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STRABO ON CIVILIZATION

An important concern of the geographer, according to Strabo, is the study of the quality of human life in the various parts of the inhabited world [1]. Strabo himself takes this claim very seriously in his Geographica. His main interests appear to lie in the domains of economics and society, and efforts to increase the material well-being of a community or to achieve a more rational organization of society are ipso facto justified in his eyes [2]. He uses the phrases τὸ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν and τὸ ἀστεῖον καὶ ἄριστον ἦθος to describe the quality of life found in the most advanced of the societies treated in his work [3]. In the first of these two terms the component τὸ ἥμερον expresses the idea of an advanced material culture and of moral and social 'cultivation', while τὸ πολιτικὸν conveys the notion of city-life. In a discussion based on Plato [4] Strabo also distinguishes a number of stages in the evolution of society: from the primitive condition of simple and wild food-gatherers, society advances gradually to a well-ordered mode of life based on agricultural food-production, described by Strabo as τὸ ἥμερον. This broadly defined condition in fact embraces three distinct levels of development: the rustic, the semi-rustic and the urban, all three qualifying as 'material, moral and social cultivation', but only the last qualifying as τὸ πολιτικόν. The evolutionary process from rustic to semi-rustic and finally to urban life is a process of gradual improvement in 'manners and mode of life' and in socio political organization [5]. The urban stage (τὸ πολιτικόν) is 'the refined and highest êthos'. Thus Strabo's terms τὸ πολιτικόν, τὸ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πολιτικόν and τὸ ἀστεῖον all convey the idea of society at the most advanced stage of the evolutionary process: that is, 'civilization', in the sense of 'the state or condition of being civilized'. For in this sence 'civilization' has come to replace 'civility' (from the Latin civilitas) with which it was once synonymous [6], and, like the terms of Strabo with which we have equated it, it properly refers to a collective state. Again, like Strabo's τὸ πολιτικόν, 'civilization' properly refers to the qualities appropriate to urban society.

Before examining the precise significance of Strabo's terms, however, we must admit that the word 'civilization' is often employed in vague and imprecise ways, and that even social scientists differ in their definitions of the term. The term has commonly been applied to the most advanced of the societies that have emerged

1. Strabo I 1.1: ἡ περὶ τὸν βίον τέχνη καὶ εὐδαιμονία.

2. Cf. Germaine Aujac, Strabon et la science de son temps, Paris 1966, 307–309.

3. Strabo III 2.15, XIII 1.25; cf. XVII 1,3 (πολιτικῶς καὶ ἡμέρως ζῆν). II 5.26 (πολιτικῶς ζῆν).

4. Strabo XIII 1.25; cf. Plato Laws III 576a—682d.

5. Strabo XIII 1.25; τῶν ἠθῶν καὶ τῶν βίων and βίων καὶ πολιτειῶν.

6. H. G. J. Evans, Culture and Civilization, Ibadan 1975, 2—8.

in human history[7]; but, according to A. J. Toynbee, what distinguishes civilization from the uncivilized state is not institutions and patterns of socio-economic organization, but the fact that the former is a dynamic movement while the latter is a static condition[8]. Others like L. H. Morgan and V. Gordon Childe see civilization as the final stage in a process of social evolution from savagery via barbarism. In this doctrine 'savagery' defines the hunting and gathering society and economy of Palaeolithic man, while 'barbarism' defines society that is food-producing but not yet civilized. A society at the level of barbarism may (but does not necessarily) include specialist craftsmen, administrators, merchants, soldiers, priests and so on, supported by the production of a surplus of food over and above the needs of those directly engaged in the tasks of food-production. Such a society may also be (but is not necessarily) governed by a regularly constituted state organization, and the relationship between its members may or may not be regulated by law (as opposed to custom). By contrast, civilization necessarily includes all these features, and civilized society is also necessarily an aggregation of men in a city or in cities; and 'the distinctive achievement of civilization that differentiates it from barbarism is writing and the elaboration of exact sciences'[9].

Strabo does not set out a theory of civilization as a formal and complete whole in any particular section of his work. Indeed, the only comprehensive analysis of social evolution in the extant classical literature is that of Lucretius (V 925 f.), which enshrines the Epicurean doctrine and was hardly improved upon until the 18th century[10]. But Strabo's ideas on the subject of civilization may be assembled from observations scattered here and there in his prolegomena and in his accounts of various peoples, Graeco-Roman and 'barbarian'[11].

I

The process of social evolution

Strabo sees the genesis of civilized society as a process of gradual improvement in manners and modes of life and in socio-political organization (XIII 1.25) or,

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7. Cf. L. H. Morgan, Ancient Society, New York 1877; V. Gordon Childe, What Happened in History, Harmondsworth 1964²; id., Man Makes Himself, London 1965⁴; J. G. D. Clarke, From Savagery to Civilization, London 1946; S. Piggot, The Dawn of Civilization, London 1961; H. Frankfort, The Birth of Civilization in the Near East, London 1951; A. J. Toynbee, A Study of History, London 1934—1954.

8. A. J. Toynbee, op. cit. I, 147 f.

9. V. Gordon Childe, What Happened in History, 140; cf. the works of Morgan, Clarke, Piggot and Frankfort cited in note 7. Toynbee, however, does not accept this differentiation; thus he cites examples of illiterate 'civilizations'.

10. Cf. C. Mullet, 'Lucretius in Clio's chariot', Journal of the History of Ideas XIX (1958) 322; C. Bailey, T. Lucreti Cari de Rerum Natura Libri Sex III, Oxford 1947, 1472—74.

11. For the purpose of ascertaining the ideas held by Strabo, what matters is not how much he has borrowed from his sources (on which, see E. Honigmann, R.-E. IV A (1932) 97—151), but his selection and use of the material. See A. N. Sherwin-White, Racial Prejudice in Imperial Rome, Cambridge 1967, 2.

in Toynbee's phrase, as 'an act of creation involving a process of change in Time'[12]. The progress towards τὸ ἥμερον begins when man ceases to be a mere parasite on nature and begins instead to co-operate with nature in the tasks of producing food by means of agriculture and animal husbandry. But Strabo regards the physical environment as a very important factor in the development of society. The intemperate regions at the northern and southern extremities of the o i k o u m e n ê 'are of necessity defective and by nature inferior to the temperate' (XVII 1. 1). In general they are either too hot or too cold to admit of an excellent quality of life for man in the natural course of things, and their natural deficiencies are reflected in the modes of life of their inhabitants, who lack the resources necessary for cultivated (and a f o r t i o r i for civilized) life. On the other hand the temperate and fertile lands are 'admirably adapted by nature for the development of excellence in men and in forms of socio-political organization' (II 5. 26). Thus the neighbours of the Debae of Arabia are 'more cultivated' (ἡμερώτεροι) than the latter because they live in a more temperate area and one that is well watered and enjoys excellent rainfall (XVI 4. 18). The arid or mountainous parts of the temperate belt are also naturalty inadequate for the development of cultivated life, and so their inhabitants tend to lead a wretched existence, often as nomads (XVII 2. 1). Some peoples are thus condemned to nomadism, poverty and social stagnation by their physical environment (XVII 3. 15). Primitive society can advance intependently[13] to cultivation and civilization only with the co-operation of a reasonably bountiful Nature[14].

Strabo's category of favourable environments includes the temperate and non-mountainous parts of Europe (II 5. 26), the Lower Nile Valley (XVII 1. 3), most of the North African littoral (XVII 3. 1, 3. 15, 3. 24), and the Indus Valley (II 5. 32, XV 1. 20). A society blessed with good climate, fertile soil and adequate natural resources (εὐδαιμονία χώρας) will advance to the cultivated state provided that its members work in a prudent, systematic and organized manner to control nature and to put her gifts to worthy use[15]. As an illustration of this general principle Strabo contrasts the condition of the Egyptians with that of the majority of the Aethiopians, the latter (in this context) being the dark-skinned and black peoples of the Upper Nile and the adjacent deserts (XVII 1. 3). The primitive Egyptians had been blessed with a fertile soil and a generally favourable environment, but the majority of the Aethiopians had been ill-served with a wretched soil and climate. Consequently the former had been able to master their environment by their own endeavour and to put their soil to worthy use, while the latter, lacking nature's co-operation, had remained in the uncultivated state. The Egyptians had thus 'lived a civilized life from ear-

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12. A. J. Toynbee, A S t u d y of H i s t o r y II, London 1954, 1.

13. Strabo is here concerned only with civilization as an independent development. The spread of civilization as a result of contact between different peoples belongs to another context (cf. II 5. 28, 3. 7).

14. Strabo II 5. 26 : φύσις συνεργός.

15. Strabo XVII 1. 3 The Greek expressions are ἐπιμελείᾳ νικᾶν τὴν φύσιν and ἀξίως χρήσασθαι τῇ τῆς χώρας εὐδαιμονίᾳ. Cf. II 5. 26, III 2. 5, IV 1. 2, IV 1. 14. Strabo similarly observes that the good or bad attributes of a locality are not always due to nature ; some are the result of human design (ἐκ κατασκευῆς) ; see II 5. 17.

liest times' (πολιτικῶς καὶ ἡμέρως ἐξ ἀρχῆς ζῶσι), whereas these Aethiopians had stagnated at the level of nomadism and poverty.

The notion that cultivation arises from the interaction of a favourable physical environment and human ἐπιμέλεια is a fortiori applicable to the genesis of civilization. The civilization of the South Arabian states, for example, emerged in a country that is 'watered by summer rains and sowed twice a year, like India'; its rivers supply water to the plains, and the soil is generally fertile, with an abundance of domestic animals (XVI 4. 2). Similarly, Baetica, the homeland of the pre-Roman civilization of the Turdetani, is 'marvellously blessed by nature', and 'pre-eminent in the entire oikoumenê in respect of fertility and the goodly products of land and sea'. It produces all the familiar Mediterranean crops in abundance, and all these blessings are doubled by the facilities for exportation and importation provided by the country's navigable rivers and estuaries (III 1. 6, 2. 4). Here too Strabo finds a good example of man controlling nature and putting her gifts to worthy use.

> It was because the people had learned the character of these regions, and that the estuaries could subserve the same purpose as the rivers, that they built cities and other settlements on their banks, just as on the rivers. Again, canals that have been dug in a number of places are an additional aid, since many are the points thereon from which and to which the people carry on their traffic not only with one another but also with the outside world [16].

Significantly, this country is also blessed with a natural richness in metals: gold, silver, copper and iron in great quantity and of high quality (III 2. 8); and the Carthaginians under Hamilcar Barca found its prosperous inhabitants, the Turdetani, using silver dinner ware and wine jars (III 2. 14). In this highly favoured land the process of social evolution was also aided by the near-total absence of destructive beasts (III 2. 6); for, as Strabo explains elsewhere (IV 1. 4, XVII 3. 15), a society cannot have the leisure necessary for progress towards civilization if environmental factors condemn it to a more or less constant struggle against the menace of wild beasts or of other human groups. In pre- Roman Baetica civilization (τὸ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πολιτικόν) was, accordingly, the consequence of the country's εὐδαιμονία and of the ἐπιμέλεια of its people (III 2. 15). Similarly the Numidian kingdom, which was brought to civilization by the efforts of Masinissa, is a χώρα εὐφυὴς with several rivers and extensive fertile plains, good for cereal production, as well as copper mines (XVII 3. 9—11).

So far, then, Strabo's ideas on the genesis of civilization seem to be quite close to those of modern social scientists who argue that environment, though not the 'total causation in culture-shaping, is beyond doubt the most conspicuous single factor' [17]. The second factor adduced by Strabo is that of human ἐπιμέλεια. He takes Mauretania as a case in point. In his day the majority of the Moors are still in the uncultivated state, despite the natural fertility of their soil and the temperate nature of their climate. This country is blessed with lakes and rivers and is capable of producing all the familiar Mediterranean crops; 'yet,

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16. Strabo III 2. 4 (Loeb trans.).

17. P. A. Means, Ancient Civilizations of the Andes, New York and London 1931, 25—26; cf. E. Huntingdon, Civilization and Climate, New Haven 1924³, 225—6.

though inhabiting a land that is for the most part so fertile, most Moors continue to this day to lead a nomadic life' (XVII 3. 4, 3. 7). Similar is the case of the Numidians before the time of Masinissa.

> Although they lived in a land blessed by nature, except for the fact that it contained an abundance of wild beasts, they made no effort to eradicate the menace of these beasts in order to enable themselves to work the land in security; instead, they kept on warring with each other and abandoned the land to the wild beasts. Thus they continued to lead a nomadic life just like those peoples who are condemned by lack of resources and by a wretched soil or climate to resort to this mode of life [18].

In both these cases Strabo is aware of one unfavourable environmental factor: the menace of wild beasts [19]. But he sees this as a very minor factor; the major factor in the promotion or retardation of social evolution is soil and climate. Good soil and climate ought to lead to the cultivated state. Hence Strabo sees the condition of the nomadic Moors and Numidians as a curious anomaly (ἴδιόν τι) [20], and the only explanation he can find for their lack of progress towards cultivation and civilization is their own ἀμέλεια or ὀλιγωρία. Interestingly enough, he also notes an anomalous case of the opposite kind, where a people advances to civilization by its own efforts despite nature's parsimoniousness. This extraordinary people happens to be the Greeks. In temperate climates, Strabo maintains, even naturally poor regions can become centres of civilization, thanks to the efforts of good caretakers (ἐπιμεληταί). The proto-historic Greeks who settled in Hellas were such good caretakers that they created a great civilization despite the rocky and mountainous nature of the country; and they were able to achieve this 'because of their forethought in regard to socio-political organization, arts and crafts and the general science of living' [21].

The weakness of this line of argument is that it fails to explain why some peoples display such qualities as πρόνοια or ἐπιμέλεια and others do not. Strabo, indeed, seems to see these qualities as natural endowments, although he elsewhere argues that human qualities do not result from nature and environment alone but also from training and habit [22]. There is certainly no attempt to explain why a minority of the Moors (who had advanced to settled and urban life) [23] displayed ἐπιμέλεια while the majority did not, or why the Numidian nomads chose to co-exist with the wild beast menace. Questions of this kind are ignored

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18. Strabo XVII 3, 15.

19. In regard to Mauretania this factor is mentioned at XVII 3. 4.

20. Strabo XVII 3. 15.

21. Strabo διὰ πρόνοιαν τὴν περὶ τὰ πολιτικὰ καὶ τὰς τέχνας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην σύνεσιν τὴν περὶ βίον. Cf. I 3. 1. Strabo, of course, ignores the fact that parts of Greece, like Boeotia, Thessaly and the valleys of Laconia and Messenia, were very fertile (cf. Thucydides I 2, A. W. Gomme, A Commentary on Thucydides I, Oxford 1945, 92—93). But Strabo is, no doubt, thinking primarily of Attica, which, despite its poor soil (Thuc. I 2) emerged as the great παίδευσις of Hellas (Thuc. II 41. 1) and the main citadel of classical Greek civilization.

22. Strabo II 3. 7.

23. This minority constituted the settled and urban population of the Moroccan part of the kingdom of Juba II in Strabo's time, and Strabo mentions (among the cities of this area) Tingi, Zelis and Lixus (XVII 3. 2, 3. 6).

by Strabo primarily because he subscribes to the notion (denounced as false by Toynbee) that civilization is apt to arise in environments that provide easy conditions of life for man [24]. It has, for example, been pointed out that Graeco-Roman writers (beginning with Hecataeus and Herodotus and the immortal dictum 'Egypt is the gift of the Nile') generally err in seeing pre-agricultural Egypt as a paradise [25]; and Strabo certainly has no idea that the primitive Egyptians had entered the Nile Valley only because of the desiccation of the adjacent plateaux (in Toynbee's terms, in response to the environmental challenge of desiccation), or that the creation of the historical land of Egypt required stupendous effort on the part of these early settlers [26]. Since Strabo holds that civilization is not apt to emerge in unfavourable physical environments, he concludes that only a people with extraordinary gifts (such as he attributes to the early Greeks) can advance to civilization by its own efforts in a difficult environment. He indeed gives the impression that the emergenge of Greek civilization was a remarkably rapid process. But Thucydides shows a much better understanding of this process in his sketch of the development of Greece from semi-nomadism and barbarism to the prosperous life of the classical polis [27]. It is also to be noted that Herodotus, echoing Hippocrates, had long since given a certain popularity to the environmental theory that 'soft countries breed soft men' [28], a pattern of thought which easily leads to the kind of questions ignored by Strabo, and also to reasonably satisfactory answers to those questions. For although this Hippocratic notion was the foundation of a thorough-going theory of environmental determinism [29], its essence is that, for primitive man, 'the greater the ease of the environment, the weaker the stimulus towards civilization' [30]. The Hippocratic school undoubtedly appreciated the sociological significance of Homer's tale of the Lotus-eaters and their soporific life, and would equally have appreciated the remark of H. Drummond about the 19th century Nyasalander: 'he does not need to work; with so bountiful a Nature around him it would be gratuitous to work' [31]. Lucretius too, and even lesser students of the Epicurean theory, like Diodorus, show a more acute understanding of the role of environmental factors in social evolution, explaining that these factors operate as stimuli to human action, which in turn leads to social and cultural improvement.

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24. Toynbee, op. cit. II, 1.

25. P. E. Newberry, Egypt as a Field for Anthropological Research, London 1924, 176—180.

26. Cf. Toynbee, op. cit. II, 1f.

27. Cf. Thucydides I 2f.; cf. A. W. Gomme, Commentary on Thucydides I, 91—133; C. N. Cochrane, Thucydides and the Science of History, London 1929, 37—49.

28. Herodotus IX 122; cf. W. W. How and J. Wells, A Commentary on Herodotus, II, Oxford 1912, 336—7. Lucretius (V 988—1010) similarly argues that primitive man was much more hardy than contemporary man 'as befitted the offspring of a tough earth'.

29. Cf. Ellen C. Semple, The Influence of the Geographic Environment on the basis of Ratzel's System of Anthropogeography, New York 1947; C. J. Glacken, Traces on the Rhodian Shore, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, 89f.

30. Toynbee, op. cit. II, 31.

31. H. Drummond, Tropical Africa, London 1888, 55.

The vital questions which Strabo ignores would have been raised by men like Lucretius, Hippocrates and Thucydides, all of whom see civilization as the consequence of environmental stimuli that shock society out of its stagnation [32]. The physical environment must present a reasonably severe challenge to man, as Toynbee puts it. Neither Homer's Lotus-eaters, nor Herodotus' 'soft men', nor H. Drummond's happy Nyasalanders will have found anything in their physical environment to shock them out of their stagnation. Toynbee extends the Epicurean theory by the argument that 'the most stimulating challenge is to be found in a mean between a deficiency of severity and an excess of it'. For if there are environments that are too easy and so guarantee social stagnation, there are also environments that present challenges 'of an overwhelming severity to which the victim succumbs' [33].

Consideration has so far been restricted to civilization as an independent development in a particular physical environment. Strabo also comments on the factor of the human environment; that is, contact with other societies as the main factor in the emergence of civilization among a particular people. He emphasises the civilizing role of Greece and Rome in various parts of the oikoumenê, and insists that 'the various arts, abilities and institutions of mankind, when once a start has been made, flourish in almost any latitude, and in some instances even in spite of the latitude' [34]. A society that has been stagnant and uncivilized owing to its physical environment can become civilized through contact with a civilized society (II 5. 56). Formely wild peoples taught by the Romans or Greeks to live a civilized life include the Celtiberians, the Allobroges and the Gallic tribesmen around the Greek colony of Massalia [35]. Brutishness gives way to cultivation and civilization in direct proportion to the intensity of the Roman presence (III 3. 8). Consequently, by Strabo's time, the Roman conquest had already transformed some of the savage Lusitanians of Iberia into πολιτικοί. On the other hand, the remote Scythians, who enjoyed only a superficial contact with Graeco-Roman civilization, lost their primitive innocence without losing their barbaric savagery (III 3. 7, 4. 6). By implication the remoteness of a country from contact with the Graeco-Roman world is, in the final analysis, a more decisive obstacle to the emergence of civilization in that country than the natura factors of poor soil and climate.

II

The cultivated state

Several observations of Strabo serve to clarify his idea of what constitutes civilized society and distinguishes it from cultivated society or savagery. Agriculture is the essential basis of τὸ ἥμερον. Nomads are thus dismissed as uncul-

32. Cf. Mullet, op. cit 307 f.; Cochrane, op. cit. 9—24. On Diodorus, cf. G. Vlastos, 'On the prehistory of Diodorus', *AJP* LXVII (1946) 51—59. It has also been noted that Posidonius (who is one of Strabo's sources), though a Stoic, shared many of the Epicurean postulates on social evolution (cf. Mullet, op. cit. 308, Bailey, op. cit. III, 1521).

33. Toynbee, op. cit. II, 393.

34. Strabo II 3. 7; cf II 5. 26; Sherwin-White, op. cit. 5 f.

35. Strabo III 2. 15, IV 1. 5, IV 1. 11; A. N. Sherwin-White, op. cit., 8.

tivated barbarians: those of Aethiopia, North Africa and Scythia, as well as the wandering folk of Germany [36]. The latter have a meagre livelihood and neither engage in agriculture nor store up food (VII 1. 3). This is also a characteristic of the Scythian nomads who live mostly on horse flesh, milk and cheese made of mare's milk (VII 3. 7). But the barbarian societies which practice some form of agriculture reveal varying degrees of cultivation or of savagery, for agriculture alone does not render a society cultivated. Hence Strabo's use of the term 'absolute barbarians' (τελέως βάρβαροι). The peoples so described, even if they engage in agriculture, are but little removed from nomads in terms of cultivation: for example, the Ligurian mountain folk and the so-called Ariani of Asia, whose wretched livelihood is explained by the proverty of their soil (II 5. 32, IV 6. 4). Similarly the mountain folk of Corsica, whose rough and impassable fastnesses afford only a meagre livelihood, support themselves on brigandage and are more savage than wild animals (V 2. 7). Their Sardinian counterparts do a bit of farming but do not take it seriously, and live in caves, devoting most of their attention to pillaging. Significantly Strabo labels both these groups of mountaineers βάρβαροι (V 2. 7), although their islands had long been politically Roman. Again, the Irish are 'complete savages', leading a wretched existence owing to the coldness of their climate; they are also cannibals who even eat their dead fathers and have sexual intercourse openly with their mothers and sisters [37].

The traits of cultivated society are mostly implicit in what Strabo says about savage barbarians, though a few are explicitly stated. The characteristics of uncultivated society are material proverty (ἀπορία), non-accumulation of resources (τὸ μὴ θησαυρίζειν) and hand-to-mouth living (ἐφήμερος παρασκευή), absence of commerce except in the rudimentary form of barter, lawlessness, indiscipline, slovenly inefficiency, and a brutish and savage existence 'according to the impulses of physical needs and bestial instincts' [38]. Thus Strabo comments on the slovenliness of the savages of pre-Roman Spain who lived on a low moral plane, following no ordered pattern of living, but merely responding to bestial impulses and necessities, bathing in ripe urine and sleeping on the ground (III 4. 13 - 16). The fact that they took the trouble to store up the urine for their wretched ablutions evokes the ironic comment that perhaps that is their sole claim to ordered living (III 4. 16). Also noted is the lawlessness of the Spanish mountaineers who led a simple existence, sleeping on the ground and indulging in human sacrifice, and also showing pronounced traits of intractability and savagery (III 3. 5–7). The pre-Roman Cantabrians were similarly marked by savagery and bestial insensibility (III 4. 17). The Germans beyond the Rhine are still wild and indigent in Strabo's day (VII 1. 2—3), and in earlier times Illyria had been underdeveloped partly because its people had failed to appreciate the fertility of their soil, and partly because of their wildness and addiction to piracy (VII 5. 10). The Bessi of Mount Haemus are downright brigands, dwelling in huts and leading a wretched life (VII 5. 12). The Berber tribes lying between the Gaetuli and the prosperous Tunisian littoral are 'very simple

36. Strabo XVII 1. 53, 3. 21, 3. 1, 3. 23, 3. 4; VII 1. 3, 3. 7.

37. Strabo II 5. 8, IV 5. 4. Strabo, however, admits that his information on Ireland is not very trustworthy.

38. Strabo XVII 3. 15, II 5. 26, 32, XVII 2. 1, 3. 19, VII 1. 3, 3. 7, III 3. 5—7, I 4. 6, VII 1. 2, 5. 10.

in their modes of life and in their dress; the men are polygamous and have many children, and in other respects are like the nomadic Arabians' (XVII 3.19). Most northern Europeans are characterised by stupidity (ἄνοια) and an unnaturally horrible kind of barbarity (τὸ βάρβαρον καὶ τὸ ἔκφυλον): they not only practice human sacrifice, but also 'when they leave the battlefield, they hang the heads of slain enemies on their horses' necks and take them home to fix them to the entrances of their dwellings for display' (IV 4.5). The northern Gauls generally 'sleep on the ground and eat their meals sitting on straw beds' (IV 4.3). The habits of the Britons are in part like those of the northern Gauls and in part 'more simple and barbaric'. Despite an abundance of milk, some of them do not know how to make cheese; and they are inexperienced in gardening and other agricultural pursuits. They have no cities, and Strabo remarks with disdain that 'their forests are their cities', since they build temporary huts for themselves and stalls for their cattle in spacious enclosures fenced in with logs (IV 5.2).

It transpires, then, that cultivated society lives πρὸς διαγωγήν ('according to the rule-book', as Sherwin-White neatly puts it), and is characterizet by social discipline, respect for law, adequacy of material goods, the prudent and systematic deployment of labour and resources, commerce and specialized craftsmanship. It is also distinguished from uncultivated society by manners that gentler in some degree [39].

III

The civilized state

We have noted that Strabos's ἀστεῖον καὶ ἄριστον ἦθος ('civilization') represents vis-à-vis mere cultivation (whether the latter is rustic or semi rustic) an improvement in manners, mode of life, and socio-political organization. We have also seen that this improvement is regarded as a process that is a function of city life. Urbanization transforms society from the rustic (ἄγροικος) and semirustic (μεσάγροικος) modes of life to the civilized life [40]. Civilization is thus distingnished from cultivation (τὸ ἥμερον) by the fact that it is urban while the latter is rustic or semi-rustic. The attributes of civilized society thus consist of a certain standard of material culture and of moral and social cultivation (τὸ ἥμερον) combined with the particular societal traits that arise only from the process of living together in cities (τὸ πολιτικόν). Strabo accordingly represents civilized society as an aggregate of πολιτικοί, and draws a sharp distinction between the city (πόλις) and the village (κώμη). The city is the essential basis of civilization [41]. Thus the Celtic neighbours of the Turdetani are less civilized than the latter because they live for the most part in villages, whereas the Turdetani live for the most part in cities (III 2.15). However large the village, it is still not a city (III 4.13), though it may be the approximation described by Strabo as κωμόπολις (XIII 1.26).

What then is a city? Paul Pédech has noted that Strabo uses several terms

39. Strabo I 4.9, XV 1,53; I 2.32—33 (εὐτεχνία, καλλίτεχνοι); II 3.6, 5.26, XVI 1.50, XVII 1.3; XIII 1 25.

40. Strabo XIII 1.25.

41. Strabo XVII 3.15, IV 4.2, XVII 1.4, 3.9, III 4.13.

to designate 'town' and that these terms reflect the relative importance of the places so described, though only πόλις necessarily implies some kind of municipal organization and local institutions [42]. No less important is Strabo's observation that the Troy of his day was a πόλις, but that it had been at an earlier period a mere village (κώμη) built around a small and cheap temple of Athene. Alexander the Great had adorned the temple with votive offerings and had planned to transform the village into a city. Owing to his premature death, however, nothing had come of this plan; and when the Romans entered the area in 189 BC the place was still only a kind of township (κωμόπολις), failing to qualify as a πόλις because its buildings did non even have tiled roofs and it had no walls. It was in the Roman period that the place received the αὔξησις that transformed it into the πόλις of Strabo's day [43]. By αὔξησις Strabo evidently means the addition of sophisticated public and private buildings and civic amenities, the building of city walls, and the improvement of the general layout that were required for this transformation. Strabo's definition is highly materialistic. The city, which is so essential for civilized life, is a privileged organism that depends on the support of considerable resources provided by its surrounding territorium, with which it must be linked by efficient communications. It cannot exist otherwise. Hence Strabo, following Posidonius, assumes that Polybius, in order to flatter his friend Ti. Gracchus, had inflated the number of Iberian cities destroyed by the latter: most of the 300 'cities' reputedly destroyed by Gracchus were in reality merely fortified redoubts (πύργοι). Strabo himself adds that owing to the poverty of most of the Iberian terrain, that peninsula cannot actually have contained the numerous pre-Roman cities it is reputed to have had, and that the savage character and isolation of the pre-Roman inhabitants of the interior also point to the same conclusion (III 4.13). He acknowledges, however, that the southern part of the peninsula, Baetica, was highly urbanized in pre-Roman times (III 2.1).

Strabo, then, sees civilization as inseparable from the material culture of the city and from urban life. Urban life is the basic prescription; but civilized society is 'well-equipped for warfare and in the other aspects of life' [44], and is marked by excellence in men and in socio-political organization [45]. Strabo (I 4.9) indicates that this was also the view of Eratosthenes. In his own definition, however, much emphasis is set on order and discipline. Accordingly the tribute to Masinissa's civilizing achievement in Numidia highlights the transition from the wild raiding and 'brigandage' characteristic of less advanced societies to organized and disciplined soldiering: 'he transformed nomads into politikoi and

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42. P. Pédech, 'La géographie urbaine chez Strabon', Ancient Society II (1971) 239f.

43. Strabo XIII 1.26, 1.42; cf. W. Leaf, Strabo on the Troad, Cambridge 1923, 139—150. Leaf showed that most of what Strabo says about Troy is, in fact, incorrect; but this does not detract from the validity of Strabo's remarks as an indication of his own and of the generally accepted contemporary view of the distinction between a city and a village. For other examples of the transformation of villages into cities, see Strabo IV 1.11 (Vienna) and V 1.6 (Mediolanum). Egyptian Thebes underwent the opposite process (XVII 1.4, 1.46).

44. Cf. XVII 1.53: παρεσκευασμένοι καλῶς ... πρὸς πόλεμον ... πρὸς τὸν ἄλλον βίον.

45. Strabo II 5.26: ἀρετὴ ἀνδρῶν καὶ πολιτειῶν.

farmers and taught them to be proper soldiers instead of mere brigands' [46]. In regard to the economic aspects, Strabo, with his strongly materialistic approach, naturally takes material prosperity and a thriving commerce as a sine qua non of civilized life [47]. This is, of course, also implicit in his list of the traits of cultivated society, which are a fortiori applicable to civilized society. In regard to the socio-political sphere, if Strabo's lofty language is somewhat vague, it is nevertheless evident that his πολιτικοί and τὸ πολιτικόν are not restricted to Graeco-Roman civilization. In matters where such a restriction is intended the point is clearly made. Thus the city of Ptolemais in Upper Egypt has a constitution 'of the Greek type', and the southern Gauls have mostly been transformed 'to the type of the Romans, in language and in mode of life, and in some cases also in municipal organization' [48]. Again, the Turdetani are described as having 'completely changed over to the Roman way of life' and as 'men of the toga' [49], while the entire body of Iberian togati age said to have been transormed 'to the Italian type' [50]. Moreover the terms τὸ πολιτικόν and πολιτικοί are applied to 'barbarian' societies that are in no sence 'of the Graeco-Roman type' [51]. Similarly Strabo follows Eratosthenes in emphasizing a division of mankind based on refinement and excellence of socio-political organization as opposed to the ethnocentric dichotomy between Greeks and barbarians (I 4.9). Eratosthenes had cited 'the Indians, the Arians, and still more so the Romans and the Carthaginians, who have such admirable socio-political systems' as examples of civilized non-Greeks. Strabo accepts this, indicating at the same time that other barbarian peoples in the time of Alexander the Great had possessed the traits which he associates with civilized life: 'the law-abiding instinct and the qualities associated with city life, education and powers of speech' (τὸ νόμιμον καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν καὶ τὸ παιδείας καὶ λόγων οἰκεῖον).

Strabo naturally (and justifiably) regards the Graeco-Roman mode and quality of life as the best expression of civilization, and this occasionally leads him to reveal certain prejudices. For example he uses the term πάμφορος ('productive of all crops') in the narrow sense of 'productive of all Mediterranean crops' [52]. Similarly he regards southern Gaul as the most favoured part of Gaul because it produces the same fruits as Italy (IV 2.1), and observes that Europe excels the other continents in that it produces 'all the crops that are best and that are necessary for life, and has all the useful metals, importing from abroad such inessential luxuries as spices and precious stones' (II 5.26). He also tends to comment unfavourably or apologetically on the absence of such Graeco-Roman crops among foreign peoples, however advanced, repeatedly implying that wine is a more civilized drink than beer and that olive oil is similarly superior to

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46. Strabo XVII 3.15: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοὺς νομάδας πολιτικοὺς κατασκευάσας καὶ γεωργικούς, ἔτι δ' ἀντὶ τοῦ λῃστεύειν διδάξας στρατεύειν. Cf. II 5.26, VII 5.10.

47. Cf. XVII 1.12—13, 3.1, III 2.4, II 5.26, XVII 3.21.

48. Strabo XVII 1.42, IV 1.12.

49. Strabo III 2.15.

50. Strabo III 4 20.

51. Cf. Strabo XVII 1.3 (Pharaonic Egypt); XVII 1.12 (native Egyptians at Alexandria); XVII 3.15 (Numidia); III 4.8 (a 'barbarian' city in Iberia). In view of these uses of the terminology, one cannot agree with Sherwin-White, op. cit. 5 where πολιτικὸν is interpreted as a reference to city life 'of the Hellenic sort'.

52. Cf. III 2.4, XVII 3.2.

butter and fat [53]. He similarly judges a piece of Egyptian architecture purely in terms of Graeco-Roman aesthetic values as 'a kind of hall with numerous columns, built in a barbaric style; for, except for the fact that it has numerous large columns forming many rows, there is nothing pleasing or picturesque about it; otherwise it is nothing but a display of vain toil' (XVIII 1. 28). But, however much his judgement is coloured by his own socio-political and cultural backround, he evidently does not regard the Graeco-Roman mode of life as the sole expression of civilization. His τὸ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πολιτικόν and τὸ ἀστεῖον are terms connoting in a general sense 'civilized society', which is necessarily a matter of 'well-governed cities or nations' (II 5. 18), but does not necessarily relate to the Graeco-Roman model. His term πολιτικός has no necessary connection with the Hellenic πόλις, except in the sense that it postulates some form of city-state institutions and municipal organization. It has to do with the kind of socio-political order and social relations that are associated with the act of living together in cities. Anything that is conducive to this kind of order is accordingly πολιτικόν, and anything that is not is ἀπολιτικόν. Hence matriarchy, a kind of 'woman-rule' (γυναικοκρατία), is not quite πολιτικόν (III 4. 18); for Strabo, as a Greek, finds it difficult, if not imposible, to see how a society dominated by women can be well-ordered. Similarly the habit of dining alone and at any time of the day is less conducive to κοινωνικὸς καὶ πολιτικὸς βίος than the custom of dining in company at set times (XV 1. 53). The former habit was reported to be common in some Indus Valley communities, and although the information available to Strabo leads him to regard these Indian states as civilized [54], he is constrained to point out with regret that the order and discipline that otherwise pervades their modes of life is not reflected in their dining habits.

This inseparable association of τὸ πολιτικόν with social order and discipline explains why Strabo, following Polybius, can describe the native Egyptian element of the population of Alexandria as a φῦλον πολιτικόν, by contrast with the class of largely barbarian [55] mercenary soldiers which is 'high-handed and undisciplined' (βαρὺ καὶ ἀνάγωγον), and with the Greek element which is 'not distinctly amenable to civil order' (οὐδ' εὐκρινῶς πολιτικόν) [56]. The theme of this passage [57] is law and order, and the contrast is between military violence and civilian turbulence on the one hand, and conduct appropriate to orderly civil life on the

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53. Cf. II 1. 14—16, III 3. 7, III 4. 16, IV 1. 2, XVII 1. 14, XVII 2. 2.

54. Strabo I 4. 9 (ἀστεῖοι); cf. XV 1. 27—36 (cities); XV 1. 34 f. (the sciences, study of philosophy, admirable administrative system and social system, orderly behaviour, respect for truth).

55. E. R. Bevan, A History of Egypt under the Ptolemaic Dynasty, repr Chicago 1968, 168.

56. Strabo XVII 1. 12.

57. A number of untenable emendations of the MSS φῦλον πολιτικὸν have been offered, all based on the misguided assumption either that Polybius and Strabo cannot have found the native element more praiseworthy than the Greek, or that πολιτικὸν must relate to the Greek mode of city-state life and is therefore less applicable to Egyptians than to Greeks. Bevan, op. cit 100—101, rightly understood the meaning of the passage and rightly defends the MSS tradition against ὀχλητικὸν ('prone to mob action'), πολύδικον ('litigious'), οὐ πολιτικὸν and ἀπολιτικόν.

other. Polybius had mentioned repeated turbulence at Alexandria in which the Greeks and the mercenaries, but not the native element, were involved; and Strabo quotes Polybius in the context of his own reference to the lawlessness that had prevailed in Alexandria under the weak rule of the later Ptolemies, a situation which, he adds, had disgusted Polybius (XVII 1. 12). The Greek element was turbulent, though less so than the mercenaries; 'for even though they were a mixed collection of Greeks (μιγάδες), nevertheless they were Greeks by origin and retained some memory of the general Greek mode of life' [58]. But both Greeks and mercenaries are together contrasted with the native element which is 'amenable to civil order' (πολιτικόν). Lawlessness is the very antithesis of τὸ πολιτικόν (III 3. 5).

When Strabo, then, defines civilized society as an aggregate of πολιτικοί he means by that term not only 'city-dwellers', but also 'men amenable to the kind of socio-political order and discipline that is appropriate to city life'. The theme of order and discipline is further emphasized in the statement that the Romans, by re-organizing the administration of Egypt, corrected the evils of lawlessness (ἀνομία) and mal-administration (κακῶς πολιτεύεσθαι) that had plagued Egypt under the later Ptolemies: Augustus 'put an end to the reign of drunken violence in Egypt' by placing the country under the administration of prudent caretakers [59]. The same theme is apparent in Strabo's tribute to Rome's excellent leaders and institutions which had combined to arrest the downward drift of Italy 'into the ways of error and corruption', and also in the panegyric on the pax Augusta: 'Never have the Romans and their allies thrived in such peace and plenty as that which was afforded them by Augustus Caesar from the time that he assumed absolute autority' [60]. Strabo's approach to the problems of society is highly practical and materialistic. In the Augustan era 'ce sont les problèmes de gouvernement, d'administration, de prospérité sociale, qui passent au premier plan, et l'on abandonne peu à peu une étude qui peut ne pas se traduire immédiatement par un résultat positif' [61]. Strabo's Geographica reflects the spirit of the age. Hence his emphasis on order, stability and material prosperity. Hence his undisguised horror at bad management, lawlessness and indiscipline, which are obvious dangers to civilized society as he conceives of it. Hence too the point is made that, although the city is a civilizing organism which may even radiate social cultivation beyond its borders, civilization is easily annihilated when neighbouring barbarians, bent on mischief, have numerical superiority on their side [62]. Cyrène offers a good example of success in the defence of civilization against savage hordes (XVII 3. 21 – 22). But a classic case of failure in a similar situation is provided by an advanced Iberian community whose constant struggles with their wild neighbours forced them to concentrate on war at the expense of their agriculture, with the result that their country degenerated into a land of brigands (III 3. 5).

One further aspect of Strabo's concept of civilization emerges most clearly from his description of the criterion of ἀρετή which Alexander is supposed to

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58. Cf. Bevan, op. cit. 98; A. H. M. Jones, The Cities of the Eastern Roman Provinces, Oxford 1971², 306 and note 6.

59. Strabo XVII 1. 11—13.

60. Strabo VI 4. 2 (Loeb trans.).

61. Germaine Aujac, Strabon et la science de son temps, 309.

62. Strabo III 4. 13; cf. III 2. 15, IV 1. 5.

have adopted in his treatment of barbarians as 'the law-abiding instinct and the qualities associated with living together in cities and with education and powers of speech' : τὸ νόμιμον καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν καὶ τὸ παιδείας καὶ λόγων οἰκεῖον (I 4.9). This expression is evidently meant to convey the same idea as τὸ ἀστεῖον καὶ ἄριστον ἦθος : that is, 'civilization'; and here it becomes obvious that Strabo is at one with moderns like Childe (and at variance with Toynbee) in that he sees literacy and exact sciences as distinctive marks of civilized life[63]; for these are essential constituents of what he calls τὸ ἀστεῖον καὶ ἄριστον ἦθος. Hence the emphasis on παιδεία and λόγοι as an aspect of the ἀρετή that marks τὸ ἀστεῖον and distinguishes it from lower forms of social cultivation[64]. Hence also the insistence that the illiterate man is in a certain sense a child (I 2.8).

Civilization, the level of development described as the highest ἦθος, necessarily implies a knowledge of writing and exact sciences. That is why Strabo rarely makes a direct reference to literacy in his accounts of 'civilized' (ἀστεῖοι, πολιτικοί) peoples, and why allusions or out-of-context references are equally rare. Turdetanian literacy is mentioned, but only as clear proof of the argument that the Turdetani were the cleverest of all the peoples of pre-Roman Iberia (III 1.6). Egyptian literacy is indicated only by casual references in accounts of other peoples (XVI 4.4, XVII 1.5). In the case of the South Arabian states it is casually implied by what is said about the royal succession, not explicit. In regard to India, Strabo quotes Megasthenes to the effect that, a generation after Alexander's conquests, Chandragupta's subjects 'have no knowledge of writing and regulate everything from memory' (XV 1.53). But Strabo knows that this notion had been contradicted by Nearchus, whom he quotes in another context[65]; and in his account of India literacy is even more strongly implicit than in the account of South Arabia. For example, the Indian equivalent of the Roman milestone offers information 'on the by-roads and the distances'; and there are officials whose duty is to 'keep the land re-measured, as is done in Egypt', to scrutinize births and deaths for the purposes of taxation and record preservation, and to control weights and measures, using official stamps in the line of duty[66].

Literacy and exact sciences are implicit in Strabo's term πολιτικοί, as they obviously are in the term ἀστεῖοι. These terms and their equivalents are, naturally, applied to communities by Strabo on the basis of the information available to him on the quality of life of the society concerned. Admittedly this information was sometimes very inadequate or untrustworthy[67]; but it at least enables us to see how he arrived at his various judgements. His civilized peoples include the Egyptians (XVII 1.3), the Babylonians and the Persians (II 3.7, XVI 1.1—17, XV 3.1—24), the Phoenicians (I 2.33, XVII 1.3), the Carthaginians (I 4.9, XVII 3.15), Masinissa's Numidia (XVII 3.15, 3.9), the states of South Arabia (XV 4.2–4) and of the Indus Valley (I 4.9, XV 1.27—73),

63. Cf. V. Gordon Childe, What Happened in History, 116f., 140.

64. Strabo I 4.9.

65. Strabo XV 1.67. Megasthenes was, of course, wrong. O. Murray, 'Herodotus and Hellenistic culture', CQ XXII (1972) 200f., makes some valuable observations on Megasthenes and Nearchus.

66. Strabo XV 1.50—51.

67. Cf. E. H. Bunbury, History of Ancient Geography II, New York 1959², 259f.

and the Turdetani of pre-Roman Baetica (III 2. 4 f.). Among those who fail to qualify as civilized are the Aethiopians of the Nile Valley 'extending towards the south and Meroe' (XVII 1. 53), the Berbers of the North African hinterland (XVII 3. 19), most of the pre-Roman Iberians (III 3. 5—7, 4. 13—18), the pre-Roman Illyrians (VII 5. 10—12), and all the barbarians of northern Europe [68]. I conclude this survey with some further observations on Strabo's accounts of Egypt, South Arabia, Turdetania, Numidia and Aethiopia.

The Egyptians' claim to social cultivation rests on the fact that, from earliest times, they had made worthy use of nature's gifts, practising agriculture and developing the economic potential of their country by their own ἐπιμέλεια, particularly in respect of artificial irrigation (XVII 1. 3). But what makes them civilized is, in the first place, their πόλεις ἀξιόλογοι. Strabo is particularly impressed by the past wealth and grandeur of the city of Thebes, even though few indications of that brilliant past were visible in his day, by which time the ancient city had become 'a mere collection of villages' (XVII 1. 4, 1. 46). Secondly, Egypt has an ancient tradition of priestly study in the fields of science and philosophy, and is justly famous for some important scientific discoveries (XVII 1. 3, 1. 29). Thirdly, Pharaonic Egypt had an admirable socio-political system: a monarchy in which the population was divided into military, agricultural-industrial, and priestly castes to take care of military affairs, production and matters of religion respectively. This was the basis of the kind of stability and material prosperity that is so highly prized by Strado. His admiration of the Egyptian caste-system [69] is also in keeping with his observation (II 5. 26) that the best kind of society is one that is founded upon co-operation between a warlike element (τὸ μάχιμον καὶ ἀνδρικόν) and a numerically and politically dominant element devoted te the arts of peace: agriculture, arts and crafts, and character-building (καρποῖς καὶ τέχναις καὶ ἠθοποιίαις). The idea is further developed by the observation that leisure from warfare and from the necessity of battling against the menace of wild beasts is a prerequisite for industrious farming and the development of civilization [70]. Strabo also admires the division and minute sub-division of Egypt into provinces and districts for administrative convenience and efficiency (XVII 1. 3). In sum, the Egyptians are civilized (πολιτικῶς καὶ ἡμέρως ζῶσι) [71].

Similarly the index of civilization in the South Arabian states is their prosperous cities, ruled by kings, and 'beautifully adorned with temples and royal palaces', their thriving commerce and their literacy (I 2. 32, XVI 4. 34). Again, in the case of Turdetania, what constitutes the collective state of civilization is, in the first place, the highly urbanized character of the country, which contains 'a surpassing number of cities, as many as 300, it is said' (III 2. 1). In the second place, the Turdetani have their own alphabet, historical records, and poems and laws written in verse (III 1. 6). Again, just as the condition of the Turde-

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68. Strabo IV 4. 5, IV 5. 2—4, VII 1. 2 f.

69. Strabo XVII 1. 3; compare the obvious approval of the Indian caste-system (XV 1. 39).

70. Strabo IV 1. 14: ἄγοντες σχολὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ὅπλων ἐργάζονται τὴν χώραν ἐπιμελῶς, καὶ τοὺς βίους κατεσκευάζοντκι πολιτικούς. Cf. II 5. 33. III 2. 6, XVII 3. 15. Significantly also Strabo makes the point that wild beasts are rare in Europe (II 5. 26).

71. Strabo XVII 1. 3.

tani is one of τὸ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πολιτικόν (III 2. 15), so the Numidians under Masinissa and his successors are πολιτικοί (XVII 3. 15). Of the several Numidian cities (XVII 3. 9 13), Cirta, the capital and main royal residence, is 'very beautifully built up in every way, and is so great that it could muster an army of 10,000 cavarly and twice as many infantry' [72].

Strabo's account of the Aethiopians of the Nile Valley 'extending towards the south and Meroe' indicates that these consisted of several peoples who, for the most part, had their own local chiefs, but together constituted one kingdom centred on Meroe and Napata. The account also indicates that these peoples varied widely in cultural attainments. Some lead a wretched life as nomads, lacking basic human necessities and dressing only in sheep-skin loin cloths (XVII 2. 1). Others are farmers, and others again are primitive hunters and gatherers (XVII 2. 2). The religious life of some bears no relation at all to the beliefs and practices of the civilized world [73], but that of Meroe approximates to that of Egypt and of the Graeco-Roman world, with deities that can mostly be identified with gods of the Graeco-Roman pantheon, though there is also one 'barbaric god' — probably a reference to their Lion-god, Apedemek [74]. Cultural differences are also indicated by the ways in which these Aethiopians dispose of their dead: some simply throw the corpse into the river, while others practise some form of interment or costly preservation (XVII 2. 3). These differences are entirely compatible with Strabo's broad division of this group of Upper Nile Aethiopians into primitive hunters and gatherers, nomadic pastoralists and farmers. This entire group of Nilotic peoples (who all belong in some way to the Meroitic kingdom) is distinguished from the group of largely nomadic peoples of the Arabian Desert and the Red Sea coast [75]. When Strabo contrasts the Egyptians with the majority of the Aethiopians (XVII 1. 3) he also implies a contrast between that majority and a minority of Aethiopians that was culturally more advanced. This minority undoubtedly consists of that part of the population of the Meroitic kingdom which is designated as sedentary and agricultural (XVII 2. 2). Strabo also admits that the Meroitic kingdom possessed a number of cities [76]; and the population of these cities, especially Meroe and Nepata, clearly represents the highest level of cultural development in the kingdom. Not only is the urban religion less alien to Graeco-Roman eyes than that of the less advanced tribal groups within the kingdom, but the urban population is advanced enough in technological terms to engage in the mining of 'coper, iron, gold and a variety of precious stones' (XVII 2. 2). But if Strabo's account reveals wide diffe-

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72. Strabo XVII 3. 13 ; cf. 3. 15. Strabo shows no awareness of the role of Carthage in the emergence of civilization in Numidia, though he mentions the Greek 'colony' at Cirta. He may also have been unaware of the existence of the indigenous Numidian script, but here again literacy is subsumed under the term πολιτικοί.

73. Strabo describes these peoples as ἄθεοι (XVII 2. 3). The interpretation here followed is that of Sherwin-White, op. cit. 10.

74. Strabo XVII 2. 3 ; cf. P. L. Shinnie, Meroe; a Civilization of the Sudan, London 1967, 142.

75. Strabo XVII 1. 53 : Troglodytes, Blemmyes, Nubae and Megabari ; cf. XVI 4. 9 — 17.

76. He mentions Pselcis (Dakka) and Premnis (Qasr Ibrim) in the north and Napata and Meroe in the south, besides making a general reference to 'the cities' of the kingdom (XVII 1. 54, 2. 22).

rences in cultural development, with townsmen and farmers at the top of the cultural ladder, it conveys no sign of what he calls 'excellence in men and in politeia', which is one of his definitions of 'civilization'. The kingdom is, indeed, 'not well-equipped for warfare or in the other aspects of life' (XVII 1.53). This is Strabo's general verdict on the kingdom as a whole, and, as such, it is not inconsistent with the indications of social cultivation that he gives for the urban communities[77].

Significantly, although this kingdom can put an army of 30,000 into the field, this army, despite its great numerical superiority, is easily defeated by Petronius because it is 'badly organized and poorly armed' (XVII 1. 54). Again, the kingdom 'has no fruit trees except a few datepalms in the royal gardens' (XVII 2. 2). But Strabo's view was undoubtedly influenced also by what he saw as a strong element of γυναικοκρατία in the culture of the Meroitic kingdom. It does, in fact, appear that Meroitic society was matrilineal[78]. As we have seen, a socio-political system dominated by women, does not qualify as civilized in Strabo's view (I.I 4. 18). Such a system is in fact hardly compatible with his civilization-index of excellence in men (ἀνδρῶν) and in πολιτεία. Now, although in one passage (XVII 2. 3) he indicates that the monarchs of Meroe were males, he elsewhere subscribes to the erroneous belief that the kingdom was ruled by a succession of queens[79]. It was one of these 'queens' who personally led the army against the Romans and played the dominant role in the kingdom throughout that episode (XVII 1.54). Strabo's unkind description of this royal lady as 'a one eyed and masculine sort of woman' suggests disapproval of her 'usurpation' of a military role that properly belongs to the male sex[80]. Some light is thrown on this attitude of Strabo by his remark that superstition is the opiate of the masses and of women and children (1 2. 8) : the élite of the male section of society stands in a class by itself. It is this class which, Strabo believes, ought to have the dominant role in society. That, at any rate, he regards as a sine qua non for civilized society.

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77. Archaeology has given evidence of an advanced society, marked inter alia by literacy, as far as the main urban centres of the kingdom are concerned (cf. Shinnie, op. cit. 62 f.) Some of Strabo's information is drawn from sources of the second century BC and earlier, but his account seems to be a fairly accurate reflection of the situation as it actually was from early Hellenistic times down to the Augustan era. For example. outside the main centres, the typical Meroitic domestic building was always the straw hut (Shinnie, op. cit. 156).

78. Shinnie, op. cit., 153.

79. Strabo XVI 4. 8. This erroneous belief enjoyed widespread currency in the Graeco-Roman world in the first century AD (cf. *CAH* X 242, note 1). The truth is that 'queens played an important part in the life of the country, and ruled at times in their own right' (Shinnie, op. cit., 153).

80. The Meroitic Kadakes (Candaces) were not reigning queens, but queen-mothers or dowagers (*CAH* X 242); but Strabo is correct in his understanding that they wielded great power. For Strabo's description of this particular kadake see XVII 1. 54.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΙΣ

Ἡ ἐποχὴ τοῦ Αὐγούστου ἔδωσε προτεραιότητα εἰς τὰ πρακτικά, ὑλικὰ καὶ κοινωνικοπολιτικὰ θέματα. Ἡ ἄποψις τῆς Germaine Aujac ὅτι τὰ Γεωγραφικὰ τοῦ Στράβωνος ἀπηχοῦν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐποχῆς του ἐπιβεβαιώνεται καὶ ἀπὸ τὸ γεγονὸς ὅτι τὰ κύρια ἐνδιαφέροντά του φαίνεται ὅτι ἐντοπίζονται εἰς τοὺς τομεῖς τῆς οἰκονομίας καὶ τῆς κοινωνίας. Ἓν ἐκ τῶν βασικῶν ἐνδιαφερόντων του εἶναι ἡ θεώρησις τῆς ποιότητος τῆς ζωῆς ἐξ ἐπόψεως τῶν διαφόρων εἰδῶν ἐργασίας, καὶ εἰδικώτερον ἡ ὑλικὴ εὐμάρεια. Ἡ ἐποπτικὴ πλαισίωσις τῶν σχολίων τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς ποιότητος τῆς ζωῆς ἀποτελεῖ ἓν εἶδος θεωρίας τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ. Ἡ θεωρία αὕτη ἀπαιτεῖ τρεῖς κυρίας φάσεις εἰς τὴν ἀνέλιξιν τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων κοινωνιῶν: τὴν πρωτόγονον ἢ ἀγρίαν, τὴν 'καλλιεργημένην' (τὸ ἥμερον) καὶ τὴν πολιτισμένην (τὸ ἥμερον καὶ τὸ πολιτικόν)· ἑκάστη φάσις παρουσιάζει μίαν ἐξέλιξιν σχετικῶς μὲ τὴν προηγουμένην εἰς τοὺς τρόπους, τὸ εἶδος ζωῆς καὶ τὴν κοινωνικοπολιτικὴν ὀργάνωσιν. Γενικῶς ἡ γένεσις τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ καὶ τῆς 'καλλιεργείας' ἐξαρτᾶται ἀπὸ τὸ καλὸν κλῖμα, τὸ γόνιμον ἔδαφος καὶ τὰς ἐπαρκεῖς φυσικὰς πηγάς. Ἀλλὰ ἔστω καὶ ἂν ὑπάρχουν αἱ τοιαῦται φυσικαὶ εὐχέρειαι, ἡ ἐξέλιξις αὕτη εἶναι δυνατὴ τότε μόνον, ὅταν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐργάζεται μὲ συνετὸν καὶ ὠργανωμένον τρόπον, διὰ νὰ ἐπιβληθῇ ἐπὶ τῆς φύσεως καὶ νὰ ἐκμεταλλευθῇ τὰ δῶρά της. Διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦτον μερικαὶ κοινωνίαι, παρὰ τὰς φυσικὰς ταύτας εὐλογίας, ἔχουν παραμείνει ἀπολίτιστοι καὶ πρωτόγονοι. Ἀφ' ἑτέρου ἕνας προικισμένος λαὸς δύναται νὰ ἐκπολιτισθῇ εἰς πεῖσμα τῶν προσκομμάτων τῆς φύσεως εἴς τινας περιπτώσεις. Ὁμοίως ἕνας πολιτισμένος λαὸς δύναται νὰ ἐπιβιώσῃ εἰς δυσμενὲς περιβάλλον, ἐφ' ὅσον χρησιμοποιεῖ ὀρθῶς τοῦτο καὶ μάλιστα θὰ δυνηθῇ ἴσως νὰ ὁδηγήσῃ καὶ ἄλλους λαοὺς εἰς τὸν πολιτισμόν. Ὁ Ἱπποκράτης, ὁ Θουκυδίδης καὶ ὁ Ἐπίκουρος εἶχον ἑρμηνεύσει τὴν γένεσιν τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ ὡς μίαν διαδικασίαν εἰς τὴν ὁποίαν τὸ φυσικὸν περιβάλλον λειτουργεῖ ὡς ἐρέθισμα εἰς τὴν κοινωνικὴν καὶ πολιτιστικὴν βελτίωσιν. Ὁ Στράβων φαίνεται ὅτι ἀγνοεῖ τὴν ἄποψιν αὐτήν, ἡ ὁποία ἀπηχεῖ μίαν καλυτέραν κατανόησιν ἀπὸ ἐκείνην τὴν ὁποίαν ὁ ἴδιος εἶχε σχηματίσει σχετικῶς μὲ τὸν ρόλον τοῦ περιβάλλοντος εἰς τὴν διαμόρφωσιν τοῦ πολιτισμοῦ. Στερυύμενος τῆς διανοητικῆς δυνάμεως ἑνὸς Θουκυδίδου ἢ ἑνὸς Λουκρητίου, ὁ Στράβων ἀποτυγχάνει νὰ ἐξηγήσῃ διατί (εἰδικώτερον ἐντὸς εὐνοϊκοῦ περιβάλλοντος) μερικοὶ λαοὶ εἶναι ἱκανοὶ νὰ ἐπιδεικνύουν τὴν ἀναγκαίαν πρόνοιαν ἢ ἐπιμέλειαν διὰ τὴν κυριαρχίαν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς Φύσεως, ἐνῷ ἄλλοι ἀδυνατοῦν νὰ ἐπιτύχουν τοῦτο.

Ἡ γεωργία ἀποτελεῖ τὴν οὐσιώδη βάσιν τῆς ἐννοίας τοῦ ἡμέρου τοῦ Στράβωνος. Ὅλοι οἱ μὴ γεωργικοὶ λαοὶ θεωροῦνται πρωτόγονοι ἢ ἄγριοι. Ὑπάρχουν ὅμως ποικίλαι βαθμίδες ἀγριότητος καὶ «καλλιεργείας». Ἡ δευτέρα δύναται προσθέτως νὰ εἶναι εἴτε «ἀγροτικὴ» ἢ «ἡμιαγροτικὴ» καὶ δὲν δημιουργεῖται μόνον ὑπὸ τῆς ἀγροτικῆς δραστηριότητος. Μία κοινωνία εἰς τὴν φάσιν τὴν ὁποίαν ἐκφράζει τὸ ἥμερον, ἀγροτικὴ ἢ ἡμιαγροτική, ζῇ πρὸς διαγωγὴν καὶ χαρακτηρίζεται ἀπὸ κοινωνικὴν πειθαρχίαν, σεβασμὸν πρὸς τοὺς νόμους, ἐπάρκειαν ὑλικῶν ἀγαθῶν, συνετὴν καὶ συστηματικὴν χρησιμοποίησιν τῆς ἐργασίας καὶ τῶν πηγῶν, τὸ ἐμπόριον, εἰδικευμένην τεχνικήν, καὶ μεθόδους εὐγενεστέρας ἀπὸ ἐκείνας τῶν ἀγρίων.

Ἡ πολιτισμένη κοινωνία ἀποτελεῖ περαιτέρω βελτίωσιν τῆς ἀνωτέρω εἰς τὰς μεθόδους, τὸν τρόπον ζωῆς καὶ τὴν κοινωνικοπολιτικὴν ὀργάνωσιν. Ὡς τὸ ἄριστον ἦθος ὁ πολιτισμὸς ἐγκλείει ἀναγκαίως παιδείαν, καὶ ἀκριβεῖς ἐπιστήμας μεταξὺ τῶν κυρίων χαρακτηριστικῶν του. Οὐχ ἧττον ὅμως, ἡ ὑλιστικὴ φύσις τῆς σκέψεως τοῦ Στράβωνος εἶναι ἐδῶ προφανής. Ὅ,τι διακρίνει τὴν πόλιν ἀπὸ τὴν κώμην εἶναι πρωταρχικῶς τὰ κτίρια, τὸ σχέδιον πόλεως καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ διευκολύνσεις. Προσθέτως ἡ τοῦ Στράβωνος πολιτισμένη κοινωνία διακρίνεται διὰ «τὸ ἔξοχον εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ εἰς τὴν κοινωνικοπολιτικὴν ὀργάνωσιν», ἀλλὰ εἶναι ἐπίσης «καλῶς ἐφωδιασμένη διὰ τὴν εὐημερίαν καὶ τὰ ἄλλας πλευρὰς τῆς ζωῆς». Προσέτι ἡ ἔννοια τοῦ «ἐξόχου εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ εἰς τὴν κοινωνικοπολιτικὴν ὀργάνωσιν» ἀνακλᾷ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἐποχῆς εἰς τὸ ὅτι τίθεται μεγάλη ἔμφασις ἐπὶ τῆς κοινωνικοπολιτικῆς τάξεως καὶ πειθαρχίας καὶ προβάλλει τοὺς κινδύνους εἰς τὴν πολιτισμένην κοινωνίαν, οἱ ὁποῖοι εἶναι ἐγγενεῖς εἰς τὴν κακὴν διαχείρισιν καὶ εἰς τὴν ἀπειθαρχίαν.

Μεταξὺ τῶν «βαρβάρων» οἱ ὁποῖοι, μὲ τὰ κριτήρια αὐτά, παρουσιάζονται ὡς πολιτισμένοι, εἶναι οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι, αἱ πολιτεῖαι τῆς Νοτίου Ἀραβίας καὶ τῆς Ἰνδικῆς κοιλάδος, οἱ Τουρδητανοὶ τῆς Βαιτικῆς καὶ οἱ Νουμιδοὶ ὑπὸ τὸν Μασανάσσην καὶ τοὺς διαδόχους αὐτοῦ.

Μεταξὺ αὐτῶν οἱ ὁποῖοι δὲν δύναται νὰ χαρακτηρισθοῦν ὡς πολισμένοι εἶναι οἱ περὶ τὴν Μερόην Αἰθίοπες, οἱ Βέρβεροι τῆς Βορείου Ἀφρικῆς, πλεῖστοι λαοὶ τῆς προ-Ρωμαϊκῆς Ἰβηρικῆς καὶ ὅλοι οἱ βάρβαροι τῆς βορείου Εὐρώπης.