with Lot or Pirenne, and in any case concerned with a problem they largely ignored, he looked to Taylor and Charles Homer Haskins for inspiration. He found in Taylor the outlines of a solution to the dilemma suggested above. That is, the period of greatest import to the understanding of early medieval history is the Patristic Age which had immediately preceded it. Most particularly he thought he found in the Christian fathers of that age the foundations for succeeding centuries.

It is because these Church fathers viewed the world in which they lived as in need of serious and thorough reform, that they overhauled 'Antique' culture, transforming it into a culture anticipating that of the Middle Ages. As events would have it these fathers were in a position of intellectual and religious leadership for nearly two hundred years. They assumed during that time the role formerly reserved for pagans in directing the avenues of thought, education and culture of the Romans. Thus their ideas concerning the reform of ancient learning were destined to

be influential in succeeding years, and because of an absence of creativity in these areas after the sixth century for generations to come.[35]

As reformers, the Churchmen of the Patristic Age expressed certain prejudices. They were hostile to the more obvious vestiges of paganism, as exampled by their condemnation of rhetoric, philosophy and heresy. Consequently much of their literature was in the form of tracts against the pagans and against the intellectual tradition from whence they came. But hostility is only the most visible manifestation of deeper urge to remake society after their own image. Thus to convert the unbeliever, apologetics and other propagandist letters were in general evidence. And for those who were making up a rapidly growing majority, a huge corpus of literature designed to improve their Christianity was written. Since earlier Christian literature was largely defensive and reflected the minority position of the church, it was necessary to create vestiges of church organization on a literary as well as physical plane. To accomplish this Augustine, Ambrose and Jerome with a supporting cast of dozens wrote volumes defining church dogma. But it soon became apparent that in an age replete with heresy that too few Christians were being 'educated' for the world of a

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[35] Edward Kennard Rand, Founder of the Middle Ages (New York, 1957), pp. 34-69.

Christian, and those who were being educated were often corrupted by the paganism which permeated the schools.[36]

For Jerome and Augustine the source of corruption was the schools themselves, but others perceived the problem to be in the content of the education they provided. Classical education had a rather fixed and universal program. Included in its curriculum were the basics of the 'trivium' and 'quadrivium'. To teach these subjects the pagan educators relied upon classical literature. The Christian reformers directed their attack upon this non-Christian literature, hoping to replace it with textbooks of their own authorship. The most successful of the "Christian" texts was that of Martianus Capella, De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae. By making such substitutions the sources of pagan thought were gradually eliminated, which explains in part the great decline in pagan Latin literature during the fifth and sixth centuries. As the pagan content of the schools was reduced, however, the viability of the schools themselves suffered. It became necessary, and for most Christians, desirable, to found new schools supported by the rapidly growing monastic foundations in the West. It was to accomodate this revolution in education that Benedict and Cassiodorus made room within their rules for the intellectual training of monks.[37]

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[36]Rand, pp. 50-181.

[37]Rand, pp. 218-251.

On a different plane, but nonetheless under the influence of Taylor and Rand and certain specialists such as de Labriolle, de Wulf and Gilson, is A History of Christian Thought by Arthur Cushman McGiffert. By means of extended essays on each of several Christian fathers representative of their age, McGiffert demonstrates in greater and more profound detail the conclusions drawn by Rand. Anticipating Pickman he assigns to Augustine a pivotal role in Christian thought. Although Augustine belonged to the Ancient world, it was due to his influence that the spirit of Middle Ages replaced that of antiquity. In response to his provoking arguments man ceased to be the center of the universe. In place of man was God, who used men as His tools to carry out His will. Man's end in life was to glorify Him, their greatest ambition to serve Him. Hence the Church as the institution in which God was glorified, and the monastery where He was served became the most important social institutions after the fifth century.[38]

As the importance of the Church was enhanced controversy arose over ways in which it could be better used to serve as means for man's personal salvation. When the effort to subordinate the Church to the needs of individuals failed in the fifth century, then the medieval Church emerged triumphant under Gregory. Gregory encouraged the powers of the Church be increased so that it might best

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[38]Arthur Cushman McGiffert, History of Christian Thought (New York, 1933), II, pp. 71-125.

convey the Christian ideal to men everywhere. Gregory simplified Church doctrine so that it can be taught to the poorly learned. He emphasized homilies, a Pastoral Rule morality and monasticism as means of missionary education. Thus by 604 Church dogma was clear and the position of the Church comprehensively defined. Church dogma and doctrine were fixed by Gregory after Augustinian and Patristic teachings. As sources for his theology, and consequently that of the early Middle Ages, Gregory looked to the various Councils, the Church fathers (especially Augustine) and to the notions of the people (such as angels, demons, extreme piety and excessive good works).[39]

After the death of Gregory, McGiffert resumes his narrative with John Scotus Erigena and Anselm. He argues that the century and half that he skips did not produce a significant theologian of the Church, and that in fact "there was comparatively little theological activity."[40] With a sentence he dismisses, as had Rand, and as will Duckett, the practical theologies of Bede and Boniface, and the whole of the northern missionary movement, without which it is difficult to imagine the Carolingian Renaissance. His attitude towards the seventh and eighth centuries closely resembles that of de Wulf and Gilson, Catholics who were writing about this same time. They, as had Taylor,

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[39]McGiffert, II, pp. 144-65.

[40]McGiffert, II, p. 178.

focused their attention upon the Middle Ages. With this later period, McGiffert demonstrates his affection for Collingwood and for Burckhardt. He describes the Middle Ages as "transitional", "diverse", "original", "creative" and "fresh". It was "a time of growth and change on a large scale and the greater part of it was marked by uncommon intellectual activity."[41] The sources for the Middle Ages are to be found in the Patristic Age and transmitted to it by the Church, the single vehicle of learning after the sixth century.

With perhaps greater emphasis on Lot, but nonetheless ardent in his defense of the role of the church in the creation of the civilization of the Middle Ages is Edward Motley Pickman. An historian whose format is like that used by Dill, he is avid in his use of footnotes and dependent upon traditional authorities. He blends Lot and Pirenne with Duchesne and the Catholic historians of the nineteenth century. He is anxious to hold a course independent from that established by the 'scientific' histories of Dill and Bury. For example, he remarks that in his day it was popular not to select any specific date for the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the Middle Ages. He goes on to suggest that any date between 400 and 476 would be equally meaningful. As Lot had established, incipient feudalism, disorganization in the

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[41]McGiffert, II, p. 165.

government of the Empire, economic depression, barbarian influence and Christianity are easily discernable in the fourth century. And as Pirenne suggested, a political papacy, Merovingian decline, and the ascendency of Islam were equally poignant features of the eighth century. Pickman discerns that between these two centuries it is evident that the Middle Ages began. But since beginnings are a continuous process the significant point of departure is not in the origins of the Middle Ages, but in the time the ancient world began its irrevocable decline. The approximate measure for such a decline is for Pickman found in Roman intelligence as opposed to Pirenne and economics.[42]

Thus the contemporaneousness of the great invasions of the fifth century with the death of Augustine is to Pickman the key to understanding when Rome "fell". Augustine, "the most brilliant, profound, and enlightened Greek or Roman since Aristotle," directed his City of God, "that last great work of antiquity,"[43] to the problem of the invasions, and his death seemingly signals their success. Thus Pickman writes, "I like to think the Western Empire fell on that day of the year 430 when, in Hippo, besieged by the Vandals, her bishop Augustine died."[44] With

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[42]Edward Motley Pickman, The Mind of Latin Christendom (New York, 1938), I, pp. 288-89.

[43]Pickman, I, p. 288.

[44]Pickman, I, p. 289.

vengeance Pickman substitutes a figure great in intellectual history for the symbol formerly assigned to a political figure, Romulus Augustulus, or to an economic event, the closing of the Mediterranean.

Pickman consistently substitutes intellectual and cultural events for the often overplayed developments in political or economic spheres, for this is the substance of his thesis. The political hence material empire of the Romans decayed, fell apart, disappeared, and in its place arose the universal empire of the Church. The former had lost its purpose, its only contribution was that it made possible the rapid expansion of Christianity. Its disappearance was of no great loss, but to the contrary, it was a gain, for it freed Christianity from the Mediterranean orientation of the Empire so that it could convert the European world.

For Pickman the impersonal and material nature of the Roman Empire represents the insignificance of these factors in a truly Christian world. Just as the ideas which live after Augustine symbolize the importance of Christian Patristic thought to the creation of a new world order. Indeed Pickman carries the investigation of Rand to its logical conclusion. If the Patristic age has importance it lies in the evolution it wrought upon the minds of men. Rand limited his argument to education and poetry. Pickman believes that the Church fathers remolded

the whole makeup of man and gave to future centuries a "mind of latin Christendom".[45]

Yet a fourth study of the sixth century came from the pen of Eleanor Shipley Duckett in 1938. Again the emphasis is on the old giving away to the new, but this time due emphasis is given to the divergent participation in things religious among the Italian, French and Irish. Her theme is taken from Ker: "almost everything that is common to the Middle Ages, and much that lasts beyond the Renaissance, is to be found in the authors of the sixth century."[46] That this theme is common to Taylor, Rand and Pickman has already been demonstrated. It was Duckett's purpose to study the impact diverse national attitudes had upon the sixth century writers as opposed to presuming all belonged to the same universal order of thought as Rand and Pickman evidently did. For as early as the sixth century the spirit of nations had supplanted the universal order of the Empire. In all the nations a "new life" was in the making in the sixth century and nowhere was this better revealed than in things religious.

Arians were everywhere converted to Catholicism, the Irish missionary converted Northern England and Augustine southern England, Monasticism became a fixed feature of life, and received its "rule" from Benedict. The medieval

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[45]Pickman, I, pp. 300-320.

[46]Eleanor Shipley Duckett, Gateway to the Middle Ages (Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 101.

lyric, legend, myth and narrative were evidenced in the literature of the sixth century. Boethius presaged the scholasticism of medieval philosophy and Cassiodorus experimented with the medieval scriptorium. Finally Gregory elevated the papacy to a position of leadership approximating that achieved later by Hildebrand.

For the writers of this century, and there were many, the ancient ideals still lingered, as if a hangover from the night before. The poetry of Fortunatus resembled the ancients in meter and in attraction for Virgil, but he was unable to write classical poetry worthy of the name. In his emphasis on accent and rhyme, his deemphasis of quantity and his preoccupation with themes of Christian activity and the Church he anticipated the Latin poetry of the Middle Ages.[47]

Duckett does not agree with Ker that it was poor Latin that made poor writers of the early medievalist. Rather she follows Taylor when she remarks of Fortunatus,

> Yet for him, as for his fellows, this Latin finds a compensation in a freshness of joy in living, physical and spiritual, that is stimulating in its picture of humanity, a reawakening to new life that the dying age of the Empire could never know.[48]

As admirable as her understanding of the sixth century is, she like Rand shows no sympathy for the age immediately following.

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[47]Duckett, pp. 271-312.

[48]Duckett, p. 311.

> Cassiodorus, Ennodius, Boethius: these are the three last sounds from the train of Italy's culture before it plunges into this long tunnel of the Dark Ages. Flashes of light may occasionally illuminate its buried course, but they do little save reveal the darkness.[49]

Many years later (1959) Duckett balanced this judgment of the seventh and eighth centuries by praising the monks for their noble and saintly qualities in The Wandering Saints of the Early Middle Ages. In her earlier work she is attuned to the monastic movement in the sixth century as symbolic of things to come. Stimulated by Rand's thesis that the monastery represented the "new" education of the Middle Ages, she narrates the evolution of the monastic movement in the sixth century, emphasizing the formation of a monastic ideal conducive to learning and the study of letters. The development of a rule for this purpose is studied from Severinus, Cassiodorus, Cassian and Caesarius to Benedict. Parallel developments in Ireland gave ground for the substance of medieval monastic life when the two movements met at Whitby. The English monks gained from the Romans a rule and from the Irish a missionary bent and a fervor for learning.[50]

As the above pages indicate the impact of a World War ended the nineteenth century reliance upon the authority offered by nations. Rarely after World War I do historians

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[49]Duckett, pp. 211-12.

[50]Duckett, pp. 358-531; Eleanor Shipley Duckett, The Wandering Saints of the Early Middle Ages (New York, 1959), pp. 15-29.

orient their writings about their national prejudices. The War also seems to have terminated the positive school of historical writing, and introduced with respect to early medieval history a firm conviction that the period had been transitional in nature. Lot for example, maintained the transition to have begun in the third century, but he found the period to be a regression from previously high standards, and noted the decline has no point at which it appeared to stop. Pirenne thought of the period as an extension of the later Empire, which continued without interruption until the end of the seventh century.

In an effort to find some terminal point for the decline generally observed to have begun as early as the third century, Rand, Pickman, McGiffert and Duckett suggested the Patristic Age delimited the period of transition after which collapse had set in for a period of time. During the Patristic Age a new culture was introduced to replace the decaying Empire, and evidence for this new culture can be found in literature, education and especially in the development of monasticism and the Roman Church. Quite possibly the most important century in this transitional period is the sixth century during which Gregory and Benedict set the tone of religious thought for the next several centuries.

CHAPTER IV

MODIFICATIONS OF THE TRANSITIONAL INTERPRETATION

Within the decade in which Pirenne died his point of view, that the early Middle Ages were a mere extension of the ancient world, was substantially altered. But what was offered as a replacement more closely resembled his position than that of Lot, who had maintained the early Middle Ages to be a retrogression compared to classical culture. Among those historians following Lot and Pirenne there existed a tendency to think solely in terms of transition, but this concept is not so insignificant as it first appears. Transition implies change, and refutes Pirenne's contention that the Empire lasted to the end of the seventh century. But transition does not imply the changes that took place to be sudden, or even dramatic. To the contrary, and this is the essence of the point of view represented by the following historians, there were no dramatic improvements or innovations just as there had been no precipitous decline after or during the invasions.

It had been the purpose of Catholic writers to justify the involvement of the Church in worldly affairs since certain Romans had associated Christianity with the sack of their city in 410. In this task they were rarely and only temporarily successful. After the sixteenth century and most obviously in the eighteenth century they

were beleaguered by a host of anti-clerical writers, but defeat has often only encouraged greater efforts. One such effort is that of Gustav Schnürer, who in three volumes traces the relationship of Catholicism to culture throughout the thousand year history of the medieval Church. The first of these volumes appeared in 1925 in German and in 1956 in an English translation and represents the narrative devoted to the early Middle Ages.

In Schnürer's opinion the Church has consistently advanced the intellectual achievements of mankind, and hence has long associated itself with man's cultural life. Thus his history of the Church and Culture in the Middle Ages is primarily a narrative of how the Church advanced man's "intellectual mastery of the goods at his disposal."[1] Schnürer depicts the early Middle Ages as a period distinct from antiquity. During this era the Church, freed from the limitations the more powerful Roman state had imposed upon it, created a civilization anticipatory of our own. From its inception Christianity brought forth practices which evidenced its ability to bridge over differences between peoples and nations, for Christian doctrine gave a new basis for a "more profound and complete civilization."[2] Romans and barbarians alike were encouraged to become children of God, to submit their souls to the help of

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[1]Gustav Schnürer, Church and Culture in the Middle Ages, trans. G. J. Undreiner (Paterson, New Jersey, 1956), p. ix.

[2]Schnürer, p. 5.

divine grace. They were taught that before God all were equal and hence relationships between men were given a new dignity a concept that Burns and Bark adopt to suggest is the basis for contemporary democracies.

Recognizing the need to provide an alternative to Christianity as a cause of Rome's fall, Schnürer follows Lot in noting that the factors which doomed the Roman state to destruction were discernable as early as the third century. These factors can be found in the body politic, the military system, the economic situation and in the legal system; that is so generally and so deeply there was no way in which they could be remedied. It is therefore incorrect to say the Roman state disappeared because "the Christians failed to fulfill their duties; on the contrary, it was due to the Christians that whatever Rome possessed of permanent value was preserved."[3] Furthermore, Schnürer argues, the Church would not have been able to save from catastrophe the important cultural features of the ancient world "if the fossilized Roman Empire and corrupt Roman society had continued to exist."[4]

As the Empire visibly suffered "decay unto death" it became the dream of certain Christians to build a new Rome which would fulfill the Christian mission. Such was the purpose of Ambrose and Augustine, states Schnürer. The efforts of the Church fathers would have been for naught

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[3]Schnürer, P. 24.

[4]Schnürer, p. 27.

in Schnürer's estimation had not the Church taken custody of their writings and faithfully transmitted them to later generations. The crucial period came at the close of the fifth century when a Roman power no longer existed outside the Church to defend the culture of antiquity. This crucial period lasted to the eighth century.[5]

Aside from the Church of Rome, the Benedictine order established in the late sixth century was the institution central to the maintenance of culture and the preservation of the legacy of the ancients. For a time, from the fifth to seventh centuries, the Christian Irish were the missionaries of the Church, and their work is no less important because they did not follow Roman usages. With Gregory the Great, however, the Benedictines increasingly became instrumental in the conversion of the North, a step which necessarily preceded the rise of an medieval Christian order. Schnürer credits the Anglo-Saxon monks with the conversion of Germany, the reform of the Frankish Church and eventually bringing into close union the converted peoples of Europe and the papacy.[6]

The important juncture in Schnürer's narrative is reached as Boniface dies and Charlemagne assumes the leadership of the Frankish kingdom. The mid-eighth century is important, for at this time "the cultural

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[5]Schnürer, p. 111.

[6]Schnürer, pp. 142-90 and 287-336.

community of the West had come into being."[7] It is also important for it followed hard on the severance of the Papacy with its Mediterranean orientation. Without the papal support that was freely given to Charlemagne there would have been little possibility for the flowering of Christendom in the Middle Ages.

Clearly the themes of Schnürer stand in bold relief against the cataclysmic attitudes of Gibbon or Lot, and are in contrast with Pirenne's thesis that the declining Empire endured until the eighth century. Schnürer does not believe it correct to assess the cultural level of the early Middle Ages as low. Furthermore he believes emphasis should be placed upon the superior culture that during this time came into being.

Christopher Dawson, a Catholic of Welsh descent, wrote The Making of Europe in 1931, the same year in which Lot's book was published in English. His study takes on an approach directly contrary to Lot's, however. Where Lot emphasized a comprehensive narrative of facts, Dawson emphasizes a teleological drive towards an end. Where Lot offers balance and multifarious attack, Dawson overwhelms one with a single point. As one of the neo-romanticists, Lot demonstrates the best of early twentieth century scholarship. Dawson on the other hand is influenced

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[7]Schnürer, p. 418.

deeply by Croce and Collingwood. He disdains to write of the rise of Church and Christianity as Schnürer did, but aspires rather to provide a history "of the particular culture that is ancestoral to our own."[8] As a student of Collingwood he believes modern man to be "conditioned" by his historical past, and particularly by the nineteen centuries since Christ. His specific interest is in the period during which the European peoples came into contact with higher civilization of Rome and acquired the creative consciousness which today is recognized as European civilization. This later term does not have the abstract meaning given to it by Voltaire, it is a "concrete social organism."[9]

For reasons also observable in the writings of Lot, Pirenne and Schnürer, Dawson has an expressed dislike for history written from the nationalist point of view. This point of view had in his estimation permeated all levels of thought so that each nation was claiming for itself a self-sufficiency that in truth it did not possess before, but even more certainly after the War. He condemns nationalism for undermining the vitality of European life. Although the League of Nations represented an international spirit it frustrated any real attempts to achieve any sort of European unity such as that accomplished in our time

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[8]Christopher Dawson, The Making of Europe (New York, 1963), p. 19.

[9]Dawson, The Making of Europe, p. 22.

by the Common Market. Furthermore during the depression, nationalism was encouraged by the economic rivalry arising among desparate nations. As Dawson expressed it in another book, Understanding Europe, "Europe is a society of peoples; that Europe is a spiritual unity, based on the tradition of Christian culture."[10] Thus the true nature of Europe is unity, not the national state. In order to reject the false impression given by the national historians of the nineteenth century, he thought it necessary to rewrite history with the "European point of view."[11]

In the long history of Europe there was but one age in which Europe achieved a degree of unity, and that was the age of 'Res publica Christiana'. For Dawson earlier events were directed with the sole purpose of achieving this "medieval unity". As to the particulars of this achievement he provides an outline which closely resembles that given by Taylor. The several ingredients that were to go into the making of Europe were politically the spirit of the Empire, religiously the community of Christianity, intellectually the learning of the classics, and socially the customs of the barbarians. These four elements first combined into a unity in the Carolingian period, but that unity was premature and did not last when

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[10]Christopher Dawson, Understanding Europe (Garden City, New York, 1960), p. 6.

[11]Dawson, Making of Europe, p. 22.

pressed by a new set of invasions.[12] A unity of greater permenance was not established until the eleventh century. As Dawson views it:

> The previous revivals of culture in the age of Justinian and that of Charlemagne had been partial and temporary, and they had been followed by periods of decline, each of which seemed to reduce Europe to a lower stage of barbarism and confusion than it had known before. But with the eleventh century a movement of progress begins which was to continue almost without intermission down to modern times.[13]

For Dawson the great watershed of European history is the beginning of the Middle Ages when Christendom "first became conscious of itself as a society of peoples with common moral values and common spiritual aims."[14] Dawson represents Western Culture before this watershed as "pre-Christian unity" and after it as "post-Christian unity". He hopes his use of these terms will clearly indicate he considers the Christian Middle Ages as a great deal more than an interruption of a normally classical-secular culture. For him the history of civilization is centered in that thousand years in which Christianity was the dominant cultural force. Events prior to then were those of preparation and those which follow deterioration.

Western civilization was born with the Greeks, and to it they gave many of its intellectual and social traditions.

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[12]Dawson, Making of Europe, pp. 83-99 and 187-202.

[13]Dawson, Making of Europe, p. 239.

[14]Dawson, Understanding Europe, p. 33.

As the Romans built their empire under a common law and uniform military system they absorbed the Greek idea of man and the Graeco-Roman conception of a humanist culture that is still recognizable in Europe today. After the third century the life and vitality till then conspicuous in the Graeco-Roman world were drained by a series of crises.[15] Soon the Empire died, but not before it performed an important service for the history of Western civilization. It provided the sociological and juridical basis for the organization of a new religious society, which resembled the Roman structure in its ecclesiastical hierarchy and its canon law. Surviving the collapse of the Empire, the Western Church became heir to the Graeco-Roman tradition of culture, although by this time it had undergone much transformation. The invasions by the barbarians were in most respects destructive, and greatly reduced the already declining level of culture. But inasmuch as they destroyed the "complicated machinery of the imperial bureaucracy" and thereby put an end to those Roman institutions which tended to crush human initiative, the invasions were positive.[16]

With the invasions of the fifth century a new stage in the development of the West was initiated. In the succeeding centuries the barbarians were converted, and through the Church the traditions of the former Mediterranean

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[15]Dawson, Making of Europe, p. 83.

[16]Dawson, Making of Europe, p. 87.

culture were transmitted to the new converts. However unsteady the establishment of a new Christian society at first sight appears, the foundations were nonetheless firmly laid. By cooperation between Church and barbarian kings, and by the missionary activity of the Irish and Anglo-Saxon monks, Christian culture and education was extended to lands where no external evidence of civilization had hitherto existed. Central to Christian growth was the Frankish kingdom. Outside this rather limited area either the Roman influence was insufficient, as in England or Eastern Europe, or too great, as in Byzantium or Italy, to permit all the requisite elements to meet on equal terms and thereby become fused into the desirable unity.[17]

Dawson provides a curious admixture of Lot and Pirenne that will again appear in the works to be considered later. He notes, as did Lot, that neither the barbarian nor the Christian stabbed the Romans in the back. He wishes, as did Pirenne, to prove the idea of Empire was never 'destroyed'. True, many of its ancient characteristics disappear, but as an idea, a moving cultural force, it lived on as the co-equal to the Church or barbarian "nation" throughout the Middle Ages, and from time to time emerged to dominant once again the governance of peoples. A similar thesis will be adopted by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill.

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[17]Dawson, Making of Europe, pp. 93-94.

Wallace-Hadrill views the events after the third century as transitional. During the transition the barbarians that invaded the Empire gradually acquired what they considered to be a place in the Roman sun. This is true of Clovis in the sixth century and of Charlemagne in the eighth and early ninth centuries. Wallace-Hadrill observes at the closing of his The Barbarian West that:

> Historical interests and imaginative background do not radically change in Western Europe during the period covered in this essay. That is why it has unity. Hence, as at the beginning so at the end, the vivid contrast stands; early medieval men could live like barbarians; but they could think that they were Romans.[18]

As Dill and Lot had observed in their studies, the barbarians were not aware they were destroying classical civilization, nor were the Romans always conscious of momentous changes in their way of life. Wallace-Hadrill concludes the reason for this general ignorance was the barbarian conceived himself to be an emigrant, and aspired to become a citizen of the Empire.

During the third and fourth centuries Wallace-Hadrill notes the Empire was still capable of absorbing the migrating barbarians. During the fifth century this was no longer the case, but the barbarians did not understand why and they continued to call and think of themselves as Romans. Towards

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[18] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, The Barbarian West (New York, 1962), p. 146. Mr. Wallace-Hadrill first had this book published in 1952. Since then he has written The Long-Haired Kings (New York, 1962) in which he discusses in a series of essays the impressions given by Frankish historians of the society in which they lived.

the end of the fifth century the barbarians were forced to assume actual rule of those lands in which they were living, but this in no way diminished "their resolve to behave like Romans."[19] Throughout the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries the barbarian kings continued to recognize the emperor in Constantinople, although that emperor was not accorded any real control within their kingdoms.

Another evidence of the desire of the barbarian to become Roman can be found in the literature they wrote. Cassiodorus and Boethius strove to put into Latin the classics with which they were familiar. Historians of the barbarian kingdoms wrote "in a Roman mirror."[20] When Charlemagne 'revived' the empire in the West, intellectuals sought to connect his creation with the "Christian imperium" described by Augustine as the unfulfilled objective of the later Roman Emperors.[21]

In other respects the barbarians demonstrated they thought themselves to be pursuing the Roman tradition. The first barbarian codes were attempts to imitate the available Roman models. Clovis paraded his Roman title of 'consul', and continued to use the monetary and fiscal systems of his Roman predecessors. The great respect accorded to the bishop in Rome was an outgrowth of the magic of the Roman

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[19]Wallace-Hadrill, p. 25.

[20]Wallace-Hadrill, p. 44.

[21]Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 74-97.

name. To the barbarians the Church symbolized "Romanitas". Thus when Charles was anointed emperor he surrendered his state to the superior and universal "Imperium Christianum".[22]

Wallace-Hadrill concludes the results of the barbarian invasions to be a period of transition because the barbarians were unaware of the impact their venture had upon the Empire. Throughout several centuries the barbarians believed they were maintaining the traditions of the Romans, although this was not in fact the case. Actually the barbarians disrupted the unity of the Empire, and within centuries caused complete fragmentation. Only the pacifying, unifying and civilizing efforts of the Church countered the process of atomization the barbarians had begun. The result was the creation of the "Imperium Christianum".[23]

Indication of the completeness of change in attitude towards the early Middle Ages is given by M. L. W. Laistner in a work appearing in the same year as Dawson's. Laistner could with justification lament as late as 1931 that aside from specialized treatments of topics or individuals, the early Middle Ages was a subject generally and unfortunately ignored in the English speaking world. To illustrate the counterfeit nature of the "Dark" tag pinned upon his subject, Laistner provides in Thought and Letters in Western Europe;

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[22]Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 121-136.

[23]Wallace-Hadrill, pp. 91-105.

A. D. 500-900,[24] a survey of the literature written during the early Middle Ages. To a certain extent Laistner is successor to Ker and Taylor as the apostle of medieval intellectual history. But with that their likeness ends. Laistner has without question a greater depth to his knowledge of the early Middle Ages than any of his predecessors. And he brings to his study but one conviction: the whole of this period is worthy of sound scholarship.

The focal point of Laistner's interest is the Carolingian era. This is so for two reasons. Obviously there is a greater abundance of materials to be studied during this period. But more importantly the Carolingian age represents the fruition of earlier endeavors to create an ordered world out of the collapsed Roman legacy. The developments in European thought after the fourth century are treated by Laistner in the order in which they happened. The fourth and fifth centuries in particular are characterized by their transitory nature. But in truth, Laistner presents the five centuries preceding the coronation of Charles as transitional.

Most decidedly Laistner is opposed to the cataclysmic interpretation given to the decline and fall of the Empire by Gibbon. He maintains the decline had been a gradual process, requiring at least the two hundred years between 300 and 500. The decline required several restorations,

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[24]Mr. Laistner's shorter works have been collected together under the title, Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages (Ithaca, 1957).

but as evidenced by that of the fourth century, each time a different Empire was restored. Furthermore, the myth that the Roman was either supplanted by the barbarian or was isolated by barbarian settlement has no truth. What in fact happened was a vast transference of culture from German to Roman and vice-versa. Unlike Lot, Laistner notes that pagan education and pagan letters continued to have a productive influence after the fifth century, but that they declined from lack of a popular following.[25]

Reflecting the influence of Rand in his treatment of the fourth and fifth centuries, Laistner notes the changes in education. The educational program was fixed early in the fourth century and was at that time inflexibly pagan. There were no Christian schools, so Christians were forced to receive their education, beginning with the program of the "artes", in the pagan schools. This was changed with the introduction of monasticism and monastic schools. The Christian population then had educational facilities which were also purely Christian. Meanwhile, Augustine and Jerome were reducing the high pagan content of educational literature. But as they did so, they reduced educational requirements generally, forcing a precipitous decline in learning. The last to suffer from this decline was Christian literature, which until the seventh century remained creative,

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[25]Max L. W. Laistner, Thought and Letters in Western Europe: A. D. 500-900 (Ithaca, New York, 1931), pp. 23-25.

with fairly numerous authors producing dogmatic, exegetical, homiletic and apologetic tomes.[26]

As had been the case with Rand before him, Laistner is most knowledgeable about the sixth century. Of the writers in that century he writes:

> If a man's eminence is to be estimated by the influence which his work or thoughts have exercised on succeeding generations, then assuredly Italy in the sixth century produced four men, each of whom deserves a niche in any hall of Fame.[27]

These men were, of course, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Benedict and Gregory. Cassiodorus provided that monasteries would in the seventh and eighth centuries become the repositories of culture and education, while the Benedictine rule gradually was adopted universally in the West. Between Boethius, who benefited from the last remnants of antique learning, and Gregory there was a serious decline in the cultural level of Italy which not only lowered moral standards, but at the same time promoted popular superstition. It is to this change in culture that Laistner, like McGiffert, attributes the nature of Gregory's writings. Gregory, in contrast with Augustine or Boethius, reflects rather than directs the will of the popular mind, for he, unlike them, received an education barely removed from the vulgar.[28]

With remarkable novelty Laistner continues his transitional theme beyond the sixth century.

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[26]Laistner, pp. 34-53.

[27]Laistner, p. 85.

[28]Laistner, pp. 85-112.

> While during the seventh century the continent of Western Europe was withered by a blight of intellectual sterility, a fresh and vigorous growth of culture was maturing in Ireland and Britain.[29]

This geographical shift in the center of cultural activity from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, was beyond the scope and perhaps imagination of earlier historians. At least none had been so daring as Laistner, as to point it out. Duckett, Schnürer and to a lesser extent Dawson, all writing within a few years of Laistner, do make note of Irish culture, however. The sources for Irish scholarship were imported from the continent in the fifth and sixth centuries. During the fifth century Catholicism was introduced through the person of Patrick. In the sixth century the monasteries he founded gleaned Frankish schools for secular and theological writings.

Without a doubt the Irish enthusiasm for learning was the most important feature of its monastic establishment, but the world would not have known of it had not the Irish monks exhibited another characteristic, a zeal for missionary work. This sent them into England late in the sixth century and soon to the continent itself. Columban (c. 560-615) led a small number of Irish monks from Scotland to Brittany and Burgundy, and after founding the famous abbeys at Luxeuil and at Fontaines he made his way to northern Italy and eventually to Switzerland establishing the monasteries

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[29]Laistner, p. 136.

at Bobbio and St. Gall. Laistner does not wish to maintain the Irish or English monks were exceptionally creative in the literature they most certainly did produce, but Adamnan was unexcelled in medieval hagiography. Aldhelm was the foremost poet of his day, and Bede, whom we have met before, has been widely recognized for the quality of his scholarship and literary skill.[30]

On the continent there existed aside from Isidore of Spain no exceptional examples of learned men, a fact often overemphasized by historians prior to Laistner. This remarkable absence of luminaries reflects the haggard state of education on the continent, but does not mean there was, as many claimed, a total want of it. Christianity was not at this time the antithesis of learning. It was, on the contrary, the very repository of what erudition that remained. It was the major task of the Church in the seventh and eighth centuries to spread Christianity among the still pagan barbarians; thus education was often given secondary emphasis. The numbers of missionaries involved in spreading Christianity are left unrecorded, but there are a few who were so prominent they are worth mentioning. Wilfrith and Willibrord were English monks occupied with the conversion of Frisia.

Easily most conspicuous was the Anglo-Saxon monk Wynfrith renamed by Gregory II, the Pope in 719, as Boniface. Boniface spent the thirty-five years following 719,

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[30]Laistner, pp. 136-66.

strengthening the Church, first in the vast pagan lands east of the Rhine, and then, in his last fourteen years, by re-organizing the Church of the Franks, particularly under Carloman and Pippin. His death coincided with the advent of the "epoch-making events" associated with the reign of Charles.[31]

Once Laistner reaches the Carolingians he passes beyond the introductory nature of his survey of earlier centuries to provide his endeavor with greater substance. Laistner is convinced of the renascent qualities of the Carolingian age. He believes them to represent the early fruition of the union between Church and state. But he does not, as others seem to have suggested, argue this union was without long and arduous preparation. Pirenne to the contrary, the Carolingians were extending the lessons of preceding centuries.

No one before Laistner applies the thesis of transition to the early medieval period more consistently than he. H. St. L. B. Moss, who authored The Birth of the Middle Ages 395-814 in 1935 only four years after Laistner's book had been first published, likewise thinks the four centuries after the death of Justinian to be transitional.

Governing the overview of Moss is the conclusion that the key crisis in the decline of the Empire occurred

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[31]Laistner, pp. 167-89.

in 395 with the death of Theodosius and the final division of the Empire, and the observation that the theory of evolution provides for a more reasonable explanation of events than the catastrophic explanation of the nineteenth century.

> Organic processes cannot be cleanly bisected with a stroke of the pen, and it is hardly to be expected that all forms of human activity should develop 'pari passu'.[32]

The significance of the division of the Empire after Theodosius lies not in its introduction of something radical or new, but in that it depicts the finality of this division and hence the beginning of a fact central to the following centuries: the impossibility of reuniting the Empire. As the fifth century begins the Mediterranean world was already undergoing a transition that by the seventh century found it divided into its Western, Byzantine and Moslem fragments.

During this transitional period Europe is neither ancient or medieval. In the fifth century men constructed and gave faith to an orderly universe and a scheme of salvation resembling that of the medieval world.[33] But Moss admits to the frustration of adequately depicting the cultural changes,

> It is useless to outline in mechanical abstractions the tendencies of the transitional age in art, literature, religion, philosophy, and science. The interaction of Christianity

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[32]H. St. L. B. Moss, The Birth of the Early Middle Ages 395-814 (London, 1963), p. iii.

[33]Moss, p. 14.

> and Paganism, the confluence of Roman, Greek, and Oriental streams of culture, can be depicted, if at all, only by copious and detailed illustration. Yet from the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries certain characteristics of the educated classes may be drawn; an elegant pedantry, a vague liberalism, a watery humanity, a fluid pantheism, and above all, a vast superstition, creeping up from the lower classes as rationalism decayed.[34]

What is ancient, what is medieval within this mixture is not only obscure, but a moot point to Moss. All that is possible to distinguish is a beginning of this transitional period in the late fourth century and its closing in the early eighth with the death of Charlemagne in the west.

Moss offers an illustration of the ancient-medieval mixture of the transitional early Middle Ages by tracing the origins of feudalism to sixth century Italy. He thinks it unrealistic to claim Italy to be feudal at that early date, but he does suggest that "continual war conditions transformed the civil machinery of ancient Rome into medieval feudal dispositions."[35] As the central power of the Roman or Byzantine state wanes it is replaced in Italy and also in France by a feudal system.[36] Alongside the rising feudatories is the expansion of papal power under Gregory, and of Christianity under the monkish missionary. Thus in the seventh century Moss observes that, "out of the chaos of invasion, the medieval world of Europe is

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[34]Moss, p. 32.

[35]Moss, p. 128.

[36]Moss, pp. 130-31.

beginning to take form and substance."[37] It only remained for the Papacy and the Frank to unite in the form of the Empire to make manifest the Middle Ages.

In a series of incisive arguments Moss rejects as erroneous the thesis of several of those authors previously discussed. This is not incidental to Moss, for he is one of a new generation of historians who wish to make serious revision of the generation of Pirenne and Lot. With respect to the long standing contention of Fustel de Coulanges and Pirenne that the invasions did not seriously affect Gallo-Roman continuity, Moss makes the distinction, drawn earlier by Dill, that the Gallo-Roman tradition was superficial, and gradually discarded by the Franks in practice. He likewise rejects Pirenne's thesis that the commercial traffic on the Mediterranean remained intact and significant after the invasions and until closed by the rise of Islamic seapower. He shows no favor towards nineteenth century association of the Teuton with freedom and democracy, nor with Schnürer's argument that Christianity introduced any essentially democratic principles. The barbarian kings strove unconsciously towards a feudal constitution, and the Church was inclined towards a theocracy. Both were willing to join in administrating the new kingdoms.[38]

Moss chose the permanent division of the Empire after 395 as an exemplary event, for throughout the transitional

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[37]Moss, p. 142.

[38]Moss, pp. 143, 203-05, 245 and 250-51.

period which follows, existing institutions always resemble some part of the Empire when it had been whole. Economically, the system of Mediterranean-wide trade is replaced by local self-sufficiency. Politically, the Empire becomes a group of 'Germano-Roman' states. Educationally, the pagan schools with their emphasis on rhetorical training for wide flung pagan intelligentsia disappeared after the invasions. The pagan schools were supplemented by monastic schools which were a part of closed society and offered no opportunity for secular learning. Artistically, the massive imperial style of the Later Empire gave way to local and non-Roman traditions. In peaceful co-existence there flourished flexible Celtic patterns, huge Teutonic jewelry, fanciful Scandinavian wood and metal crafts and Christian art. As cultural standards weakened in the fourth and fifth centuries experiments in literary models gave rise to greater "self-expression in the broad emotional effects of strongly expressed rhythms."[39] Since the first century the impact of oriental patterns of worship had been strong, and this was no less true until the late sixth century. But the West was from the beginning more legalistic and concrete. It gave greater emphasis to the personality and the grace gained for man by Christ's life than the East did. Thus as the two grew apart politically religious ties were likewise gradually loosened.[40]

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[39]Moss, p. 254.

[40]Moss, pp. 242-60.

Learning after the sixth century had but one purpose and that was to enable ecclesiastics to perform their duties. These duties demanded a considerable knowledge, and learning was further fostered by the secure and peaceful conditions of the monastic life. The "extraordinary achievement" of scholarly monks were unique in early medieval society as the lay would no longer attend schools and were for the most part hostile to learning. But the monks were not alone able to halt the great decline in learning which had occurred since the third century. In the third century the full resources of classical civilization were still available; in following centuries they were increasingly more limited, and the Church helped to reduce and dilute the supply. Creative thought ceased early in the fifth century as tastes turned to grammars, anthologies, epitomes and works of reference. There was a "definite break-down" of culture in France and in Italy by the close of the sixth century.[41]

Although the Church had been victorious over the pagan religions of the Empire long before Theodosius died, and successfully supplanted the schismatic Arians in the sixth century, Europe remained imperfectly Christianized well into medieval times. The difficulty in suppressing the strong undercurrent of paganism is attested to in Carolingian and related documents. And learning, which

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[41]Moss, pp. 250-266.

would prove to be the only effective antidote, was only imperfectly achieved.

To the lasting credit of Moss he dispels the virtuous image assigned to the early Middle Ages by well meaning but prejudiced historians. Unfortunately Moss demonstrates an unwillingness to consider the vast Christian literature of the post-classical period as a means by which medieval culture can be discovered. He believes literature must be measured against the achievements of the Greeks. By making a rather narrow definition of what constitutes superior thought and culture, he falls into the same mistake made by Lot and Gibbon. All three men fail to appreciate a literature or a culture designed to advance a civilization which is not classical in orientation. Since the nature of early medieval culture is Patristic and unmistakably Christian, Moss is unable to conceive what is the central feature of the society whose history he wishes to survey. He is consistent with his contemporaries in that he understands the period to be transitional, but he is unable to evaluate the nature of the changes, or to give to them any positive character. Moss is by no means alone in defining transition to mean change without advancement. This is also the position adopted by the next historian to be discussed.

In recent years attempts to provide textbooks for the precocious youths of today have often led to curious productions in which the scholar disguises his knowledge

among chapters of necessarily borrowed ideas imperfectly fitted into a whole. Such problems limit the usefulness of The Mind of the Middle Ages A. D. 200-1500,, An Historical Survey by Frederick B. Artz. His is an informative object lesson in the merits and limitations of 'synoptic' writing. While on the one hand he hopes to provide an overview of a period and a subject discussed only in scattered monographs, on the other he recalls the uninformed superficiality so often cultivated by generations seemingly in too great of a hurry to get anywhere. There is nonetheless, something to be learned from the synoptic and obviously eclectic character of The Mind of the Middle Ages.

Artz has gleaned from a rather wide assortment of creative historians the substance of his attitude towards his topic; a reconstruction of the sources and individuals that together represent to us the thought of medieval culture. There are strong overtones of Taylor, Lot and Moss, and occasional suggestions of Sandys, Rand, McGiffert and Laistner.within his text. Each was chosen for the non-controversial nature of its ideas. They are "safe" historians of the transitional school.

Like Lot, Artz recognizes the foundations of the Middle Ages to date in certain fields from the third century forward. Artz comments for example, of art in the third and fourth centuries as the period in which,

> The classical style of Greece and Rome was being transformed into the transcendental style of the Middle Ages. Art, like much of the rest of classical civilization, became medieval before it became Christian.[42]

The crucial transformation lasted the whole of the Patristic age, which ended with Augustine's death in 430. As Pickman had argued Augustine was followed by the barbarian invasions and the subsequent breakdown of Roman government, communication and commerce. "Western Europe sank slowly into a backward argicultural localism and into a twilight of culture."[43] It took four centuries for the decline to resolve itself meanwhile reaching its lowest level. Eventually some signs of cultural revival appear in the tenth and eleventh century.

> The lack of educational facilities and of intellectual communication, except as they were maintained in some monastic centers, brought on a tremendous drop in the intellectual level. Culturally Latin Christendom, like a ruined family that could no longer maintain its old dwelling, came to live in a few rooms of the cellar.[44]

Latin Christendom, a term Artz inherits from Pickman, is used here to describe the culture of the early Middle Ages as a blend of classical and Christian.[45]

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[42]Frederick B. Artz, The Mind of the Middle Ages, A. D. 200-1500 (New York, 1953), p. 89.

[43]Artz, p. 94.

[44]Artz, p. 180.

[45]Artz, pp. 179-83.

Remnants of the corpus of classical literature, truncated by the Church fathers barely survived in any form the barbarization of the West. Where there was learning, the textbooks substituted for the classics were Christian or were by "second-rate geographers and encyclopedists." Contributions were made by Benedict, Boethius, Cassiodorus, Isidore, Gregory and Bede, but they were the contributions of "transmitters" or of Christian thinkers. Benedict is cited for the organization he lent the monastic movement and Gregory the organization he lent to the papacy and the Church. As "founders of the medieval mind" Artz gives them credit in the manner of Rand.[46]

The summaries of art, music, poetry and history that are offered by Artz, are chapters from the learned presentations of Laistner and Moss. His emphasis in all cases is on the Christian content of early medieval themes, and the maturation of early medieval technique. This technique starts to grow with the efforts of the Church fathers, and if the growth is not rapid in the following centuries it is steady.[47]

As Artz and his predecessors Laistner, Moss and Wallace-Hadrill demonstrate, it is possible to maintain the early Middle Ages delimit that historical period marked by the transition from the ancient world to the Middle Ages. By employing the theory of transition in this manner they

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[46]Artz, pp. 183-199.

[47]Artz, pp. 201-224.

imply transition means change not involving progress or decline. The authors discussed in the previous pages actively avoid judgment of the cultural level of the early Middle Ages because they think such judgments are meaningless when applied to historical epochs not having a distinct culture to measure. The absence of a distinct culture is another way in which the foregoing historians define what they mean by transition.

Pirenne had observed that the sixth and seventh centuries should be viewed as an extension of the fourth and fifth, but this meant he thought all four centuries had a distinct culture, that of the later Empire, and thus he did not consider them to be transitional. Laistner, Moss and Artz also group these four centuries together, but not because they thought they represent the later Empire, rather because they do not represent any culture so singular as that of the later Empire.

CHAPTER V

THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES AS A UNIQUE CULTURAL ENTERPRISE

Lot had introduced a new era in the historiography of our subject. His departure was prompted by the advanced philosopies of history of Dilthey and Croce, men who pioneered a modern rationale for historical and cultural studies. When Wilhelm Dilthey died in 1911, his first major work was nearly thirty years old, but his theory of history was only beginning to take hold in the decade of his death. His genius would have been neglected, but for the similarity of his conclusions with those of Benedetto Croce, the great Italian philosopher of this century. The works of both men tended to free history from its subservient relationship with metaphysics and science. They contended that the student of history and the data he studies are alike in that they belong to the same historical moment. Unless the historian can get "inside" his data he cannot comprehend the material as anything more than chronicle. Hence they tend to think that the historian's role is to re-live the past, and that the process of this experience and the creative act which expresses the experience are both art and science. It follows that they thought the historian's orientation, interest and values would vary with his historical situation, suggesting his judgments would be relative.

Within the philosophies of Dilthey and Croce exist the essentials of contemporary approaches to the early Middle Ages. Recent historians are uniformly revisionist in spirit, reacting to every kind of dogmatism. They do not hesitate, however, to express their judgments of the past. Since 1940 they have taken on yet another idea, again stimulated by Croce, that of ethico-political history. The guiding thought behind this form of historical writing is that man's spirit is forever progressing towards self-realization. Against the seemingly endless natural and human obstacles, man is struggling to organize a free society. Thus Croce believed history to be the process in which man seeks liberty, but so far he has been frustrated in his endeavors. Writing history is for Croce writing a narrative of this historical process or "the story of liberty". C. Delisle Burns, who is to be discussed in this chapter, conceives the historical process to be the generation of morality through some moral authority. Charles Norris Cochrane thinks that men have been constantly searching for their personality, William Carrol Bark for freedom and Jean Leclercq for God, as the discussion which follows will point out.

Croce had placed upon the historian the task of leaving his ivory tower for a life in the world. Intellectuals, he said, die within the narrow confines of their studies. To grow they must become involved. To write history they must become fully engaged in the affairs of

the world in which they live. The ideas of Croce did not fall on deaf ears. A good many historians in recent decades have been men of affairs, concerned with events outside the classroom. Burns was an official in the British government during and after the first world war and authored numerous tracts related to the advancement of internationalism. Arnold Toynbee was an early opponent of Hitler, and during the last war was conspicuous in his pamphleteering for the English government. Since the war he has directed his numerous magazine articles both here and in Europe towards the encouragement of peace and redefinition of the status of Europe. Oscar Halecki has taught in Poland, France, Canada, Switzerland and the United States and has been active in seeking peace and international cooperation. Christopher Dawson has had similar active roles and the list could be extended outside this group to include a large number of scholars in many fields. This activity has undoubtably influenced the tone of contemporary history. To what extent is clearly visible in the following presentations.

It had been unfashionable during the nineteenth century to indulge in histories of international dimensions. The intellectual revolution in the three decades before the first world war altered this prejudice. Oswald Spengler received a very popular response to his Decline of the West which appeared in 1920; in the same year H. G. Wells

published the Outline of History which was of similar broad proportions. It was about this time Arnold Toynbee conceived his immense (12 volumed, 7000 paged) A Study of History.[1] Although others have since completed serious studies of civilizations, Spengler and Toynbee are unique in that they undertake a comparative study of "all" civilizations. They sought to discover the laws that determine social evolution. Whether such can be done is a problem for philosophers, but it would do us well to understand one or two of Toynbee's working assumptions.

Toynbee believes that each of the twenty-one civilizations known to us today to be distinct from all others. There are, however, certain features that are common to all civilizations. Science and ethics are among those few factors which transcend the boundaries of any one civilization. Achievements in these common elements create differences among civilizations and point to a progressive growth of four stages ascending from primitive societies, through the primary and secondary civilizations to the higher religions in which history finds its ultimate goal.[2]

> If religion is a chariot, it looks as if the wheels on which it mounts towards Heaven may be the periodic downfalls of civilizations on Earth. It looks as if the movement of civilizations may be cylcic and recurrent, while

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[1]Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History (12 vols.; London and New York, 1939-1961)

[2]Arnold Toynbee, A Study of History, abridg. D. C. Somervell (New York, 1956), I, pp. 12-43.

> the movement of religion may be on a single and continuous upward line.[3]

The parochialism of the nineteenth century and the absurd morphology of Spengler are both criticized and supplemented by Toynbee's teleological philosophy of history. That it is both teleological and gives emphasis to the role of religion suggests the obvious parallel with Augustine. Nor does the parallel end here. As Cochrane notes in another work, Augustine appreciates the importance of the Roman Empire in the history of mankind. It provided an easier means for Christianity to expand. Toynbee views the Empire as the initial step towards world religions. A clear and well understood example of Toynbee's concept of civilization is available with the Graeco-Roman. There is good reason for the hyphenated title. It indicates the crux of his argument. Although the civilization is one it can be neatly divided. The earlier Greek world was intellectually and culturally creative. To every challenge it responded successfully except one. It could not replace the international anarchy of local, sovereign city-states with some kind of international law and order. Its only attempt prior to the establishment of the Empire was the so-called "Delian League" founded in 478 B. C. The failure of that league led directly to the destruction of the Greek civilization between the years from 431 to 31 B. C. After

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[3]Arnold Toynbee, Civilization on Trial and the World and the West (New York, 1959), pp. 206-07.

these four centuries of failure there came with Augustus "a partial and temporary rally." Patterned after the "Delian League" of the Greeks, the Empire came too late to save the new Graeco-Roman union. The centuries of peace it initiated were neither creative nor permanent. In fact maintaining peace exhausted the waning vitality of the civilization which had created an Empire for that purpose, and led directly to its final collapse during the invasions of the fifth century.[4]

Unlike Gibbon, Toynbee maintains that the Graeco-Roman world began to decline in the fifth century before Christ. Its death was obviously not a murder sponsored by the barbarian or the Christian, but one of suicide committed as the decline began. Christianity was not responsible for its death nor were the philosophies which anticipated Christianity. Both arose,

> because the civic life of that civilization had already destroyed itself by turning itself into an idol to which men paid an exorbitant worship.[5]

To provide an alternative to the worship of social idols a series of mistery religions, among them Christianity were created by the vital minority groups within the Empire. In anticipation of the day they would be able to reduce the power of the governing minority they nourished their infant religion.[6]

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[4]Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., I, pp. 257-58, 260-62, and 296-97.

[5]Toynbee, Civilization on Trial, p. 200.

[6]Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., I, pp. 476-79.

The collapse of the Empire in the fifth century finally resolved an inevitable series of developments initiated by the breakdown of the Graeco-Roman world nearly a thousand years earlier. Events during that thousand years centered about the activities of three groups, who represented a 'schism in the body social'. Militarists, exploiters, nobles, administrators and philosophers constituted a "dominant minority" that established the universal state of the Empire, maintained it against all challengers, and thereby exhausted the resources of the state and dictated their will to the majority. Within the 'body social' were the disinherited, the economically or politically ruined peoples who constituted an "internal minority". The victims of upheaval, they turned to a religion which they eventually built into a church as universal as the Empire. Bordering the Empire were numerous primitive neighbors influenced to a varying degree by the culture of the higher civilization. For a time they were absorbed by its charms. When, however, the Empire broke down the charm ceased to be influential and the barbarian became hostile. This occurred in the Roman world in the century before the Caesars. As the Empire suppressed the barbarian threat, it expanded its frontiers and in time established a stationary border far afield. This expansion exhausted the Empire and helped the barbarian to realize his strength.[7]

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[7]Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., I, pp. 371-429.

Also frustrating the Empire was a "schism of the soul". The behavior, values and way of thought typical of the dynamic civilization were vastly altered, reflecting the disintegration of its society. Whereas the dominant minority were creative during the stages of growth, it became passive and imitative, and the 'internal proletariat' assumed creative and active roles. Abandon and self-control replaced the creativity of the dominant minority, and truancy and martyrdom replaced discipline among the proletariat. Those who had wealth and held a stake in society felt a sense of drift, and those with no stake a sense of sin. Both embraced religion to restore the lost objectivity. Activity for all shifted from the macrocosm to the microcosm. The dominant minority directed its activities to the past, with the object of sustaining it without change. Unhappy with their status the proletariat attempted to find a short cut to the 'civitas Dei', hence they became more spiritual, withdrawing into the fortress of the soul, abandoning the world. Christianity, the Church and monasticism were the products of the "schism of the soul" and the logical substance of the future.

Toynbee also investigates the role of the barbarian during the early Middle Ages. He observes that throughout the long history of the Graeco-Roman world, barbarians lived on the periphery of civilization. As long as the Graeco-Roman civilization was growing the barbarian had a satisfactory relationship with it. Inasmuch as the Roman

Empire represents the 'disintegration' of classical civilization, it represents the absence of growth and the deterioration of the normally good relations with the barbarian. Toynbee selects the erection of a permanent military frontier as the point at which this departure was made. Henceforth the barbarians were hostile to the Roman world, and in place of the economic, political and cultural exchanges with the Romans, they conducted only trade and war.[8]

After the third century the advantage in waging war was with the barbarians, who had acquired from the Romans the equipment and technique to defeat them. Once the pressures behind the military frontiers grew great enough, the frontiers were broken by the barbarians, and the cataclysm begun. Suddenly the Graeco-Roman world was destroyed by the barbarian, and with destruction came "calamity for all concerned". For the barbarians elated with the success of their military venture, there was a brief interlude called by Toynbee the Heroic Age followed by a longer Dark Age. For the Graeco-Roman world there was extinction.[9]

During the Heroic Age the barbarian exhibited qualities that Toynbee compares to those of youth. These qualities were generally destructive of all remnants of

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[8]Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., II, pp. 120-130.

[9]Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., II, pp. 130-136.

civilization including those of his own barbaric tribal life, except in the case of literature, which briefly flourished as the barbarian praised themselves on their success, and then it faltered. Resulting from the havoc caused by the youthful acting barbarians, was a Dark Age of some two hundred years duration. Beneath the apparent chaos of the Dark Age were the creative elements out of which a new civilization was constructed, the new civilization first taking form during the Carolingian era.[10]

Toynbee was principally concerned, some observers think, with giving explanation for the causes of Rome's decline and fall. This may have in fact been the case, but for reasons these observers fail to bring out. Toynbee thought there could be something to be learned by a comparative study of the genesis of civilizations, and whatever these lessons could teach us, would be most valuable in a world that bears a striking resemblance to that of the later Empire. Although his study was not nearly so massive, this was also the purpose of Charles Norris Cochrane, who in 1940 authored Christianity and Classical Culture. Toynbee wrote of the contacts between civilizations producing among other institutions, the higher religions. Cochrane investigates the confrontation of a higher religion with one of its parent civilizations.

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[10] Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., II, pp. 136-41.

Toynbee's analysis leads to the conclusion the Empire was a transient development of a collapsing civilization. Its sources were decay. Out of the same decay arose Christianity and it was this institution which was destined to have the greater future. The passing of the Empire represents the disintegration of the Graeco-Roman civilization. The establishment of Christianity represents the foundation of a new and greater civilization. Between 375, when the Empire began its death throes and 675, an interregnum existed symbolized by absence of any one consistent controlling element in western Europe. Governance shifted from the Romans to the barbarian, religion was for a long time divided among the Arian and Catholic and the culture of the Graeco-Romans was barbarized and otherwise transformed.

> During the deep sleep of the interval (375-675) which intervened between the break-up of the Roman Empire and the gradual emergence of our Western Society out the chaos, a rib was taken from the side of the older society and was fashioned into the backbone of a new creature of the same species.[11]

Thus does Toynbee present the story of religion. A story he believes to be infused with the idea of progress and which he always relates to the present. The moral to the story is clear: religion is the product of historical progress, and civilizations are but transient vehicles in which the movement of history is most visible.

Cochrane's book was a departure in the study of the Roman Empire affecting philosopher and historian alike.

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[11]Toynbee, Study of History, abridg., I, p. 10.

As opposed to earlier histories which had been political, legal, economic or social in nature, Cochrane was interested in evaluating the intellectual history of the Empire. Cochrane brought to his analysis the academic weaponry of an English classical historian. His philosophy of history was greatly influenced by his friend and fellow historian, R. G. Collingwood. His only prejudice was his appreciation of the Christian world view.

It is Cochrane's contention that the cosmology of the Christian was not only distinct from those of classicism, but was fundamentally opposed. Of the two the second was by far the superior. Hence the study of the decline of the Roman Empire is the summary of the triumph of barbarism and superstition,, but contrary to Gibbon, Cochrane thinks the success of Christianity was a gain for the world as was the demise of the Empire. For Cochrane, reflection upon the creation of the Empire "resolves itself largely into a criticism of that undertaking and of the ideas upon which it rested."[12]

Cochrane expressed his thesis in a few words as "the fall of Rome was the fall of an idea."[13] Rome was a way of life predicated on the complex of ideas which when grouped together are known as those of classicism. To understand what is meant by the fall of Rome then it is

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[12]Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture (New York, 1957), p. vi.

[13]Cochrane, p. 355.

necessary to begin not with the third, fourth or fifth centuries, but rather with the Republican crisis of the Caesars. As Toynbee had demonstrated, the four centuries before 31 B. C. were plagued with the problem of government still visible in the destruction of the Republic by Julius Caesar. It was the hope of Augustus to restore and consolidate the Republic, to give it a constitution adequate to its needs and thereby to solve the problems of government. The constitution of Augustus, which he believed salvaged what was vital in the idea of the commonwealth, transformed the state into a device expressing "imperium", the rule of law.[14] Augustus presumed he freed 'the law' from manipulation by interest groups and made it the expression of philosophic and scientific principle. As thus envisaged, the restoration dedicated the imperial city to the realization of the thought and aspirations of antiquity hitherto frustrated by the impermenance of rival systems of government.[15]

As Cicero viewed the history of the ancient world a "pattern of empire" enabled nations to establish dominion over their neighbors who were weaker in 'concentration of virtu'. But the same law of empire also destroyed these dominions once established, for industry when satisfied by wealth gave way to sloth and eventually to destruction.

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[14]Cochrane, p. 23.

[15]Cochrane, pp. 1-26.

The Augustan Roman believed this true of other ancient peoples, but because he thought his ideals were uniquely high he could break the bonds of this law. As the Empire "embodied purposes which transcended the mere accumulation of wealth and power, so also it pointed to an eternity in sharp contrast to the ephemeral character of other systems."[16] Its permanence was additionally assured because the Empire was built from the ground up on "the essential and indestructible elements of the private personality."[17] 'Romanitas' stood alone as a project of world community united by the ties of reason. By transcending the 'natural bonds' of empires, Rome claimed a universality and finality never before achieved.[18]

Needless to say the claims of the Augustan order were doomed to frustration, yet the ideas Augustus symbolized were in the first and second centuries implemented for the most part. This implementation was temporary, however, and was followed in the third century by inevitable collapse. Reconstruction in the fourth century under Constantine and his successors culminated in the adoption of a radically new principle which integrated 'Romanitas' with the "likeness of a crucified Jew."[19]

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[16]Cochrane, p. 72.

[17]Cochrane, p. 72.

[18]Cochrane, pp. 39-45, 59-61, and 149-51.

[19]Cochrane, pp. 115-40.

> But the object of the Constantinian and Theodosian houses was not so much restoration as renovation; they aimed to bring in a new world to redress the balance of the old. This was to effect a complete reorientation of imperial policy, the chief preoccupation of which was thenceforth to be with problems arising out of the novel relationship of Church and State.[20]

The Empire restored in the fourth century barely resembled the Empire founded by Augustus. What had originally been designed as a mere "intrusion into the machinery of government" had been transferred into the vulgar military and bureaucratic absolutism of the last Antonines and eventually into the "theocratic dynasticism" of the Christian emperors of the fourth century. The crisis of the third century had forced the Antonines to rule by bureaucratic regulation, which had so dulled the sources of action that 'Romanitas' could be restored only by mutilating it almost beyond recognition.[21] Eclipsed was the classical idea of 'virtus' and excellence, ended was the "great spiritual adventure" of antiquity.[22]

Causes for the breakdown of the third century are not simply economic, social or political. In the last analysis they were, Cochrane states, the "moral and intellectual failure. . . of the Graeco-Roman mind."[23]

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[20]Cochrane, p. 152.

[21]Cochrane, p. 151.

[22]Cochrane, pp. 143-53.

[23]Cochrane, p. 157.

The most tragic and radical defect in the Graeco-Roman mind rested with its conception of "power". Power was conceived of as dualistic by the classical mind. One factor rested with the individual and involved character, the other was vested in the Gods and with fate and fortune and involved circumstance. The two factors could not be mixed in any satisfactory way and yet left separate they could lead only to confusion. The insistence of the classical mind upon maintaining the dualism it thought existed in the nature of power, directly contributed to its inability to "understand itself".[24] Classicism had sought to secure for man the good life and stave off the threats of "superstition and barbarism". A series of political experiments witness, however, to the inability of the Ancients to achieve their ends.

Constantine's turn to Christianity was both an admission of past failures and the expression of the hope that a new creation, that of a Christian commonwealth, would reverse the tendency of the centuries. As Tertullian and his fellow Christians predicted, the possibility of a Christian Caesar did not exist. Constantine, who was unable to forego his classical prejudices, promoted a very imperfect union of the two ideologies.. The result was further conflict, that throughout the fourth century threatened to shake the Empire asunder.[25]

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[24]Cochrane, p. 157.

[25]Cochrane, pp. 177-212.

Under Theodosius the conflict between Church and State was finally resolved by instituting "the forms and order of the Catholic state."[26] By so doing Theodosius completely shattered the foundations of 'Romanitas' and heralded the beginnings of the medieval establishment. Theodosius exceeded Constantine only in the extent he was willing to elevate Christianity as a political instrument. Because he insisted that the Church play a political role, his experiment like all the others could not succeed. There were too few elements in Christianity that could effectively reinforce an established order. On the other hand the principles it embodied were of such an "explosive" nature they could destroy the waning faith in classicism, leaving the Empire the empty husk that the barbarian could with remarkable ease devour.[27]

If what Cochrane asserts is true, Christianity was afterall a party to the Empire's fabled fall. Should the religion be condemned? Gibbon thought yes, but Cochrane assuredly did not. His reply:

> For the modern, however, these momentous developments were the necessary preparation for a new and radically different future; and, in order that this future should materialize, it was inevitable that Romanitas, despite her pretension to eternity, should perish from the earth.[28]

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[26]Cochrane, p. 356.

[27]Cochrane, pp. 335-56.

[28]Cochrane, p. 356.

The architect of the "new and radically different future" was Augustine, who described in his City of God the social goals of the medieval world, its Christian Commonwealth and the Kingdom towards which all were to direct their ambitions.

To build the world after Augustine's model required the combined efforts of many generations. To this construction the Church contributed its civilizing influence upon the barbarian to whom the Christian brought "a faith less inadequate to human needs"[29] than that of classicism.

Writing about the same time as Cochrane (1940-41) and in the main offering a sequal to his analysis, C. Delisle Burns also owes an intellectual debt to Toynbee. The First Europe is as much a political treatise as it is history. Burns never tires of drawing parallels between events of "the formation of the first Europe" (400-800) and the events of the twentieth century, which he thought could and would create a third Europe at the end of the war then in progress. These conclusions are also drawn by Toynbee in the later volumes of his A Study of History and in essays such as Civilization on Trial, and by Halecki, who contends in The Millennium of Europe that the Europe of the twentieth century is on the "threshold" of the third millennium (to begin in the year 2000). Of the three Burns is the only one who is not forced by the logic of his argument to delimit certain precise times for the beginning of the

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[29]Cochrane, p. 357.

First Europe. As it was for Cochrane, Burns thought historical change to be gradual or "transitional". Neither would care to date precisely the "fall" of the Roman Empire. Both, however, believed the events from 395-410 were more crucial than those of the 470's.[30]

"The formation of the First Europe" is more precisely a social transition, the key events of which are represented by the transformation of a unity maintained by the military into a unity suggested by a Christian community. By the alteration of the condition of most men from that of slavery to that of serfdom, man gained both rights and responsibilities. By the deterioration of a military dictatorship, the foundations of democracy become discernable in the equality of men and before God in moral worth.[31]

Burns is less concerned in The First Europe with the causes of Rome's "fall" than he is with the discussion of an historical "problem". The problem he focuses upon "is the relation between armed force and moral authority in the art of government and in social organization generally, especially during a period of transition."[32] He believes that the conclusions he draws from the formation of Europe can be in some way applied to the formation of a third Europe. Thus the "nomadism" of the fourth and fifth and of the twentieth centuries may be taken to be similar

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[30] C. Delisle Burns, The First Europe (New York, 1948), pp. 23-25.

[31] Burns, pp. 26-58.

[32] Burns, p. 12.

social dislocation, and this dislocation may perhaps be resolved in the twentieth in the same way it was solved in the eighth and ninth by the assertion of moral authority. That such a connection between the two ages has meaning he substantiates by drawing two parallels. A major failure of the later Empire was in the governance of the barbarians, just as in our time Europeans have failed to justly govern the Africans. Once the barbarians of the fifth century gained political control they turned to the Romans for models of government and social order. At the conclusion of the first World War the League of Nations was a similar archaic creation, thinks Burns. Both the barbaric nations and the League of Nations failed since neither improved upon institutions already demonstratively incapable of solving the problems of government.[33]

As Cochrane had described, the "military dictatorship" of the Empire collapsed of its own weight. Politically it was replaced by a collection of nations maintained by military force. The moral authority of the Empire was vested in the sacred and eternal nature of the emperorship. It was impossible for the barbarian kings to have this moral authority transferred to them by the mere assumption of the powers once held by the Empire. What happened was the transferal of this moral authority to the sacred and eternal nature of the Church, which like the Empire was

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[33]Burns, pp. 35-58.

universally greater than any rival institution. In actuality moral authority was transferred from an organization for law and government to the bishops occupied with the welfare of Christians and anxious for the salvation of souls. Once the moral authority was transferred to the Church it was never certain how legal and political institutions were to receive the necessary sanction of the authority.[34]

Burns also draws a certain parallel between the "Mediterranean" civilization of antiquity and the First Europe. The latter was the creation of "the Latin Churchs" as opposed to some one military or civil power. Thus "it was an original experiment in new ways of living and thinking."[35] In externals and in culture the Roman was more advanced, but in certain respects medieval civilization was superior. Burns sees this superiority "in its moral and religious ideals, in its community of feeling between the rich and the poor and in its widespread sense of social responsibility."[36] Many medieval men were superior to the ancients in thought and character, but because the two civilizations are in most particulars distinct in emphasis it is unreal to exalt one or the other. It is true nonetheless that in the formation of the "First Europe" a greater stake in the fortunes of community were given to its poorer members and by so doing many of the

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[34]Burns, pp. 110-51 and 250-75.

[35]Burns, p. 24.

[36]Burns, p. 24.

injustices of the older society were resolved. Burns thinks that from this we should learn that the new Europe, now in the making must also find room for its poorer members.

Oscar Halecki, recently author of The Millennium of Europe, arrives at conclusions that closely resemble those of Burns. The most visible comparison between the two men lies, however, in the manner in which they divide up European history.

Halecki would like to divide the two thousand years of European history since Christ into three millenniums. The first ended in the tenth century with the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire under the Ottonians and the third with the end of this century and the termination of the predominance of the European over the world.[37] Halecki's use of the millennium as a measure of European history deserves explanation. Halecki defines a millennium to open with a significant event that initiates distinct institutions whose evolution gives meaning to the thousand years or so of their existence. To illustrate his use of millennium Halecki provides a brief description of the "first millennium". The significant event opening the "first millennium" was the life of Christ, who inspired the Christian Church, the institution whose growth characterizes the whole of the following thousand years.[38]

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[37]Oscar Halecki, The Millennium of Europe (South Bend, Ind., 1963), pp. 77-80 and 356-69.

[38]Halecki, pp. xxi-xxv.

There were, in Halecki's mind, two ingredients basic to the Church: Graeco-Roman humanism and Christianity. It was upon these "pillars" that the "New Rome" of the Popes was built. Classical humanism is represented by the Empire of Augustus. Its establishment, decline and fall are important chapters in the history of an idea lasting through the Empire of Charlemagne. Christianity quickly found root in the Empire, eventually occupying the capital city itself, identifying its leadership with the Romans. It was the Roman church which bore out the transition from the "ancient" to the "medieval". Halecki is most careful to establish the change as transitional.

> Today it is almost universally admitted that there was no break separating Antiquity and the Middle Ages but rather a gradual, continuous evolution, a long and slow transition from the Hellenic or rather Graeco-Roman to the so-called western civilized society. . .[39]

He implies that it is misleading to label the successors to the Empire as early medieval, medieval or dark. The significant contrast between the old and the new is geographical and religious, not temporal. The former was pagan and Mediterranean, the latter Christian and European.[40]

Differences between the later Empire and the three centuries of "no Empire" should be deemphasized. Early Christian culture was closely allied to that of the ancients. Similar language, artistic environment, social

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[39]Halecki, p. 32.

[40]Halecki, pp. 36-37.

structure and problems of survival override the other often superficial differences. Christian literature was an outgrowth of the Roman heritage, and once the pagan conceptions in philosophy and ethics were no longer a threat to the Christian mind, Classical literature was widely appropriated by the Christian. Of the appropriators the greatest were the monks, especially of the Benedictine order, who during the periods of political confusion inspired considerable intellectual labor. The church survived the collapse of its protector the Empire, and succeeded in spite of great material losses in "preserving, sublimating and augmenting the cultural heritage of the Rome of Caesar."[41]

Already the similarities with the work of Dawson show through in Halecki's survey of the first "millennium". This similarity becomes even more evident when the Carolingian revival is discussed. Both men emphasize the transient character of the revival, and its basic affinity with the Empire of the Romans. When it fails it frees Europe for a complete shakedown succeeded by the order of the medieval world established sometime in the eleventh century. Both men follow rather closely the guidelines for European development first established by Henri Pirenne, although neither historian gives evidence of realizing this similarity. Both men, however, differ from Pirenne in one very important aspect. Dawson and Halecki give considerable emphasis to the Christian orientation of society, and

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[41]Halecki, p. 35.

Pirenne does not. It is the continuity of the Church throughout the "first millennium" which permits Dawson Halecki to suggest it has uniformity, but Pirenne attempted to find in terms of economics and less directly political and cultural events a certain extension of the ancient world.

The weakness of Pirenne's analysis offers William Carroll Bark, an American historian and author of the Origins of the Medieval World, his point of departure. Bark attempts in the rather unusual form of an extended critique, to dispel his American readers of an accumulation of "notions" heaped on early medieval studies by the twenty some historians discussed above, but particularly by Pirenne. For this reason he devotes a full quarter of his book to a methodical, almost surgical examination and dismissal of the Pirenne thesis. The one point he finds to be valid is Pirenne's claim the barbarian did not destroy the Empire. This does not imply, as it did for Pirenne, however, that the barbarian should not be associated with change, but rather, that causes for Rome's decline cannot be so easily explained.[42]

Difficulties in the classical order of things were apparent early in the third century. The resulting crisis destroyed the economic, social and intellectual foundations of the ancient world. The leadership of Rome was forced

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[42] William Carroll Bark, Origins of the Medieval World (Garden City, New York, 1958), pp. 9-40.

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[42] William Carroll Bark, Origins of the Medieval World (Garden City, New York, 1958), pp. 9-40.

by the crisis to pursue a path destined to destroy the very enterprise the Romans hoped to save. With the reign of Constantine the "major turning point in history was reached."[43] The Empire was for a time restored, the rapid decline following the crisis of the third century forestalled. But at what cost! A name was ransomed for the price of the western half of the Empire.

Was the sacrifice misfortunate? Bark answers yes, at least for the Byzantium. "A thousand years of Byzantium produced extinction; a thousand years of medieval effort produced the Renaissance, the modern state, and ultimately the free world."[44] Drawing an unmistakable parallel to the American frontier, Bark portrays Western Europeans using original ideas and methods to forge a new civilization out of the crumbling world that had been Rome. As the "dead wood" was cut away experiments were started, aimed at a more satisfying solution to the social problems than the Graeco-Roman world was unable to provide.[45]

Cutting away the dead wood and the forging of a new society occurred alongside one another over a period of three centuries (300-600), During this time the world was neither ancient or medieval, but both. Bark emphatically rejects Pirenne's efforts to deny change, but he believes it useless to attempt fixing some specific date such as

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[43]Bark, p. 60.

[44]Bark, p. 93.

[45]Bark, pp. 83-93.

476 (Gibbon and Lot), 395 (Moss and Cochrane) or 430 (Pickman) for ending the Empire. There had been a profound social and economic revolution, but it took centuries not years to be realized.[46]

Accompanying the social change that destroyed the Roman middle class and granted to the landed aristocracy a great increase of power over the numerous small landholders, and the associated economic transition to a natural economy, was the transformation of Christianity into its distinctly Western character. Contrasted with that of Byzantium, the Church of Rome gained power and prestige without the support of the State, and its nature increasingly reflected the poor, agrarian and "intensely empirical" society in which it grew.[47]

The rearrangement of society into its pre-feudal pattern may have been something of an historical accident; at least it was not planned. But it created what modern sociologists call an "open-society".

> Perhaps it is not too much to say that medieval society was functional in ways not even dreamed of by antiquity and leading to ends beyond the imagination of earlier times. By 'functional' I mean that it was a working, striving society, impelled to pioneer, forced to experiment, often making mistakes but also drawing upon the energies of its people much more fully than its predecessors, and eventually allowing them much fuller and freer scope for development.[48]

Not the least of the products of this "functional" settlement was the acceptance of change and the discovery that the new

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[46]Bark, pp. 94-110.

[47]Bark, pp. 107-123.

[48]Bark, p. 98.

conditions could be adapted to. "Our early medieval predecessors began to win their way, and ours, to freedom because conditions enabled them to learn from the past without being enslaved by it."[49]

No one better represents the genius of medieval men to appropriate from the past than Augustine. His City of God is deeply indebted to the classics for many of its inspirations, but as much is derived solely from the needs and values of the emerging Christian world. That Augustine or many of his less highly praised heirs did not occupy themselves with speculation about science and various metaphysical problems does not reflect on their inability to do so, but indicates the very great shift in intellectual interest after the fourth century. Stigmas of decadence and retrogression often placed upon the post-classical age distort the realities of that historical situation.

> "The essential consideration is that by the fourth century a new intellectual attitude toward the world had been well launched; that this attitude was not necessarily either superior or inferior to that of classical antiquity, but simply different."[50]

With Bark the implications of the progressive nature of the early Middle Ages were no longer disguised. They were now clear and out into the open. What had been subtly inferred by Taylor, Schnürer and Dawson, and indirectly expressed by Toynbee, Burns, Cochrane and Halecki was

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[49]Bark, p. 157.

[50]Bark, p. 103.

now neither subtle nor indirect. Bark writes without apology or qualification:

> The primary thesis of this chapter, therefore, and indeed of this work as a whole, is that something new, distinct, and essentially original began in the Western European portion of the Roman Empire; that its elements are distinguishable by the fourth century, and some of them earlier. This "something" is perhaps best described as a new attitude toward life.[51]

Quite obviously the vision expressed by Bark is unlike that of any expressed before the twentieth century, and with the exception of the few just mentioned, not within the scope of opinions expressed in this century either. In truth Bark represents a position which only quite recently would have been possible to maintain. Without the generations of scholarship which preceded him Bark would be but a voice in the wilderness, without substance and without meaning. The work of Taylor, Schnürer, Dawson, etc., were essential to Bark. And for this reason, others, including Leclercq, Daly and Décarreaux yet to be included in this chapter, have in recent years accepted and expanded upon the progressive thesis Bark so vividly asserts.

Scholarship removed, if only temporarily from the schools, has in recent years proven to be both imaginative and creative. This is attested to not only by those in close contact with current politics or other worldly affairs, but by those who avoid such contacts, but have intensified in other ways their sympathy with the historical

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[51]Bark, pp. 97-98.

subjects of their choice. Jean Leclercq, a Benedictine monk of more than casual persuasion, left the world for the contemplative life when he was seventeen. His contact with the Benedictine traditions was both the stimulus and the subject of his The Love of Learning and the Desire for God. That his experience with monastic life is everywhere evident within his study is quite possibly its major attribute.[52]

To familiarize his students with the monastic tradition he himself is so familiar with, Leclercq returns to the four centuries from 800 to 1200 in which monastic culture was most fully in evidence. He distinguishes this culture from the co-existing and much more emphasized scholastic Middle Ages of the universities. Then with the touch of a master he in turn investigates the formation, sources and fruits of that culture.

About the two texts which together initiate the Benedictine tradition, Gregory's "Life of St. Benedict" and Benedict's Rule for Monks, the monastic culture of the Middle Ages was formed. Both texts emphasize the acquisition of knowledge always evidenced by the Western monk. The acquisition of knowledge or at least learning was demanded by the major occupation of monks, which was prayer and meditation, the lectio divina. Implied in this

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[52]Jean Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York, 1960). Compare this paragraph with the discussion on p.111 of this chapter.

acquisition was the ability to possess, read and write books. But studies were not undertaken for speculative purposes. As Benedict demonstrated, once learning was acquired it was to be turned to the contemplation of God, that is, transcended if possible. A monk had but one end, and that was to obtain eternal life. Thus the monastic community was organized so as to detach him from immediate and distracting concerns and to allow him to devote his time to prayer and asceticism, "authentic contemplative peace."[53]

Obtaining eternal life required constant search, aided on the one hand by an intense longing or "desire" for God and his love, and on the other, by the study of letters that intensified this longing or "desire". Quite obviously there was a great need for study, but study was no way a part of the monk's vocation, it was and remained a means useful to, but also subordinate to, the "search for God."[54]

In the formation of the monastic culture Benedict is the inspiration behind monastic learning, and Gregory supplied the enthusiasm for the life of contemplation. Beyond that, Gregory provided an "authentic theology" that in later centuries became the substance of a "monastic theology". Gregory's theology in many respects resembles that of Origen and Augustine as well, and for this reason he "bridges the gap between the patristic age and the monastic culture of the Middle Ages."[55]

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[53]Leclercq, pp. 13-22.

[54]Leclercq, pp. 23-30.

[55]Leclercq, p. 31.

Gregory elaborated in addition to a theology, "a phenomenology of the states of prayer."[56] These states move from the fundamental level of humility to compunction and eventually detachment or aceticism. Out of the earlier states of prayer and contemplation a new understanding of God and love is achieved that may lead to knowledge of God and an even more active humility that brings with it a certain peace.[57]

Monastic culture drew upon several sources for the materials used to spark meditation and desire for God. Some of these sources were used to improve the abilities of monks to speak and write well of God, and were essentially grammatical in nature, while others described the fruits of God's love and otherwise encouraged the monk to transcend petty thoughts and consider the eternal life. Whatever their function these sources were found in "Holy Scripture, the Patristic Tradition, and Classical Literature." Of these three, the first two are by far the most important.[58]

All monks were very familiar with the contents of the Scriptures, and in most cases knew much of it "by heart". Their familiarity arose from constant contact with the Scriptures through prayer, reading and study. The methods of learning, which placed an emphasis upon

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[56]Leclercq, p. 33.

[57]Leclercq, pp. 37-44.

[58]Leclercq, pp. 65-187.

"active reading" and "reminiscence" made the contact with the Scriptures much more personal than the more casual reading habits of today. Also reinforcing a monks knowledge of the Scriptures is the extensive use they made of commentaries on them. The primary source for these commentaries were the writings of the Patristic Age. Although the Eastern fathers were far more numerous than the Latins of the West, their influence upon the monastic culture was no greater.[59]

As evidenced by the great import accorded Gregory and Benedict, Augustine and Jerome the Latin fathers gave monastic culture its special character. But, if this culture was profoundly Latin and western, it had a close intellectual and spiritual connection with the East of Cassian, St. Basil, Evagrius, Origen and most particularly St. Anthony.

Out of the Patristic Age grew the monastic Middle Ages. Leclercq thinks the Patristic Age separated the monastic from classical culture, however. Whereas the affinity with the Church fathers was very real for most monks, the value of pagan letters was usually only pedagogical. Classical Latin authors were read for the beauty of their expression. Their ideas, when reflected upon, were rarely understood and almost never thought to be pagan. They were utilized and allegorized, and transcribed

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[59]Leclercq, pp. 87-111.

with abandon, but the milieu in which they were written and the assumptions upon which they were predicated were conceived as Christian and hence never comprehended at all.[60]

Before Leclercq, numerous efforts had been made to identify the Middle Ages with scholastic theology and philosophy, and hence with scholastic culture. If such an identity is legitimately made, it produces conclusions such as those in evidence throughout the first forty years of the twentieth century. Since scholasticism is largely a phenomenon of the Middle Ages and does not appear among theologians much before the ninth century, although some have claimed, as Rand did, that Boethius was the first of the scholastics, the task of assigning the early Middle Ages any position of importance in intellectual thought is considerably complicated.

Assuming scholasticism is the fruit of medieval culture then the early Middle Ages are either a period of transition or of preparation. If, however, Leclercq is correct in arguing that there is an intermediary culture preceding that of scholasticism, then it is possible to speak of the creative aspects of the early Middle Ages. In effect, a monastic culture was the product of early medieval thought, and this culture is not only distinct from those of the past, but is an advancement upon the past, as maintained by Daly and Décarreaux.

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[60]Leclercq, pp. 139-87.

After the Second World War there was a considerable revival in interest in monasticism, particularly inasmuch as it appeared as a key to understanding the transition from the patristic to the Carolingian ages. Laistner and Gustav Schnürer introduced the possibilities of monasticism in the late twenties and early thirties and Leclercq, in the fifties viewed monastic culture as the first expression of medieval culture. Two very recent studies in Benedictine monasticism suggest the possible fruition of this interest. Both Jean Décarreaux and Lowrie J. Daly wrote their historical narratives of monasticism in the sixties, and both are fully appreciative of the monks as the mainstays of culture in the sixth through ninth centuries. Décarreaux entitled his monograph, Monks and Civilization from the Barbarian Invasions to the Reign of Charlemagne, and Daly, Benedictine Monasticism: Its Formation and Development Through the 12th Century.[61] Although their styles differ, Décarreaux closely resembles the straightforward narrative used by Schnürer, and Daly the topical survey method of Leclercq. The material they cover is very similar. They are anxious to portray the monk as the nameless man who through his quiet and unspectacular labors over generations of time converted the masses of an uncivilized society into the civilization of the Middle Ages.

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[61]Lowrie J. Daly, Benedictine Monasticism: Its Formation and Development Through the 12th Century (New York, 1965).

> The tremendous achievement of winning the Teutonic and Slavic peoples to Christianity and then to civilization was brought about by the continual self-sacrifice and heroic labors of hundreds of monks in all parts of Europe. . .[62]

The culture they brought to the pagan barbarian is likewise explored by these men, and they reveal it to be an amalgam of antique, peasant and Christian ideas with a particular emphasis upon the Christian. This culture is no longer in its elemental state after the sixth century. It is the unity, labeled by Leclercq as monastic. Neither historian has doubts that the monk was as early as the sixth century a member of a new society in the history of civilization. In the monk's way of thinking and way of life he was no longer Roman. The monks had transcended the Roman with a neutral culture, or rather individual culture neither antique nor barbarian. Thus as monks, they could smoothly, but slowly move along the path towards religious unity while politically Europe remained fragmented.

As they advocate the role of the monk in early medieval Europe Décarreaux and Daly differ remarkably from Montalembert of the mid-nineteenth century. They are not so much defenders of the faith as they are scholars whose interests happen to be the role of monasticism. As such they complete the thrust initiated by Dawson in 1933.

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[62]Jean Décarreaux, Monks and Civilization from the Barbarian Invasions to the Reign of Charlemagne, trans. Charlotte Haldene (London, 1964), pp. 135-36.

It is no longer necessary to assume an apologetic stance. The relationship between church and culture after Augustine are widely and clearly understood. Gibbon no longer dominates the public's prejudice, hence study of the early medieval scholarship is normative rather than explicative.

Additionally Décarreaux and Daly represent the complete abandonment of the explanation offered by Artz, Moss, Laistner and Wallace-Hadrill for the early Middle Ages. As Bark and Leclercq had declared, the early medieval period should be understood as an advancement upon ancient culture and distinct from it. If there was a transitional period in the sense Moss and Laistner use the term, this period encompassed the Patristic age, the three centuries from 300-600, or that period often described as the later Empire. After the sixth century a new culture set forth by Leclercq as characteristically monastic is clearly evident. Although this culture eventually blends in with that of the Middle Ages, this fact does not deny its singular existence from the seventh to the beginnings of the eleventh century.

CHAPTER VI

CONCEPTIONS OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES BY THE HISTORIANS OF ART

It seems evident from the material presented in the preceding chapters that historians are very dependent upon their predecessors for their inspiration. In many cases the general themes of a history are prominent in other works, and it becomes the purpose of that history to reject or correct the errors which accompany these themes in the other presentations. This does not imply that historical writing is necessarily cyclical or linear although ample examples can be found to support either idea. It does indicate the dependency of the historian upon his environment, and hence gives substance to the philosophers who would maintain scientific history such as that sought by Ranke to be quite impossible. If the environment of the historian is a factor in determining his approach to historical writing and the themes to which he will give emphasis, then it should also be true that other intellectual endeavors will likewise be limited in this respect.

To discover if such is the case, the subjects of art history and the history of philosophy will be explored in the two following chapters. To maintain the continuity of this paper, these subjects will be limited to those materials which explore the art or philosophy of the early

Middle Ages. And in order to maintain temporal perspective, the materials selected to measure each of these topics will be related to the books and themes discussed in the previous chapters.

Objects of classical and post-classical art have been familiar to men since they were first produced, but it does not follow they have always been appreciated as such. Art history demands that the art objects be clearly recognizable as belonging to one epoch as opposed to another. Classical art is easily differentiated from the materials common to the Middle Ages, but study of the arts of a period in transition or of arts closely allied to either the classical or the medieval periods awaited the creation of refined methods to distinguish the dates in which specific works were done. For this reason the history of post-classical art is a relatively modern phenomenon. As had been the case with political and social histories of the early Middle Ages, students of art history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were interested in classical subjects to such a degree they were almost totally ignorant of the developments in art during the thousand years preceding the Renaissance. Those who had opinions about the non-classical art of this millennium were filled with an enormous disgust characterized by the very name they assigned to it, "gothic".

During the Romantic reaction to classical art forms in the nineteenth century, medieval art was not only

highly praised, but it was given a stature of eminence excelled only by the art of the Romantics themselves. Romanticism in art outlasted the influence that movement had in history by several decades. Thus a far more substantial "school" of art history was developed in the study of barbaric or Germanic art than was sustained among historians more generally, although art historians do not retain in art any more than in history the exaggerated importance the Romantics assigned to the barbarian.

Interest in the Middle Ages, and more specifically the early Middle Ages, demanded the invention of a mature system of archeological exploration and of scientific means by which findings might be classified. Thus the nineteenth century gave impetus to the systematic exploitation of burial and other archeological sites, the profits of which are filling volumes of literature in the twentieth century. So great has been the increase in post-classical art objects that a large volume is now needed to discuss the subjects exhausted within brief chapters only fifty or sixty years ago.

In many important particulars Franz von Reber, a German educated at Munich and author of History of Mediaeval Art in 1886, follows the lead of Fustel de Coulanges in emphasizing the continuity of art from late Roman to the times of the Carolingians. Fustel de Coulanges had insisted the Germanic invasions did not disrupt the organization of

Gaulish society. Reber agrees, and further asserts that with the beginnings of early Christian art in the third century the principle features of art are determined for the whole of the medieval epoch. Early Christian art is succeeded in turn by Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic Christian art, which developed unaffected by the political events which had import elsewhere. Christian art borrowed heavily from the art forms prevalent in the Empire in which it grew. The nature of the parent art was classical but decadent, and once the Christians adopted them, the continuation of certain classical forms was assured.[1]

Reber was convinced that Christian art was never adulterated by the Celt or Teuton, but rather lends to each of these cultures the benefits of its superior ideal. Celtic art was inspired originally by borrowings from Ravenna craftsmen, the same source that Charlemagne turned to when building the churches for his Empire. The importance of Christian art was assured by Charlemagne, for he brought to the north the Christian architecture of the south. When the Carolingian Empire began to dissolve the medieval nations were founded and art presumed the local character familiar in the "Romanic and Gothic epochs". Reber exactly reversed the impression Taylor or Dawson would give for this period. He presented unity disrupted in the ninth century by the diversity of the Middle Ages,

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[1]Franz von Reber, History of Mediaeval Art, trans. J. T. Clarke (New York, 1887), pp. 1-118.

whereas Taylor and Dawson represent the early Middle Ages to be diverse, but with the ninth or tenth century a unity is attained. Reber's presentation is more consistent than Taylor's or Dawson's with the nineteenth century preference for organization on the basis of nations.[2]

In other places Reber accepts the race concept when speaking of the Celt or Teuton. He gives priority to the Christian over either of these, however, which is a reflection of his Catholicism, an attitude discernable in another German, Schnürer, of a later date. The implications of Reber's book are fully evident in Mediaeval Art, by the Englishman, W. R. Lethaby. Of greater technical accomplishment, Lethaby represents the advancement made in art histories in the eighteen years after Reber's book was published. Lethaby, for example, distinguishes between two schools of Christian art after the fourth century. In the West, and dependent upon the Roman preference for representational art, Christian artists continued to use sculpture and bas-reliefs in the "Romanesque" fashion. After Constantine, the East was introduced to a Christian art unable to resist the oriental culture. Thus a "Hellenesque" art concentrated in Byzantium arose.[3]

Except for isolated cities in Italy all creative advances in art during the early Middle Ages were inspired

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[2]Reber, pp. 202-49.

[3]W. R. Lethaby, Mediaeval Art: From the Peace of the Church to the Eve of the Renaissance 312-1350 (London, 1904), pp. 9-63.

by the "Hellenesque" or Byzantine art. Lethaby, like Reber, could find no need to devote many pages to Celtic or Germanic art. To them neither art contributed to their subject, which was in truth a history of Christian art not medieval art as they claimed. Both Lethaby and Reber use architecture as the art form by which "Mediaeval Art" can best be traced. Thus they are speaking in terms of architecture when they conclude that Charlemagne revived the "Romanesque" visible in Italy under Constantine and Theoderic.[4]

Neither Lethaby nor Reber demonstrates Christian art to be distinct from classical art forms. In an otherwise unsatisfactory monograph, Margaret A. Bulley depicts the decline of Graeco-Roman art to have begun in the second century, and as an independent current of art to have disappeared by the fifth. Thus Christian art is viewed as a response to the decline rather than its cause, a concept advanced in a different context by J. B. Bury. When in the fourth century Christian art assumes a major role it unites either with the Roman to form the "Romanesque", or the Greek to form the Byzantine (or Hellenesque after Lethaby). The dominance of Christian art was assured before the Empire began its rapid disappearance after 395. Mrs. Bulley, writing her Ancient and Medieval Art: A Short History in 1914, agrees with Taylor's analysis that the Middle Ages did not begin suddenly, any more than its appropriate to think of the Empire failing in 476. One of the reasons

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[4]Lethaby, pp. 80-100.

for this gradual beginning was the separation in art usages dividing the Roman Christian world from the pagan barbarian. Mrs. Bulley uses the presence of such division as an excuse for ignoring the eight centuries following, resuming her narrative with the Gothic Art of the twelfth century.[5]

Henry Cotterill, A History of Art, published in 1922, also recognized a difference between art usages in the Christian and pagan worlds, but he interpreted this to be a mandate to explore more fully the Christian art, which more immediately supplanted that of the pagans. As ancient art declined with the political problems of the third century, so it revived as the political situation improved in the fourth and fifth. Thus ancient art, although thoroughly Christianized after the third century, endured in its "Romanesque" form into the Middle Ages. The main features of the architecture of this art are the round arch style, which is "clearly Roman", and, more importantly, column supports for the arch, also Roman. These first appear in their most familiar structures, churches, as the Empire was still declining. When, in the difficulties arising from the invasions, sculpture, painting and other modes common to the ancient artist began to disappear, church work was being produced of "exceedingly beautiful" character. Although the mosaics which decorated many of the Romanesque churches were influenced by the Byzantines,

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[5]Margaret A. Bulley, Ancient and Medieval Art: A Short History (London, 1914), pp. 186-250.

who after the fifth century were generally present in Venice or Ravenna, the builders responsible for the design and construction of these buildings were Christian Romans accomplished in an independent Western art form. Charlemagne, when seeking architects for his new capital to the north, turned to the "so-called 'Comacine masters'" of Italy. It was also from Italy that the Romanesque era of later centuries received its inspiration.[6]

Not all art historians of the twentieth century are occupied with the origins of "Romanesque" or even of Christian art. Beginning with Josef Strzygowski and Haäkon Shetelig in the 1920's a small but remarkable number of monographs have been produced attempting to explain the origins and evolution of Germanic art. Strzygowski proclaimed in his pioneering Origin of Christian Church Art[7] (1923) and his later Early Church Art in Northern Europe[8] (1928) that not all that was Christian in early medieval Europe was Roman Classical. As Ker had done in literature and Dawson more generally, Strzygowski recognized the barbaric German to have been independently creative, or as in the case of much of Germanic art, inspired by the barbarians' contact with the East. Strzygowski, Shetelig

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[6]Henry B. Cotterill, A History of Art (New York, 1922), I, pp. 175-239.

[7]Josef Strzygowski, Origin of Christian Church Art (Oxford, 1923).

[8]Josef Strzygowski, Early Church Art in Northern Europe (London, 1928).

in his earliest work, Préhistoire de la Norvège[9] (1926), and Harold Picton, a student of Strzygowski and author of Early German Art and Its Origins[10] in 1939, maintain a common thesis. Germanic art can be traced to the contact that the Germans had in the pre-invasion era with Sarmatians and Scythians along the Black Sea. From the Sarmatians the Germans acquired the art of polychrome jewelery, and from the Scythians the fantastic use of animal ornamentation everywhere common in Germanic art.[11]

After the invasions, which to the Germanic world are but an aspect of the great migrations or Volkerwänderung, the Goths and Alans transferred their talent for making jewelery to the lands in which they settled, i. e., Spain, South-West France and Central Europe, and to those peoples with whom they had close contact, such as the Jutes and Scandanavians. The influence of the East was not limited to the few Germans who had once lived there. The Syrians also influenced the art of the Byzantine Christians. Pirenne and Dawson therefore considered the meeting of Germanic and Byzantine art under Charlemagne a reunification of two families of Syrian or "Eastern" art.[12]

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[9] Haakon Shetelig, Préhistoire de la Novège (Oslo, 1926).

[10] Harold Picton, Early German Art and its Origins (London, 1939).

[11] Strzygowski, Origin, pp. 4-20; Shetelig, pp. 154-59; Picton, pp. 23-35.

[12] Shetelig, pp. 150-54; Picton, pp. 29-35.

Dawson for example believes that Shetelig proved that Classical art in its demise made room for two new currents of art which flowed into Europe during the early Middle Ages. The one, "Iranian-Gothic", was carried by the barbarian by way of the "Russian steppe" to the plains of northern Europe. The other, "Syrian-Byzantine", was transmitted along the Mediterranean to Italy and hence to southern Europe.[13]

For Strzygowski and Picton the Germans, whenever embraced by the Romans, were influenced negatively. Not satisfied with their own ornamentative art when exposed to the representational art of Roman Christians, the German would attempt to emulate that art. In this they failed miserably. The only exception arose with the case of Church architecture. Preference for the "Romanesque" stimulated a very profitable expansion in building churches. Picton maintains the reason behind what appears to be an exception is the close resemblance between existing German structures and the Roman importations. The basilica is in design little different from the farmhouses prevalent in most German lands. Thus the insistence of Roman missionaries upon the basilica church structure was equalled by the abilities of artisans to handle the familiar design, but unable to handle those of the East.[14]

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[13]Dawson, Making of Europe, p. 96.

[14]Picton, pp. 37-46.

More conventional histories of art were soon influenced by the discussions of Strzygowski and Picton. Much greater attention was given to the accomplishments of the barbarian, where before the very possibilities of Germanic art were largely dismissed. The value of admitting the presence of barbaric art is revealed by Ernst Kitzinger, Early Medieval Art in the British Museum, 1940. In a survey which is at once more general, better organized and more brilliant than those of his predecessors, Kitzinger gives a most plausible explanation for the evolution of art during the period in question. And to a large extent he anticipates those who succeed him.

According to Kitzinger, Graeco-Roman art collapsed sometime prior to the peace of the church in 313. After that time art must be considered as medieval, or in the fourth and fifth centuries as proto-medieval. In the West, art remained loyal to classical models, but this loyalty was for a long time smothered by the anti-classical sympathies of the East and of Christians more generally. This anti-classical mood was represented by its desire for the transcendent and symbolic. Thus the use of mosaic or the deemphasis on sculpture of the human body pre-empted the stale imitation of classical forms associated with the late Empire.[15]

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[15]Ernst Kitzinger, Early Medieval Art in the British Museum (London, 1940), pp. 1-20.

Among the Germanic peoples of the North an anti-classical movement in art demonstrated the capacity of the barbarian in production of fine work, but it was not normally motivated by a drive for the transcendent. Thus when the Christian moved into pagan and barbaric lands, the natives reacted by adopting the art forms of the missionary. Charlemagne revived the classical, but highly Christianized art, indigenous to Italy and thereby completed the destruction of barbarian art.[16]

Kitzinger insists upon the transitional nature of the early medieval period. In this he follows the lead of Moss, who only a few years earlier had discovered that the transitional nature of the history of art was consistent with the cultural and political history of the early medieval period. Moss had come upon his interpretation somewhat independently of scholarly information, but Artz, who also believes in the transitional thesis, relies very heavily upon Kitzinger and Morey for his discussions of art.

The themes emphasized by Kitzinger appear again in one of the standard histories of medieval art, that of Charles Morey, Mediaeval Art, 1942. It is Morey's claim that, "Every growth proceeds from a decay".[17] Medieval art grew out of the decay of classical art after the second century. Medieval art succeeded what was in fact a post-classical art in two forms or styles, both of

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[16]Kitzinger, pp. 19-38.

[17]Charles Rufus Morey, Mediaeval Art (New York, 1942), p. 21.

which were Italian or Roman in nature. The Alexandrian art style emphasized landscapes as a part of the normal use of representational arts. The Neo-Attic art style was more decorative and lent itself well to art preferences of the of the East. Both styles were introduced just prior to the founding of the Empire, and flourished as late as the second century. They declined until the fourth century; the Alexandrian style suffered the most, and in the fifth century they became obscure.[18]

With the introduction of Christian art, Hellenic art was no longer vital, but the tradition of its two styles reappear in a similar dichotomy within Christian art. Thus Byzantine art tended to be decorative, and Romanesque, once established in later centuries, was often representational. Romanesque art reached maturity after the Carolingian revival during which the "vigorous and primitive genius of Celtic-Teutonic Culture"[19] became infused with the post-Hellenic style of the Christians.

Early Christian art originated in the third century, and during the fourth and fifth centuries virtually absorbed whatever features of Hellenic art it found consistent with its motives. Later in the sixth and seventh centuries Eastern Christian art adopted a Byzantine character which by the eighth century was firmly fixed in that part of the

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[18]Morey, pp. 19-45.

[19]Morey, p. 6.

world. In the West, Christian art was more fluid, and remained until the ninth century a reflection of Hellenic, Christian and Byzantine political and cultural domination.[20]

Barbarian art, Morey argues, borrowed from East, but not from classical or Byzantine arts. Therefore when it came into contact with the Roman Church, barbarian art provided the original inspiration which resulted in Romanesque art. Christian art was more sophisticated than that of the barbarian and it is to this sophistication that the qualities of Germanic surrendered. At first the collision produced grotesque human forms and course ornamentation. Particularly with Merovingian illumination the weaknesses of barbarian capacity to reproduce the naturalism of the classics is very evident. But as the barbarian adjusted to the needs of Christianity he was able to produce art work of very high quality.[21]

It had been conventional for historians of Germanic art to emphasize its distinctness from the art of the Patristic age and of Rome generally. Similar efforts among cultural historians had pointed to the individual nature of German culture prior to the conversion of the North by the Church. A reaction to these efforts are conspicuous in the decade following World War II, during

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[20]Morey, pp. 80-92 and 177-85.

[21]Morey, pp. 80-92.

which the German became once again, in the eyes of many Western historians, a vulgar barbarian. Thus Haakon Shetelig, who had been among the first to express that the German had a genius quite free from Roman penetration, wrote in 1949 of a theme indicated by the title of his book, Classical Impulses in Scandanavian Art,[22] and Wilhelm Holmqvist, insisted that Rome was the main source of Germanic art, in Germanic Art During the First Millennium A. D.

In the estimation of Holmqvist, Germanic art cannot be distinguished from that of primitive cultures until the Roman expansion in the first century B. C. During the following millennium, the thousand years which delimit the duration of Germanic art, Rome continued to provide the stimulus for the achievements in art by the barbarians. Transmitters of this Roman influence were the art craftsmen of the Roman provinces who had intercourse with both the Roman and German, and provided many of the art products for the Germans which required technical skill. After the fifth century Germanic art became increasingly less imitative, but as it gained independence, what quality it had, declined, and it acquired those crude forms that invoke the condemnation of men like Lot.[23]

Unlike Lot, however, Holmqvist judges the decadent nature of Germanic art after the fifth century to represent

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[22]Haakon Shetelig, Classical Impulses in Scandanavian Art (Cambridge, 1949).

[23]Wilhelm Holmqvist, Germanic Art during the First Millennium A. D. (Stockholm, 1955), pp. 27-49.

the dislocation of craftsmen separated from their normal sources of inspiration, as opposed to some lack of ability on part of the craftsman themselves. Until the ninth century, when Germanic art disappeared it continued to disintegrate before expanding influence of another Rome, that of the Church. Christian culture was not diluted by a buffer group (Roman Provinces) before coming into confrontation with the barbarians, and thus its pure and more powerful stature overwhelmed rather than inspired the artists of the North. As the latter succumbed they left with Christian culture certain stylistic features visible throughout the Middle Ages. Thus Gothic art is a legacy and not, as Morey would assert, a result of the barbarian adjusting to the needs of Christian art.[24]

A middle ground between Strzygowski and Holmqvist is achieved by Marvin Ross and Philippe Verdier who together produced Arts of the Migration Period in the Walters Art Gallery in 1961. They defend Holmqvist in that Germanic art was most certainly influenced by its contact with Hellenic or Roman art, but they return to Morey and indirectly to Strzygowski when attempting to explain the more ultimate sources of the models which the Germans used. Polychrome styles came, for example, from the Sarmatian, Roxolan and Alan tribes of Southern Russia between the Black and Caspian Seas. As opposed to

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[24]Holmqvist, pp. 39-49.

Holmqvist's thesis that Christian art produced the death blow to a Germanic art already in decline, Verdier and Ross attempt to show Germanic art was in no way decadent at the time it was confronted with Christian art. Actually Germanic art was in most ways so similar to Christian art that when they were brought into "severe contact" it could not maintain its integrity and was almost immediately submerged. There can be no doubt that Germanic art is a direct forerunner to medieval art, if Verdier is correct in assuming that "Gothic" and medieval are indeed synonymous terms. For there is a close connection between the cut glass and handicrafts of the Gothic period with the polychrome and handicrafts of Germanic art.[25]

Apart from the variety of opinions about the importance and evolution of Germanic art, discussion of Christian art was by no means settled by the presentations of Morey. Within the last decade three works of note have been written on the Christian art. Each presents a different view, and yet all are different from those points expressed by Morey. In 1957 D. Talbot Rice wrote The Beginnings of Christian Art and Andre Graber Early Medieval Painting from the Fourth to the Eleventh Century. Four years later Eduard Syndicus completed Early Christian Art. Graber recalls the disposition of Rand and the Patristic group. On the one hand he denies the pronouncements of unnamed parties

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[25]Marvin C. Ross and Philippe Verdier, Arts of the Migration Period in the Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore, 1961), pp. 21-29.

who pointing to the paucity of early medieval art, would declare the period to have little merit. And on the other he finds early medieval art, particularly painting, to have significance in very few places, and then at diverse times. For example, during the fifth and sixth centuries Rome and Ravenna were the two centers of artistic production, but in the seventh and eighth the center shifted to Ireland and England and in the ninth century to France.[26]

Whenever and wherever painting was fashioned during the early medieval centuries it had a high Christian content. Illumination of books was not an exception to this generalization, although before the seventh century book illumination most closely resembled its ancient origins. As Islam expanded in the seventh century, the center of gravity moved north and art, as with culture generally, put on the garb of English monks. Graber is in this case inclined towards the Pirenne thesis when he divides Christian history with the seventh century. Earlier times he more closely associated with Latin antiquity and later times with the Middle Ages.[27]

Writing in the same year as Graber, Rice essentially agrees with Graber. Early Christian art is, with the exception of thematic material, nearly indistinguishable

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[26]Andre Graber and Carl Nordenfalk, Early Medieval Painting from the Fourth to the Eleventh Century, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York, 1957), pp. 9-21.

[27]Graber, pp. 87-107.

from the Hellenic forms which chronologically preceded it. That is Christians borrowed or selected from the Alexandrian form certain conceptions of the "picturesque" and from Pompeii the "expressionistic". When it "came above ground" in 313 Christian art quickly assumed a proto-Byzantine character. Byzantine and Christian art between the fifth and eighth centuries are one and the same, but with the iconoclastic struggle at the beginning of the eighth century, a "Roman" school of art developed which under Charles the Great becomes very distinct from the Byzantines. As the "Roman" form of Christian art developed under the patronage of the popes, Benedictine monks and the court of Charles, its conservative nature was assured, and is thus thought of as a return to the early centuries of the Patristic Age in Italy.[28]

Syndicus is convinced that the Christian themes to which Rice alludes are far more important than what is borrowed from the Hellenic art which happened to be in the same locale as a particular Christian artist. Unlike the borrowings from Hellenic art, the themes of Christian art are general and consistent throughout its long history. Syndicus thinks it worth noting that Christians did not appropriate from classical Hellenic art its refined technique, or rather made no effort to sustain their refinement. This is but one example of how what is hostile to Christian

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[28] D. Talbot Rice, The Beginnings of Christian Art (New York, 1957), pp. 19-31.

theology is simply ignored when produced artistically. Early Christian art was very fond of symbolic portrayals of Christ as the shepherd or the teacher, and both are portrayals current in third century literature. But perhaps the most popular image to be found in Christian art is that of the 'orante', the human figure praying with arms outstretched after the fashion recommended by Origen in De Oratione.[29] Aside from painting, Christians made use of classical materials in architecture such as with the basilica and martyrium. Again what was borrowed from the classics was remade in the Christian image.[30]

During the Volkerwanderung, the barbarians were highly imitative of existing Christian art because they were awed by the Romans civilization and wanted to be accepted as equals to the Romans. Syndicus adapts here an idea presented by Wallace-Hadrill in 1952. As to the sources of Germanic art, Syndicus follows the compromising position of Verdier and Ross. The technique of Germanic art is Sarmatian in origin, and is by nature decorative. When the Teuton copied from Hellenic and Christian art forms his imagination tended to be more disciplined, but this also tended to ossify his imagination when the contact was prolonged as it was after the fifth century.[31]

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[29]See discussion of De Oratione and Jean Daniélou, Origen, trans. Walter Mitchell (New York, 1955), pp. 28-32.

[30]Eduard Syndicus, Early Christian Art, trans. J. P. Foster, Vol. 121 of Twentieth Century Encyclopaedia of Catholicism, ed. Henri Daniel-Rops (New York, 1962), pp. 7-35.

[31]Syndicus, pp. 154-64.

There are some inter-relationships between the historian of art and those who write more general histories. Often the cultural historian looks to the historian of art for support or suggestion when forming the contents of his surveys. Dawson follows Shetelig, Lot and Moss are dependent upon Strzygowski and Bark discovers in Morey and in a work by Henri Foncillon the substance of his knowledge of art. Pirenne was very fond of the views of Louis Brehier and Nils Aberg when he presented his brief review of art, and these views closely resemble those of Lethaby and Strzygowski. Nor is the exchange entirely one-sided. Reber and Lethaby maintained the thesis of continuity of Roman art through the invasion period in a manner not unlike that of Fustel de Coulanges, Bury and later Pirenne. Cotterill thought of the third through sixth centuries as transitional as did Lot in the early twenties. Kitzinger suggested a strong familiarity with the transitional thesis of Moss and Artz.

Observers of early medieval culture are far more dependent upon the historian of art than vice-versa. With the exception of Kitzinger there is little evidence that the historians of art has been very directly indebted to the cultural historian for his impressions of the period of which he writes. Whenever a theme can be found in common not only is the parentage questionable, it is not even certain the themes are in fact related at all. It is

safer to insist that what inter-relationships the historian of early medieval art might have with those of early medieval culture have been to the benefit of the latter.

CHAPTER VII

CONCEPTIONS OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES BY THE HISTORIANS OF PHILOSOPHY

Histories of medieval philosophy are even a more modern invention than those of the art or culture of the Middle Ages. As was the case of medieval studies generally before the nineteenth century observers thought that intellectually man had entered upon a long period of inactivity and slumber after the fifth century and did not awaken until certain Italians initiated "the great age" of the Renaissance. But unlike medieval law or literature, to which the historians of the first half of the nineteenth century devoted considerable attention, medieval philosophy was not only not studied, it was thought not to exist.

Beginning with Xavier Rousselot, Études sur la Philosophie du Moyen Âge, in 1840-42, a number of scholars established that there had indeed been philosophical speculation in the Middle Ages, and that quite probably there had been an abundance of such speculation. Of the most early examinations into medieval philosophy the greater majority were concerned with philosophers popular within the Catholic tradition as theologians. Charles de Rémusat wrote a two volumed study of Abélard in 1845 and Victor Cousin edited the works of the same man in 1836.[1]

[1]Charles de Rémusat, Abélard (2 vols.: Paris, 1845); Victor Cousin, Ouvrages inédits d'Abélard (Paris, 1836).

Ignorance of the philosophical contributions of medieval thought arose from the confusion by medieval thinkers between what was properly understood as philosophical and what was theological. As early as the second century Christians had as theologians labored to make philosophy the "handmaiden of theology". How successful they were in this task is subject to debate, but that medieval theologians thought philosophy had been subordinated to theology there can be little doubt. With the Renaissance theology had become associated with the teachings of the schoolmen and hence called scholasticism. Scholasticism was also used to designate the philosophy of the schoolmen by Renaissance philosophers. Historians of the nineteenth century inherited both the confusion of theology with philosophy in medieval thought and the application of the label of scholasticism to both during the Renaissance.

Jean B. Hauréau wrote in 1850 De la Philosophie Scholastique and between 1872 and 1880 Histoire de la Philosophie Scholastique. Albert Stöckl added in 1864-66 Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters to the growing list of histories of philosophy, but it was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that critical historical methods were applied to the study of medieval thought. Most important to later scholarship was Herman Reuter, Geschichte der religiösen Aufklärung im Mittelalter, first published in two volumes in 1875-77. Of almost equal stature to the study of Reuter was that of Heinrich von

Eicken, Geschichte der mittelalterlichen Weltanschauung, which was completed in 1888.

Reginald Lane Poole gave Reuter considerable deference in the preface to his Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning and acknowledged that the first half of his book follows "pretty closely the scheme" of Reuter. Poole observed, however, "that the field which Reuter surveyed needed an introduction". The introduction Poole provided is most important for it is perhaps the first recognition of the significant role early medieval thought had in the formation of medieval philosophy.[2]

It is Poole's contention that medieval thought was not particularly original, but it would be a mistake to confuse the absence of originality with strict conformity. It is not "the power with which men used their intellects" that distinguished one medieval thinker from another, but "the skill with which they used their materials."[3] Reuter had defined the mode of medieval thought to be predominantely theological and to this Poole for the most part agrees, but for Poole there existed beneath the formalism of theology a variety of speculations that were philosophical.

Never in the history of Christendom, Poole asserts, did the "hard shell of its dogmatic system" remove all room "for individual liberty of opinion."[4] During the Middle

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[2]Reginald Lane Poole, Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning (2d. ed.; London, 1920) p. vi.

[3]Poole, p. 1.

[4]Poole, pp. 2-3.

Ages theologians often started with the same traditional authorities and nearly always arrived at theologically correct conclusions. They varied widely, however, in the judgments they made with respect to the authorities at hand in arriving at those conclusions. It is with this range of "accomodation" Poole thinks the historian of philosophy must concentrate his attentions.[5]

In addition to providing an account of the origins of philosophy in the thought of medieval men who, he admits, always thought and expressed themselves "theologically", Poole indicates that early medieval thought anticipates the "scholasticism" of the Middle Ages. As the western Church assumed a major role in society, learning became restricted to the clergy and monks. As churchmen they were inclined to give attention to the advancement of Christianity to the disadvantage of other studies. The pagan schools were allowed to die out, once the cathedral and monastic establishments were capable of meeting the needs of Christian education.[6]

The fall of the Empire was not so great a loss, Poole insists. The society upon which the Empire was built was subjugated to serve the ends of a few, and its "fabric was but a step less barbarous than that of the Teutonic civilization by which it was confronted."[7]

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[5]Poole, p. 4.

[6]Poole, pp. 4-5.

[7]Poole, p. 6.

Nonetheless the loss of classical scholarship as a sacrifice to the success of the Church is to be regretted. Poole shows no doubt that the cause of the "retrogression" in learning was the hostility the Church showed towards classical letters. He cites in particular Gregory's desire to eliminate all pagan literature.

All that prevented the Middle Ages from a more impoverished heritage was the exemption of Ireland from the "authority" of the Church with respect to education. Centered in the Irish Christian community was a remarkable literary tradition where "the stream of classical learning had remained pure". From the Irish and their English converts learning was for a time restored to the continent under the rule of Charles the Great. Unfortunately the sons of Charles were unable to sustain this restoration, and once again Europe fell into "darkness".[8]

Quite like the positivists who were writing history at the same time as he was, Poole visibly was nationalistic in the high praise he gives the Irish. He resembled Taylor, who he anticipated in many respects, in arriving at fairly sound conclusions, but for all the wrong reasons. Poole was guessing when he accorded the Irish such a prominent position in the history of early medieval thought and as if in acknowledgment of this,historians of philosophy have uniformly ignored Irish scholarship since Poole wrote in 1884.

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[8]Poole, pp. 9-23.

Poole demonstrated a dependency upon the scholarship of Reuter, and this was also in some respects true of Wilhelm Windelband, who in 1892 wrote one of the first comprehensive histories of philosophy to include a general discussion of the philosophy of the Middle Ages. Windelband reflected his knowledge of Reuter throughout his analysis of medieval philosophy, but like Poole he recognized a need to provide an introduction to this analysis. The introduction Windelband provided, however, must be understood in terms of his motivation for writing A History of Philosophy.

Windelband was convinced by Hegel that history was a continuous evolutionary process involving a succession of theses, antitheses and syntheses. But he agreed with Burckhardt that within history certain epochs could be discerned by the distinct nature of the culture each period presents. By "an all-sided, unprejudiced investigation of the facts.",[9] Windelband argued that the opinions of Hegel and Burckhardt might be made compatible. Using an "synoptical and critical method" Windelband searched European philosophy for the ideas current to individual epochs, and then related them to the more general movements of philosophic conceptions that have been evolving since the Greeks. For Windelband the ideas of any one epoch contributed to the conceptions of the next, and together all

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[9]Wilhelm Windelband, History of Philosophy, trans. James H. Tufts (New York, 1958), I, p. ix.

philosophic ideas contributed in some way to those of the present.[10] For these reasons an introduction of medieval philosophy requires a discussion of "Hellenistic-Roman Philosophy".

Beginning with the Jewish philosophers of the first century A. D., ancient philosophy entered upon a "Religious Period". Central to the problems of this period were the relationships of authority to revelation, of spirit to matter and of God to the world. Solutions to these problems were offered by both the Christians and the neo-Platonists. In each case the answers provided by the Christian appear again in the scholastic position in the Middle Ages and the neo-Platonist response was followed by the medieval mystics. Additionally, alongside the scholastic and mystic philosophies of the Middle Ages a third philosophy existed which was secular and represented a continuation of ancient scientific philosophy.[11]

Although medieval philosophical positions were in many ways anticipated by philosophies of the Roman 'Religious period', the connection was not simple and direct. Interrupting the evolution of ideas was the devastation of the Empire by the migrating Germans. In face of the barbarian conquests the Roman state and Roman mind were helpless; only the power of the Church prevented ancient civilization

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[10]Windelband, pp. ix-xii.

[11]Windelband, pp. 219-62.

from completely disappearing. As a consequence of the unique position the Church held during the centuries following the 'fall' of the Empire the only portion of ancient culture which was at first transmitted to the Middle Ages was wholly Christian in content.[12]

Without the efforts of Augustine the philosophy of the Middle Ages might have suffered greatly under the tutelage of the Church. Windelband considered Augustine the "true teacher" of medieval nations. Through Augustine the union of Christian and neo-Platonic thought that became the basis of medieval philosophies was accomplished. That Augustine embraced within his system the various philosophies of the Patristic Age was not evident to observers of the centuries immediately following his death. Windelband attributed this ignorance to the restrictions placed upon the use of non-Christian materials by the Church in the fifth and sixth centuries.[13]

In the early medieval 'schools' instruction was limited to what was most necessary for the training of the clergy. Additional instruction in the arts, when possible, was restricted by the small number of useful texts. Elementary logical treatises were the most abundant, and for this reason the philosophic activity of the early Middle Ages was directed toward the learning and practice of

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[12]Windelband, pp. 263-69.

[13]Windelband, pp. 276-84.

logic so that religious dogma and the content of Christian tradition might be best set forth and elaborated upon. This activity provided in the ninth century the beginnings of independent reflection in the form of inquiries as to the significance of logical relations. Out of these inquiries arose scholastic philosophy and in reaction to these inquiries a return to mysticism.[14]

Windelband constantly strove to find in the philosophy of the Middle Ages the sources of nineteenth century "scientific philosophy". His effort forced him to draw rather sharp distinctions between the various "strands" of medieval thought and produced a close association of "scientific philosophy" with scholasticism and ancient secular thought. During the twentieth century historians of philosophy have sought to pursue scientific philosophy and hence have concentrated upon scholasticism. A few historians have recognized that philosophy might be religious as well as scientific, and have carried out studies of "religious philosophy" during the Middle Ages. Windelband offers what was probably the initial justification for the division of the history of philosophy into scientific and religious.[15]

Within a year after Windelband first produced <u>A History of Philosophy</u> Maurice de Wulf completed the first of what proved to be a series of volumes on the history of

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[14]Windelband, pp. 264-65.

[15]Below, pp. 178-9 and 185-6 .

scholastic philosophy. This first work, titled History of Scholastic Philosophy in the Low Countries, inspired a more comprehensive history which appeared in 1900 as History of Mediaeval Philosophy. In the six editions of the History appearing before his death in 1947, De Wulf extensively expanded and revised the original French text, but consistently maintained two important themes. He held that scholastic philosophy was distinct from scholastic theology during the Middle Ages and furthermore that scholastic philosophy consisted of certain doctrines common to most of medieval philosophy.

De Wulf argued that the close identification of medieval with scholastic philosophy was a product of the Renaissance. He conferred upon this identification his stamp of approval. He reasoned his definition for scholastic encompassed all the truly philosophic activity of the Middle Ages. When De Wulf used scholasticism in terms of philosophy he referred to that philosophy that was "taught in the schools of the Middle Ages", "practiced typical methods of systematization", was "religious" and "subordinate to dogma", and provided answers to the great philosophic problems of any age in its doctrines and its systems.[16]

Armed with what is a very eclectic and encompassing definition De Wulf attacks the history of early medieval

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[16]Maurice De Wulf History of Mediaeval Philosophy, trans. Ernest C. Messenger (6th. ed.; New York, 1952), I, pp. 16-17.

philosophy. In his sixth edition, published in 1947, De Wulf followed closely the transitional theses of Taylor and Laistner. Following the collapse of the Empire western European culture entered into a period of transition lasting until the Carolingian era. In the eighth and ninth centuries a new civilization arose which De Wulf identified as medieval. During the transitional period three factors, "Roman civilization", "world Christianity" and the "new races" of Celts and Germans, were "passively" fused into "complex nations."[17]

Out of Roman civilization intellectual materials were drawn that were transferred to the barbarians through the educational facilities of monastic schools. In the early Middle Ages the monastic schools of Ireland were the most remarkable.[18] The program of studies employed in the monastic schools did not include philosophy as a subject until the twelfth century. During the early medieval period the very absence of philosophical materials precluded the possibility of mature philosophic undertakings. When such materials became available in the twelfth and later centuries they were employed with considerable vigor.

De Wulf cites several writers from the fourth to the eighth centuries who may be counted as philosophers. In the fourth and fifth centuries Chalcidius, Marius Victorinus, Macrobius and Martianus Capella combined certain Roman philosophical ideas with the Christian thought of the

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[17]De Wulf, p. 43.

[18]De Wulf, p. 50.

Patristic Age. The importance of the last Roman philosophers is overshadowed by Augustine and the Pseudo-Dionysius, whose thought not only dominated the fifth century, but many of the succeeding centuries as well. Gregory I, Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore were to De Wulf the first medieval thinkers, and along with Bede completed his list of notable intellectuals during the period of transition before the eighth century.[19]

Considering the compass of his study De Wulf gave ample space to the philosophies of most of the intellectuals that dotted the era of transition from the fourth to the eighth century, but much of what he wrote on early medieval philosophers was in response to works written of these intellectuals in the nearly fifty years that transpired after De Wulf wrote his first edition. Among these works were definitive studies of Isidore by Ernest Brehaut and of Boethius by Howard Rollin Patch and numerous works on Augustine. Several studies on individual philosophers were prepared during this time by Étienne Gilson, an historian of philosophy who along with De Wulf has molded contemporary impressions of medieval philosophy.

In addition to his studies of individual medieval philosophers Gilson has provided from time to time more general works on medieval philosophy that are considered by many to be the definitive histories for this subject.

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[19]De Wulf, pp. 77-120.

The first of these histories appeared in 1921 under the title Études de Philosophie médiévale. Since then he has written The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy (1936), The Philosophy of the Middle Ages (1936), and A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (1955). In his Spirit of Medieval Philosophy Gilson seeks to establish as valid the use of the term medieval as a modifier of philosophy and secondly that the philosophy of the Middle Ages was essentially Christian.

After 1944 Gilson included the expression "Christian philosophy" in the titles of many of his works. He reasons that the common feature of philosophers after the second century in the West was the Christian content of their writings and the profession of Christian beliefs amidst their philosophical speculations. Within Christian philosophy scholasticism played an important and at times dominant rôle, but as a label for post-classical philosophies or for medieval philosophy it is too limited to serve the needs of historians of the philosophy of this period.[20]

Gilson seeks to include in his histories the whole range of medieval philosophies which Windelband suggests might have existed. Gilson like Windelband gives specific recognition of scholastic and mystical philosophers and of medieval "theologians", but his enumeration is misleading. Gilson continues to interpret what is meant by philosophy

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[20] Étienne Gilson, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York, 1955), pp. 4-6.

in a narrow and restrictive sense in the manner established by Windelband and De Wulf. Gilson seeks to present medieval philosophers in such a way that they might be reasonably considered the equals of philosophers in any other age. He therefore skims over many medieval philosophers worthy of the name and distorts the nature of many of the philosophers he does present. Also his histories are technical to the point they exclude important cultural and intellectual information that relates the philosophers of the medieval period to the culture in which they lived.

More serious is the affect which Gilson's attitude towards the history of medieval philosophy has towards study of the philosophy of the early Middle Ages. Gilson like De Wulf and Windelband before him finds no need to examine intellectuals of the seventh and eighth centuries. A one page dismissal of the period intervening between the Patristic and the Carolingian Ages illustrates the weaknesses of Gilson's approach.[21]

Gilson is not alone in thinking the seventh and eighth centuries as unworthy of greater exploration. Several cultural historians including Rand, McGiffert, Lot and Duckett held the same view as Gilson and wrote about the same time. Among historians of philosophy the position elaborated by Gilson has been predominant in this century. Illustrating the dependency of twentieth century historians

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[21]Gilson, p. 111.

of philosophy upon Gilson are G. G. Coulton, Studies in Medieval Thought (1940); S. J. Curtis, A Short History of Western Philosophy in the Middle Ages (1950); Anne Fremantle, The Age of Belief (1954); Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought From Saint Augustine to Ockham (1958); David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (1962); Armand Maurer, Medieval Philosophy (1962); and Julius Weinberg, A Short History of Medieval Philosophy (1964).[22]

Admittedly all of these histories are one volume works and the first four named are really little more than handbooks. But they must suffice as examples since they encompass nearly all that is available on this subject. Not all of these works completely ignore the seventh and eighth century intellectuals. Coulton and Leff, for example, discuss Isidore briefly. Fremantle and Maurer study Augustine, Boethius and Erigena alone and Curtis, Knowles and Weinberg add to these three early medieval philosophers the name of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Coulton and Leff investigate, although very briefly, Cassiodorus, Isidore, Gregory and Anglo-Saxon writers in addition to the four philosophers of the early Middle Ages enumerated by Curtis, Knowles and Weinberg.

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[22]G. G. Coulton, Studies in Medieval Thought (London, 1940); S. J. Curtis, A Short History of Western Philosophy in the Middle Ages (London, 1950); Anne Fremantle, The Age of Belief (New York, 1961); Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought from Saint Augustine to Ockham (Baltimore, 1958); David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (Baltimore, 1962); Armand A. Maurer, Medieval Philosophy, Vol. II of A History of Philosophy, ed. Étienne Gilson (4 vols.; New York, 1962); Julius R. Weinberg, A Short History of Medieval Philosophy (Princeton, 1964).

Coulton is interesting in another respect. The purpose to which he directs his study closely resemble those expressed by Burns. Coulton observes, and Burns would in principle agree:

> We stand in this generation at one of the greatest crises ever recorded, especially for the educated. . . . and the nearest approach in past history to that conflict is the story of those Ages which followed upon the fall of the Roman Empire, and from which Europe emerged very slowly. . . . the lessons we have to learn from those times often bear very directly upon some of the most insistent of present-day problems.[23]

Although Coulton differs from Burns in what he thinks happened in the early Middle Ages, that he attempts to write his history of medieval philosophy in terms of his interpretation of early medieval culture sets him apart from other historians of philosophy.

Of the histories of philosophy that follow the Windelband-De Wulf-Gilson tradition only one has been written on a scale equal to those acknowledged classics. Frederich Copleston wrote his Mediaeval Philosophy in 1950 as the second of the five volumes of A History of Philosophy. Of particular note in Copleston's treatment of the early Middle Ages was the thorough analysis he gave Augustine and his unusually long examination of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Otherwise Copleston was conventional in his treatment of Boethius, Cassiodorus and Isidore as the last philosophers before the Carolingian

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[23]Coulton, pp. 9-10; above pp. 127-28.

Renaissance and in his conviction that only those intellectuals who write 'scientific' or speculative philosophy are worthy of study.

Copleston did not distinguish between scholastic and mystical philosophers in the manner suggested by Windelband and followed by Weinberg, but neither did he adopt the labels offered by De Wulf or Gilson. Copleston was just not interested in classifying medieval philosophers into 'schools'. For him such groupings denied the individuality of the philosophers in question, and in any case could not with meaning be applied to medieval philosophers. Copleston stands pretty much alone on this point although Coulton and Fremantle did not organize their books about any of the themes offered by Windelband, De Wulf and Gilson.

Windelband had set the pattern for most of twentieth century philosophy when he recognized three strains of thought during the Middle Ages which could be identified as philosophical. Windelband presumed these strains were most marked after Augustine but recognized within the Empire a group of religious philosophers that anticipated medieval philosophy. De Wulf chose to identify medieval philosophy with the scholastic strain and hence like Copleston dated the beginnings of medieval philosophy with the writings of Augustine. Gilson found in the studies which Adolf Harnack made of Patristic thought support for his contention that Christian and medieval philosophy began in the second and third centuries. Thus Gilson included a number of the

philosophers of the "Religious Period" in Windelband's history as belonging to the Christian philosophers of the Middle Ages.

For Harry Wolfson medieval philosophy began when Philo first compared Scripture to philosophic writings. Like Windelband, Wolfson thought medieval meant philosophy which was not ancient, but Wolfson also thought that both ancient and modern philosophy were distinct from medieval in that they did not attempt to apply Scripture to philosophic speculation. Therefore what was a religious period in ancient philosophy for Windelband was the beginning of medieval or "scriptural religious philosophy" for Wolfson.[24]

In his main text, Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems From Plato to Spinoza, Wolfson has included in the "early medieval period" early Christian philosophers such as Tertullian, Clement and Origen that were also cited by Gilson, together with Jews of Alexandria, most notable of which is Philo, who lived in the first century. Gilson, Copleston and others have chapters on medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy in recognition of the influence they had upon medieval Christian philosophers. Wolfson included Jewish and Islamic philosophy within his history because they were an integral part of medieval philosophy. Judaism,

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[24]Harry Austryn Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Vol. II: Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza (Cambridge, 1948), I, pp. v-vii and 115-63; Harry Austryn Wolfson, Religious Philosophy: A Group of Essays (New York, 1965), pp. 1-5.

Christianity and Islam were three religions contributing to a "homogeneous, if not thoroughly unified, system of thought."[25]

Quite obviously Wolfson did not think De Wulf was correct in limiting histories of medieval philosophy to scholasticism, even if De Wulf could accomodate all Western philosophers from Augustine to the Renaissance under that label. Nor did Gilson offer much improvement when he limits his history to Christian philosophy. All religious philosophers have made use of Scripture and have arrived at a constant set of philosophic principles, Wolfson claims. Therefore they should be grouped together as medieval philosophers.

Common to all religious philosophy was the belief that the one infallible source of truth was revelation as embodied in Scripture. Medieval philosophers recognized that not all knowledge was furnished to them by Scripture; some must be acquired by their use of reason, and much of the truth to be found by reason was expressed in the philosophic literature of the Greeks. Since all truth was authored by God, the medieval philosophers were convinced there could be no conflict between the truth they found by reason and that found by revelation. Apparent conflicts were the fault of the philosopher, Wolfson says, not of the text.[26]

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[25]Wolfson, Philo, II, pp. 443-46.

[26]Wolfson, Philo, II, pp. 446-47.

The truths revealed by Scripture and essential to all religious philosophers were the existence of God, the unity of God, divine providence, divine creation of the world and the divine origin of the rules for human conduct. Reason provided the medieval philosophers with proofs for the existence of God and the truth of His unity, but Greek philosophic literature did not agree with Scripture as to the nature of God and His relation to the world. God was both uncreated and creator, but according to Scripture His essence could not be known contrary to what is taught in the texts of philosophy. Scripture also verifies that God created the world out of nothing, was cause of its preservation, its governance and its order, again contrary to the reason of the Greek philosophers. That the religious philosophers knew that God granted man freedom, a freedom that permitted man a certain independence of natural law and hence allowed men to perform miracles was confirmed by Scripture but not by reason. Scripture in opposition with reason assures the religious philosopher that God gave man an immortal soul and perfect rules of conduct by which he should live.[27]

There are within these truths revealed to the religious philosophers by Scripture numerous inferred truths that were amplified by the philosophic texts, Wolfson points out. But--and this was Wolfson's main point--all of the above mentioned truths were known to Philo just as they were to

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[27]Wolfson, Philo, II, pp. 448-57.

all of his successors, and were agreed upon by them until Spinoza in the seventeenth century cast doubt upon them and thus initiated modern, non-religious philosophy. Wolfson acknowledged the existence, alongside early medieval philosophy, of philosophies that did not relate Scripture to the Greek philosophic writings. He does not find this contradictory to his contention that medieval and religious philosophy were the same, however. Non-religious philosophy during the first and second centuries was ancient, just as non-religious philosophy before the mid-seventeenth century was modern, although in either case they might overlap in time with medieval philosophy.

Wolfson has had little affect upon the historians of philosophy. His has been like a voice from the wilderness. No general history of philosophy has been written after his point of view, but several specialized studies related to early medieval philosophy give indications of increasing recognition of his point of view. In many respects Wolfson resembles the positions taken by Cochrane, Burns, Halecki and Bark in cultural history. He has begun a redefinition of what is meant by medieval and ancient, and has demonstrated that conventional approaches to the thought of the early Middle Ages have for the most part been inadequate.

Wolfson contended, as did Coulton, and among cultural historians Burns, Bark and Leclercq, that early medieval philosophy was in no way inferior to ancient or modern philosophy. He made this contention on the grounds that

early medieval philosophers sought answers to old problems in an unique and profitable way, not because ancient, medieval and modern philosophy shared the same philosophic techniques and differ only in mental outlook as Gilson or De Wulf maintain. Furthermore it is not sufficient to give credit only to the philosophers of the Middle Ages for the religious philosophy they produced. Philo and others during the ten or more centuries prior to the Middle Ages of the scholastics held the same fundamental principles that were common to the later period.

Histories of philosophy are in most respects a more recent development than that of cultural or of art history. All three fields have matured as they have grown older and it is reasonable to expect the most youthful of these fields to have the furthest to go before it reaches full maturation. If the writing of historians of medieval philosophy is not as yet fully mature, it is largely because those who have been studying the subject have occupied much of their time with justifying the very endeavor they have undertaken. In their opinion it has been necessary to justify not only the application of the term philosophy to medieval thought, but also vindicate each medieval thinker as a legitimate philosopher. Evidentaly considerable time is required before the historians of philosophy are satisfied with the justifications members of their profession have offered.

CONCLUSION

Before mention can be made of the conclusions that can be drawn from the discussion presented above it seems wise to review the major points raised in the first five chapters. It was noted in the first chapter that the attitudes of intellectuals from the Renaissance to the mid-nineteenth century were formed by a continuous reaction to what they viewed as medieval. Historians during these centuries tended to reject not only the ideas and institutions that they associated with the Middle Ages, they were opposed to the very idea of studying medieval history or culture.

With the nineteenth century a reaction against the rationalism of the previous century produced a movement called romanticism. In response to the repudiation by the romantics of the internationalism of the Napoleonic system, a strong sense of national fervor can be found in the historians of the nineteenth century. In addition to their nationalism, nineteenth century historians adopted after the Revolutions of 1848 a position that can be identified as positivism. Positivism tended to support the romantic contention that the Middle Ages were indeed worthy of study.

Following World War I the nationalism that had been associated with positivism no longer appealed to historians, who were otherwise prepared to accept many of the conclusions the positive historians had drawn with respect to the early

Middle Ages. In particular historians of the twentieth century have held the view that the early Middle Ages did not begin with the sudden collapse of the Roman Empire. At first, dismissal of the cataclysmic interpretation of early medieval beginnings involved only the adoption of a transitional thesis in its place, retaining the catastrophic view of early medieval culture that was normally associated with the older interpretation.

Historians of the 1930's generally held the use of transition to the strict definition that dictated that no judgments be passed upon the cultural level of the early Middle Ages. They also sought to describe the six centuries beginning with the fourth as transitional, and some thought the period of transition extended to the eleventh century.

Since the beginning of the second World War, historians have wanted to limit the concept of transition to the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, reserving the seventh and following centuries for the expression "early Middle Ages". They wished to represent early Middle Ages as a period characterized by a new culture distinct from that of the period of transition which preceded it and from the Middle Ages which followed. The culture of the "early Middle Ages" was viewed by this group as an improvement upon that of the transitional age and of its predecessor, the culture of the Empire.

From the exploration of early medieval historiography presented in the above chapters certain conclusions can be drawn.

1) Over the past seven centuries those historians that have presented views of medieval or early medieval history and culture can be broken down into "generations" that lived about the same time and exhibit a common "attitude". For example, we can legitimately speak of the Renaissance 'humanist' as belonging to the fifteenth century and as holding an "attitude" towards the Middle Ages that was in most respects like that of others who lived in the fifteenth century. But when we label Gibbon as a 'humanist' we refer to those thoughts that Gibbon expressed that are like those of the humanists and not germane to the eighteenth century in which he wrote. That Gibbon sometimes resembled the humanists indicates that thoughts of one generation can be often found in another, but this does not mean the two are not in some ways distinct. The historians of the eighteenth century entertained many attitudes towards history and towards the culture of the Middle Ages that are not found in the fifteenth century or the nineteenth century.

2) Although historians before the nineteenth century had a dismal view of the Middle Ages, they did prepare histories of the Middle Ages. In most cases these histories were factually scimpy and would hardly meet the demands of modern scholarship, but they were nonetheless the "accepted" histories of the Middle Ages at the time in which they were written. Medieval scholarship has vastly improved since Gibbon wrote in 1770. Technology has provided the historian with important aids for studying the more distant past.

Detailed research has made single designations such as "gothic", "medieval" or "dark" inadequate representations of the thousand or so years following Rome's fabled fall. Since Voltaire first studied the culture of the France of Louis XIV historians have found cultural history a major sphere of activity. Toynbee has for example compared several cultures with very profitable results and a number of historians have viewed early medieval history as a study in culture. A number of intellectual histories written since the latter part of the nineteenth century have provided important insights into the thought of early medieval men. Momentous as these gains have been one cannot help but be impressed with their comparative youthfulness and particularly that such innovations have only recently been applied to the early medieval period. If an analogy is permissible here, it would seem that cultural and intellectual histories of the early middle ages are in the spring of their career and full of fresh promises for the future. There is little evidence to support those who might think of historical studies, at least within the narrow confines to which this thesis has limited itself, as irrelevant quibblings. On the contrary it would seem historians are near the threshold that will lead to a mature understanding of the early Middle Ages, an understanding to which past efforts have contributed, but were for various reasons incapable of achieving.

3) The point at which historians now stand with respect to the early Middle Ages can be discovered only after a reading of several recent studies upon the subject and a comparison of the apparently varied treatments they give. Within the scope of early medieval history fall the first thousand years of the Christian era. Within that thousand years a number of institutions came and then disappeared. Historians have sought to find in the changing nature of institutions indications of changes within the constitution of Western civilization during that millennium. For the first three centuries of the Christian era the Roman Empire has stood and will no doubt continue to stand as the single most representative institution. Among the historians considered within this essay Cochrane provides the most intense and penetrating analysis of the Roman Empire.

Unable to find one particular institution to represent the character of the fourth through sixth centuries, historians have tried a variety of labels such as "the later Empire", "the Patristic Age" and "the period of invasions". In the past forty years the term "transition" has been used to indicate the absence of a distinguishing institution or institutions during this period. Hence Bark insists that it is necessary to use the concept "transitional" as the one best label for the years 300 to 600.

Even greater difficulty has arisen in finding some appropriate signification that would apply to the seventh and later centuries. Rejection of the "Dark Ages" concept

may be the single point upon which all twentieth century writers could agree. Bark and Leclercq have in the last ten years found a possible solution to the difficulty. Both would insist that with the seventh century, the early Middle Ages can truly be said to have existed. This claim again admits a failure to find within a single institution the essence of an age. When Bark and Leclercq use the expression "early Middle Ages" they are describing what they think was an unique culture. Leclercq would go so far as to call this culture "monastic". Both would distinguish the institutions and thought of this culture from those that characterize the transitional culture that preceded it.

Finding an end for the early Middle Ages has from the outset been fairly easy for historians. The intensification of intellectual and economic activity in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries has as a matter of practice been presumed as the termination of the early medieval epoch.

As the contemporary historian views the first thousand years of Christianity, three periods emerge, each of fundamental singularity and of individual importance. From Augustus to the Peace of the Church there existed the Roman Empire, then a transitional period during which institutions cannot with precision be defined lasting until the early seventh century when the early Middle Ages are clearly visible. Each period has been carefully researched by historians whose common goal is a better comprehension of

early medieval culture. Cochrane and Bury have explored the Roman Empire, Lot, Rand, Laistner, Mc Giffert and others the three centuries of transition and Bark, Leclercq, Dawson, Schnürer and many others the early Middle Ages. Historians of several generations can be mixed together because each offers to future generations impressions of the past that continue to have value.

4) With respect to the thought and culture of the early Middle Ages historians of this century have expressed at least three views. Reflecting a dependence upon earlier attitudes towards the seventh and succeeding centuries a number of historians have characterized these centuries as nearly void of intellectual life and without cultural growth. Those of this view associate the absence of classical letters following the collapse of the Empire with the catastrophic nature of the early medieval period.

A second position ascribed to the early Middle Ages a transitional status, which was taken by those who held the position to mean a rather continuous alteration of culture. Thus estimates of the quality of the culture were meaningless. They reasoned the constant changes in the mixture of classical and medieval institutions during the seventh through tenth centuries defies simple characterization and classification.

The third and more recent view agrees that transitional eras do not lend themselves to meaningful appraisal of their cultural or intellectual life. They

who hold to this third view would not describe the early Middle Ages as transitional, however. The early medieval period possessed a culture of well-defined constitution. It was the first expression of the Christian solution to social relationships and intellectually rested upon principles visible throughout the Middle Ages and into modern times. As such it was a departure from the ill-defined transitional period that immediately preceded it, and a major improvement upon the classical culture that mediately preceded it. Its intellectual life may have been immature, but it was not visibly interior to that of other epochs, and considering the purpose for which most of it was intended, the contemplation of God, it may have been unusually accomplished.

The last two chapters of this thesis were devoted to a brief survey of the literature by specialists interested in the art and philosophy of the early Middle Ages. As the survey indicated, the literature of the specialists in most cases was not very satisfactory. This should not be taken to mean there is nothing to be learned from specialists in early medieval art or philosophy, or for that matter literature, theology, education and other branches of cultural and intellectual history. As would be expected specialists provide far more information related to their subject than the general cultural historian who has but a few pages to spend on early medieval art or philosophy. But the specialists appear lacking.

Explanation of why this is so will give rise to certain other conclusions.

1) Historians of art and of philosophy have yet to produce a synthesis devoted to the early Middle Ages that is comprehensive within the historians' field. Since numerous books on medieval art and philosophy are currently available this would seem a pertinent stricture. Good histories of early Christian art, of Germanic art of medieval art exist, if not abundantly, but none of early medieval art.[1] In philosophy there is, with one notable exception, nothing but general histories of medieval philosophy, and that one exception, the works of Harry Wolfson, holds more in the way of promise than actual accomplishment. This situation is in itself somewhat unsettling, but some of the explanations for why it exists are more bothersome.

2) It is reasonable to expect the historians of art and of philosophy should reflect the same attitudes evidenced within the more general histories of their "generations". That this is not the case raises the same question asked in the above paragraph, why?

Presence of a time lapse that might involve years in the exchange of ideas seems quite natural, but it does not follow that a greater lapse of time between the

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[1]John Beckwith has a book by the title Early Medieval Art, however, he limits his discussion to the "Romanesque" art of the ninth and later centuries.

exchanges of the historian of art and those of culture should exist than are present among historians of culture alone. Yet this seems to be the case. As Dawson, Lot, Moss, Bark and Pirenne demonstrate a cultural historian depends upon the specialist for much of his information about art. The exchange is for the most part only a one-way process, however. A simple explanation would be the historian of art or of philosophy does not need to learn from the cultural historian. That this is not the case is proven by the absence of histories of early medieval art and philosophy, and by Coulton's profitable venture into the history of medieval thought. A better explanation is the historians of art and philosophy believe they do not need to learn from the historians of the early Middle Ages. This explanation fails to completely satisfy us for it does not tell us why.

3) As the surveys given in chapters six and seven of this thesis indicate students of art and of philosophy are not convinced the terms "early medieval" have meaning within their fields of inquiry. Satisfied that art can be broken down into Christian and barbarian until Romanesque art began to flourish under Charlemagne, historians have oriented their histories about those three types of art. Efforts have been made to connect Christian art with that of the barbarians, but such efforts are still controversial. The seventy-five years in which historians have critically examined post-

classical art suggest that with additional investigation the barriers to the study of early medieval art will break down. Eduard Syndicus writing in the past five years gives an example of what might be done on a greater scale. He provides within a history of early Christian art a chapter on barbarian art and another on how both contributed to Romanesque art.

Historians of philosophy have given considerable attention to the many medieval philosophers. Unfortunately this has led them to think of post-classical philosophy in terms of medieval philosophy alone. The philosophers of the fourth through tenth centuries, when thought of at all, are considered transmitters or precursors, both terms implying a second-class citizenship. Thus the historians continue to devote their major attention to a period that comes later than that with which we are concerned here. Little wonder that Gilson, De Wulf or Maurer do not find early medieval history fruitful grounds for the research in which they are interested.

4) Two solutions to the dilemma that entangles early medieval philosophy might be proferred. One would be to attempt to dispel the image of medieval philosophy as exclusively scholastic or scientific, and give to it a broader definition, perhaps along the lines suggested by Wolfson, that would encompass early medieval philosophy as within the proper domain of historical studies of medieval philosophy. The other solution would be to

inspire historians to approach early medieval philosophy as a field of specialization. In either case the gap that presently exists could eventually be closed.

Certain questions are raised in this discussion that are left unanswered by the authorities on early medieval culture. To what extent and in what manner did the Islamic and Byzantine civilizations affect the culture of the west during the early Middle Ages? What in detail was the nature of western culture during the seventh and eighth centuries? Is it appropriate to assess the intellectual and cultural level of a civilization that is just beginning against some fixed standard? If so, what is the standard against which they may be measured?

If this thesis, which is already quite long, should allow for greater expansion, there are three directions this expansion should follow. The philosophers of history that are presently offered as a backdrop for purposes of comparison ought be given greater attention particularly within the twentieth century. The several French and German histories of early medieval culture that are as yet untranslated into English should be given hearing. Lastly a comparison of specialists in early medieval literature, theology, education, music and drama could be added as chapters in the manner art and philosophy have been approached.

APPENDIX

The following is a comparative chart to give the reader a perhaps clearer picture of when the general cultural historians of this century wrote and what country they were native of.

Author	Date of Publication	Year Died	Country	Chapter
Bury	1889 & 1926	1926	Eng.	II
Dill	1898	1924	Eng.	II
Sandys	1903	1922	Am.	II
Ker	1904	1923	Scot.	II
Taylor	1911	1941	Am.	II
Lot	1921	1952	French	III
Pirenne	1925 & 1936*	1935	Belg.	III
Schnürer	1926	1941	Germ.	IV
Rand	1928	1945	Am.	III
Laistner	1931 & 1957		Am.	IV
Dawson	1932 etc.		Eng.	IV
McGiffert	1933	1933	Am.	III
Moss	1935		Eng.	IV

Author	Date of Publication	Year Died	Country	Chapter
Pickman	1937		Am.	III
Duckett	1938 & 1959		Am.	III
Toynbee	1939 etc.		Eng.	V
Cochrane	1940	1946	Eng.	V
Burns	1948	1941	Eng.	V
Wallace-Hadrill	1952		Eng.	IV
Artz	1953		Am.	IV
Leclercq	1957*		French	V
Bark	1958		Am.	V
Décarreaux	1960*		French	V
Halecki	1963		Polish	V
Daly	1965		Am.	V

* notes date of first French edition

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Historical reading, by popular hearsay, is a vertible desert of dusty prose. In all honesty much of it is: the student of history must be prepared for long journeys without a single refreshing sentence; it takes the endurance of an ox and the patience of a saintly monk to finish some of the great texts. But not all history falls into this category. There is much that is alive, provocative and stimulating even to the novice, and there is much more that is sufficiently interesting, persuasive or important to warrant a certain amount of heavy going. Such are the books recommended here.

The reader may want to begin with a history of historical writing that parallels the scope of this one, but in greater detail and with more attention to the full range of historical ideas. The standard Harry Elmer Barnes, A History of Historical Writing (Norman, 1938; Dover Publications, 1963), or the more recent Page Smith, The Historian and History (New York, 1964), are both thorough and full of interesting sidelights.

Once the reader is confident he has within his grasp the essential historiographical background he may be wise to turn to the philosophy behind historical writing. A good place to start is with the collection of excerpts from contemporary and influential philosophers of history edited by Hans Meyerhoff, The Philosophy of History in our

Time (New York, 1959; Doubleday Anchor, 1963), which includes a useful introduction to each of the selections. Also basic introductory material is offered by Edward Hallett Carr, What is History (New York, 1961); A. L. Rowse, The Use of History (New York, 1946; Collier Books, 1963); and W. H. Walsh, Philosophy of History: An Introduction (London, 1951; Harper Torchbooks, 1960). Each of these have the advantage of brevity and readibility in addition to being distinguished texts.

For those readers who wish to skip the precursory for the genuine raw materials of philosophy of history one might turn to Wilhelm Dilthey, Pattern and Meaning in History (London, 1961; Harper Torchbooks, 1962); Jose Ortega y Gasset, History as a System and others Essays (New York, 1941); Norton Library, 1962); Christopher Dawson, The Dynamics of World History (New York,1956; Mentor, 1962); Robin George Collingwood, The Idea of History (London, 1946; Galaxy Books, 1961); and Jacob Burckhardt, Force and Freedom: Reflections on History (New York, 1953). Each of the above are collected works by the respective philosophers, and edited to represent the vital variety of historical thought in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It is not necessary for the reader to have read all of the above materials before he begins to study the origins of modern historical writing, however. A comparison of the attitudes of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance towards historical material is offered by R. R. Bolgar, The

Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries from the Carolingian Age to the End of the Renaissance (London, 1954; Harper Torchbooks, 1964). The problem of the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance has been fascinatingly dealt with in Johann Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (New York, 1954; Doubleday Anchor, 1958). It is Huizinga's contention the Renaissance was the product of the collapse of European solidarity. Jacob Burckhardt, the recognized authority on the Renaissance itself, envisioned its occurence as an event somewhat unique in historical annals. Burckhardt's The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy (3rd ed.; New York, 1929; Harper Torchbooks, 1958), should be read in conjunction with Huizinga's study.

For the intellectual currents existing during the Renaissance a very useful book is Paul Oskar Kristeller, Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic and Humanistic Strains (Cambridge, 1955; Harper Torchbooks, 1961). Documentation for his analysis is offered in another valuable publication which he helped to edit with Ernest Cassirer and John Herman Randall, Jr., The Renaissance Philosophy of Man (Chicago, 1948; Phoenix Books, 1965).

Only two of the many studies on Machiaevelli need be mentioned here. J. H. Whitfield, Machiaevelli (New York, 1947), offers a good account of the man and the significance of his thought. Herbert Butterfield, The Statecraft of Machiaevelli (New York, 1940), includes within a brilliant assessment of Machiaevelli's place in the history of

historical and political thought, extended excerpts from The Prince and its companion work The Discourses.

Little has been done in way of the historiography of the Reformation aside from rather technical accounts within certain historical journals. Estimates of the conclusions these accounts make are provided in Herbert Butterfield, Christianity and History (New York, 1950). Historical surveys of the Reformation era are competently provided by Roland H. Bainton, The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century (Boston, 1951; Beacon, 1962); and E. H. Harbison, The Age of the Reformation (Ithaca, 1955; Cornell, 1962). Arthur Cushman Mc Giffert, Protestant Thought Before Kant (New York, 1911), gives a most helpful interpretation of the changes the Reformation forced upon Christian thought.

Initiating the "Age of Reason" was a revolution in manner by which men conceived the world in which he lived. Describing the role of one individual who was among the first to express the new vision that remade the cosmology of men, Giorgio de Santillana, The Crime of Galileo (Chicago, 1955; Time Inc. Books, 1962), is most successful in giving an insight into intellectual life of both the Reformation and the Enlightenment. A brief but immensely important survey of the scientific revolution is provided by Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (New York, 1925; Mentor, 1960). For an extremely readable guide to the thought of the Enlightenment refer to Frank E. Manuel, The Age of Reason (Ithaca, 1951; Cornell, 1965).

A number of good studies of the historiography of the eighteenth century are available. L. M. Angus-Butterworth, Ten Master Historians (Aberdeen, 1962); and J. B. Black, The Art of History (New York, 1926), are particularly strong on Edward Gibbon. Carl Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers (New Haven, 1932; Yale University, 1963), offers many inspired observations about the historians of the era. No historiographical study of the nineteenth century excells that of George Peabody Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (2nd ed.: London, 1952; Beacon, 1959), for completeness of scope nor fairness of judgment.

A number of historians have been discussed at length in the text above, and hence extended comment here is not necessary. For Edward Gibbon's classic work on the Roman Empire, the John Bagnell Bury edition, Edward Gibbon, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (7 vols.: London, 1897), is the most complete. Jules Michelet, History of France (17 vols. 2nd ed.: Paris, 1835-67), stands forth as one of the most intelligible of the nineteenth century romantic historians. Representative of the achievements of Catholic historians in the nineteenth century is Count de Montalembert, The Monks of the West from St. Benedict to St. Bernard (7 vols.: London, 1861-1879).

Romanticism can be found in the works of predominantly positive histories as Charles Kingsley, The Roman and the Teuton (London, 1964), illustrates when he magnifies the

virtues of the Teuton. The late nineteenth century attraction for the "germ theory" is exampled by the works of Fustel de Coulanges. For example see Numa Fustel de Coulanges, L'Invasion germanique et la fin de l'Empire (Paris, 1891).

There existed towards the end of the nineteenth century an interest in the later Empire that produced several very notable studies. Those by John Bagnell Bury and Sir Samuel Dill are outstanding. The reader may wish to refer to Bury, History of the Later Roman Empire, from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian (395-565) (2 vols.: London, 1889), or to Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire (2nd. ed.: London, 1898), and Dill, Roman Society in Gaul in the Merovingian Age (London, 1926).

Histories of literature transcend the normal bounds of cultural history and in truth belong to a group of special studies. John E. Sandys, History of Classical Scholarship (3 vols. 3rd ed.: New York, 1958), concentrates upon Latin and Greek literature. Pierre C. de Labriolle, History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius (New York, 1925), stresses early Christian literature. William Paton Ker, The Dark Ages (London, 1903), relates Germanic letters to those in medieval Latin. Henry Osborn Taylor is also concerned with medieval literature, but his most important work attempts to relate the several sources of medieval thought. Taylor, The Medieval Mind, A History of the Development of Thought and Emotion in the Middle Ages (2 vols., 4th ed., New York, 1925), is a pioneering study into the intellectual history of the Middle Ages.

Two of the most influential historians of the early Middle Ages in this century have been Ferdinand Lot and Henri Pirenne. Lot, The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages (New York, 1931; Harper Torchbooks, 1961), views the third through the fifth centuries to have been marked by the transition from the ancient to the medieval world, but he believes the consequences after the fifth century to have been catastrophic. Pirenne, Medieval Cities (Princeton, 1925; Doubleday Anchor, 1963); and Mohammed and Charlemagne (New York, 1939; Meridian Books, 1960), argues that the Empire continued without interruption until the end of the seventh century.

Several writers have insisted the transition to the Middle Ages took place during the Patristic Age, and assume as did Lot the following centuries were dismal culturally. Edward Kennard Rand, Founders of the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 1928; Dover Publications, 1957); Arthur Cushman Mc Giffert, History of Christian Thought (New York, 1937); Edward Motley Pickman, The Mind of Latin Christendom (New York, 1938); and Eleanor Shipley Duckett, Gateway to the Middle Ages (New York, 1938; Ann Arbor, 1963), may be read as representative of those expressing this persuasion.

Other historians believe the Middle Ages to have begun in the late eighth and early ninth centuries or later and view the preceding centuries as transitional. Gustav Schnürer, Church and Culture in the Middle Ages (3 vols.: Patterson, New Jersey, 1956), describes the role of the

Church in this transition. Christopher Dawson, The Making of Europe (New York, 1932; Meridian, 1963); and Understanding Europe (New York, 1952; Doubleday Image, 1960), asserts the Christian Middle Ages to have been the accomplishment about which history of the West is centered.

J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, The Barbarian West (London, 1952; Harper Torchbooks, 1962), and The Long-Haired Kings (New York, 1962); Max L. W. Laistner, Intellectual Heritage of the Early Middle Ages (Ithaca, 1957), and Thought and Letters in Western Europe: A. D. 500-900 (2nd. ed.: Ithaca, 1957); H. St. L. B. Moss, The Birth of the Early Middle Ages 395-814 (London, 1935; Oxford University, 1963); and Frederick B. Artz, The Mind of the Middle Ages: A. D. 200-1500 (3rd. ed.: New York, 1954), give minimal emphasis to the part the Church played, but all nonetheless insist the fundamental feature of the early Middle Ages was its transitional character.

Many of the most important interpretations of early medieval culture in recent years have been the result of investigations into how cultures are produced when civilizations come into contact with one another. Arnold Toynbee is best known among the historians making such investigations. His thesis can be found in A Study of History (12 vols.; London and New York, 1939-1961), and in his shorter Civilization on Trial and the World and the West (London, 1948-1953; Meridian Books, 1959), or the abridged version of his A Study of History by D. C. Somervell (New York, 1956-57).

Other works of shorter nature but of similar importance are those by C. Delisle Burns, The First Europe (New York, 1948), and Oscar Halecki, The Millennium of Europe (South Bend, Ind., 1963). Charles Norris Cochrane, Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine (Cambridge, 1940; Galaxy Books, 1957), finds in the confrontation of classicism and Christianity the former gave way, but not before it altered Christianity into its medieval nature.

From the studies of encounters between different cultures opinion has arisen that early medieval culture was the unique product of one such encounter. William Carroll Bark, Origins of the Medieval World (San Francisco, 1958; Anchor Books, 1963); and Jean Leclercq, The Love of Learning and the Desire for God (New York, 1960, Mentor, 1962), explain how this was possible and the nature of the new culture. Additional reference with respect to this position might be made to Lowrie J. Daly, Benedictine Monasticism: Its Formation and Development Through the 12th Century (New York, 1965); and Jean Décarreaux, Monks and Civilization from the Barbarian Invasions to the Reign of Charlemagne (London, 1964).

Specialized studies of ancient and medieval art are fairly abundant. Early histories on this subject such as those of Franz von Reber, History of Mediaeval Art (New York, 1887); W. R. Lethaby, Mediaeval Art (London, 1904); Margaret A. Bulley, Ancient and Medieval Art: A Short

History (London, 1914); and Henry B. Cotterill, A History of Art (New York, 1922), are no longer considered as comprehensive treatments, but they do provide valuable backgrounds for later and more complete histories. The most adequate of more recent histories are offered by Ernst Kitzinger, Early Medieval Art in the British Museum (London, 1940), and Charles Rufus Morey, Mediaeval Art (New York, 1942).

Several provocative studies on the history of Germanic Art have appeared since Josef Strzygowski, Origin of Christian Church Art (Oxford, 1923), and Early Church Art in Northern Europe (London, 1928), first wrote his two classics on the subject. Haäkon Shetelig, Préhistoire de la Norvège (Oslo, 1926); and Harold Picton, Early German Art and its Origins (London, 1939), support the views of Strzygowski. Challenging the position Strzygowski represents are Wilhelm Holmqvist, Germanic Art During the First Millennium A. D. (Stockholm, 1955); Marvin C. Ross and Philippe Verdier, Arts of the Migration Period in the Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore, 1961); and Haäkon Shetelig in his latest book, Classical Impulses in Scandanavian Art (Cambridge, 1949).

Of the recent histories of medieval art the interpretations presented by Andre Graber and Carl Nordenfalk, Early Medieval Painting from the Fourth to the Eleventh Century (New York, 1957), are worth contrasting with two outstanding studies of early Christian art. D. Talbot Rice, The Beginnings of Christian Art (New York, 1957), recalls

the arguments of Morey, whereas Eduard Syndicus, Early Christian Art (New York, 1962), attempts a rather novel and very rewarding approach to his subject.

Early medieval philosophy has never satisfactorily been investigated in English. When discussed at all, it has most often served as introductory material for a competent history of medieval philosophy. To find what is available one must be prepared to look at several histories, each of which are incomplete in themselves. A good beginning is the introductory chapter by Reginald Lane Poole for his Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought and Learning (2nd ed.; London, 1920). The classic text for the history of medieval philosophy and valuable for its few pages on early medieval philosophy is Wilhelm Windelband, A History of Philosophy (New York, 1901; Harper Torchbooks, 1958). Maurice De Wulf, History of Mediaeval Philosophy (6th ed.; New York, 1952), concentrates upon the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages, but thoughtfully includes a thumbnail sketch of early medieval philosophy.

It is generally agreed that Etienne Gilson has written the standard histories of medieval philosophy. Of these two stand out, The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy (New York, 1936), and A History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages (New York,1955). A number of shorter histories have been written that follow in most cases the posture Gilson maintains. S. J. Curtis, A Short History of Western

Philosophy in the Middle Ages (London, 1950); Gordon Leff, Medieval Thought from Saint Augustine to Ockham (Penguin Books, 1958); Armand A. Maurer, Medieval Philosophy (New York, 1962); David Knowles, The Evolution of Medieval Thought (Baltimore, 1962); and Julius R. Weinberg, A Short History of Medieval Philosophy (Princeton, 1964), all give rather cursory attention to medieval philosophy before the eleventh century.

Anne Fremantle, The Age of Belief (New York, 1954; Mentor, 1961), like David McKeon and Hermann Shapiro, edits selections from several medieval philosophers, and provides them with introductory commentary. A remarkable little book for its singular attempt to relate medieval philosophy with medieval culture is provided by G. G. Coulton, Studies in Medieval Thought (London, 1940). In the second volume of A History of Philosophy by Frederick Copleston, Mediaeval Philosophy, (Westminster, Md., 1950; Doubleday Image, 1962), there are several good chapters on early medieval philosophers although the balk of his attention is given to Augustine.

A fresh positive and promising of great reward is a series of studies relating to medieval philosophy by Harry A. Wolfson under the general title Structure and Growth of Philosophic Systems from Plato to Spinoza. In the second volume of this series, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Cambridge, 1947-1948), Wolfson puts forth his main thesis

in a very convincing manner. He restates this position in Religious Philosophy: A Group of Essays (Ithaca, 1947; Atheneum, 1965).