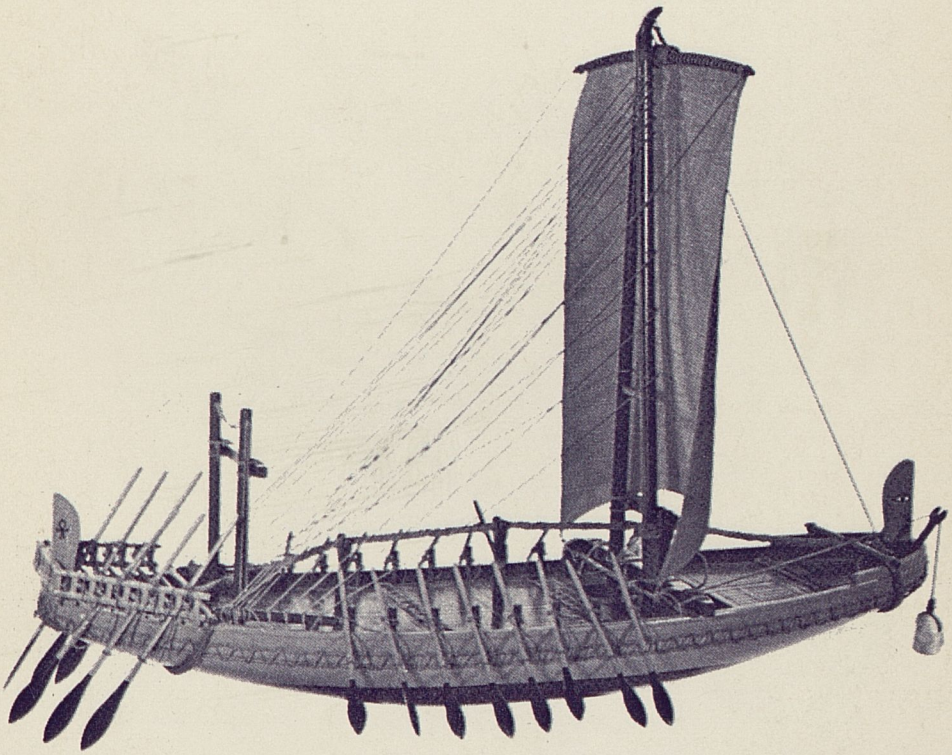
An Olson-Melville Sourcebook

Volume II

The Mediterranean

Eurasia



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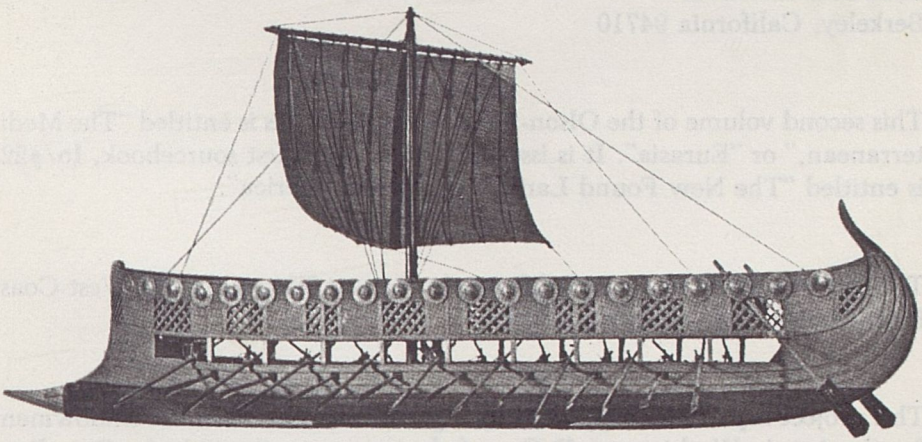
Editor: Richard Grossinger



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An Olson-Melville Sourcebook (Volume II): The Mediterranean (Eurasia)

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An Olson-Melville Sourcebook (Volume II)

The Mediterranean
(or Eurasia)

Richard Grossinger

Origin of the Human World: A Chronicle

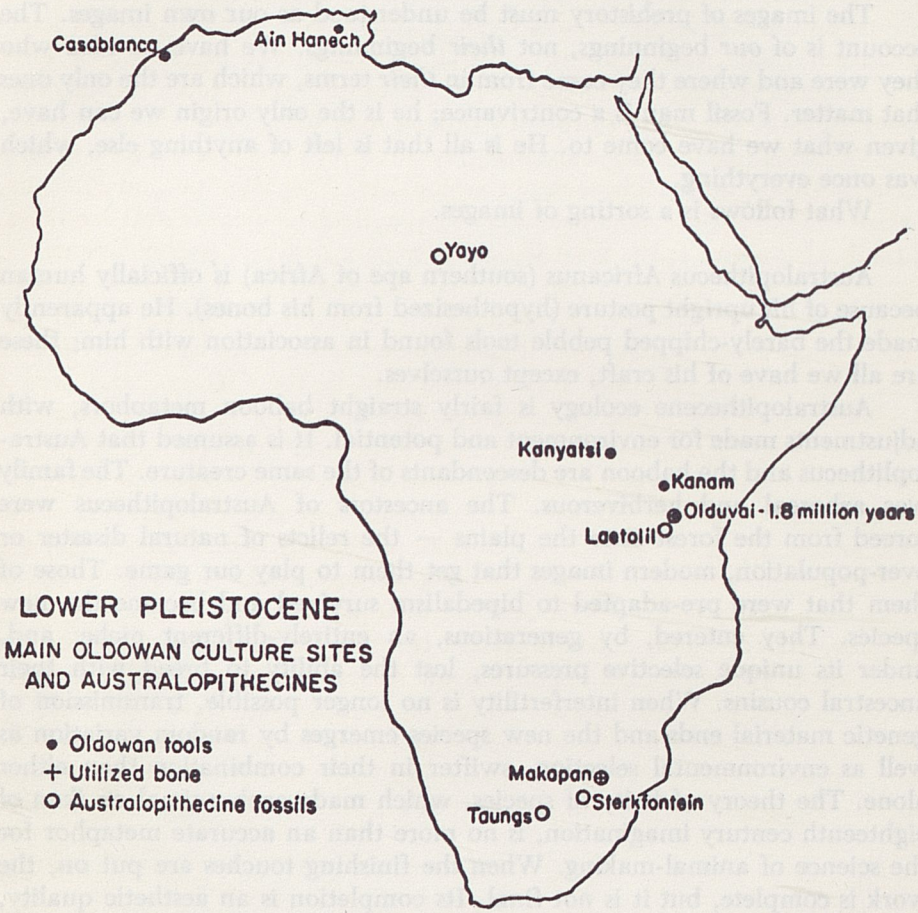
4,000,000 years ago

The images of prehistory must be understood as our own images. The account is of *our* beginnings, not *their* beginnings. We have no idea who they were and where they came from in *their* terms, which are the only ones that matter. Fossil man is a contrivance; he is the only origin we can have, given what we have come to. He is all that is left of anything else, which was once everything.

What follows is a sorting of images.

Australopithecus Africanus (southern ape of Africa) is officially human because of his upright posture (hypothesized from his bones). He apparently made the barely-chipped pebble tools found in association with him; these are all we have of his craft, except ourselves.

Australopithecene ecology is fairly straight baboon metaphors, with adjustments made for environment and potential. It is assumed that Australoplithecus and the baboon are descendants of the same creature. The family was arboreal and herbiverous. The ancestors of Australopithecus were forced from the forest onto the plains — the relicts of natural disaster or over-population, modern images that get them to play our game. Those of them that were pre-adapted to bipedalism survived and became the new species. They entered, by generations, an entirely-different niche, and, under its unique selective pressures, lost the ability to breed with their ancestral cousins. When interfertility is no longer possible, transmission of genetic material ends and the new species emerges by random variation as well as environmental selection, swifter in their combination than either alone. The theory of fixity of species, which made each animal an ikon of eighteenth century imagination, is no more than an accurate metaphor for the science of animal-making. When the finishing touches are put on, the work is complete, but it is not final. Its completion is an aesthetic quality, and in honoring it we honor as much the river in which the hippopotamus lives as the body of the beast. The theory of a universal animal, who is final in some way that all animals modelled upon it are not, is a metaphor for the living current of protoplasm in which changes are recorded. No new bones enter the skull from the ancestors of the sharks to modern man; in order to get our own skulls from the dimensions of fishes the original bones must be re-set in the genetic material, where alone they are plastic. Once



that is done, it requires almost incomprehensible change, and eras of geoloigical time, to revise them.

Australopithecus, the universal animal, is a fish and a salamander, a tree shrew and an ape. Australopithecus, the divine species, is a rough draft of Robert Fludd's naked angel, demonstrating qabbalistic proportion and the golden mean.

Since bipedalism reduces speed and mobility without conferring any compensating physiological advantage, it could occur (under positive selection) only in a context where cultural evolution was beginning to alter physiological stringency. Bipedal man was family man, tool-making man, strategist of the hunt, and probably talking man too.

With the two million year dating, Australopithecus was thought to be a child of the Ice Age, Pleistocene in nationality. The Miocene and Pliocene, before the glacial sheets, were innocent playfields of lemurs and monkeys, unvisited by man. Then, with the severity of a darkness without morning, came the experiment in Adam — great climatic changes, violent galactic explosions, meteors, radiation, mutation: a traumatic Saturnian-Jovian visitation. This is one image, and it is not cancelled by the new four million year date, which says that man played also in the Garden, and was a student, not a child, of the Pleistocene magician during his Gunz Glaciation. We live in an expanding universe; Australopithecus did not. Only he, or who he was, can say who he was. We, meantime, rightly place the center in southern Africa, where, mythologically Europe begins in the darkness of her own anima. It is no accident, as his colonial empire breaks apart, that the whiteman comes to the land of the blackman, as the Greek philosopher came to the Egyptian priest, to seek his own psychic beginnings. The bones he finds, underground, beneath present turmoil, are immune to ideology in some as-yet undetermined way. It is an African genesis — wild, intense, sustained — a language and a history four million years prior (at least) to where we lose the thread in its gnostic and hermetic survivals, which gave birth to the oldest derivative libraries we can consult. Even if it never happened, it is where we are today. It is a metaphor for our distance from an archetypal source.

1,000,000 years ago

By this time, all we have left is an argument: the Cubans in Angola, the British in Rhodesia, and pages and pages of conflicting archaeological data. The multiple-origin theory is popular among the discoverers of African fossils. They use it to give individuality and importance to their own finds; as white scientists — to suggest separate racial origins, as colonial defenders and materialists — to prove killer instinct and territorial imperative, of such

time-depth in our species as to be instinctual and ineradicable.

Either man comes from a single genetic and cultural tradition, with fossil variation representing tribal, racial, and even individual differences, or a number of different "men" evolved at the same time and fought for the niche, with all but one ending in genocide. The first theory is the most scientifically-creditable, in part because its adherents have conducted their business in an enlightened and humane manner. They argue, sociologically, that man is one and has always been one; the conditions for his origin are so unusual that it is beyond reasonable speculation to suggest they converged more than once. The ironical sidelight is, that even if man did evolve more than once, the first theory is not threatened, for it has nothing to do with historical fact, only with likelihood. On a time-scale of millions of years, only a technician like Dr. Leakey could have any confidence about the meaning of the specific event.

Meganthropus, or Paranthropus, is a later heavier form of Australopithecus, found primarily in Africa, but also in Java; he weighs about 120 pounds to 60 for his supposed ancestor. The territorial-imperative group would have him be a separately-evolved species of "man," killed off by Australopithecus in a battle of carnivore against herbivore. They attribute his large molars and small canines to vegetarian habits. Those who believe in a single line explain him as a natural stage in man's development. As the proto-human primate became a hunting, plains-dwelling carnivore, large size was adaptive, and mutations favoring greater body bulk were selected for. They explain the increased molar size as overall physiological growth, the small canines a result of intensified tool use (there now being no selective disadvantage to being born with them, hence random mutation and variation breeding them in).

800,000 years ago

Olson: "The old charts/are not so wrong/which added Adam/to the world's directions//which showed any of us/the center of a circle/our fingers/and our toes describe."

The missing link, they called it then. But with the deeper shots of twentieth century archaeology (radio-carbon and trans-uranium elements), we no longer consider Asia the cradle. Asia is, instead, the first region settled by Homo Africanus, moving his newly-invented culture under favorable environmental conditions. Meaning not that they were favorable to him personally, but to his culture. Meaning that it was already three million years old.

Asia is where colonial Europe first goes to look for "the ape-man without speech," Haeckel's Pithecanthropus Alalus; later, he is called Pithecan-

thropus Erectus, "the erect ape-man"

If, physiologically, there seems to be a missing link between man and animal, psychologically, there is no such thing. The human continues to emerge from the pithecoid again and again, in individual human beings and in modern apes already remote from the human line. And this is how it has always been. It is not an event, and it leaves no fossil evidence. It does not happen in time, but as a synchronicity, best depicted by those anthroposophical archaelogists for which empirical science has no use. It is what Steiner means when he speaks of "spiritual evolution descending, physical evolution ascending," to meet in Africa, Jung's image of the animals and half-forms that still dwell in the collective unconscious of our species, or the fact of our fishlike embryology.

From the neck down (anthropologists are accustomed to say) Pithecanthropus is modern man. His gait is smooth; Australopithecus stumbled. His brain size (measured by cranial capacity) is human (900 - 1100 cc, as compared with 650 cc for Australopithecus). His jaw is reduced, allometrically, to go with the expansion of his cranium.

Because Pithecanthropus is so similar across its entire range (which includes Java Man in the Southwest, Heidelburg Man in the Northwest, Telanthropus in Africa, and Peking Man, first known user of fire, in the caves of China), a major event is assigned here: incest taboo with exogamy. Only if Pithecanthropus had married out of his local groups could bands of hunters from Europe, Africa, and Asia have inherited genetic changes that were begun by mutation and reinforced selectively in different parts of this range. Incest taboos require intermarriage; intermarriage insures gene flow. Over hundreds of thousands of years (and thousands of generations), messages were delivered in the blood from Europe to Asia, that never could have been delivered in the flesh — along with tools, whose inventors had been dead for thousands of years and were as unknown as the Egyptian magi were to the Neoplatonics, again by a factor of ten thousands, for the great length of the Lower Palaeolithic. Bringing the ends of the earth always back into the center.

Olson: "if you are drawn,//if you do unite,//if you do be//pithecanthropus."

During these Middle Ages, man made flake tools and choppers, part of a larger complex called Acheulian Culture, with regional variations. After the Mindel Glaciation, man moved out from Southeast Asia and Africa; he settled China and Europe during the interglacial, and lived there through the eons of the Riss Glaciation.

100,000 years ago

If you saw Neanderthal walking down Fifth Avenue in a shirt and tie, you wouldn't recognize him. Alley Oop comes not from the Pleistocene, but nineteenth century Europe. Neanderthal is a peasant's boogie man. He was found barely beneath the villages of Germany, France, England, Spain. He was pre-Biblical in a way they were not yet ready to understand, so they adjusted him to the present. He was considered an intruder, a Mongolian, a murder victim, an idiot, a malformation, so close was he to their own closeted skeletons.

It is a required condition of archaeology that, as we move further and further into the past, we also dig deeper into the ground, travel to more distant lands, advance into modern technologies. Australopithecus is a twentieth century invention despite his four million (still-increasing) years. His condition is as precise and inevitable as the expeditions that searched for him and the computers that reconstructed him. Neanderthal was found by poor peasants not all so many years after he sired them. His remains were brought to light by those who had forgotten him, who were descended from him. His relationship to us has always been intimate. He is neither exotic nor antiseptic, like Homo Africanus; his world suggests cosmopolitan Europe, even that early, for the Mousterian is hottest there, and thins out, as it is carried back into the hearthlands of Africa and Asia, as late as Egyptian times.

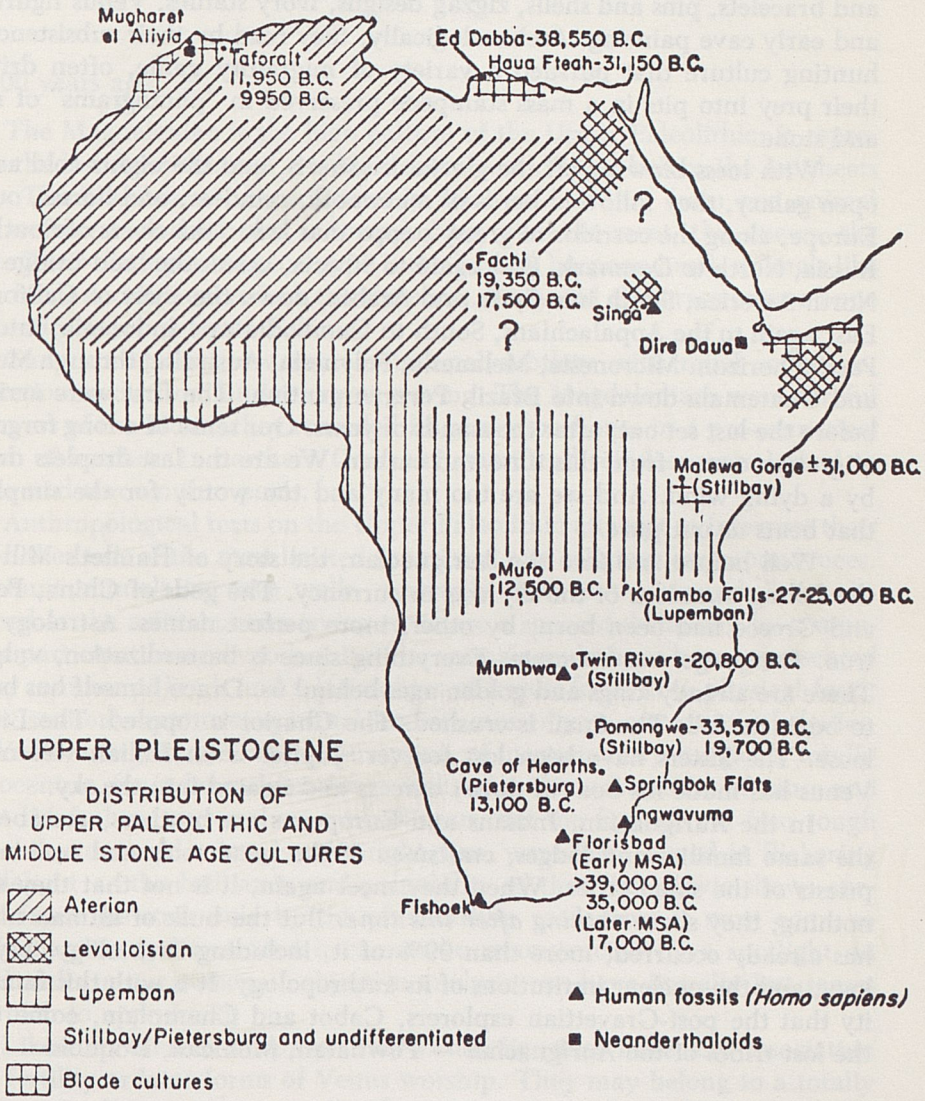
Mousterian culture is an abundance of tool types and hearth sites, seasonal activities and specialized tasks. Neanderthal made blades, scrapers, borers, burins, becs, denticulates, knives. He prepared cores from which successive duplicate flakes could be produced, one after another, by continuous blows. He made skinning tools and tools for making other tools.

We have done nothing past Neanderthal requiring greater intelligence, and we do not have greater intelligence. The Mousterian tool kit is the model for the rest of technology.

Neanderthal is another ice-storm saint, native of the Wurm Glaciation, toward the end of which, in the Near East, he has become indistinguishable from hunters and farmers of the Fertile Crescent.

40,000 years ago

The Aurignacian Culture of Cro Magnon Man is the base culture for a variety of traditions that emerged from the Upper Palaeolithic. In fact, the Aurignacian modifications are so primary, and later, so widespread, it is difficult to find any tradition not derivative from it. If necessary, we can push the date back further to have it be ancestral to the North and South American Indian and Australian traditions. Whether the tradition spread by



migration, trade, intermarriage, all three, or whether independent development elsewhere picked up on "Aurignacian" traits from similar environmental circumstances, it is useful to imagine a high convergence at this time. The Aurignacians made a variety of tools, including beaked burins, retouched scrapers, and split-base bone points. They were followed by the Gravettians, an archaeological name for themselves continued.

The Gravettians are identified by their delicate flint-work, their beads and bracelets, pins and shells, zigzag designs, ivory statues, Venus figurines, and early cave painting. Archaeologically, they read by their subsistence: a hunting culture that pursued a variety of migratory game, often driving their prey into pits in a mass stampede preserved in "photograms" of mud and stone.

With loess blowing off the glacial ice-sheets, and the nights cold as the open galaxy, they followed herds of mammoth, reindeer, and horses, out of Europe, along the corridor of grassy steppe that led to the rivers of Southern Russia, North to Denmark, East again to Siberia, across the land-bridge into North America, South into Syria and Arabia, down the coast of California, East again to the Appalachians, South to Cambodia and Indonesia, into the Pacific horizon: Micronesia, Melanesia, Polynesia, Australia, through Mexico and Guatemala down into Brazil, Peru, Argentina. The first were arriving before the last set out, after thousands of years. Our sense of a long forgotten migration comes from this time and earlier. We are the last droplets driven by a dying wind. And we are too many and too wordy for the simplicity that beats us out pure.

Well before and into the Aurignacian, the story of Hamlet's Mill and the falling mansions of the sky was in currency. The gods of China, Persia, and Greece had been born, by other, more perfect names. Astrology was true. Language was concrete. Everything since is bastardization, vulgate. There are already kings and golden ages behind us. Draco himself has begun to begin to fall. The Snail is crushed. The Chariot is toppled. The Lion is loose. The Sisters have been lost forever. Jupiter is an Indian wet nurse. Venus has made his boat of dove's carcass and floated into the sky.

In the Aurignacian, Indians and Europeans are brothers, members of the same families and lodges, craftsmen of the same tools and ornaments, priests of the same order. When they meet again, it is not that they share nothing; they share *nothing after this time.* But the bulk of human history has already occurred, more than 99% of it, including its biology, psychology, and the nuclear institutions of its anthropology. It is with this familiarity that the post-Gravettian explorers, Cabot and Champlain, come upon the lost tribes of the Aurignacian — Powhatan, Mohican, Iroquois.

18,000 years ago (in Europe, while the migrations continue outward)

Solutrean Culture produced distinctive leaf-shaped tools with flaking on both faces; similar forms emerge in the Pacific Northwest thousands of years later, called the Cordilleran, base for Kwakiutl. Were they brought there by migrants, or did they develop separately from some original seed tradition?

The Solutreans continued the arts of the Gravettians; they depicted movement of animals on cave walls.

12,000 years ago

The Magdalenian is the high culture of the Upper Paleolithic; it represents the last flourishing of the Pleistocene world-view before the ice-sheets melt. The Magdalenians specialized in reindeer-hunting; from one animal they were fed, clothed, and re-armed. They used the meat, the sinews, the bone. Their distinguishing tool type is the barbed harpoon head, animals like ibex, birds and fish carved on the throwers. They did elaborate ornate bone and antler carving: proto-Eskimo.

Cave art attains new representational subtlety with relief sculpture, stylization, reduction, and micro-engraving. The Magdalenians were careful observers of the Moon: they recorded its phases on bones in a pre-numerical system of notches. In northern Germany, sacrificed reindeer were lashed to stones and thrown into pools.

Anthropological texts on the Upper Paleolithic attempt to interpret their art on the basis of the most limited functional and religious correspondences. The hunt animals on cave walls, especially those with "wounds," are explained as the artist-hunters trying to assure a successful stalking by sympathetic participation and voodoo. But the animals could have been represented at any number of levels and relationships of levels, including: physical food, fellow sentient creatures, spiritual bodies, messengers, astronomical deities, pre-Vedic energies, etc. Our assumption of participatory magic is totally ethnocentric, for it depends on simple utilitarian demonstrations of cause and effect. McLuhan gave a clue, reminding us that the figures, cut into rough immobile stone and colored with bright dyes, were then viewed in flickering candlelight — the brilliance and palpability of that first movie show, cortexed from the stars only by the planetarium roof; from it must come so much that it engulfs us (and it cannot be reconstructed by a spotlight on faded walls in our stance of objective analysis; we have literally lost senses by which to apprehend).

Likewise, there is no proof that Venus figurines have any association with fertility or later forms of Venus worship. They may belong to a totally different tradition, giving rise finally to Mercury or Juno. They are even,

perhaps, single living women (Henry Wright mentions of the case of the woman with the arthritic cheek who, herself, was buried in the Magdalenian "cemetery," while a figurine, with the same cheek carved out, was buried in a corresponding position across the river). The error here is to assume that the features which seem stylized to us (the large buttocks) are stylized in the same way, or for the same reasons, to the people who made them. The "wounds" on the animals speak to an identical "misplaced concreteness." Our sense of shamanism, the hunt, and sexual magic from the Upper Paleolithic is of the same order as our sense of hunting bands from Olduvai Gorge and incest taboo from Pithecanthropus: circumstantial and of evasive context.

For insight into Upper Palaeolithic art and culture, one must avoid "experts," like Grahame Clark and Kenneth Oakley, and read instead the complementary ethnographic materials on peoples closer than we to the tradition: Rasmussen on the Eskimo, Lévi-Strauss on the Northwest Coast, Castenada on the Yaqui, Griaule on the Dogon, Stanner on the Australian Aborigine, Foucault on Doctrine of Signatures. Marshack's discovery of a complex numerical and astronomical system in the Magdalenian proves what we already knew: a long tradition of star-observation and counting preceding it into advanced Magdalenian science.

At the same time, in the New World, Indians are becoming separated into tribal, linguistic, and ethnic groups. The "Big Game Hunting Tradition" is dominant in the plains of North America and the pampas of South America. Clovis arrowheads, found in New Mexico and Arizona, show a distinctive style of fluting which appears, at later time periods, in variations, as far away as Uruguay and Argentina, and the Debert site in Nova Scotia. There are also less widespread ecological adaptations that will characterize regions for the next twelve thousand years. In the Great Basin, a people using grinding tools and depending on wild seeds and small game are the ancestors of Shoshonean gatherers and Pueblo villages. The pre-Paiute specialization involves a reliance on acorns, piñons, cress, lily bulbs, bulrush rhizomes, berries, and milled grass seeds which were parched with live coals in a flat basket. The Old Cordilleran Tradition, resembling the Solutrean willow-leaf points, is the seed of later cultures in both Northern California and the Pacific Northwest; ecologically, it makes use of inland rivers, coastal sea resources, and forest habitats. The Archaic Tradition, which may be a migrational transplant of an Asian mid-Pleistocene mode, flourishes in the forests of eastern North America. It is marked by extensive habitation on the shores of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers, especially in areas of shallow sluggish water, with evidence of the gathering of mussels, nuts, berries, roots, seeds; the hunting of deer, bear, wolf, squirrel, fox, raccoon, beaver, turkey, otter, and opossum. Agriculture may have even begun this early:

with the small-scale cultivation of sunflower and goosefoot in the more fertile areas of the Archaic zone, and, in the Old World, the propagation of fruit and tuber plants in Southeast Asia. Despite the semi-arid regions where intensive sowing of crops first appears, it is possible that animal domestication and agriculture began in forest and riverine environments and then spread to the plains and river valleys, if not this early, then in the Mesolithic and early Neolithic.

10,000 years ago (the Mesolithic)

"The English Channel had not yet been formed; the Thames is the abbreviated headwaters of a river tributary to a greater Rhine, flowing through low-lying land now submerged in the southern part of the North Sea. Britain was a peninsula of the European continent, and there was a coming and going of hunting peoples, their movements dictated by that of the herds of larger mammals on which they depended for their livelihood, over the whole northern seaboard from the Pyrenees to the White Sea. The climatic conditions were changing; by 8000 B.C. the last of the final glacial phases is over. With the retreat of the ice the vegetation changed accordingly. The botanical climax — the maximum number of plant species that can successfully survive — shifts from the stunted subarctic flora of the tundra to the beginnings of woodlands and grasslands, with the hardy birch as the dominant tree. The day of the reindeer, in what was becoming temperate Europe, was over, and in its place the red deer and the elk (in natural conditions animals of the woodlands), were establishing themselves as the main source of meat, together with wild cattle. Hunters of red deer take the place of those who speared the reindeer in northern Spain and southwestern France; and again in Britain, Scandinavia, and on the north European plain we can identify..... variant groups of hunting communities.....

The basic traditions of these eighth millennium hunting and fishing communities were continued until at least the second millennium B.C. in various conservative areas of northern Europe and Asia where agriculture was not adopted. A series of cemeteries, from the Baltic to south Siberia, represent such peoples, with a basically hunting, and perhaps even more significantly, a fishing economy, which may permit of permanent settlement in one place, as with the Indians of British Columbia up to recent times." Stuart Piggot, *Ancient Europe*.

The rising ocean level causes a flooding of shorelines and a gradual severing of such major regions as Japan, Britain, Indonesia, and North and South America, all of which were once part of Eurasia in a more intimate sense. Now brave sea crossings are required for contact and trade. This suggests an older splitting of the continents, first in stone and lava, then in

water and drift, now in people. Olson: "Forming a lake just outside/Spain and Portugal, and near to Tethys/on the hither side, Tripolitania its/ southern shore,//Newfoundland a large peninsula/joined almost to/Biscay, Cape Race and//Finisterre almost/stuck together//So North Atlantic once was ponds/far far above/ Gondwanaland."

The flooding ends the palaeo-Indian hunting period in many areas of North America, and leads to the expansion of Archaic culture and the beginnings of its Woodlands variants. Pocket areas are created globally, and they are often inhabited by peoples maintaining Palaeolithic and Mesolithic traditions into the present era; this would include the Bushmen of Africa, the Shoshoneans, the Yahgan of the tip of South America, the Aborigines of Australia, the Polynesian canoe-migrators, and a global culture, the Eskimo Palaeolithic remnants, stretching from the Aleutian Islands to Greenland. They are as prehistoric, in their own way, as alligators and turtles.

Olson: "The World/has become divided/from the Universe."

9,000 years ago

The usual problem with Mesolithic palaeo-anthropology is that it assumes a regression from the so-called high culture of the Upper Pleistocene. But this is a museum scholar's enthusiasm for the visible. No doubt the violent climatic upheaval brought changes and dislocations, but Magdalenian rites remain at the base. The glacial shaman, taking leave of the known world, initiates the neo-thermal magus, who forgets him in the vast passage of the years (or remembers him as a sort of god or messenger.)

The Pleistocene hunting technology is abandoned in part with the retreat of the ice. A more perishable wood and skin technology is developed in its place. Though our knowledge of it is limited, the Mesolithic dominated this planet, from the forests of New England to the bogs of Denmark, for five thousand years. And if man lived in the warm post-glacial summer, and made wines and breads and alphabets and hallucinogens and medicines and fish poisons, much of our global mythology originates there, somewhere between the fires of Lascaux Cave and the planted fields of Neolithic Iraq. We can seek those origins till the days of a dying sun in another galaxy, and they will still be there.

Olson: "I believe in God/as fully physical/thus the Outer Prědmost/of the World on which we 'hang'/as though it were wood and our own bodies are/hanging on it."

The prototype Mesolithic cultures were in the European North, where melting ice fed enormous inland seas:

Azilian: A hunting and fishing sea-coast people that used small thumbnail scrapers, microlith points for fish-hooks and arrow-tips, and drew zig-

zags and thin lines on river pebbles.

Sauveterrean: A people distinguished by their awls and small microliths of trapezoidal form.

The Tardenoisians: the first major North Atlantic people — sea-farers and shellfish-gatherers, who tamed wild dogs, did fine engraving, and lived in rock shelters and caves. A widening river separated France from England, and Tardenoisians crossed it in skin-covered dugout boats, carrying their dogs and household goods. They brought their advanced culture to the island, supplanting Palaeolithic Britain. They dug shelters that remain, and left their dead in caves, long before the Mabinogion or the Táin Bó Cualnge, touchstone for the War of Roses and the British throne itself. C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkein give a sense of their profound mystery, and the ancient vernacular out of which the England of Shakespeare and John Dee came. The tale of Hamlet feigning madness to escape death is already "biblical."

And Olson: "That there was a woman in Gloucester, Massachusetts/ whose/father was a Beothuk "Red" Indian (her mother was/a Micmac//and that this was in 1828 and that she remembered/traveling in a "canoe" which had the full forepart//of itself covered sufficiently to enclose all the/children as well as household goods and dogs/(like a wicki-up but larger, in the sense that the women too/were inside this forecastle//so that we have here an instance of the Pleistocene/'boat' as such — the Biscay shallop of another/ age literally en place in Gloucester, Massachusetts/— and probably not even far from Biskie Island, that Speck interviewed this woman/Who was able to give this evidence because/her father had been, and one has/a picture of some such 'boat'/both from Newfoundland and//from the painted cave of Castillo/at Biscay."

The Maglemoisians were a forest people with a culture center in Denmark. We have a cinema image of them as the 'bog-dwellers,' who lived in large villages of wood huts along and over the lake margins. They had bows and arrows. They made necklaces of animal teeth and pendants of amber. They used bone and cord for their fishing gear. They dug out tree canoes. They were the last pre-North-Sea migrants to England.

Sorghum is grown as a local crop in tropical Africa at this time. In Anatolia woollen textiles are woven and copper is cold worked.

(The wild sheep is not more visibly woolly than the wild goat.)

There is archaeological evidence for the herding and selective killing of sheep in Northern Iraq. The pig too? In Palestine flint sickles are used for the harvesting of some cereal crop. Wild or domesticated.

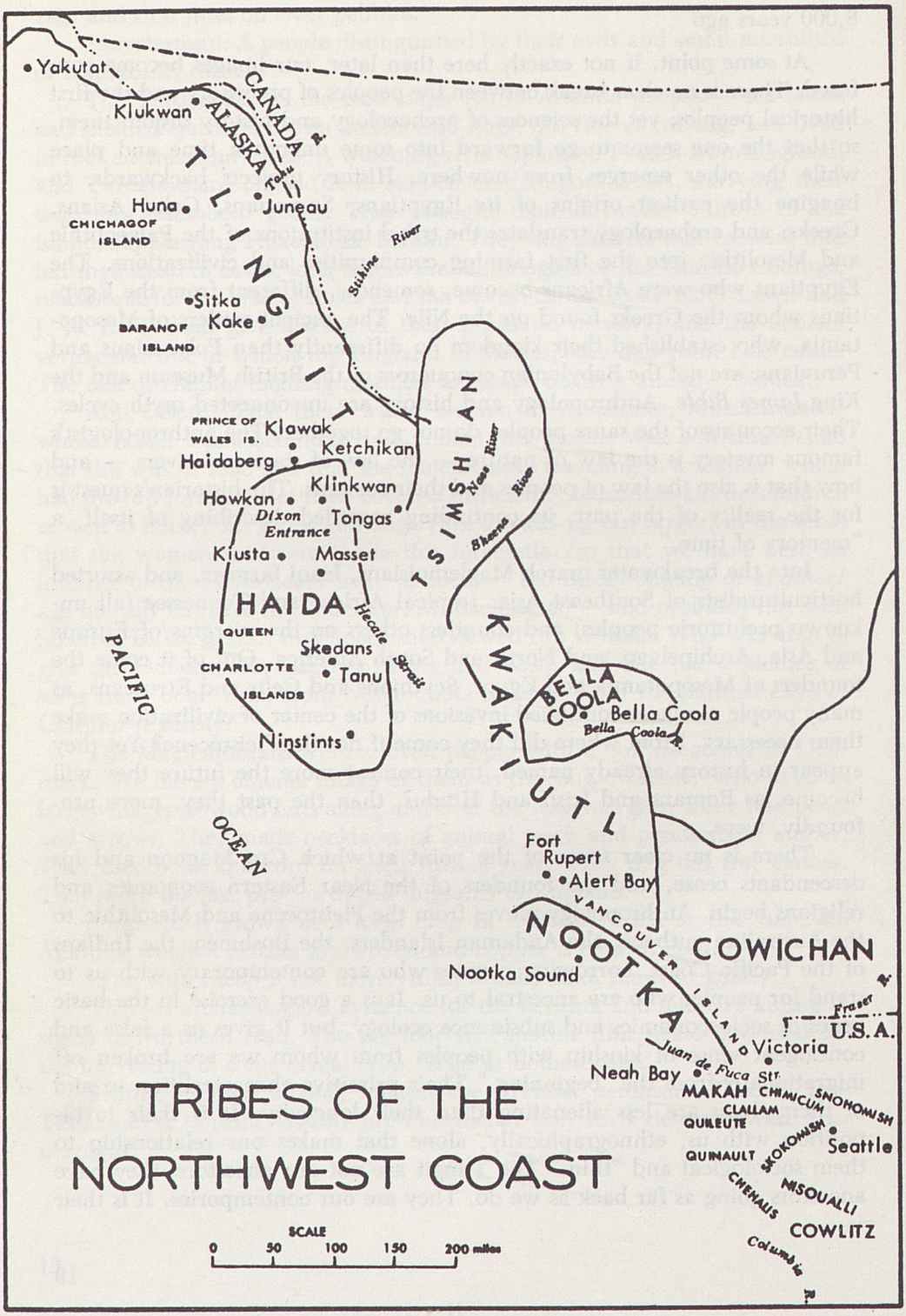
Semitic nomads already inhabit the Arabian peninsula; Olson: "pre-Testament & Muslim Arabian pre-Phoenician/holy Idris view of lowest Trismegistus."

8,000 years ago

At some point, if not exactly here then later, our images become confused. There is no clear break between the peoples of prehistory and the first historical peoples; yet the sciences of archaeology and history disjoin them, so that the one seems to go forward into some unknown time and place while the other emerges from nowhere. History projects backwards, to imagine the earliest origins of *its* Egyptians, Sumerians, Celts, Asians, Greeks; and archaeology translates the tribal institutions of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic into the first farming communities and civilizations. The Egyptians who were Africans become, somehow, different from the Egyptians whom the Greeks found on the Nile. The ancient settlers of Mesopotamia, who established their kingdom no differently than Polynesians and Peruvians, are not the Babylonian conquerors of the British Museum and the *King James Bible*. Anthropology and history are unconnected myth cycles. Their accounts of the same peoples do not go together. The anthropologist's famous mystery is the law of nature — the law of stars and rivers — and how that is also the law of peoples and their customs. The historian's quest is for the reality of the past, its continuing recorded describing of itself, a "memory of time."

Into the breakwater march Maglemoisians, Iraqi farmers, and assorted horticulturalists of Southeast Asia, tropical Africa, and Tennessee (all unknown prehistoric peoples) and countless others on the margins of Europe and Asia, Archipelago, and North and South America. Out of it come the founders of Mesopotamia and Egypt, Scythians and Celts and Etruscans, as many people as whose continued invasions of the center of civilization make them necessary. From where did they come if not the Pleistocene? Yet they appear in history already named, their context more the future they will become, as Romans and Irish and Hindus, than the past they, more profoundly, were.

There is no clear sense of the point at which Cro Magnon and his descendants cease, and the founders of the Near Eastern economies and religions begin. Anthropology moves from the Pleistocene and Mesolithic to the Australian outback, the Andaman Islanders, the Bushmen, the Indians of the Pacific Coast, borrowing peoples who are contemporary with us to stand for peoples who are ancestral to us. It is a good exercise in the basic issues of socioeconomics and subsistence ecology, but it gives us a false and contingent sense of kinship with peoples from whom we are broken off migrationally from the "beginning." Their primitive characteristics, in and of themselves, are less alienating than their longevity. It is their juxtaposition with us, ethnographically, alone that makes our relationship to them sociological and "thin." The Tlingit are not our ancestors; they have ancestors going as far back as we do. They are our contempories. It is their



ecological adaptation that suggests a relict condition, not to them. Our true ancestors lie back in the Magdalenian and Maglemoisian, at which time their ancestors were, perhaps, Siberian and Mongolian. We share yet earlier Pleistocene ancestry, but the Indians are not the pre-Egyptians, any more than are the Ethiopian tribes of present-day Africa.

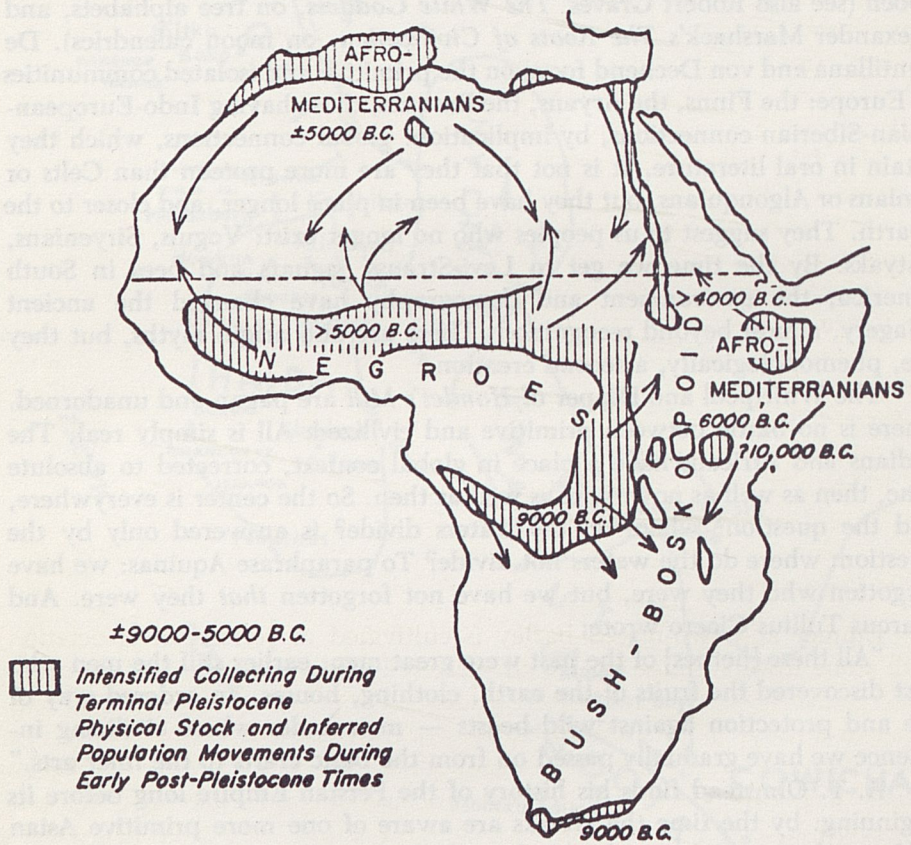
A few books, *Hamlet's Mill* by de Santillana and von Dechend most notably, try to reconstruct the oldest myths of which we still have fragments, "proving," by a global survival of archaic themes, that they must have sensibly existed in the Paleolithic, and endured through the post-glacial epoch (see also Robert Graves' *The White Goddess*, on tree alphabets, and Alexander Marshack's *The Roots of Civilization*, on moon calendrics). De Santillana and von Dechend focus on the primitive and isolated communities of Europe: the Finns, the Aryans, the Basques, those having Indo-European-Asian-Siberian connections, by implication: global connections, which they retain in oral literature. It is not that they are more protean than Celts or Ionians or Algonquians, but they have been in place longer, and closer to the hearth. They suggest to us peoples who no longer exist: Voguls, Siryenians, Ostyaks. By the time we get to Lévi-Strauss' jaguars and bees in South America, the environment and demography have changed the ancient imagery, almost beyond recognition. These are also origin myths, but they are, phemonologically, a second creation.[1]

The Whirlpool and Dipper of *Hamlet's Mill* are pagan and unadorned. There is no battle between primitive and civilized. All is simply real. The Indians and Africans have a place in global context, corrected to absolute time, then as well as now, now as well as then. So the center is everywhere, and the question: where do the waters divide? is answered only by the question: where do the waters not divide? To paraphrase Aquinas: we have forgotten who they were, but we have not forgotten *that* they were. And Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote:

"All these [heroes] of the past were great men; earlier still the men who first discovered the fruits of the earth, clothing, houses, an ordered way of life and protection against wild beasts — men under whose civilizing influence we have gradually passed on from the basic crafts to the finer arts."

A. T. Olmstead finds his history of the Persian Empire long before its beginning: by the time the Greeks are aware of one more primitive Asian tribe on their periphery, the Medes and Persians are deep into their own sense of destiny:

"When Cyrus entered Babylon in 539 B.C., the world was old. More significant, the world knew its antiquity. Its scholars had compiled long dynastic lists, and simple addition appeared to prove that kings whose monuments were still visible had ruled more than four millenniums before. Yet earlier were other monarchs, sons of gods and so themselves demigods,



whose reigns covered several generations of present-day short-lived men. Even these were preceded, the Egyptians believed, by the gods themselves, who had held sway through the long aeons; before the universal flood the Babylonians placed ten kings, the least of whom ruled 18,600 years, the greatest 43,200."

This is more clearly where we come from than any of these other places.

8,000 years ago barley and emmer wheat were raised in the Nile, the first pots were baked. Cattle were domesticated in North Africa, rice was planted in West Africa, spreading to Abyssinia — one of the first agricultural traditions of the world. Northern Europe was still fishing and fowling, small villages were being built in Mesopotamia. Eurasia was a coherent unit, with Europe becoming a remote province, the still-uncertain split between East and West. Yams were harvested in African forest zones.

The false African prehistory speaks of millions of years of backward Paleolithic followed by a sudden migration of superior peoples, the proto-Hamites, who marched across eastern Africa building roads and terraces, introducing complex irrigation systems and maintaining them. This group of benevolent conquerors then disappears, and civilization does not recur till the Bantu expansion.

Plesitocene and Mesolithic Africa was not backward. It was, if anything, the source of Egyptian culture, early to farm, but late to metallurgy and trade; it is this alone that makes it a backwater. And the final score on that one is not yet in.

Olson: "The war of Africa against Eurasia/has just begun again."

7,000 years ago

Emmer and two-rowed barley is cultivated at Jericho in association with stone towers, house sites with plastered floors, pottery, and domesticated goats. At Jarmo there is clear evidence of the cultivation of cereal and beans and the domestication of cattle. From these cultures and others like them, simple Middle Eastern communities developed. Marked by mud-brick houses, successive phase building on ruins, and oriental stamp-seal amulets, they continued into Europe, up the Danube, Rhine, and tributary waterways, to take root in the loose fertile soil left by glaciers. With the Mediterranean an early trade route, the agricultural tradition spread from the Aegean to Iberia, inland to France, Switzerland, and North Italy. The Minoans were settling (or had settled) Crete; to the far North, the Mesolithic endured. The rye and barley agriculture of Europe was probably a Middle Eastern derivative. But the Middle Eastern crops were not suited to Africa, and there the economy was based on millets, pulses, and yams. Pottery from

tropical Africa was at least contemporary with the oldest Middle Eastern pottery; it occurs in association with fields planted by stone-weighted digging sticks and large towns, holding, perhaps, 3000 people.

In North America, where the dating is less precise and specific, we have already discussed a general period through 7000 B.C. Our notes on earlier phases radiate out and cover this time also. We must acknowledge by now that all the dating is asynchronic, as it has been all along. When the Aurignacian culture emerged in Europe, much of Africa remained "Mousterian;" while the Magdalenian persisted in much of Europe, the lake regions quickly made the transition to the Mesolithic, and there they continued long after Neolithic farming cultures spread through the Near East and Southwest Asia. Thus, early domestication of animals may have begun 9,000 years ago in areas not directly affected by the glaciers or their meltwater. The renaissance of Mesolithic culture in Denmark lasted through the origins of agriculture, and absorbed some elements of farming tradition without losing its hunting-fishing base. Ertebølle Culture, in northern Jutland, is, in some ways, the Maglemoisian continued; in other ways, it is the culture of the Danube and the South, with cereal crops and stalls for livestock, pots and jars and funnelled beakers (alongside antler tools, fish-hooks, and bows and arrows). Goat-milk and seal-oil were part of the same complex. So we can already begin to see the differences between Mediaeval Scandinavia and Mediaeval Egypt, or, from an earlier horizon, the differences between the Bushmen of nineteenth century Africa and the French and English colonists. Cultures are not, intrinsically, evolutionary; they pertain to actual environments and are the effect of man's inclusion in local bio-regions. They change under crisis only. To assume that the Mousterian and Maglemoisian and Archaic must always be supplanted (when in fact they were not, in South Africa, Norway, and Delaware) is to judge every adaptation by a later technological revolution. Cultures succeed each other in intricate absorbing patterns; they are never fully lost or supplanted.

Sauer (*Agricultural Origins and Dispersals*) sets the origin of agriculture in Southeast Asia. The actual original hearth area is not overly significant, for there were many, and their effect was cumulative. Unique cultigens arose in different regions (olive and fig in the Mediterranean, potatoes in South America, bananas in Southeast Asia, turmeric in India, just for a few examples). Sauer argues that agriculture developed as invention and by-product of magic rather than necessity and utilitarian application, that its first practitioners were in the forested and water regions rather than bread-basket Mesopotamia and temple-cult Mexico.

It is in the spirit of this theory that the Mesolithic becomes the true forerunner of the Neolithic. Permanent sedentary villages on the edges of ponds or lakes, in no jeopardy of starvation, had the leisure in which to develop

stable gardens. Fishing, gathering of waterside plants, hunting of riparian mammals and waterfowl, and general collection of wild foodstuffs would have supported such villages. Their garbage heaps, as incipient gardens, held the seeds of favored wild species. Sauer suggests that crops of alkaloid fish poisons, from the same plants used for cord, fishing lines, bark, and fibers, were an inedible agricultural forerunner. After all, in a series of continuous derivations, fishing is agriculture and husbandry in another mode.

Sauer also hypothesizes that original plant domestication was from clones and cuttings rather than seed. By dividing of roots and stems, the single plant was made "immortal," and carried like fire from village to village. Seeds, the basis of sexual reproduction in plants, were not of interest at first; their application was too obscure and not directly connected to the earth botany and philosophy of early man. Of course, this is only Sauer's guess. In order to appreciate it, we would have to imagine how difficult it would be to invent agriculture if it were not yet in existence. From our own anachronistic perspective, the method seems obvious, i.e., that gathering of wild plants should lead to growing them in the actual area of settlement. It is difficult to come up with a modern parallel to the discovery of the economic use of plant reproduction. If we were living in an age of mature telepathy and use of body prana to draw nourishment out of the sun, we might wonder why an earlier age (before Findhorn, say) was obsessed with the massive, awkward, and vitiating planting and reaping of bulk material. What is obvious from the leisure of thousands of years of use is not obvious before the discovery. Cultures do not suddenly abandon previous modes of livelihood to take up ones of subtle and questionable application. Plant domestication was no more obvious to the Azilian fisherman than solar food is to modern man. The first cultivated plants may have been decorative, totemic, magical, ceremonial, planted around dwellings as part of an attention to the natural and cultural orders, leading to accidental hybridization and fruits. Our early cereal grains are not the only possible domesticates of their time, but the science of discovering such forms in the unknown wild has all but vanished, and we no longer know how to originate other agricultures. During the height of botanic invention, new cultigens spread across the world, not unlike religious cults and pottery designs, and often in association with them. A field of corn or wheat in modern Kansas is but the remnant of an archaic rite in which the integrity and signature of the plant transcended its utilitarian virtue. Likewise, animal domestication. Horse, dog, goat, sheep, cattle are all descendants of Mesolithic society and the acceptance of wild animals into human families, to be nourished on human milk, raised with human children, and buried in cemeteries with their adopted kin. Formal ranchers and herds only follow this practice of cere-

monial adoption.

Olson: "All night long/I was a Eumolpidae/as I slept/putting things together/which had not previously/fit."

6,500 years ago

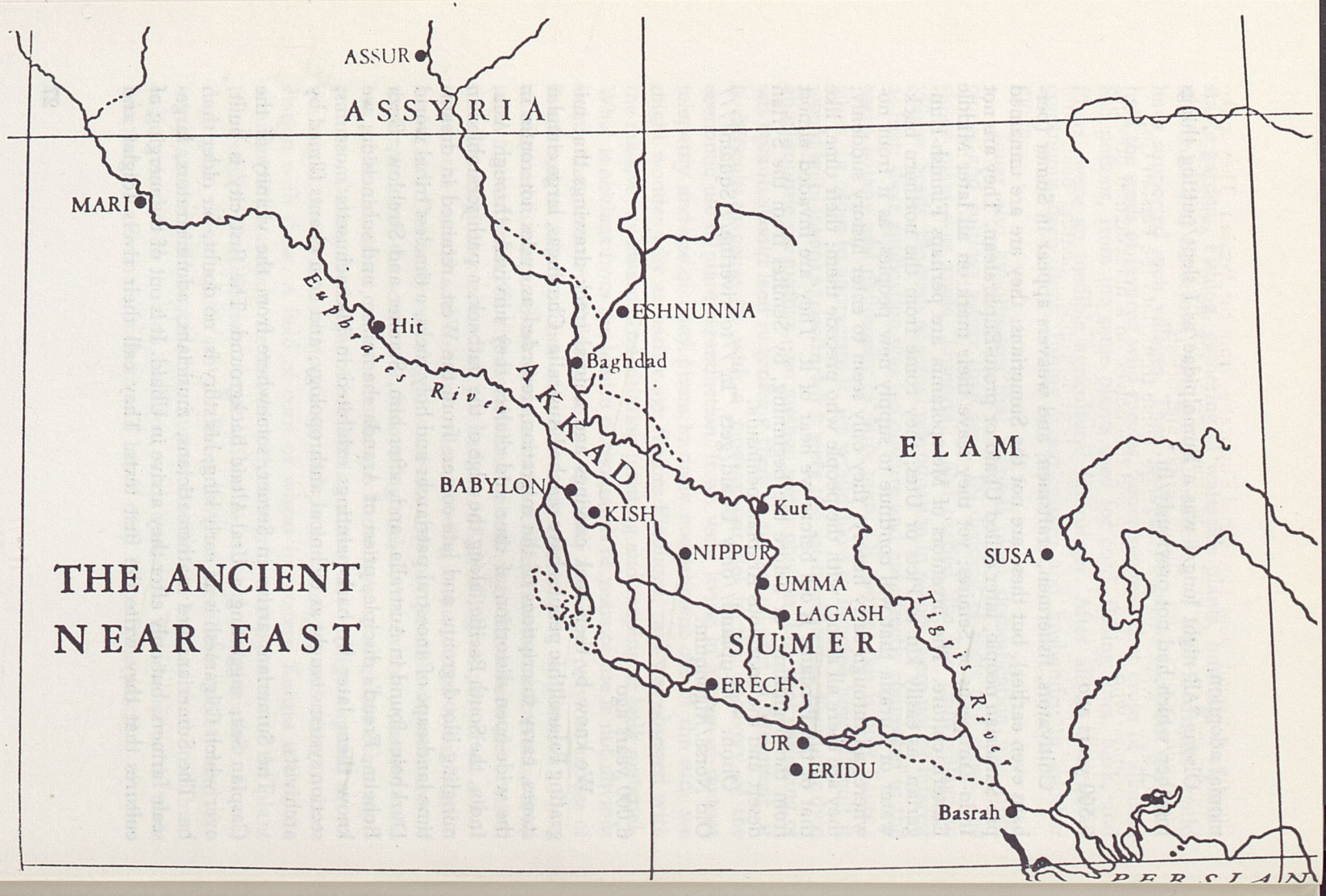
Cultivators, fishermen, craftsmen, and weavers appear in Sumer (perhaps even earlier), but these are not the Sumerians; they are are unnamed pre-Sumerian people, later called Ubaid or proto-Euphratean. They are not Indo-Europeans or Semites; yet they leave their mark on all later Middle Eastern culture. The inventors of Mesopotamia are perhaps Finnish-Hungarian, as easily kin to Picts or Utes; they come from the northern backwater of Eurasia that will continue to supply new peoples, as if from nowhere, all through early history; they only seem to enter history suddenly; they are there all along, with the people who precede them; their time, like that of the Persians, is old before we hear of it. They are invaded almost from the beginning, or before the beginning, by Semites from the Syrian desert and the enormous Arabian peninsula.

Olson: "off-upland//only Ubaid/gets "in"//to riverine//(Squam//// Old Norse/Algonquin."

6,000 years ago

We know by their rock carvings and animal track drawings that migrating Palaeolithic peoples have reached Australia. Churingas, large circular stones, carry inscriptions of the migration, recorded as cycles not routes in the wide-open distortion of time and dialect they survived, through Asia, India, the South Pacific, along the edge of the outback, a path scrambled in mingling blood-groups and late-comers from the West, retained in dreamtime landscape of ancestral patriarchs and holy rocks, a timeless tribal world Durkheim found in Australia, and, after him, Stanner and Strehlow, Geza Roheim, Freud's disciple, priest of Aranda shamanism and subincision; we know them later by bark-paintings exhibited in Massachusetts museums, section systems taught as technical anthropology, and emu chants filmed by archivists.

The Sumerians arrive in Sumer, somewhere from the vicinity of the Caspian Sea, suggesting a Ural-Altaic background. The first city is built, over which Gilgamesh is an early king; his story is, no doubt, far older than he. The Sumerians are mathematicians, musicians, administrators, large-scale farmers, but only after they arrive in Ubaid. It is out of the merging of cultures that they write the first texts. They call their rivers Idiglat and



Buranun. We call them Tigres and Euphrates, from the Persian. They make cylinder seals for signatures, and fine jewelry, metalwork, copper-casting. They enlist armies; they educate scribes and priests.

Olson: "(where did the Sumerians/come from, into the Persian Gulf — sea-peoples/who raided and imposed themselves/on a black-haired previous people/dwelling among reed-houses/on flooded marshes?"

The Egyptians of this time were heating copper, beating beads and pins. The Semites were entering Egypt: Canaanites and Phoenicians to Syria and Jordan. The same migration wave brought the Semitic Akkadians to Ubaid where they mixed with older Semites and Central Asian peoples to form the nation of Sumer and Akkad. Elephant-hunters and mangrove-gatherers were settling Peru.

5,500 years ago

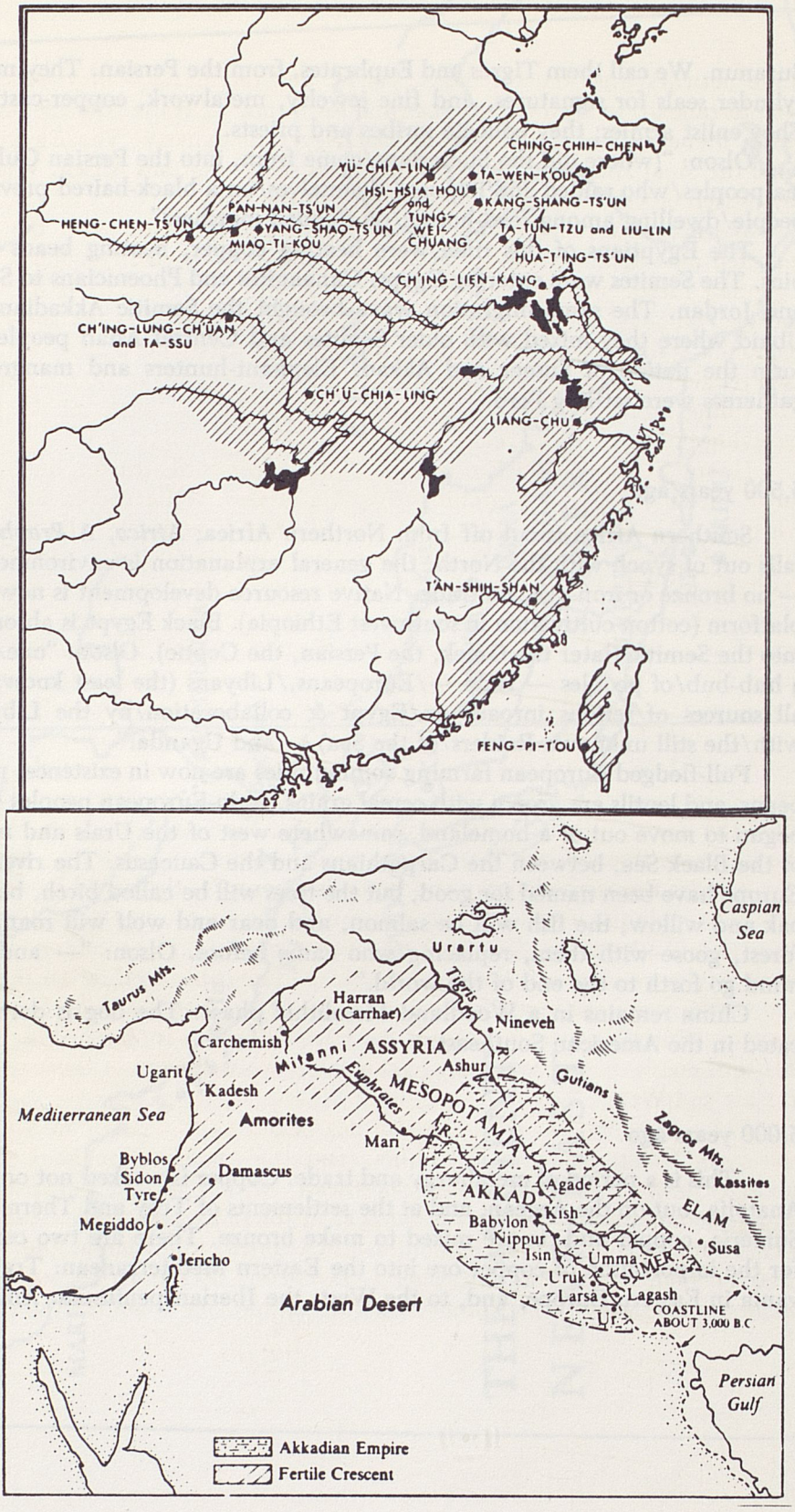
Southern Africa is cut off from Northern Africa; *Africa, A Prophecy*, falls out of synch with the North: the general explanation is environmental — no bronze or iron age, no trade. Native resource development is now the platform (cotton cultivation in southwest Ethiopia). Black Egypt is absorbed into the Semitic (later the Greek, the Persian, the Coptic). Olson: "one/sees a hub-bub/of peoples — Indo —/Europeans,/Libyans (the least known/of all sources of/serious inroads on/Egypt & collaboration/by the Libyans with/the still unknown Raiders/of the Sea) — and Uganda:"

Full-fledged European farming communities are now in existence; peas, beans, and lentils are grown with cereal grains. Indo-European peoples have begun to move out of a homeland, somewhere west of the Urals and north of the Black Sea, between the Carpathians and the Caucasus. The rivers of Europe have been named for good, but the trees will be called birch, beech, oak and willow; the fish will be salmon, and bear and wolf will roam the forest, goose with them, replacing who came before. Olson: "— and the mind go forth to the end of the world."

China remains in a Woodland Mesolithic phase. The dog is domesticated in the American Southeast.

5,000 years ago

This is a period of metallurgy and trade. Copper is worked not only in Anatolia, but on the Aegean, and at the settlements of Troy and Thermi. In Sumeria, copper and tin are mixed to make bronze. There are two centers for the importation of copper ore into the Eastern Mediterranean: Transylvania in Eastern Europe, and, to the West, the Iberian peninsula. Another



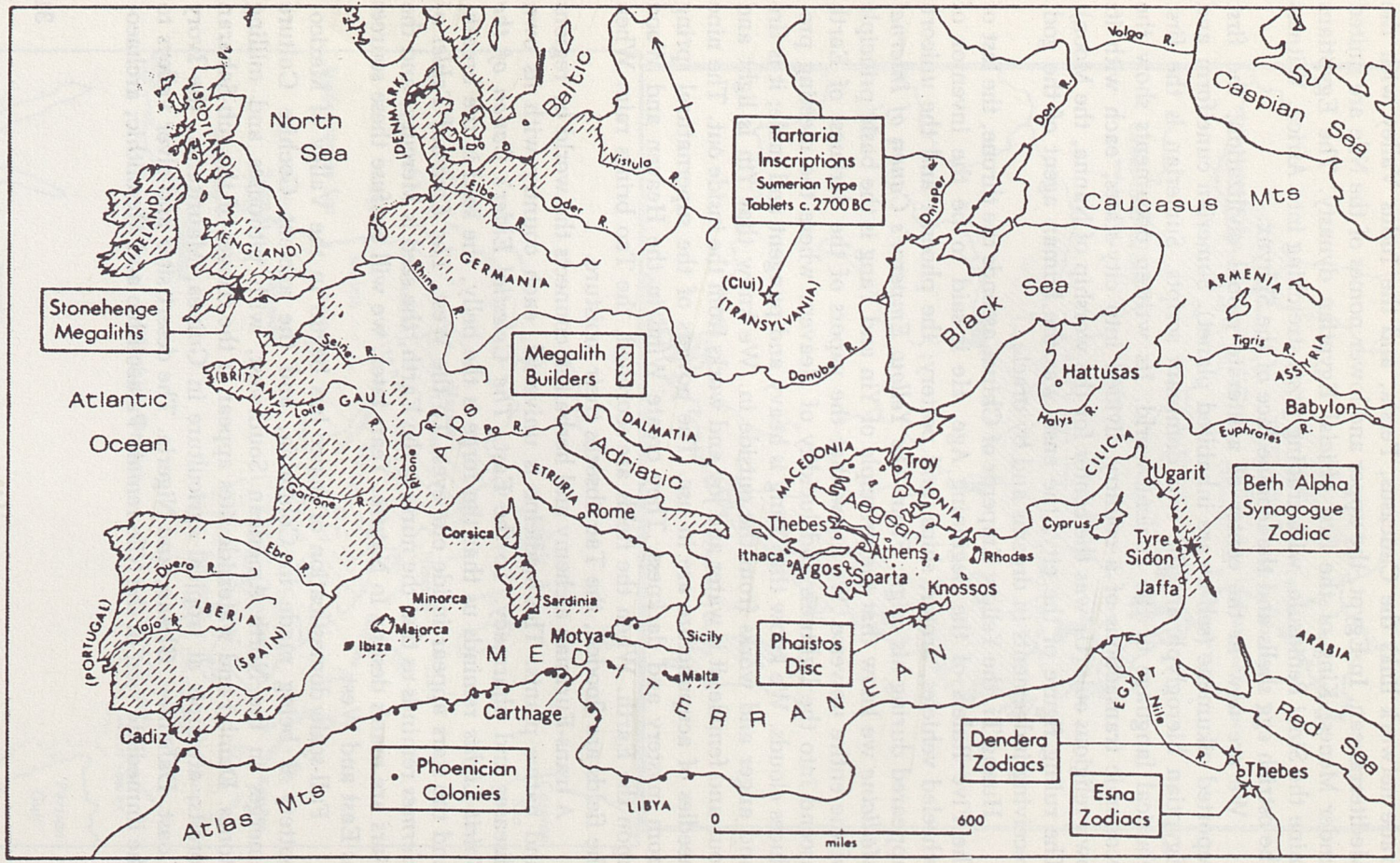
trade network links the Caucasus, Persia, and the Indus Valley with the Mediterranean. In Egypt, the upper and lower nomes of the Nile are united under Menes, King of the first official Egyptian dynasty. The Egyptians mine the Sinai Peninsula, with trading posts stretching into Africa. Witness the ostrich egg shells and the leonine face of the Sphynx.

We are now in the center of a literate global civilization, the first reported oikumene (self-aware inhabited planet). Sumerian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyph are the two dominant scripts. Sumerian is the first classical language of the ancient world. Its written documents show the economic transactions of a country divided into city-states, each with its own religious cult (Ur was the center for the worship of Nanna, the Moon). The ruling figure of the city, the ensi, was the human agent of the god, receiving judgements in dreams and by oracle.

Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor of China, ascends the throne, the last of the Five Rulers of the Beginning Age. He is said to be the inventor of wheeled vehicles, armor, ships, and pottery; the phoenix and the unicorn appeared during his reign. From *The Yellow Emperor's Canon of Internal Medicine* we know that the principle of Yin and Yang is the basic principle of the entire universe. We know that the vapors of the darkness of Earth ascend into the lightness and lucidity of Heaven, where the meeting produces clouds. We know that Yang is heavy and pungent and male; it is fire and anger and works from the outside in. We know that Yin is light and sour and female; it is water and joy and works from the inside out. The nine needles of acupuncture are in use. The powers of the supernatural spring from mystery and darkness. They create Wind in the Heaven and Wood upon the Earth. When the fields are scorched, the Tao brings rain. When the fields are flooded, the Tao absorbs their moisture.

A trans-Eurasian alchemy and herbalism connects the world by regions and native plants. The medicine is universal, each country with its own diseases and pharmacy. To the East, *The Celestial Elder's Canon of the Spirit Lights* reminds us that the forge is the belly, the seed is the breath, and the stars appear inside our eyes. To the West, *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes* reminds us that the nurse is the Earth, the seed is Mercury, and the stars are man's destiny in Nature. Years later, we will confuse these sources as East and West.

Full-scale domestication of maize has begun in the Valley of Mexico, pottery is being made in Columbia, and the ancient Cochise Culture emerges in the North American Southwest, with pithouses and milling stones. Dambo and waterside sites appear at the fringes of the sub-Saharan forests, attempts at tropical agriculture in Guinea, Mauritania, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Ghana, and Nigeria. The desert sites and river valleys to the immediate west of the Nile remain Palaeolithic and Mesolithic; archaeo-



logically, they turn up bone harpoons, fish-hooks, and bifacial projectile points. Russia is also Mesolithic, hunting and fishing dominating. In the steppelands is a people who bury the dead with their worldly goods. They use copper, grow cereal, and have cattle, sheeps, goats, pigs, and horses; they make pottery. They appear again in Central Europe, named Battle Axe, after their weapon; there they fuse with another artifact-named complex, the Bell Beakers, a tribal culture of archers, who have distinctive drinking vessels; they are perhaps native to the region, perhaps immigrants from the copper towns of Iberia. Together, in war or peace, they lay the groundwork for a people that were to have Druids as teachers, found penetrating the Mediterranean as late as Caesar, and called Celtic. Clay ovens appear on the Danube, and large chamber tombs in remote northern Europe.

Voyages to the West have led to full colonization of the Mediterranean coast, much of it Semitic, some of it African, plus those new mingling Eurasian peoples on the periphery and in Spain. Even Windmill Hill Culture in England is linked by trade with this center. So we have a world commerce with centers in Sumeria and Egypt, parts perhaps as distant as Africa and America, and out into the Pacific; Canaanites and Phoenicians are messengers, ship-captains — inventors or inheritors of the "maps of the ancient sea-kings" Charles Hapgood recovers and claims as Pleistocene, for their Antarctic coastlines.

Olson speaks of them: "older than Byblos/earlier than Palestine/and possessed of an alphabet/before the Greeks."

Advocates of the hydraulic theory of civilization show us that an area shifts from a tribal society to a chiefdom to a state as individuals gain access to luxury resources and workers are mobilized to maintain large waterworks. High population density, with occupational specialization follows, leading to churches, armies, luxury goods, trade, and class structure. In a tribal society, everyone is an artist, a farmer, a hunter, a warrior, a healer; power is temporary and charismatic in crisis. Pacific Island chiefs have ornaments, wealth, and privileges, but not differential access to necessities. In a state, power is a fact, and inherited directly by individuals. Tribal society remains in much of Europe, but states develop around the Mediterranean and extend into the outlying districts. The traders are of another condition entirely; their voyages suggest, simultaneously, the mythological past and the science fiction future, and this is why Olson cites them on all counts:

"existed/3000/BC?/from/Red Sea, via/Bahrein?////Minos/Megiddo/Jericho/Sarpedon//Rhadamanthys/Europa/Dardanus?/(Electra?/Atlas//and Zeus?////Poseidon/(Samothrace?///Taurus/the beetle/stuck in his/leg." "Additional "Phoenician" notes."

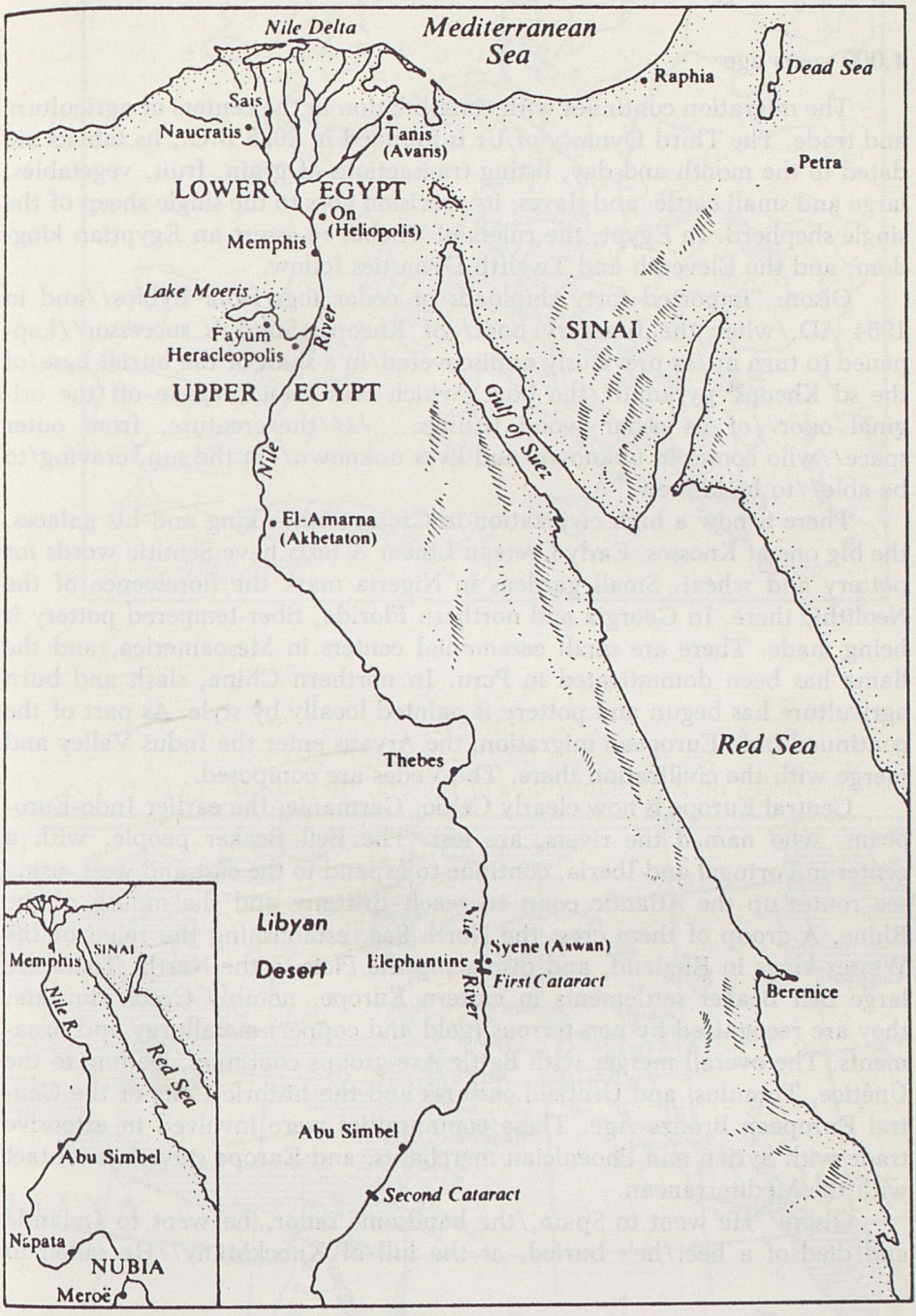
4,500 years ago

Power is consolidated at the centers. Lugalzaggisi creates, by conquest, the first Mesopotamian Empire; he is succeeded by Sargon of Akkad, a Semite. Sargon's conquests extend from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, and east into Asia. He is called, in his time, King of the Universe. Under him, Sumer and Akkad become the nation of Babylonia, with a Ural-Altaic south and a Semitic north. Trade expeditions are sent to Syria and the Taurus Mountains of Turkey.

In Egypt, this is also a time of state power, including the building of the pyramid of Cheops, containing 2,300,000 blocks, during the Fourth Dynasty. Egyptian sailors explore the Mediterranean and set up overland and sea-route trade with Syria and Palestine.

Astronomy and mathematics shared a golden age, of which the Pyramids are a blunt massive reminder. The Babylonians discovered the theorem for the right-handed triangle, approximated pi as three, and charted the course of the Sun through twelve constellations. The Egyptians calculated pi as eight-ninths the diameter of the circle (3.1605), and with it they solved areas and volumes of cylinders and hemispheres; they derived unknowns with simultaneous quadratic equations and found the frustrum for the square pyramid; they also had notation for decimals and fractions, to which the Babylonians added sexagesimals.

As we move toward 2000 B.C., peasant communities are developing throughout Europe, to exist side by side with older hunting and fishing groups. Invasions and migrations from the outlying districts are in full swing. Into Europe come large numbers of peoples, called, variously, Indo-Europeans, Aryans, Iranians; they have horse-drawn chariots with light-spoked wheels; on Egyptian tombs of the era, they appear as Nordic-Asiatic invaders; their gods are Mithra, Varuna, Indra. They descend upon the centers of civilization in waves, conquering Babylonia and Egypt, laying the basis for Hittite Culture in Asia Minor. Achaeans and other tribes enter Greece, where Helladic Culture had previously been dominant; other Aryans settle Italy, where they merge with North African and European peoples. A new Asia Minor (Babylonia, Assyria, and Syria) develops out of the chaos, with its bastard dialects of Hurrian, Hittite, and Old Persian that survive to respectable old age. This is Olson's "Indo- Euro- pean original/ migration into lands bordering//Baltic & Aegean at early period not too far back of/1540 — say rolls 2100 from Maikop or/Aia the/Golden/original name for Colchis the home of the/was the/sheep's Hide — cld be Kuban.../ ...Hercules was born 1340." It's a muddle in his text, with the Greek and Roman hypothesized but not yet arrived; as history it will always be a muddle. Did the Picts reach Scotland in this wave? They are clearly more primitive than any other Indo-European stock in England: their matrilineal



ruling families and assessments in sacred cattle. Olson: "the Atlantic/Mediterranean/Black Sea time."

4,000 years ago

The migration continues with consolidation in the centers of agriculture and trade. The Third Dynasty of Ur is founded in 2028 B.C.; its tablets are dated to the month and day, listing transactions of grain, fruit, vegetables, large and small cattle, and slaves; its precision goes to the single sheep of the single shepherd. In Egypt, the rulers of Thebes re-assert an Egyptian kingdom, and the Eleventh and Twelfth Dynasties follow.

Olson: "imported forty shiploads of cedar logs/from Byblos//and in 1954 AD,/when the funerary boat//of Kheops,/Snerfu's successor//happened to turn up/as previously undiscovered/in a shaft of the burial base/of the sd Kheops' pyramid//the boat,/which was intact,//gave off/the original odor//of its cedar wood fittings...../////the/creature, from outer space//who comes in unknown/and lives unknown//in the sun, craving/to be able//to be himself."

There is now a high civilization in Crete, with a king and his palaces, the big one at Knossos. Early Cretean Linear A texts have Semitic words for pottery and wheat. Small gardens in Nigeria mark the florescence of the Neolithic there. In Georgia and northern Florida, fiber-tempered pottery is being made. There are small ceremonial centers in Mesoamerica, and the llama has been domesticated in Peru. In northern China, slash and burn agriculture has begun and pottery is painted locally by style. As part of the continued Indo-European migration, the Aryans enter the Indus Valley and merge with the civilization there. The Vedas are composed.

Central Europe is now clearly Celtic, Germanic; the earlier Indo-Europeans, who named the rivers, are lost. The Bell Beaker people, with a center in Portugal and Iberia, continue to expand to the east and west, using sea routes up the Atlantic coast to reach Brittany and the mouth of the Rhine. A group of them cross the North Sea, establishing the reign of the Wessex kings in England, and displacing the Picts to the North. There are large Bell Beaker settlements in eastern Europe, notably Czechoslovakia; they are recognized by non-ferrous (gold and copper) metallurgy and ornaments. The overall merger with Battle Axe groups continues, leading to the Únětice, Tumulus, and Urnfield cultures and the historic Celts of the Central European Bronze Age. These communities were involved in extensive trade with Syrian and Phoenician merchants, and Europe stayed in contact with the Mediterranean.

Olson: "He went to Spain,/the handsome sailor,/he went to Ireland/ and died of a bee:/he's buried, at the hill/of KnockMany//He sailed to

Cashes/and wrecked on that ledge,/his ship vaulted/the shoal, he landed/in Gloucester: he built a castle/at Norman's Woe."

The capital of Egypt is moved north to a point below Memphis. The God of Thebes (Amon) is combined with Re. "O Amen-Re..... as thou passest over the heavens every face seeth thee..... Millions of years have gone over the world, and I cannot tell the number of those through which thou hast passed..... Thou does pass over and dost travel through untold spaces requiring millions and hundreds of thousands of years; thou passest through them in peace, and thou steerest thy way across the watery abyss to the place which thou lovest..... Thou watchest all men as they sleep, and thou seekest the good of thy brute creation..... Thou king who art One among the gods, thy names are manifold, and how many they are is unknown; thou shinest in the eastern and western horizons, and overthrowest thy enemies at thy birth daily."

3,750 years ago

Olson: ".....and she bare the thing which encloses/every thing, Okeanos the one which all things are and by which nothing/is anything but itself, measured so." We are approaching the world of Hesiod. Greek civilization begins out of the ruins and chaos of earlier civilizations, and Olson recalls those other Middle Ages, before Homer. The Eurasiatic invasion has produced Mycenaean Greece, a patchwork of old European, new European, Minoan Semitic, Aryan, and other native peoples. So what does Rhys Carpenter mean when he writes: "There is no Minoan or Asianic blood in the veins of the Grecian muses..... they dwell remote from the Cretean Mycenaean world and in touch with the *European* elements of Greek speech and culture."? How can one distinguish between Europe and Asia in the turbulence of universal intermarrying peoples?

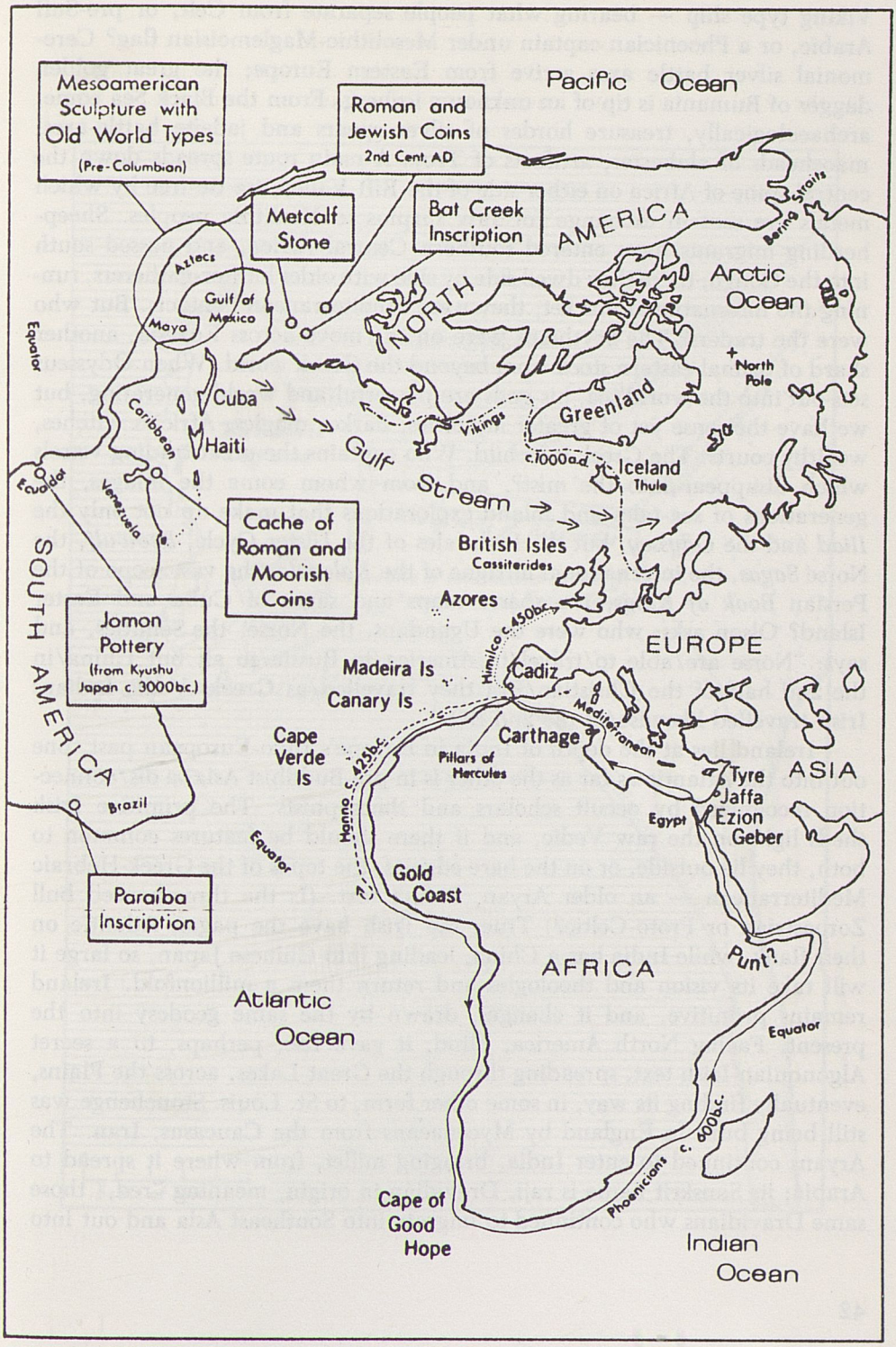
Babylonia is invaded by Amorite Semites from the Arabian desert; Hammurabi ascends to the throne. Another Asian Aryan invasion brings the Hyksos to Egypt, the expulsion of whom, in 1600 B.C., sets the groundwork for the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Hittites of Turkey, at the height of their power, build a major fortified metropolis at Hattusas.

"Outside the close mesh of the Aegean sea-ways, the main European trade routes follow fairly well defined courses in the earlier second millennium. There is coming and going along the Steppe grasslands which stretch from central Asia to end in the Hungarian plain, and there is a great axis of trade which links Transylvania to Denmark, on an approximate line (in modern terms) through Bratislava, Prague, Dresden, and Hamburg. From the head of the Adriatic, the routes over the Alpine passes run either to join the Transylvanian-Danish route around Prague, or to go by a more westerly

course through Bavaria and the Rhineland; by these routes amber was traded to the Aegean world..... Further westward, the Iberian peninsula was now being by-passed, and the Lusitanian and Galician coasts avoided, by the well-known ways leading from the Gulf of Lions at Narbonne, through the Carcassonne Gap, and so to the mouth of the Loire, thus putting Brittany and Britain in easier touch with the Mediterranean. [Witness Stonehenge as an example of Mycenean-British contact — an enormous calendar and clock built on Salisbury Plain, geared so precisely it still measures eclipses and equinoxes; this gives us the sense of something more than just a trade stop, something global and ancient — the temple of John Michel's Atlantis, so large we cannot see it, in stellar scale from Britain via Crete to the dragon paths and geomancy of China. But the explanation is gone; all that remains is the monument, and the intuition of an energy grounded in landscape. Were the pyramids in that dynamo too? What, of methodology, have we lost?] The chalk downs of Wessex, good farming land with by now a long tradition of agricultural development over a millennium and a half, lie themselves on a trans-peninsular route from the English Channel (and so from the Rhineland or Saxony) via the Bristol Channel and west Wales to the copper and gold of Ireland and down the Devon coast to the all-important sources of tin in Cornwall; small wonder that powerful dynasties enriched themselves on Salisbury Plain. Nor need all the tin needed for the flourishing bronze industries of the British Isles have come from Cornwall; for east Scotland, for instance, in the van of this technological progress, tin from Bohemia could have been obtained at the Rhine mouth by a shorter sea-route than that to Land's End." Stuart Piggot, *Ancient History*.

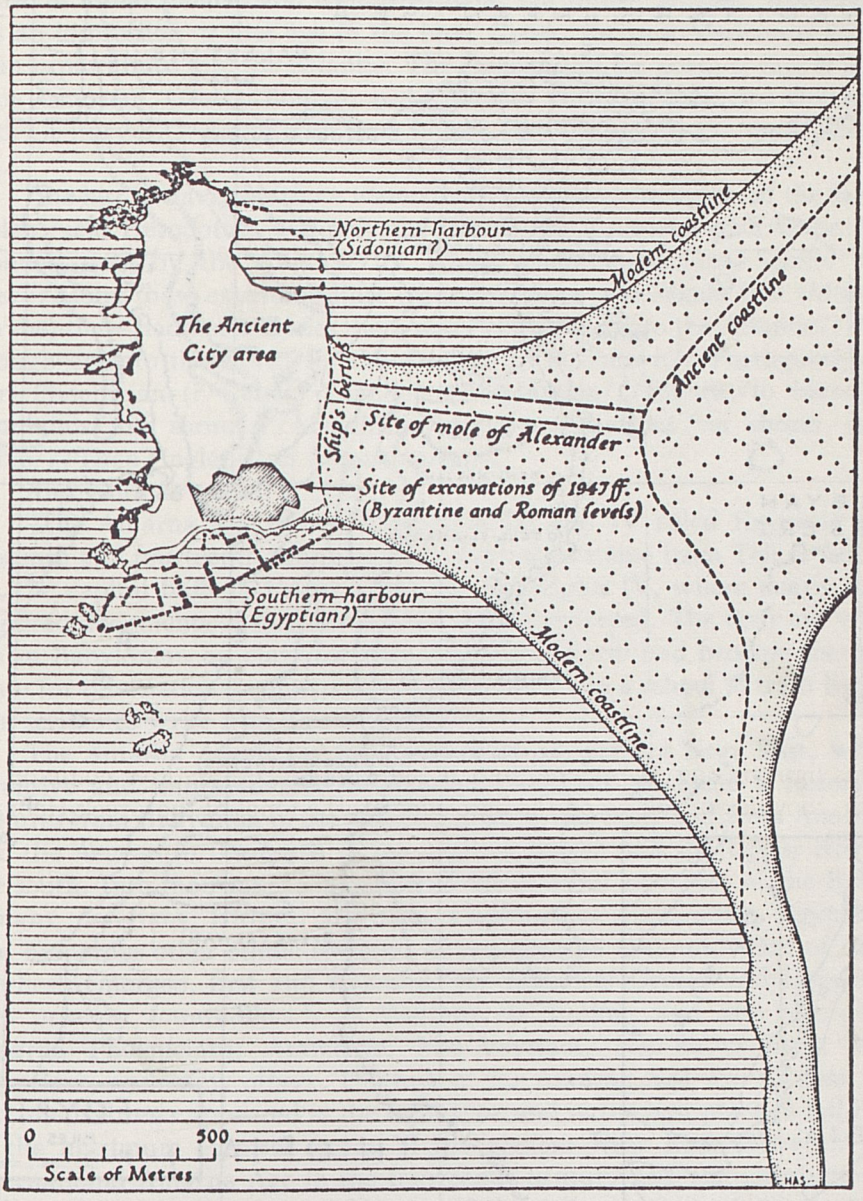
3,500 years ago

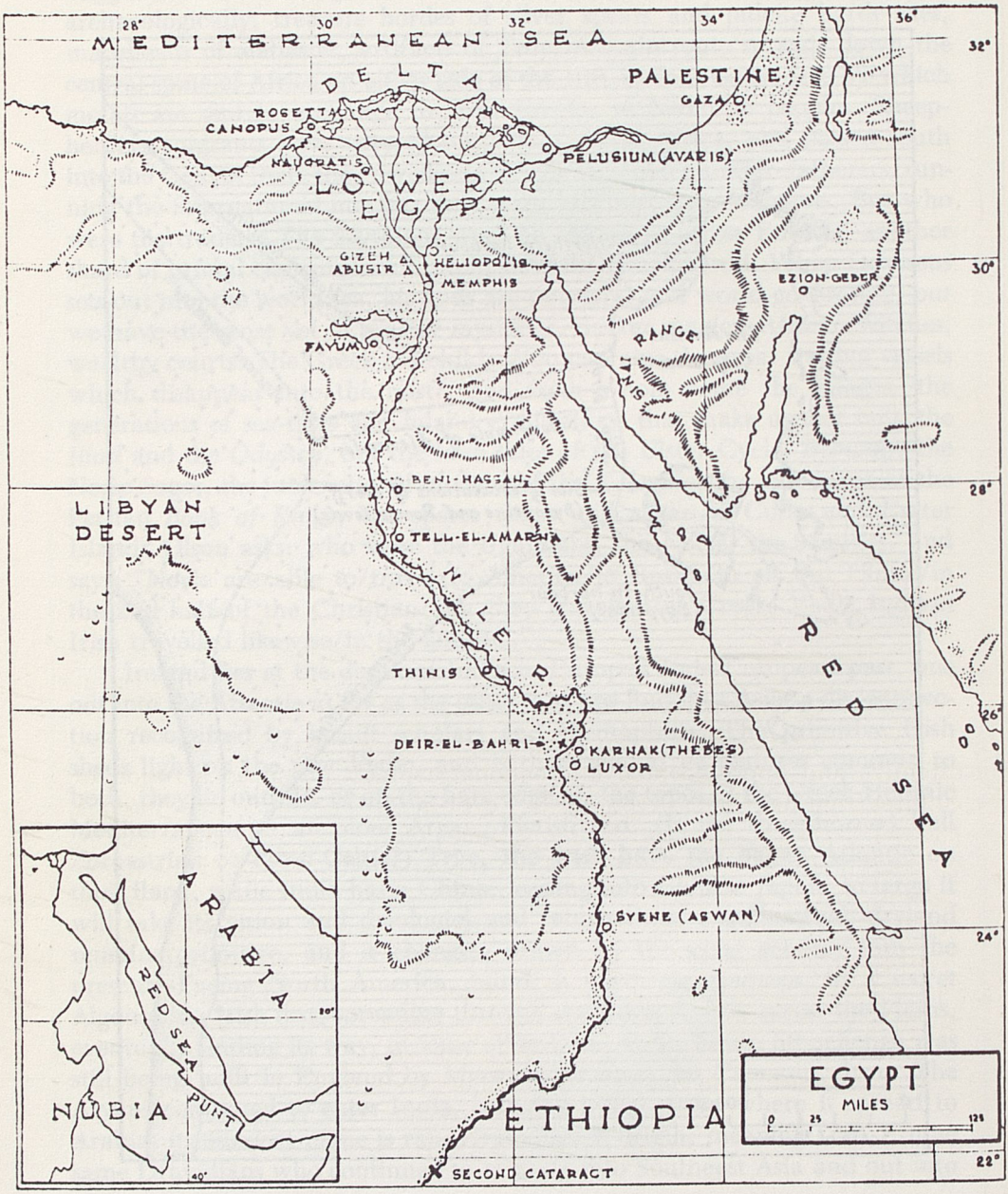
We have moved into the time of Homer (known as the Amarna Age). His chronicles have their sources here, and it is no accident that the *Maximus Poems* (V) have their heart in the same epoch. It is a mistake to think of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as Greek tales. The Amarna Age was cosmopolitan, with trade routes extending globally, contacts (hypothetical but likely) with the Indians of Brazil and Louisiana, the Mayan villages, and the Yangshao of China. Small earthworks are built in the American southwest, and pipes and fish-hooks of steatite and haliotis shell are cut by the tribes of California. In China, the silkworm is being cultivated; the Neolithic is fully developed, with crops of millet, kaoling, and rice, and the domestication of pigs, cattle, sheep, goats, and dogs. Goods travel by obvious and obscure routes. The implication is Atlantean, Earth-culture, Adriatic-Yugoslavian trade. An oval wooden bowl inlaid in gold from North Wales shows a



Viking type ship — bearing what people separate from Celt, or pre-Sufi Arabic, or a Phoenician captain under Mesolithic-Maglemoisian flag? Ceremonial silver battle axes arrive from Eastern Europe; the great golden dagger of Rumania is tip of an unknown iceberg. From the Black Sea come, archaeologically, treasure hordes of silver spears and jadeite battle-axes, maceheads of alabaster, artifacts of Troy. A main route spreads down the central spine of Africa on either side of the Rift Valley, tse-tse-free by which metals are sent in exchange for raw surplus to Neolithic peoples. Sheep-herding migrants have entered southern Central Africa, and passed south into the Congo; there they dwell side by side with older hunter-gatherers, running the international market; they were Mediterranean contacts. But who were the traders? The Scythians were on the move across Eurasia, another shard of primal eastern stock from beyond the Greek world. When Odysseus sets out into the world sea, his gods are powerful and world-generating, but we have the sense yet of greater mysteries, darker magics, African witches, wealthy courts. The Greek is a child. Who captains the great trading vessels which disappear into the mist?, and from whom come the images, the generations of sea-tales and inland explorations that make up not only the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but the Irish tales of the Ulster Cycle, *Beowulf*, the Norse *Sagas*, the international intrigue of the *Kalevala*, the vast scope of the Persian *Book of Kings*, the sparse maps and sagas of Cuba and Easter Island? Olson asks: who were the Ugandans, the Norse, the Semitics, and says: "Norse are/able to/travel/to America/to Russia/to all but China/in the 2nd half/of the Christian/Era they travelled/as Greeks Vedic Indians Irish travelled likewise/in the 2nd BC."

Ireland lies at the depth of India in Europe's Indo-European past, one out into the Atlantic as far as the other is in pre-Buddhist Asia, a dis/connection recognized by occult scholars and theosophists. The primitive Irish sheds light on the raw Vedic, and if there should be features common to both, they lie outside, or on the bare edge of, the topos of the Greek-Hebraic Mediterranean — an older Aryan, Pictish text. (Is the three-horned bull Zoroastrian or Proto-Celtic?) True, the Irish have the pagan Atlantic on their flank, while India has a China, leading into Chinese Japan, so large it will take its vision and theologies and return them a millionfold. Ireland remains primitive, and it changes, drawn by the same geodesy into the present. Facing North America, blind, it gave rise, perhaps, to a secret Algonquian-Irish text, spreading through the Great Lakes, across the Plains, eventually finding its way, in some other form, to St. Louis. Stonehenge was still being built in England by Mycenaeans from the Caucasus, Iran. The Aryans continued to enter India, bringing millet, from where it spread to Arabia; its Sanskrit name is raji, Dravidian in origin, meaning "red," those same Dravidians who continued to migrate into Southeast Asia and out into





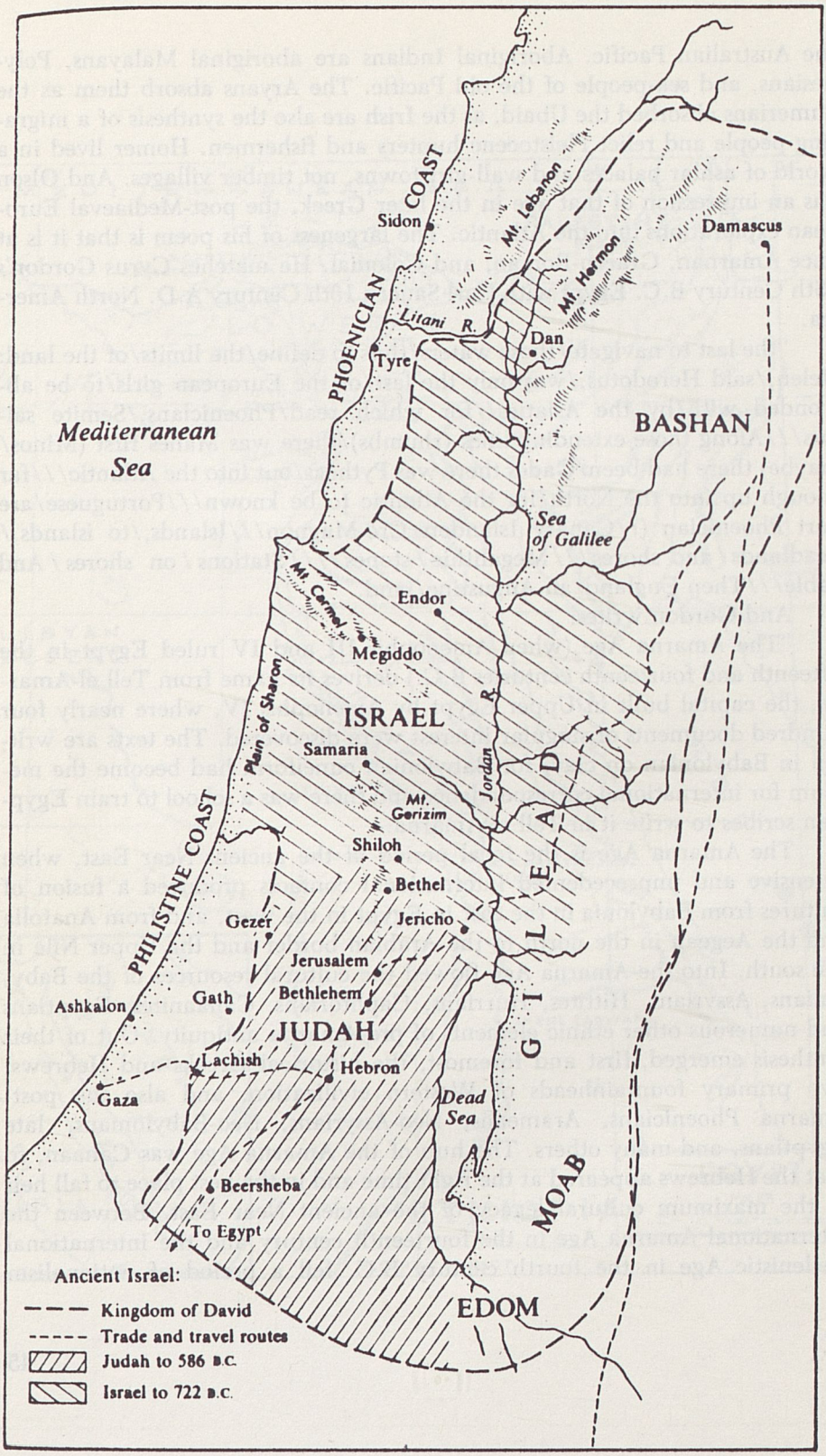
the Australian Pacific. Aboriginal Indians are aboriginal Malayans, Polynesians, and sea-people of the old Pacific. The Aryans absorb them as the Sumerians absorbed the Ubaid, as the Irish are also the synthesis of a migrating people and relict Pleistocene hunters and fishermen. Homer lived in a world of ashlar palaces and wall-girt towns, not timber villages. And Olson has an impression of that age in the later Greek, the post-Mediaeval European explorations into the Atlantic. The largeness of his poem is that it is at once Amarnan, Graeco-Roman, and Colonial. He matches Cyrus Gordon's 15th Century B.C. Egypt with Carl Sauer's 16th Century A.D. North America.

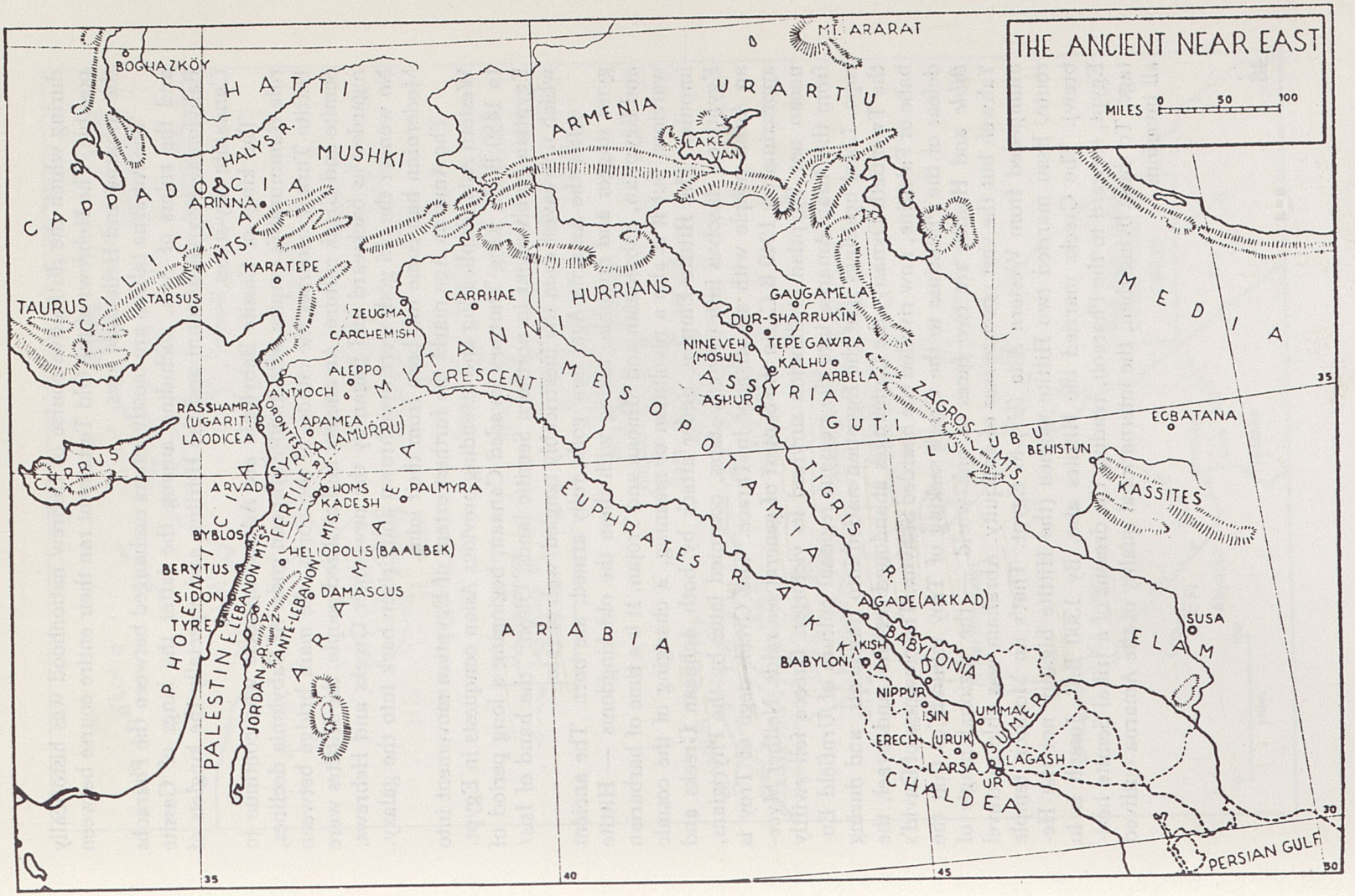
"the last to navigate/those waters/thus to define/the limits/of the land: Helen,/said Herodotus,/was only the last/of the European girls/to be absconded with/by the Asiatics//for which read/Phoenicians,/Semite sailors///Along those extending lines (rhumbs)/there was Manes first (Minos/maybe) there had been/Gades there was Pytheas/out into the Atlantic///far enough up into the North/for the Atlantic to be known///Portuguese/are part Phoenician (?/Canary Islanders/Cro-Magnon///Islands,/to islands,/headlands / and shores /// Megalithic / stones //// Stations / on shores / And Sable///Then England/an Augustine/land."

And Gordon writes:

"The Amarna Age (when Amenophis III and IV ruled Egypt in the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C.) derives its name from Tell el-Amarna, the capital built in Upper Egypt by Amenophis IV, where nearly four hundred documents of singular interest were discovered. The texts are written in Babylonian on clay, for Babylonian cuneiform had become the medium for international correspondence and there was a school to train Egyptian scribes to write it in Tell el-Amarna.

The Amarna Age is the focal period of the ancient Near East, when extensive and unprecedented international contacts produced a fusion of cultures from Babylonia in the east to Egypt in the west, and from Anatolia and the Aegean in the north to the Arabian border and the Upper Nile in the south. Into the Amarna Age flowed the cultural resources of the Babylonians, Assyrians, Hittites, Hurrians, Caphtorians, Canaanites, Egyptians and numerous other ethnic elements of pre-Amarna antiquity. Out of their synthesis emerged, first and foremost, the historical Greeks and Hebrews: two primary fountainheads of Western civilization; and also the post-Amarna Phoenicians, Arameans, Neo-Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians, late Egyptians, and many others. The hub of the Amarna Age was Canaan, so that the Hebrews appeared at the right time and in the best place to fall heir to the maximum cultural legacy of the ancient Near East. Between the international Amarna Age in the fourteenth century and the international Hellenistic Age in the fourth century B.C. fell a period of nationalism





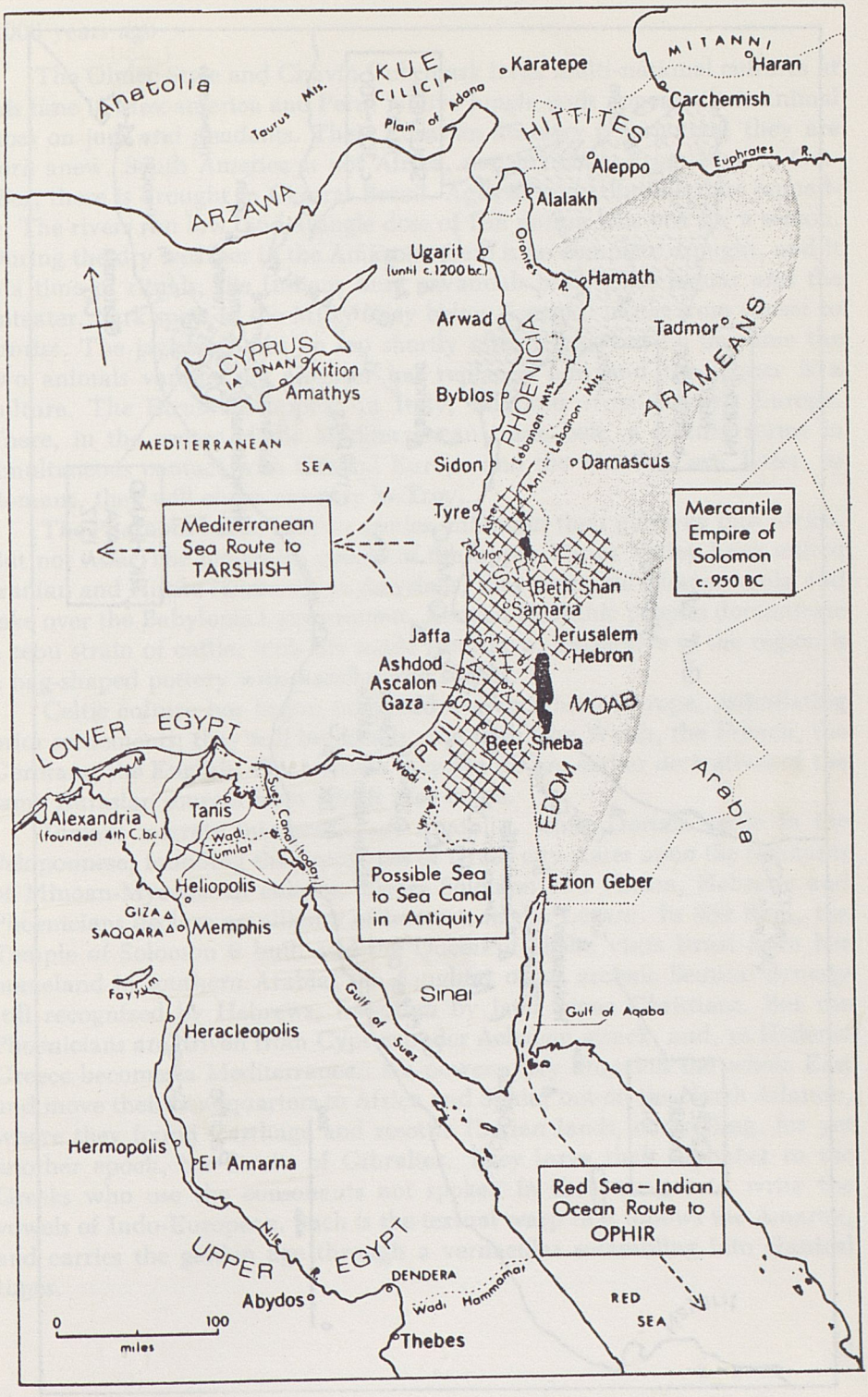
during which the distinctive course of Hebrew nationhood was historically possible. The Hebrews of the Old Testament ran their entire course between the Amarna and Hellenistic ages.

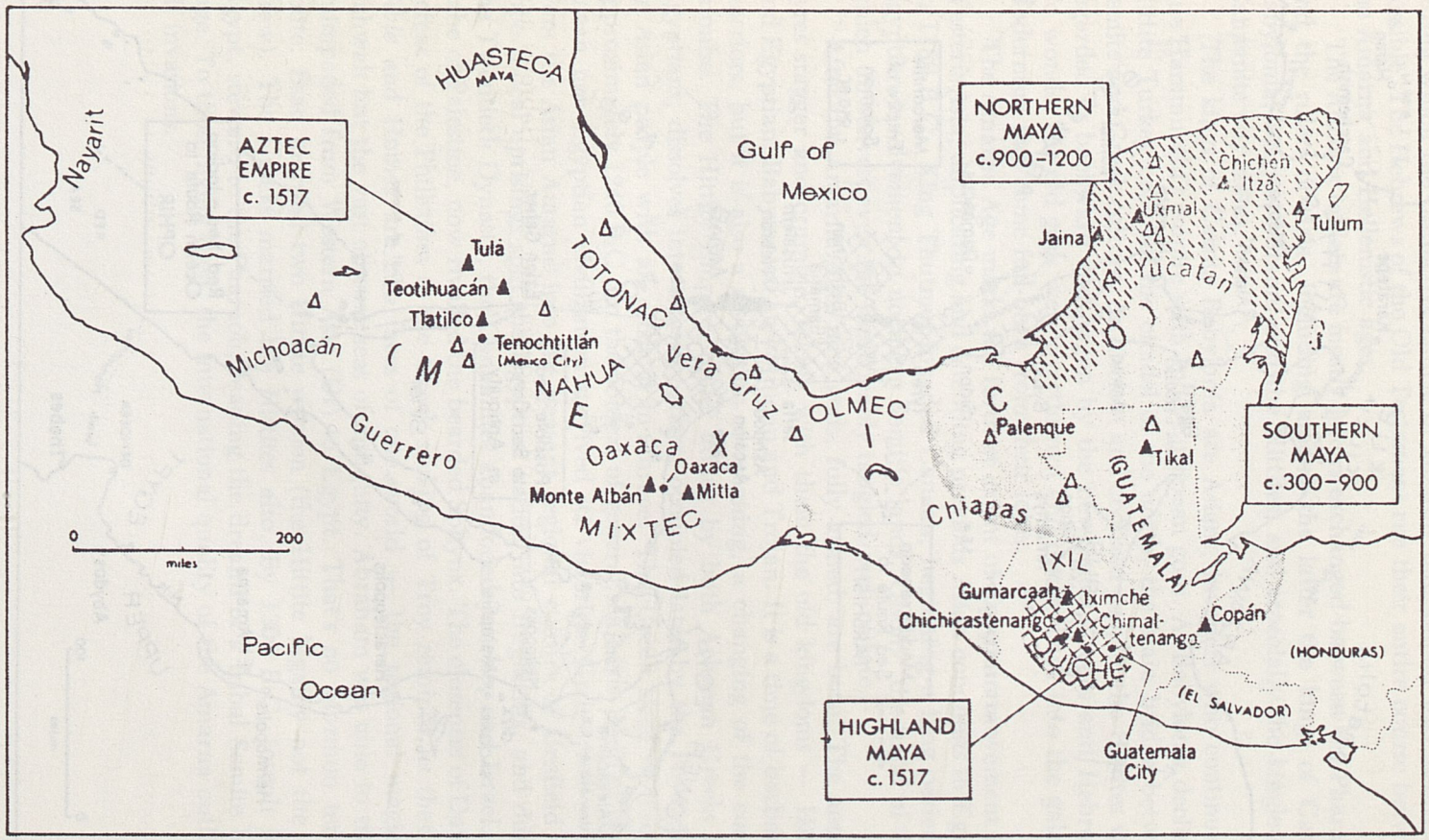
The Amarna tablets are mostly letters exchanged between the Pharaohs and the rulers of Asia, including among the latter the kings of Cassite Babylonia, Assyria, Mitanni and the Hittites; and especially the kinglets of Canaanite city-states."

The kings of Cassite Babylonia are Asians, invaders who continue to rule Hammurabi's empire with Indo-European gods. As Babylonia declines, Hittite Turkey becomes the citadel of the north, the main bridge between Semite and Greek culture. An ancient and civilized people, the Hittites were regarded as backward and pagan by the newcomer Greeks and Hebrews. No wonder the old gods were overthrown and driven back into the galaxy. Modernism had come full-born from their loins.

The Amarna Age marks the furthest extent of Egyptian movement into Western Asia, duplicating and extending previous Asian conquests in Egypt. In 1480 B.C., King Thutmes invaded Canaan, beginning a long period of Egyptian involvement in northern Semitic lands. Olson: "the hand of Isis/ which unweavest even the inextricably tangled/web of fate."

After the Amarna Age, new gods, fully armed, are born. The ancient gyres stagger and crumble, taking with them the old kingdoms — Hittite and Egyptian, Babylonian and Minoan and Trojan. It is a time of barbarian warriors, but it is also a revolution of meaning, a changing of the cosmic impulse. The Hittite Empire, under attack by both Achaean Greeks and Egyptians, dissolves into tiny city-states, occupied later by the Phyrigians, an Asian people with an offshoot in Thrace. The Greek siege of Troy is approximately 1240 B.C., in the context of general sea raids. Neither Mycenaean nor Egyptian civilization survived its victories. Greece fell swiftly from the Asian Amarna into the peasant regional culture of Urnfield Europe. Local uprisings split the Egyptian nation into fragments, and during the Twentieth Dynasty, the Canaanites abandoned Jericho, and Israel, the babe of Palestine, now rivalled the bearded Sphynx. The closeness of David's defeat of the Philistines to the Greek sacking of Troy reminds us that the *Bible* and Homer are two faces of one world — the regional magic of Yahweh but the vast obscure seas of antiquity. Abraham was able to travel unimpeded from Western Asia (Ur) to Egypt. That's no Mormon temple route. Esau married two Hittite women (the Hittite bigamy not the Hebrew). The Greeks married the Hittites also. By 1300 B.C. Joseph is in Egypt, steward to the Pharaoh, reading the dreams of a tribal Semite heritage. To those living then, the international quality of the Amarna outlived all invasions.





3,000 years ago

The Olmec Style and Chavin Cult mark large multi-national cultures at this time in Mesoamerica and Peru. Native jungle gods appear, their animal faces on jugs and pendants. Their Eurasian ancestry is forgotten; they are born anew. South America is not Africa, not anymore. From May to October, there is drought in Central Brazil. Agricultural tribes become nomadic. The rivers run low, and a single dose of fish poison kills one for a season. During the dry weather in the Amazon, there is no complete drought, and it is a time of rituals; the Indians hunt savannah birds. The jaguar and the anteater, dark spots in the Milky Way below Scorpio, battle from sunset to sunrise. The jaguar climbs on top shortly after rising, but by the time the two animals vanish, the anteater has replaced him and the jaguar is a vulture. The Etruscans appear in Italy, migrants from Eastern Europe. There, in the center of the Mediterranean trade belt, a culture forms in simultaneous contact with Central Europe and the Middle East. Later, as Romans, they will claim ancestry in Troy.

The Pharaohs battle Libyan armies, maintain their gateway into Africa. But not Asia. The mountain people of the upper Tigres Valley have united Iranian and Hittite remnants; as Assyrians, they enter old Mesopotamia and take over the Babylonian government. Kenyan Neolithic peoples domesticate a zebu strain of cattle; tools are made from lava; distinctive to the region is a bag-shaped pottery with handles and spouts.

Celtic culture has begun to spread over northern Europe, assimilating prior settlements; they will be, locally, the Irish, the Welsh, the French, the Germans, the English. The cultures they absorb are earlier derivatives of the same Eurasian sources from which *they* come.

Ionians migrate into southwest Anatolia, while Dorians settle in the Peloponnese; founding the prototypes of Greek city-states upon the remnants of Minoan-Mycenaean culture. Under Solomon and Hiram, Hebrews and Phoenicians declare an alliance of interests in the Levant. In 950 B.C., the Temple of Solomon is built and the Queen of Sheba visits Israel from her homeland in southern Arabia, the daughter of an archaic Semitic dynasty still recognized by Hebrews, forgotten by later pious Christians. But the Phoenicians are driven from Cyprus under Achaean attack, and, as Hellenic Greece becomes a Mediterranean sea-power, they abandon the whole East and move their headquarters to Africa and Spain, out on the North Atlantic, where they found Carthage and resettle Iberian lands, controlling, for yet another epoch, the Straits of Gibralter. They leave their alphabet to the Greeks who use the consonants not spoken in their tongue to write the vowels of Indo-European. Such is the textual warp that follows the Amarna, and carries the golden age through a vernacular scrambling into classical times.

Olson: "As Zeus sent Hermes/to draw Agenor's cattle/down to the seashore/at Tyre, date//1540 BC, and thereby/caused the pursuit/of him by Agenor's/sons — one to//Carthage, one to/found Thebes,/another//to establish the rich gold mines of Thasos."

With Gibraltar blocked, Greek trade with England continues across inland routes; the main Aegean export is wine, import: raw metals; bronze flagons and craters from the Mediterranean are found throughout Europe. The Phoenicians are Olson's heroes, the grandfathers of Europe, for whom the northern Mesolithic was the American West of its millennium: "meanwhile Zeus/as an immaculate//white bull with one/black stripe down him/ has caught Europe up on to his back,//his softness/fooling her,/she placing flowers/in his mouth,//he sails off/to Crete, near/Ida, and there/also Phoenician//persons are/born, Europe's/sons Minos,/Rhadamanthys,/Sarpedon."

They will still be in Carthage when they meet the Romans (Dido recalling Sheba); by then they are a very old, dying people, disappearing into Africa as the Norse later into Eskimo Greenland. Then again, like the migration, they are everyone. Though their hold on the North Atlantic is broken, no Graeco-European power will seize it for millennia; by then the open waters will be a myth.

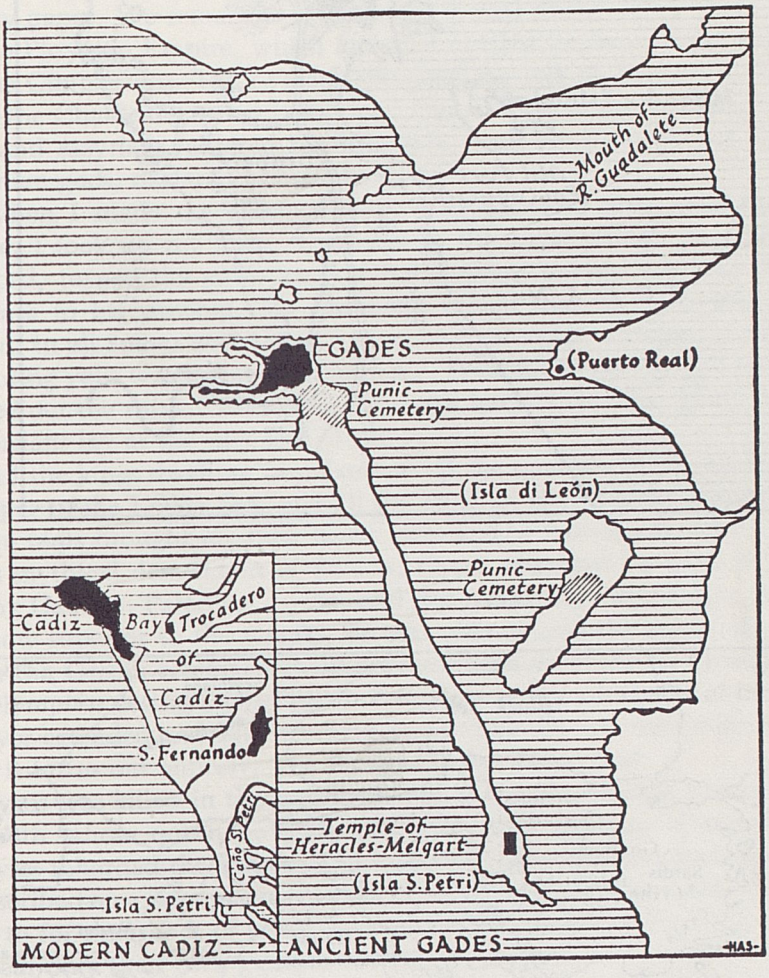
Olson: "the coast goes from Hurrian Hazzi to Tyre/the wife of god was Athirat of the Sea/borne on a current flowed that strongly/was taken straight through the Mediterranean/north north west to Judas waters/home to the shore."

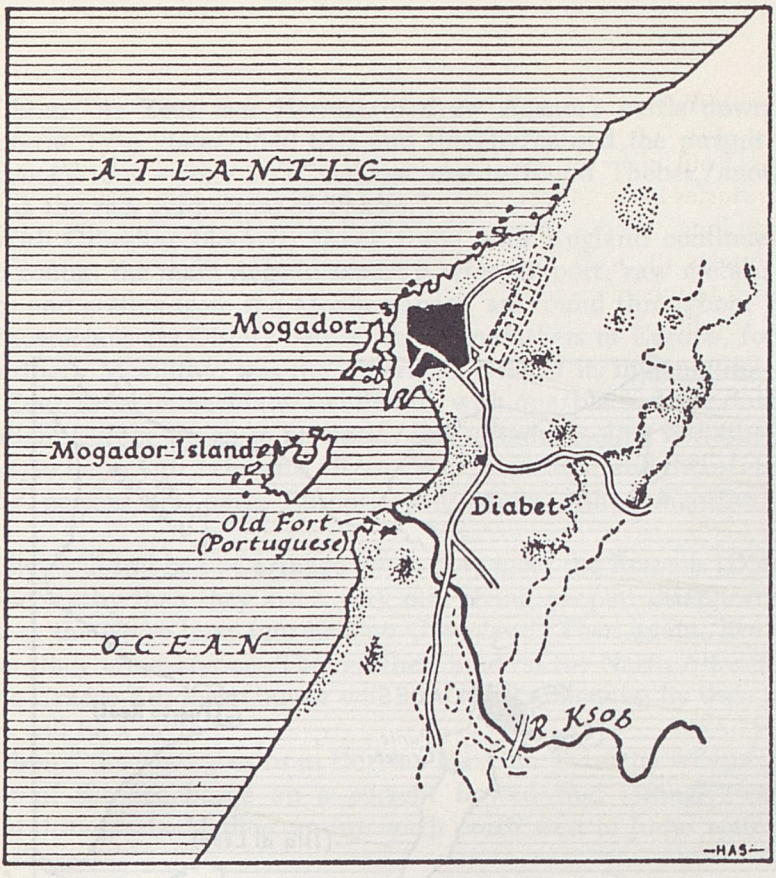
2,500 Years ago

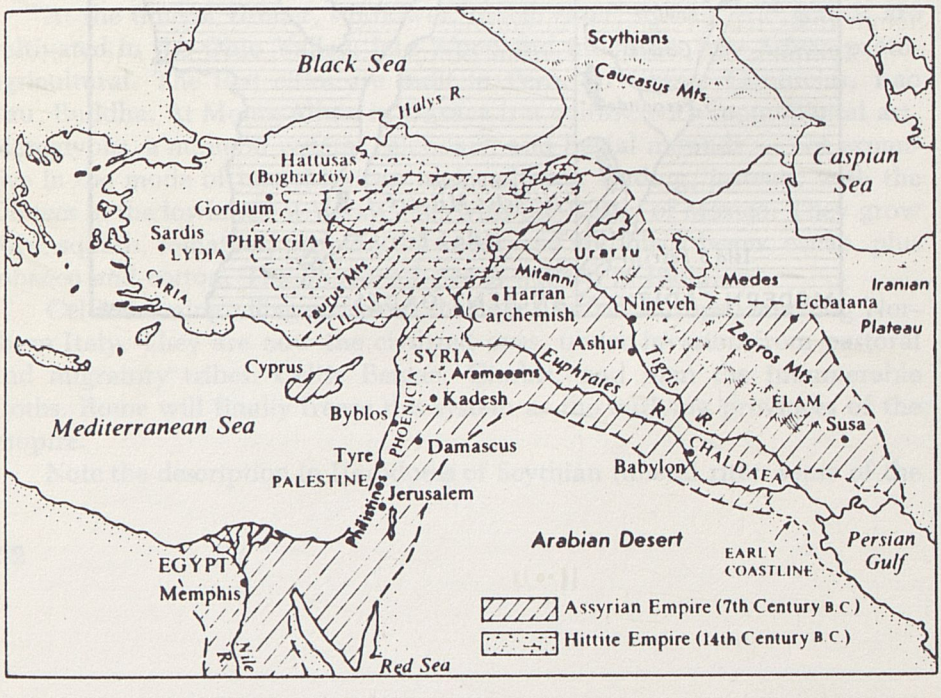
At the time of Homer, sunflower, marsh elder, squash, and gourds are cultivated in the Ohio Valley; late Woodland intensifies into Adena proto-agricultural. The first cities are built in Peru. In China: Confucius, Lao Tzu, Buddha. At Monte Alban in Oaxaca is a culture with monumental art, hieroglyphs, a numeral system, calendars, and burial mounds — not expansive in the mode of later Mexican high cultures, trading, instead, with the Olmecs in the lowlands of Vera Cruz, with the Valley of Mexico. They grow corn, squash, tomatoes, peppers, avocados, red and black beans, cacao, plus tobacco and cotton. The *Bhagavad-gita* is written in India.

Celtic farming villages expand through Central Europe, reaching Northern Italy. They are now the civilized ones, under invasion from pastoral and migratory tribes: Celtic Belgae, Cimbri, and then the innumerable Goths. Rome will finally freeze this system as the outlying provinces of the Empire.

Note the description in Herodotus of Scythian funeral rites: sense of the







continuous downflow of peoples from barbarian Eurasia into the pre-Hellenistic, pre-Roman Mediterranean, peoples that are always there, camped as if outside, peoples that Greek explorers visit, and Greek chronicles and histories locate, make into a torn planet parchment, peoples who, if ignored too long, become the Persians, and impose Asia once again on the West. Odysseus then, Dante later, sought to push outside of a world of people, back to where something original remained, something closer to the elemental condition. No wonder Olson read Herodotus as some people read the daily paper. We remain in a distortion of real time.

The Phrygian Empire, which included old Hittite, was under invasion from the Cimmerians. The Lydians occupied the rest of Turkey. A Semitic people, the Chaldeans, ruled Babylonia. Cyrus, king of the Persians, united Medes and Assyrians, entered Mesopotamia, and, by the rights of the old Babylonian gods, declared himself king.

"When I made my gracious entry into Babylon, with rejoicing and pleasure, I took up my lordly residence in the royal palace. Marduk, the great lord, turned the noble race of Babylonians toward me, and I gave daily care to his worship. My numerous troops marched peacefully into Babylon. In all Sumer and Akkad I permitted no unfriendly treatment. The dishonoring yoke was removed from them. Their fallen dwellings I restored; I cleared out the ruins." Even this early, this late: "I cleared out the ruins." The Persians lay at the very end of the cycle.

"All the kings dwelling in palaces of all the quarters of the earth, from the Upper to the Lower Sea, and all the kings of the Amorite country who dwelt in tents brought me their heavy gifts and in Babylon kissed my feet."

As mythical descendant of Sargon, Cyrus extended his empire, incorporating Canaan, Palestine, Lydia, and the remaining Phoenicians. With a navy now superior to the Greeks, he was able to add the main city-states, though the Greeks remained in alliance-submission-rebellion, nursing their own Olympian destiny. The Persian Empire was always flimsy and derivative, over-extended and self-deceiving; it was like the last explosion of a star before it burns out entirely. The Persians didn't know that.

Cyrus was killed in the interior lands of the Massagetae, a small Saka tribe with whose queen he was negotiating and fighting. Crown prince Cambyses inherited the Empire and extended it into Egypt where his name was inscribed on a sarcophagus of granite. A voice at sea is speaking, as it has begun to for thousands of years, saying that the great god Pan is dead. But they hear only their own glorious revivals.

"Horus, Samtowi, king of Upper and Lower Egypt, Mestiu-re, son of Re, Cambyses, may he live forever..... all health, all gladness, appearing as king of Upper and Lower Egypt, forever."

De Santillana and von Dechend describe the planet on which the Per-

sians awoke:

"Cosmological Time, the 'dance of stars' as Plato called it, was not a mere angular measure, an empty container, as it has now become, the container of so-called history; that is, of frightful and meaningless surprises that people have resigned themselves to calling the *fait accompli*. It was felt to be potent enough to control events inflexibly, as it molded them to its sequences in a cosmic manifold in which past and future called to each other, deep calling to deep. The awesome Measure repeated and echoed the structure in many ways, gave Time the scansion, the inexorable decisions through which an instant 'fell due.'"

During the reign of Darius, the Libyans and Scythians were defeated, and Persian governors moved into Western Asia and India. This Aryan empire marked the fruition of two ancient unresolved measures: the expansion of Asian and Indo-European masses into the cultivated Mediterranean, and the unending intrusion of Middle Eastern kingdoms into the Orient. The Persians traced these measures unconsciously, their armies a pendulum east and west, until they bent under the crossbeam from Africa to China (Alexander's inherited global dream). And they moved their capital further and further east. Initially it is Ecbatana, Babylonia, in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar. In the time of Darius, it is Susa, near the mouth of the Tigres, among groves of palm, acacia, tamarisk, iris in the desert, pink oleander in the valleys at the edge of the plain — long winter rains off the Indian Ocean. But Darius considered Susa an ancient and foreign city and began the construction of Persepolis, back in Asia Minor. It was an East-West project, calling forth the best of late ancient technology. The palace was entered by a double reversing staircase; a series of underwater channels joined the structures on the terrace. Persepolis was the gateway from Europe; it was the gateway to Asia. Through it, Greeks, like Democritus, could pass, first into Babylonia; from there into Persia itself, and finally, beyond it, India.

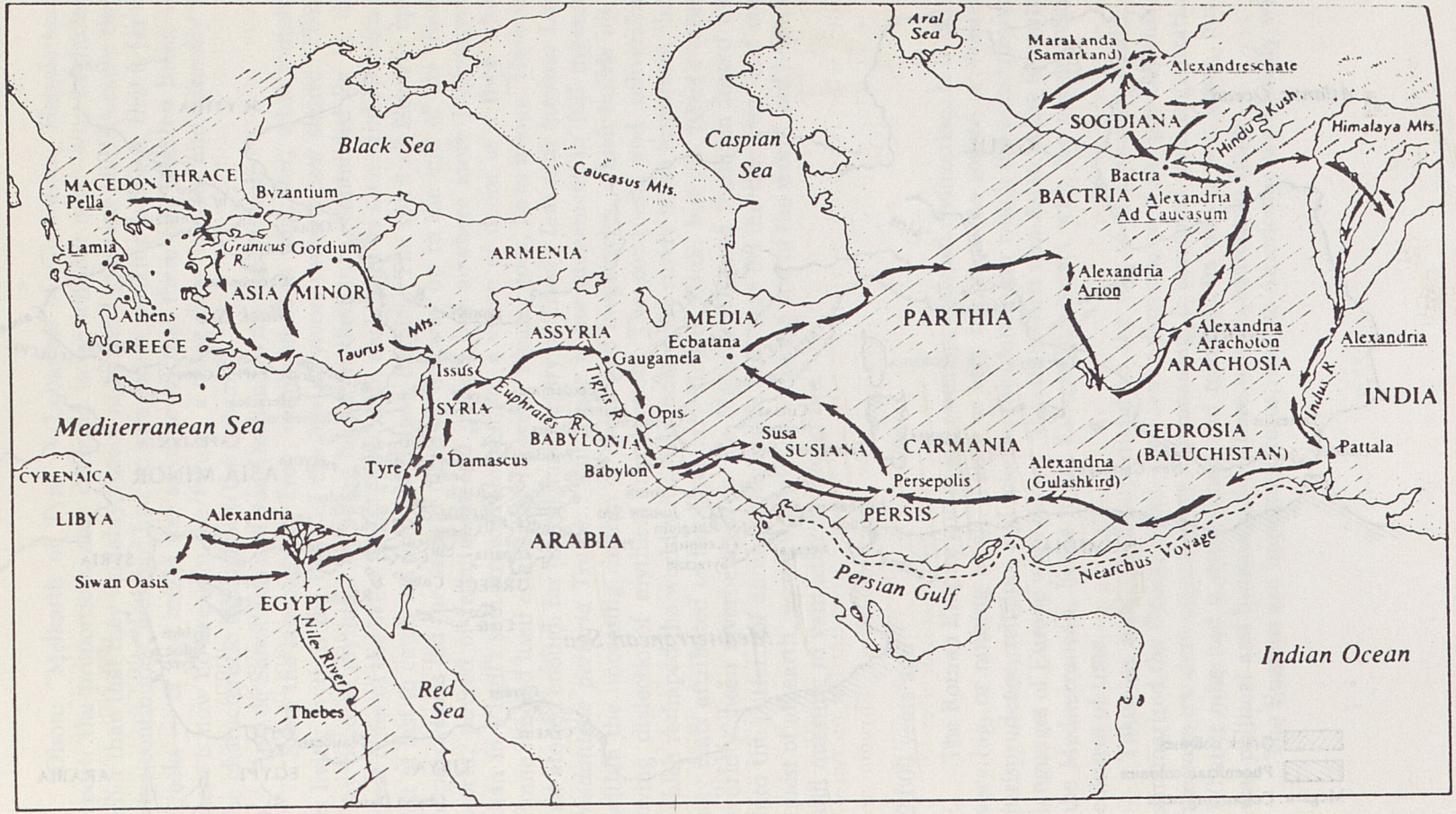
The mathematics and geography of the pre-Socratics, the balance of the elements, the intuition of cycle and process, of quantity and component, all reflect an earlier golden age, a passage to the Orient too. Not just the Zoroastrian Orient, but the early Hindu/Buddhist. The precision of their language, which we recognize as philosophically initial, is also the last precision of an aging cosmology that has become ornamental and superficially complex, whose wheels are weighted down by gods and myths that no longer do any work, to say nothing of their own royal appointees — a prior cosmology that carries within all its years of wisdom the seeds of a final deepening in the core. Its new thrust, in pre-Socratic times, comes from the rough metallurgical cosmology of Europe; it passes through a raw Neolithic quantification, an empiricism and glacial scouring few of its gods survive. This is the energy and paradox we recognize in all of that early

Greek writing: from the water of Thales and the fire of Heraclitus to the monad of Parmenides, the mixings of Anaxagoras, and the atomic essences of Democritus, the paradoxes of Zeno and the Orphic theorems of Pythagoras. It is the electron pulse from out the gaudy Egyptian shell. This is how we finally learn, in fragments, of something which has been lost and recovered, twisted and retwisted, carried in countless migrations across Europe and Asia, and honored at the center of Empire. The pre-Socratics give us a sense of what was left, at the possible most, when they are born. That is why they are such thin, hot, translucent rods.

Our language is still settling back in a recovery of currents and sources. The explosion is implicit; like with Benjamin Lee Whorf, the Euro-American is added to the Hopi-Aztecan, and a further precision, exactness, is recorded — Chinese, Eskimo, Yoruba, Dead Sea Scrolls, imaginary numbers — until the refinement is so great that we lie on the very verge, and in danger of consciousness itself becoming everything, for the refinement is now, atomically, genetically, itself being processed back through all it is.

"This universe, which is the same for all, has not been made by any god or man, but it always has been, is, and will be — an ever-living fire, kindling itself by regular measures and going out by regular measures." Heraclitus. Europe or Asia? Europe *and* Asia.

It is the backward Greeks, the Macedonians, never actually conquered, who lead the attack against the Persians and, from the Greek standpoint, drive the barbarian Asians back into Asia. Philip of Macedonia maintains a weak alliance with Darius III, nephew of Artaxerxes II, king by a palace coup. After losing Egypt, the Persians reconquer it, and relax, but Alexander, son of Philip, scorns their sloppy confidence. His feat of world conquest seizes Persian Asia within it. First the Aegean: he is hardest on sell-out Greeks who accept Persians as Babylonian successors. Next: Phrygia and Phoenicia, destroying Tyre, replacing it with a port city after his own name. Unmatched in Egypt, he visits the oracle at Siwah and is hailed as the true son of Zeus Ammon, the combined Greek-Egyptian god. Upstart Pharaoh, tribal king, he battles the Persians through Syria into Asia. They do not believe in his strength, or, perhaps, they do not understand their own weakness, until he burns Persepolis, sparing nothing, ending as he had to, the ancient world. He completes only what history and astronomy had already set on the table. It is no accident that Alexander was a student of Aristotle, but what this means is in dispute, omen and synchronicity both. For Plato and Aristotle also mark the end of the ancient world, though we use them, ironically, as our main sources to its philosophy. The *Timaeus* is a holy book to us, but it is a mishmash of archaic philosophy, derivative and poetic, neo-Rosicrucian. The Hellenic European world has replaced the Oriental Aryan. "Man is estranged from that which is most familiar."



Olson: "Melkarth of Tyre —/Lebanese of Gloucester, Herodotean/ report: the proportions/now declared to be without end —/or beginning other than that they valuably,/occur as in fact Egyptians said/(because they were continuous, and had had no calamities/speaking to Solon, that is [as of Greeks — & one might too/as of/Jews] that there has been/no break — there is now no break in the/future, a thing does flow etc and/intensity/is the characteristic throughout/the system."

And de Santillana and von Dechend write the epitaph:

"From the last night of Troy, extinguished in slaughter, what remains in living myth is the flight of the few survivors toward new shores. There they become mythical founding heroes in their turn, contended for by the great cities of the West. This is how myth deals with its own, and Nemesis is felt at last to catch up with the Roman Empire. The spirit of Homer's epic impassiveness led the ancient mind all the way up to the end of the classic world, purged of resentment and hatred, but nowhere more impressively than in Virgil's soul-stricken invocation, a vision of doom at a time when Rome fancied itself established forever: "Please, gods, have mercy. Have we not atoned enough for the original perjury of Troy?" *Iam satis luminus Laomedonteae periuria Troiae...* But there is not atonement in full measure within the unceasing rhythm of cycles and megacycles, which builds up a living dialectic of mythical imagination. The conquests and subversions which reshaped the world with Alexander were surely more important than any feats attributed to the legendary king of Uruk; but the latter's otherworldly sheen reverberated on the Macedonian, and tradition forced him into the pattern of another Gilgamesh, still bent on the discovery and conquest of all earth, water, and air, down to the end of the world and beyond, still questing in vain after immortal life."

2,000 years ago

The Roman Empire comes after ancient classical civilization. It is either very big, or nothing at all. Taken as very big, it is the source of Western jurisprudence, religion, and science, the giant from which the countries and languages of Europe were carved. It was the first non-Asian polity to control the Mediterranean; hence it put Europe in contact with the cosmopolitan cultures of time.

Taken as small, it is superficial to the rest of the ancient world; it summarized the Greek, which itself was a florescence of the pre-Hellenic, a message too derivative to have any meaning. It perfected state organization. What it inherited it streamlined and restored. Its power was great, but it was political and bureaucratic. There was no content to Rome.

The Romans are important to us, and as Americans, we identify with

them most of all; we share their mechanical efficiency and the obsession with the external. The way Rome is packaged, its Senate and Forum and theater and wars against the barbarians, makes it the perfect cover for our excuse that we come from something simple and literal, or from nothing at all.

Many Celtic tribes, including the Belgae, finding themselves crushed between Teutonic invaders and Caesars, fled to Spain and France, eventually England. The South of the island was incorporated into the Roman Empire, but the North was abandoned at the wall built under Hadrian to separate the Mediterranean from the North Atlantic. Agricola, in the vision of Tacitus, stood on the western edge of Scotland, from where he calculated that a single legion could take Ireland. But the Romans had no business on the North Atlantic, and they knew it. The West belonged to the Irish and Phoenicians, and, if there are Roman coins in Tennessee, it is not Romans who brought them there, or even knew of such peoples and places. The items of an older commerce may have passed, as exotics, through their fingers, but their ignorance of their origins and the real oikumene is matched only by those archaeologists who came later and were just as confused by an Atlantean civilization which would not be diminished by simple regionalism.

The Romans were governors, like the Incas; they reduced the variety of an ancient continent into a single governance, which was manageable, and contained its own explanation and legitimacy. Roman Christianity was most of all an expression of the continued relationship between newborn Mediterranean Europe and the dying Near East of Western Asia; it is the Roman externalization of a Semitic past. By the time it is Christianized, i.e., internalized, it is primarily a European tribal religion tightened by Greek theology. The Romans passed it all on as a unity into what came after. The rest scattered, and fled.

Olson: "He sent flowers on the waves from the mole/of Tyre. He went to Malta. From Malta/to Marseilles. From Marseilles to Iceland./From Iceland to Promontorium Vinlandia./Flowers go out on the sea. On the left/of the Promontorium. On the left of the/Promontorium, Settlement Cove///I am making a mappemunde. It is to include my being./It is called here, at this point and point of time/Peloria."

Extensive irrigation agriculture is being practiced in Peru; the Temple of Quetzalcoatl is under construction at Teotihuacan. Mexican food-production has spread into the American Southwest, where Basketmaker culture has developed out of the previous Desert mode of subsistence. In the Ohio Valley, the Hopewell phase has succeeded the Adena, with large-scale construction throughout the southern plains and on rivers, burial mounds which stand today as little hills. A massive trade network cycles copper from the

Great Lakes, mica from the Appalachians, conch shells from the Atlantic, grizzly bear canines from the Rockies, and meteoric iron from the Arctic.

The Peoples of Southern Borneo are engaged in long-distance maritime trade. Their explorers circumnavigate the Indian Ocean, backwater sea on whose shores relict populations dwell. The route goes: Andaman, Ceylon, Karachi, Oman, Aden, Dar es Salaam, or something like that: neither Asian, nor Arab, nor Negro, crowded into the tropical wind-lag marketplace. They reach East Africa, colonizing Madagascar, bringing a Southeast Asian food complex: banana, coconut, Asian yam, taro-yam, crops suited to tropical Africa, spreading to Kenya and Uganda, back toward Ethiopia. The Bantu are the first iron smiths; they adopt the Indonesian outrigger canoe. They expand to control the center of South Africa.

The Han Court has sent their envoy to Japan.

1,600 - 1,200 years ago

The storm begins. With the absorption of the Roman government into northern Europe and the later expansion of Muslim Semites, Mediterranean civilization is split into southern and northern halves, and the north is east and west.

And when we finally come to ask the question: where did Rome go?; in what battle did Rome fall?; there is no answer. The continuous pressure of Celtic and German tribes, themselves pressed upon by invaders, blurred the boundaries of the Empire, and confused its internal space. First the Visigoths were driven across the Danube by the Huns, who had been chased out of China two hundred years earlier. The Romans gave them permission to enter, having little other choice, and they arrived in disorder: men, women, children, and cattle, on rafts and in canoes, some clinging to planks and barrels. They could not be dispersed throughout the provinces, so they were allowed to settle as a state within a state. The King of the Visigoths was proclaimed a Roman general.

Rome is becoming an abstraction, the Romans themselves of mixed racial stock and bastard kulchur. It is a German general, Stilicho, who halts the Vandals; to the relieved Romans, he is Marius reborn. The Vandals finally cross the Rhine and the Pyrenees and settle Spain and the coast of Africa. The Burgundi and Alamanni move into the Rhine Basin and Alsace. After the death of Stilicho, the Visigoths, under Alaric, sack Rome, taking ornaments of gold and silver from the Forum and public buildings, after which they settle to the South. Athaulf, successor to Alaric (his brother), marries the sister of the Roman emperor in a full royal epithalamium. Shades of a 'faery queene.'

Rome did not disappear. It was gradually and continuously occupied

and decentralized by Germanic tribes, who took on and maintained Roman institutions and defended them against further barbarian attacks — so that Attila the Hun was halted by such a pagan alliance in defense of their Roman homeland.

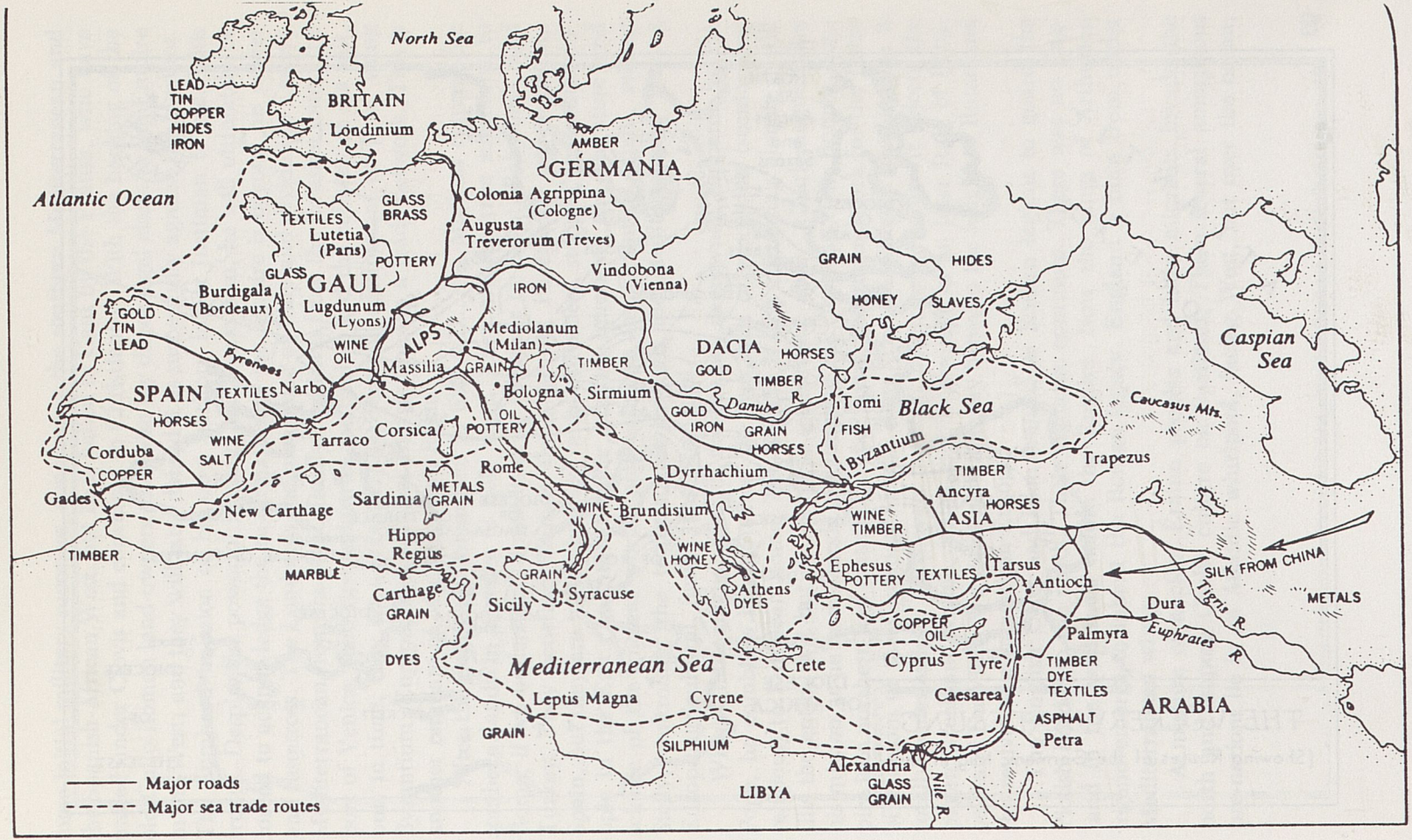
The kings of the European countries were descendants of Germanic chiefs. The emperor was never formally overthrown; he simple grew smaller and smaller until, centuries later, when they wanted him, no one remembered where he went. Romulus Augustulus, son of Orestes, last of the line, was sent without ceremony to Campania. Odoacer, the strongest of the German chiefs, took the only name available to Germans: king, i.e., head of a kin( ) group. He is followed by Theodoric, ruler of the Ostrogoths.

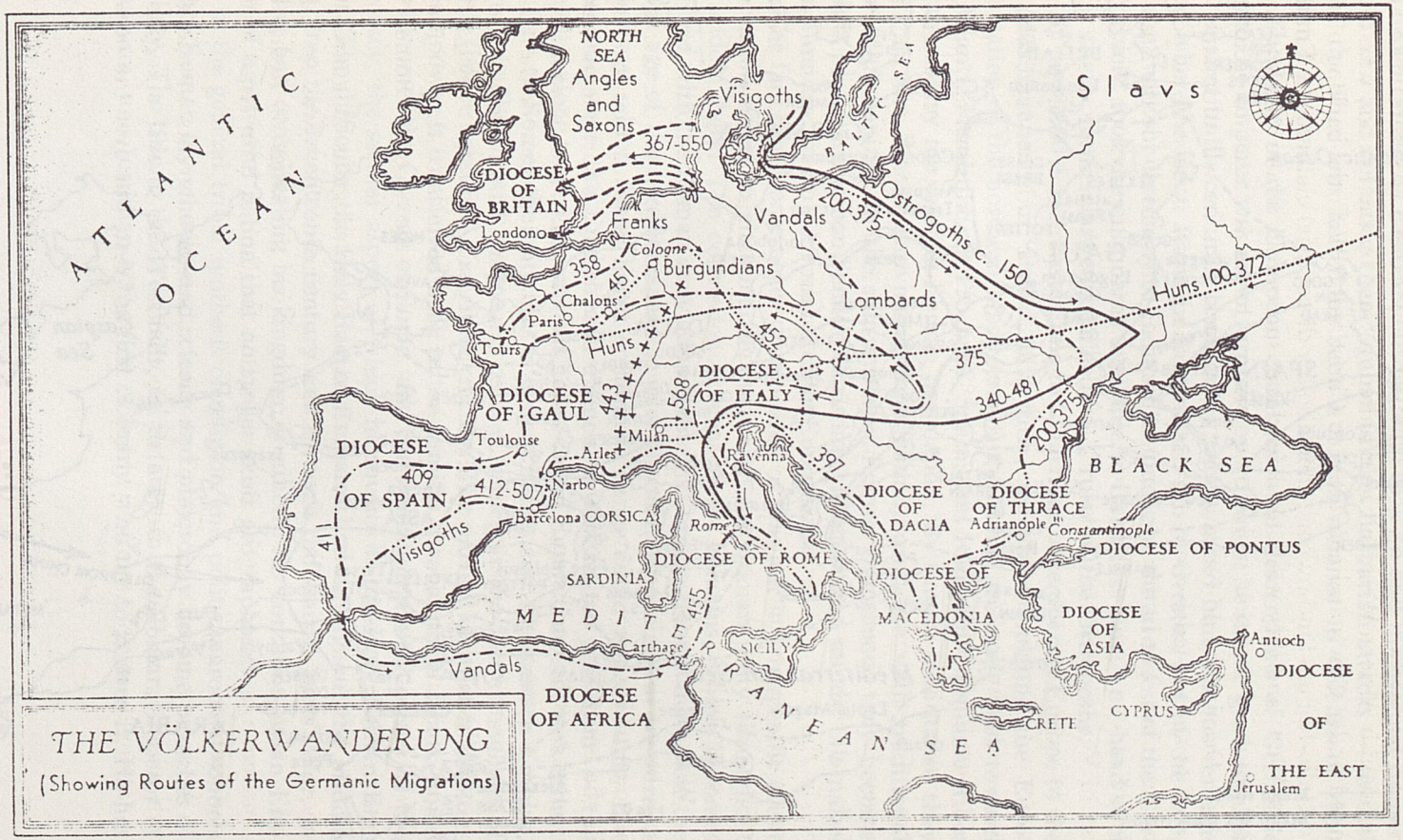
By now (500 A.D.), we are in a full marriage of temperate Europe to the old Mediterranean, or, stated differently, we are completing the Europeanization of the northern Mediterranean, turning gradually back toward the Atlantic Mesolithic. In Provence, Spain, and Italy, the Germanic tribes literally marry the existing Roman population. By family inheritance they take over the Roman provincial organization, complete with traditional titles. Christianized by the still-powerful Roman priesthood, they become the first proselytizing non-Semitic Christians. In their own minds, this makes them Romans. In truth, it makes them Europeans.

The fact that Rome never disappeared or was lost in any specific event or occasion comes to characterize the search for Roman unity throughout the Middle Ages. The conviction is, that Rome remains, which becomes confused with the Roman conviction, inherited by the Renaissance, that the golden age of the Mediterranean is part of the Roman classical treasure, a golden age which Rome never embodied, hence could not transmit. But where else were the English and French to look, after feudalism — the hermetics alone looked to something they called Egypt, and still look today.

Part of Rome, the part that is heir to Persia and the Eastern Empire, survives in Byzantium, its second capital, which is the last stronghold of gnostic (hence heretical) East-West culture. The part of her that is Mediterranean power is transferred back to the Semites, Arabs, under Islam. Rome City becomes the Church of Rome, and the Pope inherits the power of the theocracy, the secular aspect of which he invests in the Holy Roman Emperor. The difficulty the Holy Roman Emperor had throughout the Middle Ages, into the seventeenth century and through the Thirty Years' War, in finding and consolidating his kingdom, is exactly his condition as an Emperor of a powerful nation that no longer exists geographically.

In the general tribal synthesis of religion and polity, parochial schools replace Roman lay schools, and science and philosophy become branches of theology. The title to the West falls, by default, to the Roman Emperor at Byzantium, and Justinian is the first of many who try to restore it. He has





THE VÖLKERWANDERUNG

(Showing Routes of the Germanic Migrations)

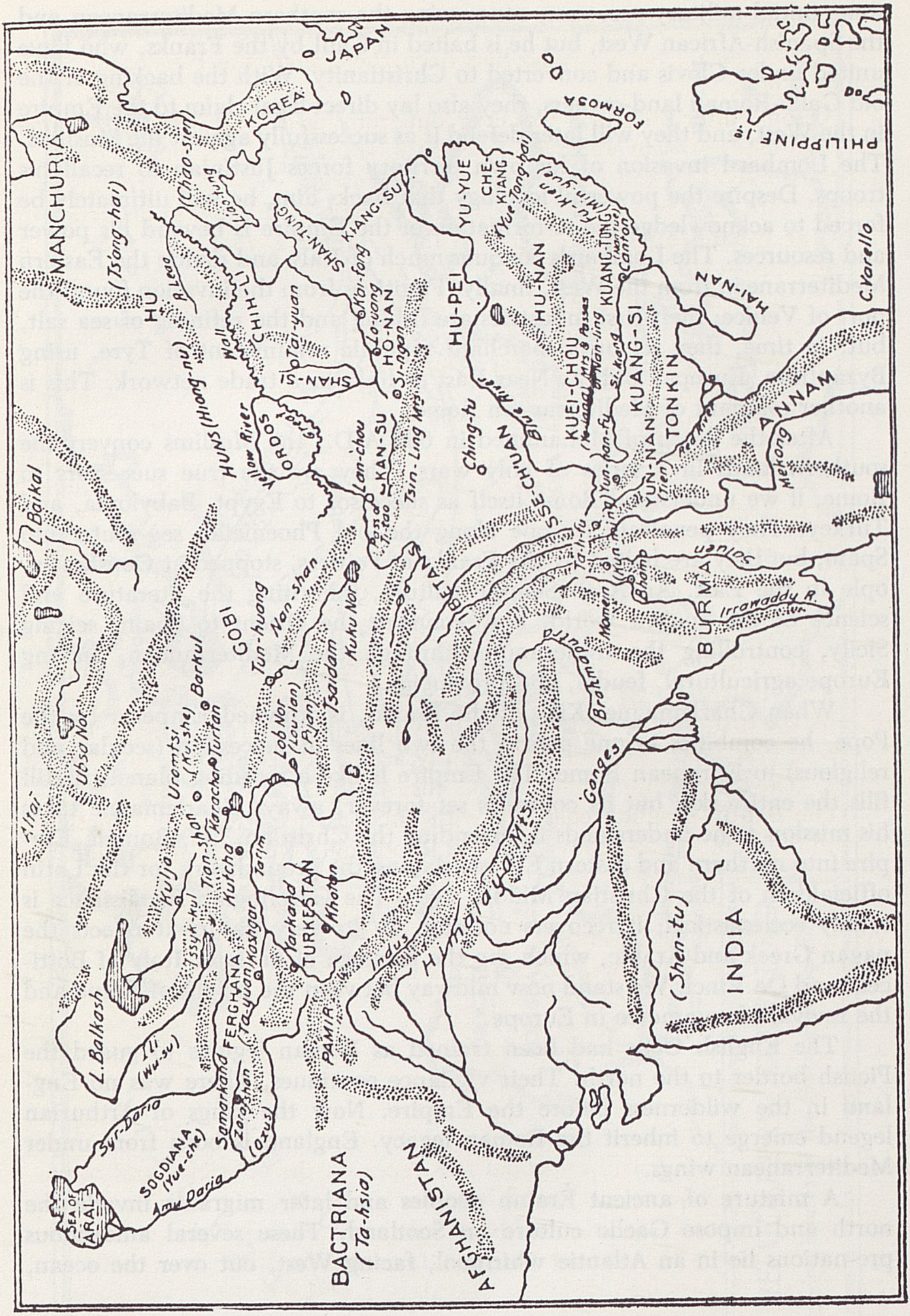
some initial military successes, conquering the southern Mediterranean and the Spanish-African West, but he is halted in Gaul by the Franks, who have united under Clovis and converted to Christianity. With the backing of the old Gallo-Roman land-owners, they also lay direct legal claim to the Empire in the West, and they will later defend it as successfully against the Muslims. The Lombard invasion of his own territory forces Justinian to recall his troops. Despire the powerful ideology that backs him, he will ultimately be forced to acknowledge the re-formation of the Empire is beyond his power and resources. The Lombards conquer much of Italy and divide the Eastern Mediterranean from the West, finally. Fugitives from the invasion found the port of Venice; their first industries are fishing and the refining of sea salt, but, in time, they set up a merchant republic reminiscent of Tyre, using Byzantium, Europe, and the Near East as links in a trade network. This is another remnant of Mediterranean Rome.

After the death of Mohammed in 632 A.D., the Muslims convert the southern lands in a series of holy wars. They are the true successors to Rome, if we understand Rome itself as successor to Egypt, Babylonia, and Turkey. They penetrate Europe along the old Phoenician sea-route into Spain, but they are halted by the Franks at Poitiers, stopped at Constantinople in the East. An Arab Semitic culture, inheriting the literature and science of the ancient world, now connects the Orient to Spain, seizing Sicily, controlling the trade routes through the Mediterranean, leaving Europe agricultural, feudal, and provincial.

When Charlemagne, King of the Franks, is crowned Emperor by the Pope, he combines in one person the two lines of succession (secular and religious) to European Rome. The Empire is like a receding planet; it still fills the entire sky, but its course is set forever, away. Charlemagne takes his mission as he understands it, extending the Christian, i.e., Roman, Empire into northern and eastern Europe, laying the groundwork for the Latin officialdom of the Christian Middle Ages. The Carolingian Renaissance is totally ecclesiastical; it recovers nothing; by its very nature it rejects the pagan Greek and Arabic, which are the heritage of an later Italy of Botticelli and Da Vinci. We stand now midway between the height of Rome and the revival of commerce in Europe.

The English Celts had been trained as Roman legions to guard the Pictish border to the north. Their vigilance continues. There was no England in the wilderness before the Empire. Now the kings of Arthurian legend emerge to inherit the Roman legacy. England is born from under Mediterranean wings.

A mixture of ancient Érainn peoples and later migrants invade the north and impose Gaelic culture on Scotland. These several amorphous pre-nations lie in an Atlantic whirlpool, facing West, out over the ocean,



Britanny, Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, returning to the direction of fishing, sea-faring peoples who had been there since the Pleistocene. The center is gone.

Olson: "after the storm was over/out from his cave at Mt Casius/came the blue monster//covered with scales/and sores about his mouth/flashing not too surely//his tail but with his eyes/showing some glare/rowing out gently//into the stream, to go/for Malta, to pass by/Rhodes and Crete//to arrive at Ireland/anyway to get into the Atlantic/to make up a boil//in northeastern waters/to land in a grapevine corner//to shake off his cave-life/and open an opening/big enough for himself."

Reviving Tiahuanaco and Chavin designs as emblems of unification and pan-Peruvian power, the Huari Empire conquers Peru; their center is in the Titicaca Basin. Chichimec invaders from Northern Mexico over-run Teotíhuacan, and the Toltecs later arise as the dominant power in Central America. California Indian economy is based on acorns, fish, birds, deep sea mammals, and plant seeds. There are small villages with mud and wood houses in Arizona and New Mexico. Hopewell continues to spread, spawning the chiefdoms of the Mississippian Age. A major center for North America existed in East St. Louis, with influences all the way to Ontario and New York.

A shrine is dedicated to the Sun Goddess at Ise, Japan; two hundred years later Buddhism is introduced to the island. The central China Empire abandons the north to the barbarians, and a Chinese Buddhist princess marries the first king of Tibet. Is there any question, from the perspective of the stars, that Buddhism and Christianity are the same message in different climes, that the chichimecs are also Goths, Mongols, Huns?

The Bantus, trading coastally with Indonesians, Muslims, Venetians, expand their culture and move into the Rhodesian goldfields — through the equatorial forest to the southern woodland, incorporating Tanzania, Kenya, and the southern Somali coastline. Indian-Ethiopian trade continues. Later, Ogun, god of the forge and of war, tumbles; Africa dissipates politically, and the slave trade follows, spreading its natives to the urban centers of the world.

1,000 years ago

During the Middle Ages of Central Europe, commerce ceased, agriculture became local, and episcopal sees replaced the old cities and towns. Roman villages became Mediaeval baronies run by seigneurs. In lieu of any other secular power, the seigneur defended the hereditary rights of his serfs; he apportioned woods, meadows, and marshes; he built local mills and exacted fees of goods for their use. Feudalism was a compromise between

the European Neolithic and Roman-Mediterranean civilization. It emphasized regional self-sufficiency and fragmentation of power. At no time did trade and world consciousness vanish entirely, yet whole lifetimes might pass without awareness. Goods entered Europe and left Europe, but in the core, a static stability remained, protecting a mythological order of nobility and sanctity. However isolated regions became, there was a sense of millennium, that the Roman Empire was in only temporary decline. German kings and Holy Roman Emperors who sought to re-impose it were destroyed at the height of their power (Otto, Barbarosa), because restoration, even in the name of the Pope, was impossible.

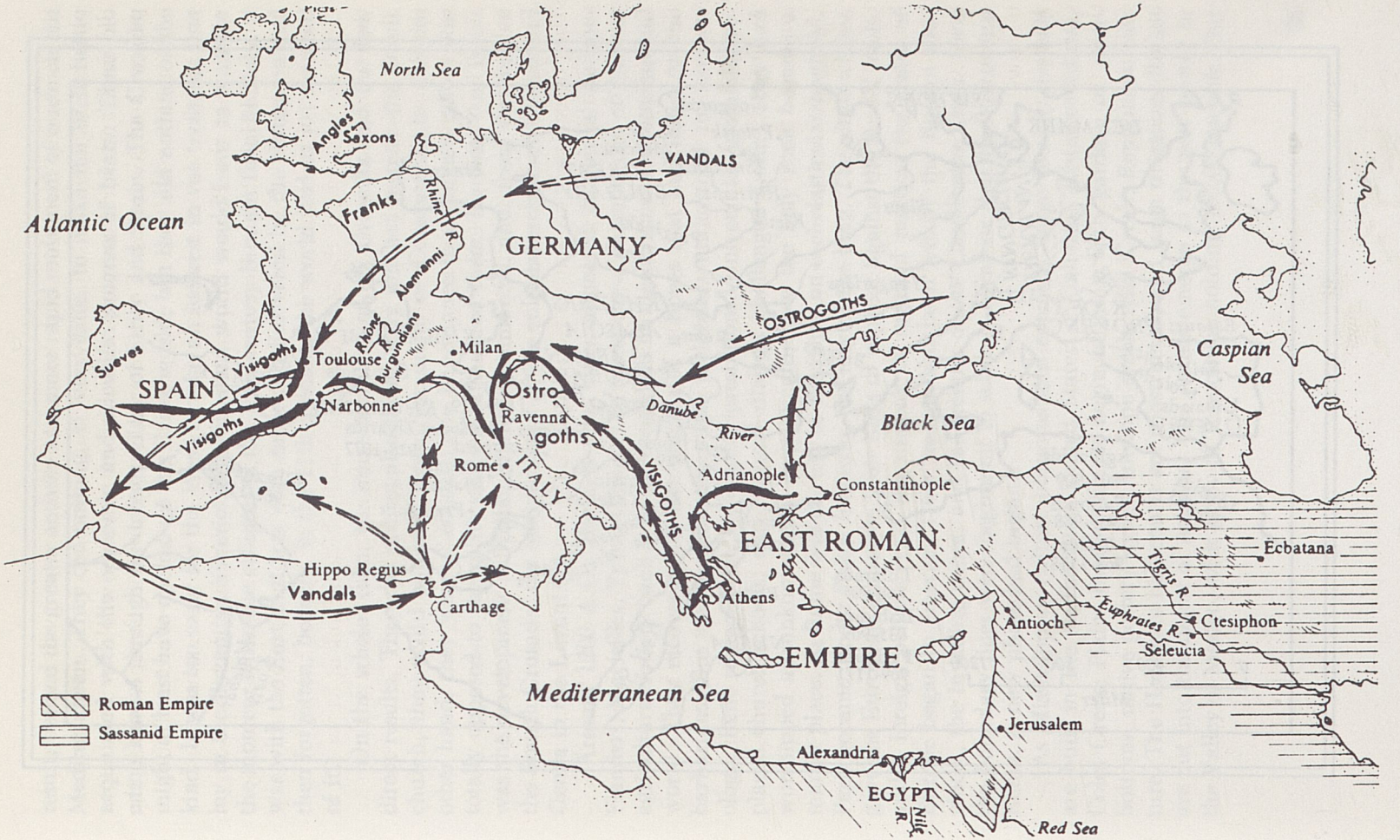
The Norse began the Middle Ages as the backward flank of Europe, but their continued sea-access and simple tribal organization gave them an almost supernatural range. They came as if from everywhere, from beyond the Roman Empre, from before it; they were not subject to its myth. They stood for the remote fringes of Europe.

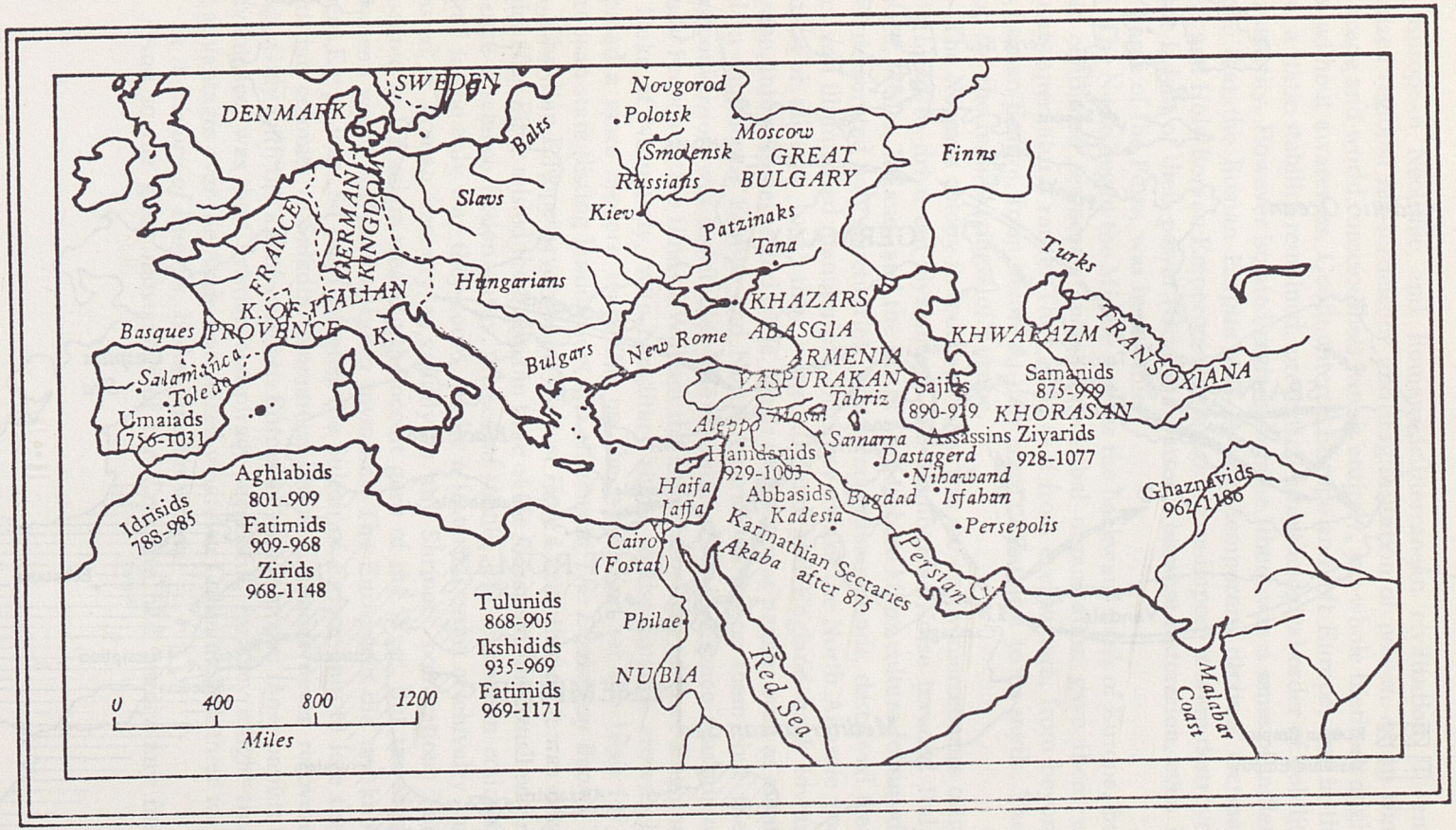
The Norman colony in southern Italy was set up by mercenaries originally hired to drive out Byzantines and Lombards. Norse invaded Italy, France, Wales, Ireland, and the Isle of Man (where Manx culture followed). They desecrated holy sanctuaries, plundered grave-mounds, destroyed treasures and illuminated manuscripts. But they awoke the North Atlantic peasants. For all they took, they turned Ireland and England back toward Europe, into commerce and trade. Their invasion was pagan, even as monks fled to continental Europe and North America to escape them, but their own conversion was inevitable. The Norman state in France was almost totally French at the time of William the Conqueror's invasion of England. As Duke of Normandy, with hereditary rights to the English crown, he imposed a more modern feudalism on the island and set the basis for a European state (listing landowners and citizens in *The Domesday Book*).

Christian Europe never forgot the lost Holy Land, though it was never theirs. The *Bible* misled them. By the time of the Crusades, the Muslims had become a science fiction entity, a race of devils. The European countries united in the only way they could, under a fraternal order of chivalry that boasted of Roman ancestry as gaudily as any Shriners' convention. They appeared in Jerusalem wearing the occult garb of the West. But the Mediterranean world was used to queer invasions. The Europeans did not know where Egypt was. So they defeated the Sultan of Egypt, only to lose their Christian colonies to Saladin. Numerous future Crusades never recovered them. Only with the aid of southern European nation-ports, those papists of convenience, was the Christian conspiracy successful, for they sought trading advantages over the Arabs and seized whatever Caliban came their way.

In *A History of Europe*, Henri Pirenne writes:

"And so the great movement of the Crusades had hardly any final





result, beyond the greater activity and more rapid movement of trade on the Mediterranean. They did nothing, or very little, to make the West better acquainted with the economic and scientific progress of Islam. These became known through the intermediary of Sicily and Spain. The Crusades might at least have opened up the Greek world; but they did nothing of the kind. It was too early for the West to take an interest in the treasures that lay in the Byzantine libraries. The Western world would have to wait for the moment when the refugees of the 15th century brought them to Italy. it was with the East as it was with America, discovered by the Norsemen and then forgotten, because, in the 11th century, the world had as yet no need of it.

On the whole, then, the immense effort of the Crusades had but few direct results. They did not repulse Islam, they did not recover the Greek church, they could not even retain Jerusalem or Constantinople. On the other hand, they were of considerable importance in a domain which was totally opposed to the spirit which had inspired them: for their true result was the development of Italian maritime commerce, and, from the time of the Fourth Crusade, the establishment of the colonial empire of Venice and Genoa in the Levant."

Around 1200 A.D., the first new cities appeared in central Europe: Flanders, Marseilles, Ypres, Ghent. The towns drew peasants out of timeless agricultural society back in to the crossroads of the political and commercial world. They recovered the last morsels of a Rome that had fallen to the barbarians. But neither destroyers nor reclaimers understood the archaeology. Rent replaced the old feudal prestations. Universities gradually replaced church schools, and regional dialects challenged Latin. They had worshipped an unknown god long enough; now the holy zone became a market place. As Rome was the city of the Pope, an ecclesiastical stronghold, Paris became, under Philip Augustus, the city of the king. The city-dwellers gave the European monarchs their basis of support against the feudal lords, and a foreign policy. From the turmoil of regional politics, the states of Europe began to emerge. Their images had been left by the Roman provinces, the invading tribes, and the treaties of the Carolingian kings. Now the boundary lines were beginning to settle in loyalties that had forgotten Rome. A new phase had begun.

As Mississippian culture blossoms and expands, large temple mounds are built in the southeastern United States at Cahokia, Hiwassee Island, Coles Creek; Plains Indian villages begin farming with gardens on river-bottoms, native pottery styles: Antelope creek, Mill Creek, Republican culture. The Hohokam ball-courts are constructed, and large irrigation ditches are cut into the desert of Arizona. The Aztecs emerge as the new power in the Valley of Mexico, with a city of Tenoctitlán holding 300,000 people. But

this is the end. The whole thing is about to explode back to its beginnings, in terms of what that beginning meant. The Aztecs and Natchez and Papago and Caribs are the last native rulers of the New World.

500 years ago

The Incas ascend to power at Cuzco, and extend their Empire through Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, destroying old tribal alliances and establishing a central government. There are Pawnee villages on the Great Plains, Hopi villages in the Southwest, fields of corn spread beneath the mesas, planted ceremonially, two-horned priests; Navahos and Apaches are thousand-year raiders. In the Southeast, there are chiefdoms with large villages, bird-effigy heads drawn on the earth (Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw). The Ming Dynasty rules China; Confucian principles of government are extended to Mongolia.

Portuguese merchants visit India and Japan. Sailors from European nations open the North Atlantic — the English to fishing stations, the Spanish to plunder for their treasury, the French to trade. It is at first exotic mythological islands, sparse discontinuous maps of vast territories; later it is settled in waves from Europe, lasting for centuries, obliterating the basis of native culture. The New World migration, begun in the sixteenth century, involved masses unheard of in planetary history; it is not only the most significant event of the last five hundred years; it is the full completion of the Pleistocene promise, the Roman externalization. And it is accompanied by exponential changes in technology, alteration of the basic cultural environment, population growth, and wars between nations separated by oceans. Olson goes right from the Ice Age to the Amarna, from the Greek to John Cabot, John Smith, and the English colonies. He takes it not as continuum but cycles, discontinuously joined. Centuries make friends on their own, without regard for intervening years. He works backwards, as an archaeologist, giving us, in the earliest *Maximus*, Massachusetts, whose history the light leaves visible; in the later volumes, Hittites, Phoenicians, Egyptians, appear out of the darkness in which he is searching:

"how small the news was/a permanent change had come/by 14 men setting down/on Cape Ann, on the westerly side/of the harbor//the same side Bradford,/the fall before, had asked London/to get for him/so that New Plymouth/could prosecute fishing, no place,//in the minds of men, England/or on the ground, equal,/and fitting the future/as this Cape sitting/between the old//North Atlantic (of Biskay,/and Breton, of Cabot's/nosing into, for Bristol)/and the new — Georges/(as the bank was called as early//as 1530: who gave her their/patron saint — England?/Aragon? or Portyngales?)"

The Roman legacy is perfection of technique, extension of surface world, and by now we have taken it into the stars and the equally limitless fabric of matter. We are as thirsty as the world has ever been for a new path inward. For all the busting of old idols, we cannot get it out of our heads that there was a golden age once, and the voyage of Columbus took us into it as dream, as Adam's dream took us into creation. He did not escape the sacred ocean; he simply penetrated it, and all that follows is as curiously unreal as it is mammoth and extensive. The single Indian creation myth still drifts upward into the skies, a wisp of smoke from an unknown place. Perhaps Columbus forgot (de Santillana and von Dechend remind us) the only voyage he could take was into stars:

"Let us go back to the end of the wonderful adventure of Dante's Odysseus, as he moves out of the straights of Gibraltar:

'And having turned our poop towards the morning./Our oars we turned to wings in crazy flight/Always gaining to the left-hand side.'

That is, he has 'turned his poop to the east,' and his prow directly west; he proceeds 'always gaining to the left-hand side.' In other words, it looks as if he were trying to circumnavigate Africa, not as Columbus but as Vasco da Gama did, going to India. The general direction of his 'crazy flight' is actually south across the equator and then the Tropic of Capricorn, just as he has already done in Homer under Circe's sailing directions: 'follow the wind from the North.' He is still looking for the 'experience, beyond the sun, of the world without people.' But in Dante's world scheme, he is clearly making for the Antipodes, which means, vaguely, the unknown South Seas.

'And, in fact, all the stars of the other pole had come into sight,/and those of ours had sunk so low that they did not rise above the sea;/five times the light of the moon had waxed and waned, when we/described a tall mountain, dim from the distance, so tall that I/had never seen any. We rejoiced, and soon it turned to tears.....'

For it was..... the mount of Purgatory, denied to the living. Hence, Providence decreed a whirl that swallowed the ship and all its hands, and that was the end.

What was Columbus' discovery? Hardly more.

Dante's description was not really an invention; it was derived from texts of his own time, and we find it, bodily transcribed, in Columbus' own extracts and notes, made in the years of waiting in Spain, from his favorite readings..... It is still the land of Eden.

'A long distance by land and sea from our habitable land; it is so high that it touches the lower sphere, and the waters of the Flood never touched it..... The waters which descend from this very high mountain form an immense lake. The fall of such waters makes such a noise that the inhabitants are born deaf. From that lake as the one Gyon which is the Nile,

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CENTERS OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE

Tigres and Euphrates..... A fountain there is in Paradise which waters the garden of delights and which is diffused in the four rivers..... Tyre's corrections of Ptolemy show that the sea can be crossed with favorable winds in a few days, going down *per deorsum Africae*, along the back of Africa.....'"

For Pleistocene man on the other side, it is the end of the journey. And Ed Dorn writes, of the removal of the Apaches to Florida:

".....this is an important terminal moment/in the Rush Hour begun in this hemisphere. .....They were sentenced to observe/the destruction of their World/The revolutionary implications/are interesting//They embody a state/which out still encircled world/looks toward from the past."

Today (.....timeless.....

Tibetan Karmapa Yishin-Norbu visits the Hopi village of Hotevilla. He is dressed in rich brilliant fabrics; they are dressed in early Neolithic rags and faded European handouts. He sits with them in the kiva and chants, bringing rainclouds, planting the seeds of the dharma. It is as though they never left Tibet.

Afterword

This chronicle was constructed from years of notes. It is a myth, one extremely choppy version of a vast operatic theme. But it is as exhaustive as I can be while still meeting a deadline. I have no sense of it as true to specific time. It is, however, a true internalization of human history, a true list of eternal and archetypal events. Its obvious longing for a golden age can be seen on any level of its author's imagination. It can be his childhood, his interest in science fiction, his lost dreams, or the size of himself he does not yet fill. It can be all these things, and remain: a history of the world. Its depth of image is human, and this condemns it to inaccuracy, but makes it possible to live.

It is also one section of a series of essays. Material on the discovery of the New World and the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans appears in my essay on Melville's *Whale* in the North America volume. In the final section, under "Today," I could have included Michael Collins' journey to the Moon, but that is covered in the "Badlands" essay, also in the North America volume. The three essays form an open circle. Where the chronicle leaves off, five hundred years ago, the Melville essay picks up. Where the Melville essay ends at the city, the Badlands essay enters. When the Badlands essay arrives at an external Moon, the chronicle already gives the prior information of Roman expansion. A fourth essay, "The First Earth War" (which appears in

The Unfinished Business of Doctor Hermes), develops a global image which is merely suggested here.

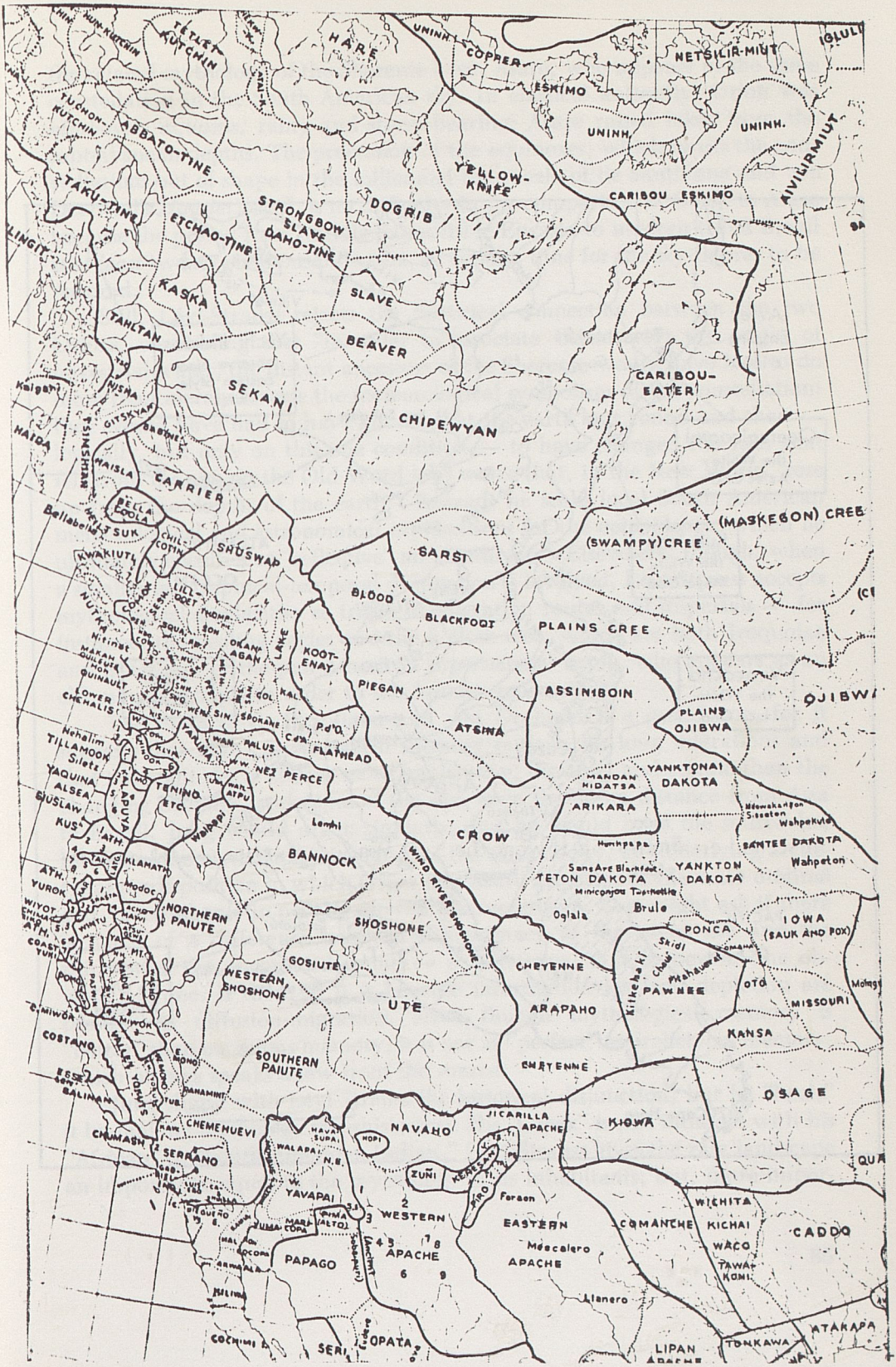
A full list of the sources in this chronicle would be an enormous undertaking, but the following are some of the major ones:

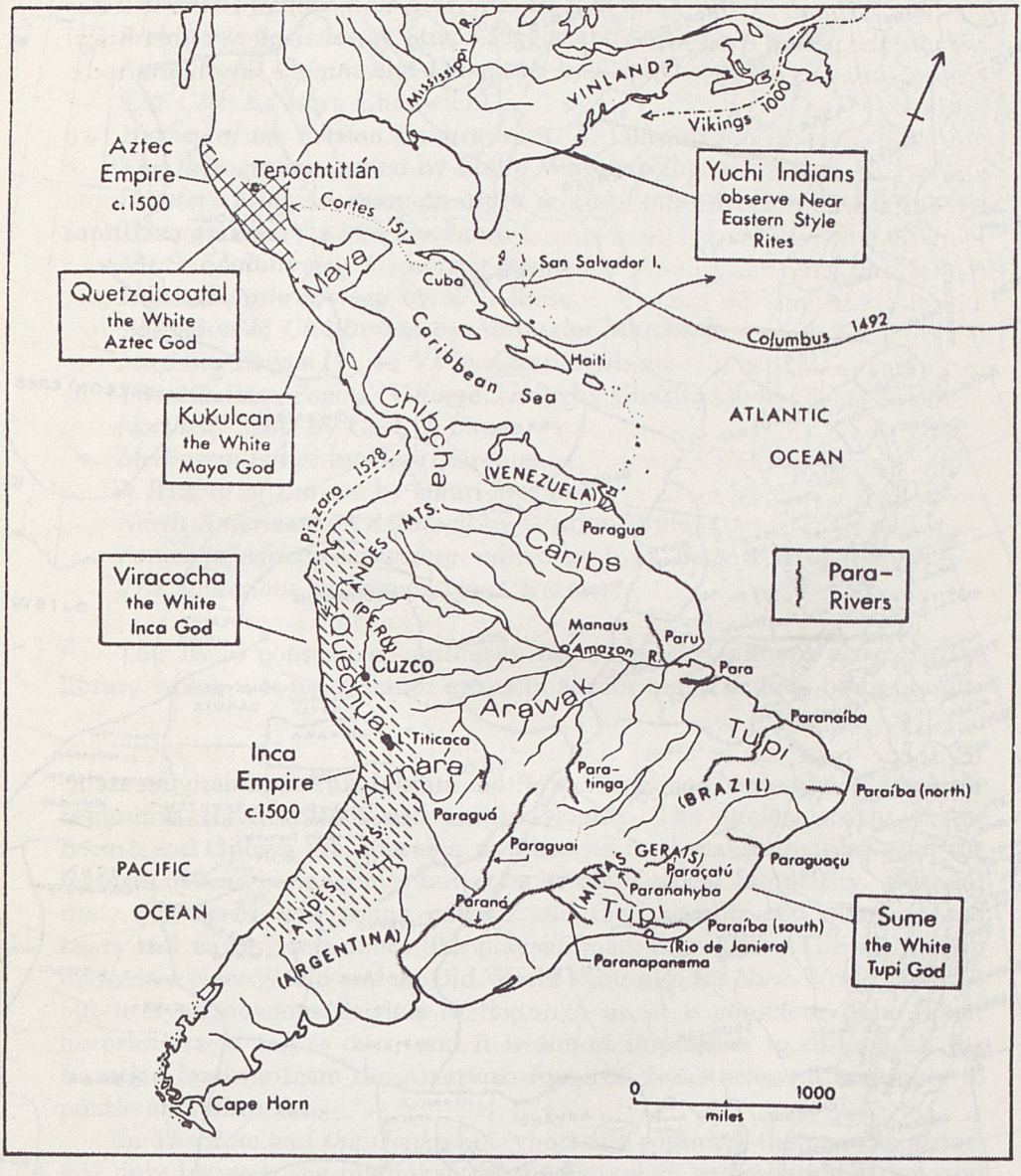
Ancient Europe by Stuart Piggot.
The Ancient Near East by Cyrus H. Gordon.
Prehistoric Societies by Stuart Piggot and J. G. D. Clarke.
Agricultural Origins and Dispersals by Carl O. Sauer.
The Celts by Nora Chadwick.
History of the Persian Empire by A. T. Olmstead.
The Presocratics, edited by Philip Wheelwright.
Hamlet's Mill: An Essay on Myth & The Frame of Time by Giorgio de Santillana and Hertha von Dechend.
Man's Evolution by C. Loring Brace.
Physical Anthropology by A. J. Kelso.
The Roots of Civilization by Alexander Marshack.
Maximus Poems IV, V, VI by Charles Olson.
The Maximus Poems, Volume Three by Charles Olson.
Northern Mists by Carl O. Sauer.
Mediaeval Cities by Henri Pirenne.
A History of Europe by Henri Pirenne.
North American Archaeology by Gordon Willey.
Papers in African Prehistory, edited by J. D. Fage & R. A. Oliver.
The Sumerians by Samuel Noah Kramer.

This list is constructed primarily from memory without access to the library which was used; minor errors in author and title may be the result.

[1]A second creation? This is what the New World has been, almost from the beginning, for historians and anthropologists. The ancient myths of the Bororo and Ojibwa are, literally, novelties to us, because they have all the features of true cosmogonies but none of the classical familiarity. Without that, they seem very young indeed, and their parrots and monkeys and bears and eagles seem more like play animals than gods. The distinction between a New World and an Old World exists also for New World peoples, but it is unconscious detritus to them; to us, it is conscious data. Their histories are as old as ours, and it is almost impossible to distinguish the Eurasian features from the American features. Nonetheless, it continues to puzzle and allure.

In *The Raw and the Cooked*, Lévi-Strauss considers the possible historical links between the mythology of the European constellation Orion and



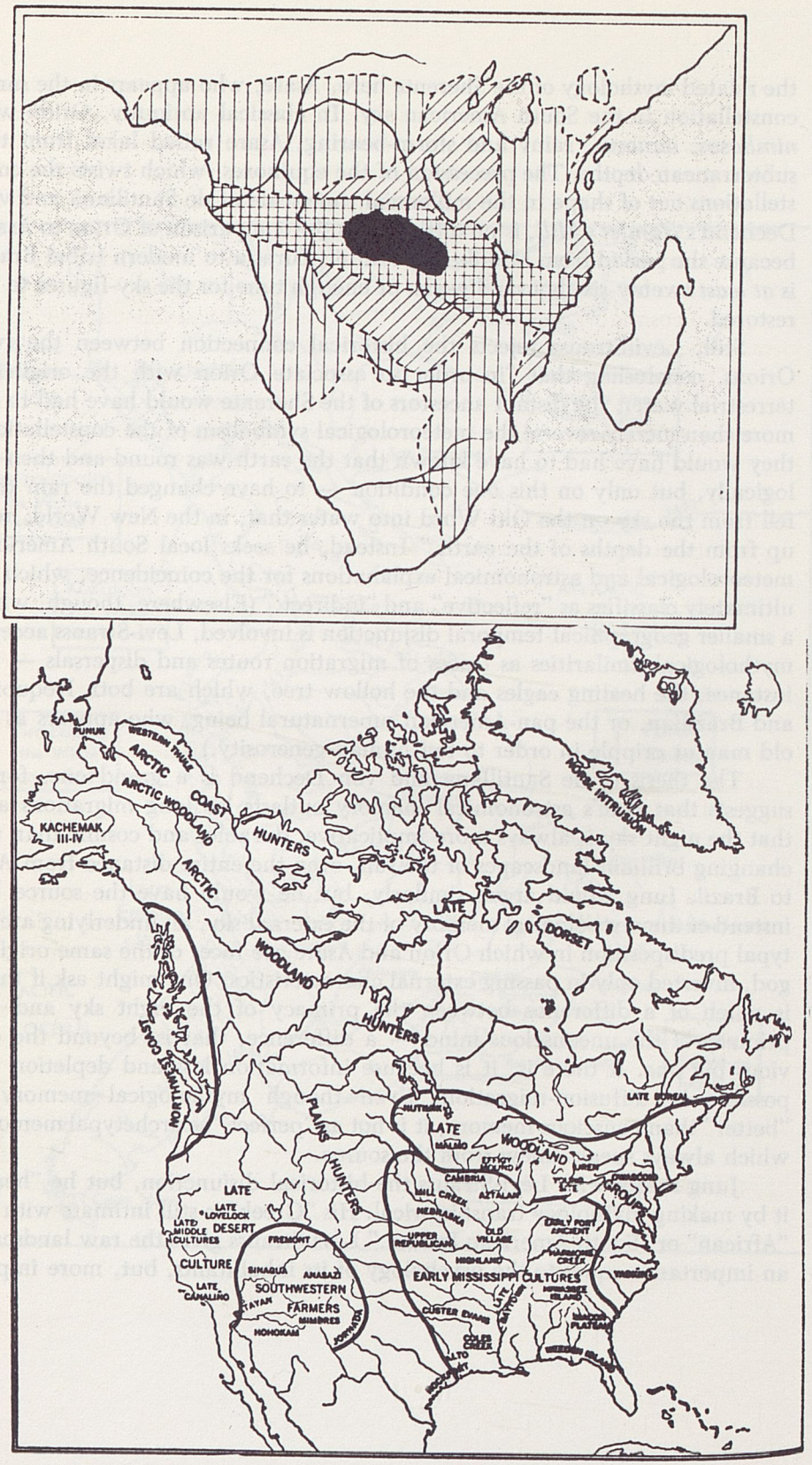


the related mythology of the Sherente hero, Asare, who appears in the same constellation in the South American sky. In classical antiquity, Orion was *nimbosus, aquosus,* rainy and storm-bearing; Asare raised lakes from the subterranean depths. The precession of the equinoxes, which twists the constellations out of shape in the millennial time-scale of de Santillana and von Dechend's *Hamlet's Mill*, is no difficulty in the comparison of Orion to Asare because the period from Middle Palaeolithic Eurasia to modern tribal Brazil is *at least* twenty-six thousand years, or enough time for the sky-figures to be restored.

Still, Lévi-Strauss rejects the historical connection between the two Orions, concluding that "in order to associate Orion with the origin of terrestrial water, the distant ancestors of the Sherente would have had to do more than merely reverse the meteorological symbolism of the constellation: they would have had to have known that the earth was round and then — logically, but only on this one condition — to have changed the rain that fell from the sky on the Old Word into water that, in the New World, rose up from the depths of the earth." Instead, he seeks local South American meteorological and astronomical explanations for the coincidence, which he ultimately classifies as "reflective" and "indirect." (Elsewhere, though, when a smaller geographical-temporal disjunction is involved, Lévi-Strauss accepts mythological similarities as traces of migration routes and dispersals — for instance, the healing eagles and the hollow tree, which are both Iroquoian and Brazilian, or the pan-American supernatural being, who appears as an old man or cripple in order to test human generosity.)

The thesis of de Santillana and von Dechend is a grand one, for it suggests that man's astronomical memory outlasts his long migrations and that the night sky is always more implicative, durable, and cosmic than the changing brilliant landscapes of the sun, even the entire distance from Asia to Brazil. Jung would argue similarly, but he would have the source be, instead of the mythological memory of the external sky, an underlying archetypal predisposition in which Orion and Asare are faces of the same original god, inverted only in passing external characteristics. One might ask if there is much of a difference between the primacy of the night sky and the primacy of the unconscious mind — a difference, that is, beyond the obvious big one. If there is, it is because information loss and depletion are possible in diffusion-migration. Even though mythological memory is "better" than conscious memory, it is not as "perfect" as archetypal memory, which always speaks anew from the source.

Jung shares with Lévi-Strauss the historical disjunction, but he "heals" it by making mythology transhistorical. His "Greek" is still intimate with his "African" or "South American Indian." Lévi-Strauss gives the raw landscape an importance equal to the psychology of its inhabitants, but, more impor-



tantly, he allows no universal content to the psyche, not even universal predispositions. What men share is only the classificatory machinery of their brains; this makes for legitimate but totally unrelated similarities between geographically separate regions. He retains microenvironmental integrity and gives man the possibility of throwing off the tyranny of old and stalemated gods. If the Brazilian Asare shares anything with the Greek Orion, it is a result of the limited number of climatic cycles (dry season - rainy season being the most obvious) and the limited number of prominent constellations whose appearance and cosmic or heliacal rising corresponds to seasonal change. Lévi-Strauss then offers his only "acceptable" explanation:

"The Sherente myth about Orion, in which the stars fulfill a function whose relation to water is symmetrical with that assigned to them in the northern hemisphere, must be reducible to a transformation of another myth belonging to the southern hemisphere, in which the role assumed by the hero is exactly identical with that played by Orion in the other hemisphere." I.e., the mythological similarity to the Greek Orion masks a real mythological connection to another constellation. If the masked pairing works chiastically, both ways, then we have separate similar inventions of astronomical forecasting systems (just like separate technologies that both make wheels, or pots, or gardens). He concludes that this constellation is Corvus, a thirsty crow who spurned drinking from a fountain in order to await the ripening ears of corn (in Greek mythology), corn which never ripened because of the drought; in Bororo mythology, the bringer of windstorms and rain; among the Caribs, part of a larger constellation called the "pakamu fish barbecue," in the center of which, using parts of Corvus and the Big Dipper, is a native demon who strikes down trees with lightning and stirs great flooding storms.

Lévi-Strauss draws out these parallels subtly and painstakingly, but he sticks to a causality of regional imagery. The daylight environment is more important than stellar night because economic and social survival is decided there. It is powerful and dense enough to wash out all the remnants of archaic myth (probably back in Asia or North America, along the way), long before the new myth is born. Thus, the theogonies of South America are truly a second creation. Some of the meteorological-mythological parallels are then demonstrated as follows:

"In one case the fruits ripen at the end of the rainy season (during which they become swollen and full of water); in the other case they ripen at the end of the dry season, through prolonged exposure to the sun. This helps to explain how in ancient Greece the crow, as a constellation associated with the dry season, could also be a harbinger of rain. The bird calls for the absent celestial water because it is thirsty; and it is thirsty because it has disdained the available earthly water and shown itself too greedy for the

fruits of the rainy season (the water inside the nuts), and that, in order to slake his acute thirst, earthly water had to become not only present but superabundant, so as to allow the hero to satisfy his thirst and refresh his whole body, before the dry season settled in. Because of the dry season, on the other hand, the voice of the crow was to become raucous, and its voice parched. In one of the variants of the Greek myth the crow accuses a snake, who is master of the fountain, of preventing it from reaching the water. This is precisely what an alligator, also master of water, tries to do in the Brazilian myth."

The disjunction between the Mediterranean snake and the central Brazilian alligator is final and irreconcilable in Lévi-Strauss, but melts, automatically and unconsciously, in one or another of the Jungian archetypes. If the link between snake and alligator is real in some primordial psychic sense, it can, as easily, be a Middle Palaeolithic sky we do not abandon, even in migration, with Orion and Asare bound etymologically in a global constellation of either name. (See also my section on *Hamlet's Mill* in the essay "The Background Noise," in *The Unfinished Business of Doctor Hermes*.)

The Norse Whirlpool and the Carib Fish-Barbecue are taken from two poles of our imagination of humanity and wholeness. In one, we are whole originally; in the other we are whole because of our human responses to related ecological conditions. They join only in my intuition of an unapproachable complexity which is both microenvironmental and macroarchetypal. "It is almost as if the Cherokee have retained the better memory....." de Santillana and von Dechend can write — meaning, from our "arbitrary" line of sight, better than the Norse, for they remember specifically, at the bottom of the maelstrom, a great company of the dead. But memory as what? — we must conclude: genetic, mythological, archetypal? Or, asks Lévi-Strauss (in essence), are we so lonely we demand the Cherokee and Norse whirlpools be the same? Why cannot two of them come into being for specifically individual reasons? It is exactly because Lévi-Strauss' argument is opposite this whole piece that I close with him. The chronicle itself comes out of a loneliness which also reminds us: what we don't share by tradition we can be in the presence of, and regard with a new awe.

Page 6: Lower Pleistocene Sites of Australopithecus ("The Prehistoric Origins of African Culture" by J. Desmond Clark, in *Papers in African Prehistory*, edited by J.D. Fage & R.A. Oliver).

Page 11: Upper Pleistocene Cultures in Africa (J. Desmond Clark, *ibid.*).

Page 14: Oldest Palaeo-Indian Sites in North and Central America (from *Goode's Series of Base Maps*, University of Chicago Press).

Page 20: The Tlingit and Other Contingent "Pleistocene" Cultures (*The Wolf and the Raven: Totem Poles of Southeastern Alaska* by Viola E. Garfield and Linn A. Forest).

Page 22: African Migrations at the End of the Pleistocene (J. Desmond Clark, *ibid.*).

Page 24: Early Agricultural Communities of Eastern Europe, c. 5,000 B.C. (*Ancient Europe* by Stuart Piggot).

Page 28: Mesopotamia (*The Sumerians* by Samuel Noah Kramer).

Page 30 (upper): Early Chinese Agriculture Lungshanoid Sites (*The Archaeology of Ancient China* by Kwang-Chih Chang).

Page 30 (lower): Mesopotamia in the Third Millennium B.C. (*The Ancient World*) by Thomas W. Africa).

Page 32: Trans-Mediterranean Culture (*Before Columbus* by Cyrus H. Gordon).

Page 35: Ancient Egypt (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 37 (upper): Trade Routes in Amber (1) and Sites of Complex-Bored Space-Plates (2) in the Second Millennium B.C. of Europe (Stuart Piggot, *ibid.*)

Page 37 (lower): The Eastern Mediterranean (*A Forgotten Kingdom* by C. Leonard Woolley).

Page 38: Crete and Early Greece with Inset Dialect Map (*The Ancient World* by Vincent M. Scramuzza and Paul L. MacKendrick).

Page 41: Routes Between North America, South America, Eurasia, and Africa (Cyrus H. Gordon, *ibid.*).

Page 43: The Site of Tyre, with Ancient Harbors, and Alexander's Siege-Mole, Linking the Island with the Mainland. Sand deposited along this mole made Tyre a peninsula. (*The Phoenicians* by Donald Harden).

Page 44: Egypt from the Mediterranean to Africa (Scramuzza and MacKendrick, *ibid.*).

Page 46: Ancient Palestine, Including Israel (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 47: The Late Ancient Near East (Scramuzza and MacKendrick, *ibid.*).

Page 49: The Eastern Mediterranean as Site of Global Trade (Cyrus H. Gordon, *ibid.*).

Page 50: Classical Mesoamerica (Cyrus H. Gordon, *ibid.*).

Page 53: The Site of Phoenician Gades, Showing Changes in Coast Line Since Ancient Times (Donald Harden, *ibid.*).

Page 54 (upper): The Punic Settlement on Mogador, or Morocco (Donald Harden, *ibid.*).

Page 54 (lower): Hittite Empire of the 14th Century B.C. and Assyria in the 7th Century B.C. (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 57: Neo-Babylonian and Persian Empires (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 59: Alexander's Route and Empire (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 60: Greek and Phoenician Colonization (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 62: Rome and the Mediterranean (Scramuzza and MacKendrick, *ibid.*).

Page 65: The Roman Provinces (Scramuzza and MacKendrick, *ibid.*).

Page 67: Commercial and Economic Map of the Roman Empire in the 2nd Century A.D. (*Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* by M.P. Charlesworth).

Page 68: The German Migrations (*Medieval History* by Norman F. Cantor).

Page 70: Ancient China and the Surrounding Countries (*Chinese Civilization* by Marcel Granet).

Page 73: The Roman Empire in the Late 5th Century A.D. (Thomas W. Africa, *ibid.*).

Page 74: The Byzantine Empire around 920 A.D. and the Concurrent Dynasties of Islam (*History of the Byzantine Empire* by Enno Franzius).

Page 77: Europe in 526 A.D. (Norman F. Cantor, *ibid.*).

Page 79: Medieval Europe (Norman F. Cantor, *ibid.*).

Page 81: Feudal China (Marcel Granet, *ibid.*).

Page 83: Some Western North American Tribes (*Cultural and Natural Areas of North America* by A.L. Kroeber).

Page 84: Pre-Columbian South America (Cyrus H. Gordon, *ibid.*).

Page 86 (upper): Areas of Successive Bantu Expansion in Africa of the First Millennium A.D. ("The Problem of The Bantu Expansion" by Roland Oliver, in Fage and Oliver, *ibid.*).

Page 86 (lower): North American Culture Groups of the First Millennium A.D. ("The Northeast Woodlands Area" by James B. Griffin, in *Prehistoric Man in the New World*, editors: J. Jennings, E. Norbeck).

These maps are presented as aids to the text. They are borrowed, with grateful acknowledgement, from various unrelated sources. In many cases, the reproduction is partial or imperfect. Their use is more to guide the reader through the chronicle than to specifically illustrate its points.

Bob Callahan

Mediterranean Sketches

He docked on the shore of the ancient Vermilion Sea. The land all about him was nothing more than the spine of a single mountain chain — nothing so common as rocks, endless rocks, and thorn bushes — nothing so rare as moisture, the old forests of the Mediterranean, and an afternoon of cool wooded shade.

The heat of the day was simply unbearable. Walking out onto that floor was similar to approaching the open doors of a flaming furnace, and yet the Natives never seemed to complain. Why he often found them laying about a blazing fire at mid-noon! It is no wonder then that for the first week or two he was convinced that he had entered Hell.

There were no seasons, as such, in this new country — only a short period of rain (from late June to November), and then from November to the following June the showers were extremely rare. And yet there was the fog. The extraordinary fog. Not only in the Autumn and Winter months, but in the Summer months as well. It would rise from the Ocean in the morning, but then dissipate against the Land by mid-day. The Natives feared this fog, feared that it carried with it some foreign and noxious agent, but after it was gone there would be celebration as a new deposit, now known as honey dew, was found among the leaves.

Water was the most serious problem. To find the rare clear mountain stream. Throughout the greater part of this new country there was so very little soil that it barely covered the rocks. And yet in those few exceptional areas where water and soil converged — everything suddenly wore a very different appearance. There one could plant & sow what he will & the land yielded back a *hundred fold*. Wheat, maize, rice, squashes, melons, cotton, citrus, plantains, pomegranites, the most luscious grapes, olives, figs, fruits — in fact almost all the fruits and flowers of both temperate and torrid zones would grow side by side with astonishing exuberance. Many of these places yielded a second or even a third growth in the very same year.

For all of it the Land had to be described as a desert waste — a ground of miserable thicket and thorn, of naked rocks, stone and sand heaps with-

out water or wood. It seemed to him as if it had been thrown up from the bottom of the sea by subterranean forces after all the other parts of creation had been finished, and apparently after the creator's energy had been well-night spent. And yet — this was the strange part — he found it peaceful here. The heat, finally, could be gotten used to. He said he would have gladly carried this climate with him when it came time to leave.

2

"I am sitting inside the walls
of the Mission of Santa Barbara
It is pleasant here the memory of the blonde
lady from the night before I ignore, teasing,
Christ is such anomaly in southern California
The sun has turned the mountains blue
the souls of Covarrubias, Orena, de la Guerra de Ord
have long since departed this yard —
the vegetation grows quite randomly —
Yes I could be a Catholic again
in the Missions of Southern California."

.... It is altogether elegant, he thought, the strength of these hardwood benches, the black wrought iron candleabras, the fantastic muted colours that have faded into the adobe chapel walls, this extraordinary courtyard, the skulls... the Skulls? "Over four thousand mission Indians," the pamphlet read, "are buried in this yard." He arose rather quickly, walked out the wooden gate, climbed into his rent-a-car, and drove back to town.

3

...An Iberian economic system, as at home the Catholic aristocracy came to rule over a Moorish peasant class.... and a Roman wisdom system (Catholicism) brought half way around the world on the great southern trade route to be replanted in the Mission settlements of Baja & Alta California.

...Alta. Settled by Franciscans. Maize introduced, i.e. the Maize tortilla. The emphasis on Sheep... The Mule as principal beast of burden.... Sparing introduction of fruit.

...Baja... Jesuits... The introduction of Wheat, i.e. the Wheat tortilla. The emphasis on Cattle.... The Horse as principal beast of

burden... Plentiful use of fruit.

... "To make this vast country *useful to the* state, by erecting pueblos of *gente de razon* who, being united, may encourage agriculture, planting, and the breeding of cattle & successfully maintain the other branches of government... in particular *to provide the presidio garrisons with provisions.*" — *De Neve.*

... The Mission, the Presidio and the Pueblo became the tri-signature of colonial settlement in New Spain.

... Twelve families were recruited from Sonora and Guadalajara, and then taken across the southern desert to *Los Angeles*. Only two of these families were Spaniards, and the rest were Blacks, Indians and Mulattos. Not one of them could sign their name. When the land grants were confirmed in 1786, five of the twelve settling families were rejected on the ground of indolence.

... On the *San Antonio and San Carlos rivers*... planted seeds... new crops... constructed a tower to install the legendary Mission bell, built by the Moors, which had been loaded on the boat at Vera Cruz, and shipped north to California.

... At *Santa Barbara* they found ten thousand 'wicked souls' who lived comfortably in wicker huts, planted grain, built wooden boats, made a form of huge pottery, and gave evidence 'of a higher state of civilization than any yet encountered.'

... At *Monterey* (1785) large areas given over to the planting of corn, wheat, barley and beans. The yield, up to 15,800 bushels a year. The corn was parched in bark baskets, over open fires, and ground between metates, after the 'primitive' Indian fashion.

... At *San Jose* each settler was assigned a house lot about a central plaza... given irrigable land sufficient for the planting of one fenega of corn, live stock, and a stipend of ten dollars a month for rations.

... In time the Missions grew quite rich — 400,000 head of cattle, 62,000 horses, 321,000 sheep. The annual grain crop was 244,000 bushels. The Missons were supplemented by an extra $500,000 to $600,000 for the sale of herds by the year 1833. In spite of all this they were never as solvent as the more successful monastic establishments of medieval Europe.

... Yet succeded in transforming the native landscape... broke the back of the Coastal Indians... 'thwarted self-development and

rendered him incapable of self-direction... 'A life that differed little from that of the lot of slaves on a West Indian sugar plantation'... 'California is a great expense to the Spanish government, which derives no other advantage from it than that every year a couple of hundred heathens are converted to Christianity, who however die very soon in their new faith, as they cannot accustom themselves to the different mode of life'.... Hence, in future years, settlers report little resistance, with a few notable exceptions, etc.

4

"So the old broken elephant goes home
to the tar pits of southern California
We learn to distrust it even initially
the color of it pastels oranges on an orange tree

"Nixon has resigned," says the voice on the television. "At last the King is dead." Impossible, he thinks, that guy has been dead for years.

"What did you say?"

Linda had entered the room before he had a chance to close his notebook.

Hours earlier he had been standing on the patio overlooking the airport waiting for her to get off work. She was playing tonight the role of a waitress at the local cocktail bar. He had been talking to Jim when a crowd began to gather out near the runway. It was some sort of Christian fellowship group, and a few of them had spilled over into the lounge to get a better view of the arrival.

Sometime past midnight a small DC-8 pulled up to the ramp, and a young be-speckled Vietnamese minister climbed off the plane while the band tooted, and the crowd swung into 'How Mighty Is Our God'.

"I don't care what their rationale is," he said to Jim, "I can't help getting happy when I see people hugging each other."

"They're not hugging," Jim replied. "They're simply holding each other up." JE SUS, as only Jim can say, *Je Sus* Christ, he thought.

Down the highway after twelve into the warm Santa Barbara night. They had gone to still another bar hidden in one of the alleys in the center of town. They sat there talking shop talk, and that was enough, as the three of them had been together now, on and off, for the last couple of days.

The bar was all but empty, and he found himself drawn into the loud conversation of the three businessmen sitting by the fireplace at the edge of the room. They appeard to be Spanish, and very wealthy. One of them was

a dead ringer for Cesar Romero. Maybe it is Cesar Romero, he thought. Three very handsome men, and it was easy to watch the fire light flicker across their faces, and fall into the drone of their conversation.

"Look this is America," one of the men was saying," and if *I want* to give my money to the poor I will. But no government has the right to tax me for these purposes. It's my *right* to give, if I want to."

"The poor can have my money," his friend replies. "It's only right. I don't mind the taxes..."

"Aren't you the fool!", the man in the wine red sports coat with the white hair who looks like Cesar Romero says, "Isn't he the fool..."

"I'm no fool," the man with the mustache replies, inhibited, and after that the drone takes over again.

5

A condition of flatness is about the Place — established there now, and seemingly beyond relief. We have come beyond the very last mountain range, and the ghost of Jed Smith is as much a curiosity to us — though nothing more — as the large Cats they dredge out daily from the La Brea tar pits. It's all gone now. They've made a movie out of it, and shipped it back to the darkened theater houses of America, just as we would make a movie of their movie. It doesn't help. You could call this place, equally, the Plains — except of course it isn't the Plains. And yet a Plain's intelligence is about this Place — the Midwest, say of a Johnny Carson? Yes that was the key. The people of the Middle Border have fled the farms, perhaps for good reason, and migrated to Los Angeles.

6

The Old Man had sent him South. During the last years of his life the Old Man had become pre-occupied — one could almost say obsessed — with the Origins of Man on this continent, and the very early use of Fire. He had listened to discussions almost abstractedly at first, spell-bound by the rigorous nature of the Old Man's intelligence. He had not known what the word genius meant, or where on earth it could be applied, until he met this Geographer.

Slowly he had become familiar with the details under question, and gradually had been drawn into the conversation. It could have been almost anybody he realized, but after awhile he knew the Old Man looked forward to his visits because in his company it was always easy to take up the

favoured subject all over again. He was interested — make no mistake about that — the Old Man's enthusiasms were infectious, and he was aware of the full measure and the confidence implied in this opportunity.

The work had begun in the twenties with David Banks Rogers' discovery of a series of subterranean constructions outside of Santa Barbara. The Old Man had visited these sites with Rogers, and agreed that they suggested great age. Thereafter, from time to time, he had been eager to send his very best students into the area south to Baja, and west out across the desert into Arizona and Nevada. In 1937 Elizabeth Campell had announced the second great breakthrough with news of an equally ancient culture at the shores of the old Pleistocene Lake Mohave. Before long a string of sites had been unearthed, and most of them at the shores of these ancient, now dry and deserted lakes — Lake Mohave (Campell), Lake Winnemuca (Phil Orr), Lake Chapala (Brig Arnold), and most recently Lake Mannix (Ruth Simpson) where Louis Leakey had become involved. Clearly human tools were in use and the sites seemed to pre-date the very formation of the Lakes during the last flooding of the Pleistocene. It was then a great Plain, the African felt, a home for various kinds of plants and animals, 'a land of verdant green' when Man first arrived on the scene.

He drove about in the hills that second day, trying somehow to get a feel for the place, trying to let all the implications set in. Somewhere out there in that great desert, which stretches from beyond these hills all the way back to Kansas, they will soon find the body of our Adam, he thought, and then at last we can put a top on this thing.

7

"California is a lovely song, most maligned as you move back East." He was sitting at his home in Berkeley writing to dear friends who had moved off to England. "There is a cold nip to the air in the morning, and the breezes are quite chilling. But the days warm on you, and by mid-afternoon the sun is bright, the sky is oh so clear..."

The City was in the throes of another municipal strike, while in Berkeley the teachers had refused to go back to work. It was all rather terrifying, and yet foolish in a way; for unlike the advertisement on TV no one was willing to admit we've already ate the whole thing.

Evening. A grape color to the lowlands, Irby's apricot sunset through the trees. The hills all in gold, the first night stars up in the sky. The God of

an old, and favoured, and all but forgotten season re-appears. It is Fall. "I'd never live in a City again," says Eileen. "Well if I did it would only be for a year. No more than a year."

(April 17, 1976)

Beginning with a Line from Pythagoras

Earthquakes proceed
from no other cause, but
the meeting of the dead

whose thin lips pucker as moon-
burnt bodies meet
at hill's curvd side.
With bat-wing twittering they bring
stillness to
the night-hot air; in the windlessness
the rocks push, pull,
stress
in the tension of the gathering
of the dead.

For this, city gates
have no guard.
Stones & trees
where the lares meet
are hidden, give
away no light, & only
as the lines of the breaking sod
reach the towers of entrance
is it known what
has come to pass . .
for none is there exit;
the walls must fall;
the lares must take
their glory among
the crushd, be-rubbld bodies.
They must swell their numbers,
separate & meet again
on the coast of
the only Black Sea.

Cimmerian? Sumerian?
the shades of Aur,
of Ore & Ur,

held together in moments
of sunset, the mornings clear
for disaster? Their talk is grey
& tastes of dust;
their lips are sealed
in thin wisdoms. Winged
& at night they rise from
the moon & come to the earth
seeking new comrades
in the wispy light.
'neath earth they have halls
magnificent & lit by torment &
jewels & rivers. Their eyes droop
& have no sense
save smell & that only
for the odor of flesh.
Their talk is the dry-leafd wind
that steals in among
the sheep, that whistles
in satire & mockery
over the crests of hills.
Men
don't see them,
don't like remembering the taste
of ice that's in
the cole glow life
between bodies;
men
wd rather not
talk much of the
meetings of the
dead. It is enough
to know the songs.

Tashkent, Samarkand...

The roads leading out of Europe
Lead here.
The roads leaving Peking
Leave here.
The well-bladed passes beyond the forest
Pass here.
My city is built on the track of camels.
They sleep with their back to the wind.
Sand clings in their nostrils;
Picked up in Arabia,
It is covered by dust in the Gobi.
Coins fill their bags, tarnished
& gold & silver, they reek of perfume,
Are covered in cloth,
Carry tea.
They come to my city — their men shout
Of distant arrivals & things to trade.
They leave the desert in my city.
They place amber at my feet.
The roads cross here.
Long & flat, winding in hills,
They are the river grinding the rocks of my fields.
I am their mountain, with groves & springs.
Men sing in my night —
Where they have come from
Where they are going —
Their souls flutter in my ear.
They rise in my morning, go out,
Return when the sun has set upon me.

August 27, 1972

Letter to My Brother, on His 19th Birthday
(Dead these two years

So simply now we disappear,
All men forgotten, so soon.
Our constant fire, like the
Leaves, so beautiful, one season.
Who and what we are
Disappears, in time.
We are. We each one
Both foam and sea of waves.

The wind around my new house,
Dirk, whistles & hums, making
Many sounds at once.
An organ having bass & treble,
Stops & crescendoes.
A stream, in winter, flows
Under our side porch.
From the window we watch
This tiny stream run out to fill the bay.

The house is strewn with toys.
Neither Diane nor I have had
The heart to close up Christmas.
We have been celebrating
Since the solstice night.
The night you died
Two years ago.
You were my only brother,
& it was you who held me
To my family.
I have had no way
To come home
Until this year.

O Brother, now, little Brother,
You held my son
That year before you died,
You were my king
And my prince.

God grant you good fortune
God grant you good life

I still have the stone
I held for you
When I knew
You had died.

January 10, 1974

Lenore Kandel

Dead Billy

you're a long way gone from here, Billy
body becoming earth and the rest of you farther than star light
messages across the green glaciers of interstellar drift
death alters the reference points
when I think of you I look beyond Orion
maybe I see a tarot deck spinning through a magician's hands
or your smile rising in the Bat nebula
somewhere beyond the bend of space
the tenderest memory I have of you is you completely nodded out
clasping your baby in the total security of unfeigned love
you were a green flame of unacceptable truth
and you ring like a zen bell
spiraling through infinity like you always knew the way home

dry man

there is something perfect in your agony
the lucid tension with which you dissect your hesitant certainties
the drunken disasters that propel you screaming through the night
lean naked body howling against the walls of what purports to be home
outpost of order in the decimation of love
perfect, the tremor of your hand avoiding destruction by one more
cataclysmic leap into chaos
the thin order of clarity sorting your mind without mercy
and your conscience without ease
leaving not even the privacy of your balls
to rest mindless
but each cell and sinew of your flesh laid out by starlight
to live or die by its own intrinsic weight
one gram of flesh, one glimpse of love
the prometheus flame
cupped in the chalice of your burning spine

prayer on the wind

when the wind blows hard enough
there is nothing left but stars
everything else, all the accoutrements of safety
all the placebos of habit
are blown away
even the stars tremble slightly
to a fine-edged eye

you have no pity, lord
only compassion

the road is long and long enough
hard and hard enough
over the bones of love and the ashes of dreams

you have no pity, lord
only compassion

pity offers no end to pain
the passing comfort
of a tear in the desert
compassion burns like a knife
dissecting the root of agony in clear daylight

there must be an end to suffering
let me cause no more pain
let me spread no more pain
let the pain that comes to me
end with me

let me have no pity, lord
only compassion

seven of velvet

brocade and tapestry, you lean back, your head against the blue velvet
and the sun dancing sparks of light across your naked skin
you lie there, your balls nibbled by teen-age succubi
and your hands on their snaky heads
their moonglow fingers twining around your rigid cock
and their little tongues darting and licking
as you stroke their smoky hair

across the room, I lie between the paws of a tiger
almost faint from the scent of his violent fur
he holds me to his belly and his paws bind me
his huge head purring like thunder at my shoulder
his white belly is velvet against me
and I am velvet to him

slowly, subtly, his paws tighten around me
and he enters within my body
I look at you from the embrace of the tiger
and our eyes meet in wonder
little tongues, little hands, move faster
and you cry out as you come
spurting a fountain of flowers
into the tiger's mouth

29 Apr 1974 — en route to Kos with John O'Connell, over Yugoslavia, somewhere S of Zagreb — reading Whitney Balliett on Jimmy Rowles in the *New Yorker*, Singer's story in same issue, also some of Scholem's *Sabbatai Sevi* — upper atmosphere brilliant, all cloud below — two magicians, one to the left, indistinct though the impression benign, watchful, silent, attentive — the other, on the right, demonic and snarling, thin pointed face, curled-up-at-tips slippers, moved in at me, I made a cross of my arms — *English* magicians I knew, but not Crowley-ish at all

3 May — Atlantis Hotel, Kos — back from Bodrum, (Halikarnassus of the Greeks), after dinner, coffee and brandy, writing in bed — so to Asia at last, Herodotus' birthplace and the breath still of Alexander banked against the wastes — still the rest in the morning waiting for the boat to leave from Kos — Danes, Swedes, Germans, two slender young blond couples speaking a language we never recognized (Flemish? not so gutteral — Finnish? no [from being in Finland later in the summer, can say no — Finnish reminding more of Japanese or Navaho]) — flying fish on way over, John saw I missed — "several yards in the air" — market day in Bodrum (Friday), another continent — prickly pear tunas in piles, women still in pantaloons, smithies and metal artisanry (a presence not felt in Kos) — walked to the site of the Mausoleion, the foundations having been excavated by a Danish group (as the Australian-Turkish lady had told us the day before) — the greatest destructive force unleashed on the structure having been *not* earthquakes (which only brought down the horses-chariot-royal couple statuary crowning the roof), but the Crusader Knights of St John of Jerusalem, to build their castle, still dominating the harbor — as were departing for Kos, the anchor line of our ship was in some mysterious, flawlessly incompetant manner fouled with the mooring lines of some smaller, Turkish, craft, releasing a paroxysm of "incontinent rage" (O'Connell) on the part of our captain, the perfect image of the captain in *Beat the Devil* — several Turkish youths attempting to free the mess took as much time as possible (and since the fouling was hopeless to untangle, there *was* plenty of time) to ogle and try to make time with the blond Nordic girl-passengers — in final desperation the chain was cut, the anchor left, and we went on our way — "life imitating art" — Kos, the city, 6-7,000, the island c. 18,000 — arrived at precise moment of change of season, rain still on the roads the day we got here, but no more rain now, the grasses, as in California, beginning already to turn gold — wildflowers thick in the fields, especially along road-sides, in disturbed earth, let-go-fallow fields — red *red* poppies, daisies, malvas —

carpet as thick as spring Death Valley — stone curlew, blue roller, African bee-eater, owl of Athena, great spotted cuckoo, Egyptian vulture — goldfinch in cage at the Asklepion, again in side street off harbor center in Bodrum — Kos the birthplace of Hippocrates, "his" fig tree in the old part of town, near the castle — the Asklepion above the town, three great levels, terraces, looking out N and E — one of the two major Greek healing centers, the other at Epidaurus — each visit drank from the spring, crushed and tossed the grass seeds, made obeisance to the directions — hold, within — fresh fish (red mullet) grilled, at the Lemnos Cafe — octopus stew, tasting like Texas chili — in all the restaurants along the harbor, you ask what there is, the waiter takes you by the arm and drags you into the kitchen, shows you the fish, the stew, the roast, everything — will come rushing into the street to implore your visit, if your eyes meet, as you promenade — *Black Caesar* with Fred Williamson on at one movie, followed by kungfu *The Dragon Meets The Tiger* at the other the nextnight — almost entirely adolescent male audience, only 2 couples at most either night — water with the coffee, *always* a glass of *cold* water served with the cup of Greek coffee, that's *civilization* — *prunelle* at the outrageously priced hotel bar here, but the best of Metaxas *ever* had — great influx of English tourists today, while we were in Asia — each night, to the harbor esplanade, to sit and drink coffee and brandy and watch the passersby, the ships — what everyone does, what everyone has always done — plate bought in Bodrum with the 50-odd lirasi left (could change drachmas into Turkish currency *ad. lib.*, but the Turks wd *not* then change the lirasi back into drachmas) — Ephesus wine at lunch (red, but served cold, as all red wine is hereabouts) — vista out the hotel room balcony, of the headland lion of Asia crouched, and the scattered islets between the point and Kalymnos, nets of the North, open palm of the sea and arid cliffs — Cretzschmar's bunting, Eleonora's falcon, Audouin's gull

4 May — Derby Day! here on Kos perfect clarity and light breeze of beginning Mediterranean Summer — stopped beside the road (*the* road) to investigate the buntings, by turn-off to Knights' ruined castle near Antimachia, dated over doorway, entwined with cardinal's hat-insignia, 1494 — another shield-block nearby dated 1502 — built on one of several roughly parallel high eroded long-fingered mesas, looking out to sea, 1½-2 km off, near village of Kardamena (all visited 2 days back — meeting there, the only other visitors besides the shepherds, a couple from Izmir, originally-Australian lady ("I always say I'm from Melbourne, when people ask where I'm *from*") in her late 50s, now Turkish citizen, married to Christian (as he twice emphasized) Turk, had met in Istanbul where both were teaching, during WWII? — both very intelligent, very open and pleasant people) —

the field of poppies just before reaching the castle, staggering Monet beyond dreams, the Impressionist paradise in view, Oz —

later, c. noon — at Tigaki, seaside village with big beach, much favored by Danes — since first coming here Tuesday, at least 1000% more custom being given by tourists — The Season has begun — back down from circuit to Kardamena, up over ridge to Pylios, back to main road, and here — the salt marsh nearby an attraction for John's birdwatching (usually out very early, before I'm up, to catch the dawn birds) — as the Dane in Bodrum said at lunch yesterday, Kos is an island where one still feels just a visiting stranger in the midst of a way of life that has not changed since the Neolithic — not (yet) as Rhodes, where tourism has conquered all — but soon, soon — here agriculture *is* still paramount, and still early Neolithic, wooden plow and oxen, hand-hoe (short-handled) and back-breaking labor — figs, olives, some wheat, grazing, grapes (some locally-produced retsina) — very neat whitewashed rectangular flat-roofed houses, with blue, green, mostly blue, shutters and doors — often trellises, pergolas, over front porticos, with morning glories — burros, bicycles, motorbikes, the predominant forms of transportation — few cars, some 3-wheeled Mazda trucks, some, even fewer, big trucks (M-Benz, Volvo) — all honk at anything, everything, that moves, no one seems to mind — but cars not yet really important outside the town of Kos — taxis, their sign the grape-topped caduseus

later still, c. 1830 — interrupted above by the coming of lunch, 2 fried mackerel apiece, good to the heads & fins & eyes, a salad of feta, tomatoes, cucumbers and olives, bread, white wine (unresinated, for John's sake), plus a Greek coffee (and the inevitable glass of cold water) afterwards for me — sitting now on our hotel room balcony, looking at Asia, a little of the Courvoisier bought on the plane, almost gone now, residues of *Doctor Faustus*, been rereading the whole stay — below, the dovecote of the neighboring small farm, with vineyard, orchard, garden plot, what looks like a whitewashed-over greenhouse inside a rock corral, and the house, as always here, reminding me but for the whitewash of New Mexico — scratching in the yard, the pea fowl, guinea hens, that start their strange haunting calls early early in the morning, as John says, just on the borders of consciousness, and then some days are silent — brooded over by the recumbent lion of Asia — the sun sets these days directly over Psirimos, which partially covers Kalymnos from here — cloudless, as yesterday evening, the sun made possible to look at as it goes, by the horizon band of haze

[27 Nov 74 — NY — from Quasha's copy]

C. Kerényi, *Asklepios: archetypal image of the physician's existence*
Bollingen, 1959

Chapter III, "The sons of Asklepios on Kos"

// William R. Paton and Edward Lee Hicks,
The Inscriptions of Cos, Oxford, 1891

Herondas — fl. c. 250 BC
Mimiambioi — 4th poem: "Women offering sacrifices
in the temple of Asklepios"

// Hippokrates: in one letter:
The Lifting of the Staff Festival
in a cypress grove not far from the
city of Kos — sacred to Apollo
Kyparissos

pre-Epidauran physician-centered
non-religious medicine

↘

// influence from Epidaurus,
patient-oriented, self-
attending, direct relation
with diety

↘

// return to purely medical elements

Asklepiad *family* originally from Thessaly
cypress
&
stag — Nebros

«the dark animal
father of the
luminous sun»

«ascribed the mysterious process of
healing rather to the night and
sleep than to the day and waking»

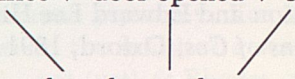
«the "temple sleep"»

offering of a rooster:

«"It is day... the temple door is open. The curtain is parted!"»

«Asklepios . . . appearance as a kind of solar epiphany.»

sacrifice / door opened / sun



then the epiphany

«dwarf-like, nocturnal figure, a child in a hooded cloak . . . Telesphoros . . . "The Finisher" . . . Akesis, "healing"»

«all diseases are human and [for this very reason] divine»

«a spark of intuitive knowledge about the possibilities of rising from the depths. . . . The religion of the Koan physicians was directed toward this spark and its sun-like efflorescence.»

Eastern Kansas, borderland, Border
Ruffian gangland, Marmatonia, Royaume
de la Marais de Cygne, Kaw Mouth
glacier end to lead crystal
grit rip, Flint
Hill palm, Ben
Webster national anthem honk
torn horn made whole again
home land

"finding the Marmaton dangerous to cross
we left our horses on the north bank"
the Lawrence grip of fear in the balls
at coming South

and no answer
Johnny Hodges high over the poled skiff glissando
plays the Cambridge at the Cambridgeport knock river crossing
one sun the sky one sun
in the heart in the sky
counting the slow time shove
against the shore to come

and then find
"and air of age and comfort
very unusual for the frontier"

but the grid is not irrelevant
to previous courses

and the dust devil
that picked them up in front of the Elks' Club
faded off E toward Dr Lewis' whipped back blunted the vector W to N
passed on through the Redman's Hall deadend at Wall
and made reverse the crossing of the dangerous Marmaton

•

relief for the dweller rules division

and no words tonight but these
an arm with three animals faces as a hand
and a king leaning forward, with his crown and ruff
and my new red underwear against the radiator stretch

or the disappearance of the Greenland settlements
or the passing of love or its never having settled
and the ache to work it
with the last fading settlers losing Norway and never gaining
Vinland or Far Thule
looking for anyone, skraelings, raiders, English pirates
off the edge
Lord save them even now
even here

and as the heart no longer nourishes
the heart it hoped to nourish, and on the Eastward-facing
Baltic shores with the head turned always backwards
and Far North

loses any heart at all and lets
the inert wisdom of drift itself
lets the unhearing slip of body careless
for that be servant

on those outer banks where
always wet genders
from Copenhagen the view
through the day the snow returns
and the great wheel of gulls over Christianshavn
projects against return
far Hulténia, Thule thither

he would not follow that line by dreams
or bells of caps out of this world
but kept *on foot* or the old canoe
club club club down the rivers of Afric
and transport Asia East East East
West, the only
ache of the land bridge for Empire
memory out of continent beyond race
urge for home so deep
the way back had to be
the first ever made

the gray serenade waltz toward summer

she hears you from off in the sand dunes at Skanör
while you dance the winter's dance indoors on Dronningensgade
the Giant Hooded Crow at the surf's edge
his feet never wet, his hear her nods

dark men instead enter the North

and by the Fish Wives' Steps
come into Højbro Plads
and circle Absalon to take
his glare on off
just East of due South

these are
the very later or never come before
or the lost who only heard right
this far

clouds lead out of Copenhagen
as if at sea, not San Francisco
over updrafts

the *dyne* surface
over the lowlands, the circular rainbow
British bullseye, just West of due North
low above the horizon

some raptors
still may be active in the Skåne lakes, but by late February
the watching shifts back to Skanör and the coast

Ceylon

or Gambia or the Red Sea
by Spies' or Tjaerborg's, Unisol's
cheap tours

to come back around
one layer up, or what
most like a layer

but Eastern strips
than Western, Middle, Rising
from descent, where does the
unbidden lie, of endless shifting magnetisms
swinging of the sky?

•

pioneers
they weren't even, no, not on the frontiers
they were almost haphazard still explorers
of an almost oblivious rise of information, and away

and not sadness, not a crown's worth

•

and not the Crown of Happy Days
as Midway North the Wolf of Days Australis
chases the Sun

at the well this time
our eyes do not meet

•

dear Ruth, dear part of me
more pain than me itself

•

your sapphire eyes once the well of violet
from the Giant Finn's arms

dark as the broadaxe people's
Eastern home, still against the Vordingborg
against Knudshoved's shore arriving

early in the spring or late in summer
a day as dark as winter and as wet, the welcoming
the warming pyres not set

and those who are leaving

Tim Reynolds

The Bush

Scrubby & tattered in a rock-crack
suddenly it was burning

It burned silently as the sun
& cold as the moon

It was a pine-torch in the crannies of my skull
& a light in my sealed bones' hollows

A black ant ambled along a branch
A vermilion lizard throbbed in its shade

& it was not consumed & I was not consumed

Bashō stood on this same bridge
and watched these same swans

a male and a female
grooming in the slow olive water

dragoning and phoenixing and
wallowing like dogs in dust

they don't once look at each other
opening ripples cling and cross

Elegy Written in Highgate Cemetery

Please plant me way back in
with the blackthorn & fern
& cow parsley, among

strangers, no name on a
round stone from a river,
no numbers, only:

O what a long life!
I can't even remember the beginning
& no end in sight!

Charles Doria

from John Malalas: Chronology

(Io)

while Woodpecker was king of the West
Inachos, one of Japhet's people
ruled the Greeks

their first king

built a city Iopolis (Moon town)
after Moon whom he prayed to

Io is her hidden name
in Greek Mystery

Inachos built her a temple
and a bronze statue that reads
'Io Happy Lightbringer'

Inachos married Melia (the ash-tree girl)
triplets:
Hasos, Baal and Io named for Moon
she was very beautiful

Woodpecker heard
friends kidnapped her for him

he fucked her
she had his daughter
whom he called Libya

Io was unhappy
didn't want Woodpecker to fuck her anymore
she left her daughter

didn't want her father to see her
sailed off to Egypt in secret

lived there until she heard
that Faun, Woodpecker's son, was king

afraid of him
so she left for Syria
to Mount Silpion
where later Seleucos the Victor the Macedonian
built his city
named for his son
Antioch the Great
where Io died

. . .

other people say she died in Egypt

Inachos told her brothers and neighbors
'find her'

no luck

the Greeks of Moontown
heard she died in Syria

went there
some stayed

knocked on every door

said
'Io, rest in peace'

went to the Oracle
they seemed to see a young cow
who said: 'I am Io'

what did it mean?
all in all they thought it best
to build her a tomb of Mount Silpion

afterwards they lived there
and started a city
which they called Iopolis

the Syrians called these people
'Ionites' (children of Io)

the Antiochenes
ever since the Greeks came looking for Io
knock on their houses
still asking about her

that's how Greeks came to live in Syria
because Inachos told them to find Io
and not come home until they did

the Children of Io built a temple to Kronos/El
on Mount Silpion

Harvey Bialy

scattered pages of an incomplete text on connectedness

a full crazy year and one more before the shores of the
new world welcome me again,

no eidos of a simple journey
we come from the same place
10 miles & a different language
all around gum arabic money glitters psychedelic in the sunday sun
part of the change

I don't understand you
and the barbarous european
last but us of the late nite drinkers at the Beacon
too drunk to fit the key to his car's lock shouts
I dey go I dey go
in Obatala's grove
potsherds
with curious letters
spell paiduema
the drummer
keeps trying to catch a look up the dancer's skirt
when he gets home he will find the sekere player has run off with his wife
Shepp sings it
sorry bout that
as the music manages the morning
and the blue green and grey birds stop their flight to listen

Don Byrd

from The Barbaric Obedience
Desperate Meditations on the End of Kultural History

> "There is no truth at all, of course, in the modern velleity. . . that you can't know everything. It is literally true that you *have* to know everything. And for the simplest reason; that you do, by being alive."
>
> —Charles Olson

In the process of their becoming, the literal thinking, writing, and re-writing, these pieces revealed a fact of composition which may have been noticed for the first time by Pascal: "The last thing one discovers when writing a work is what one should put first." The process is endless: each re-writing yields a new first thing.

The pervasive form which insists upon the firstness of first things and the lastness of things, I have called "kultur"—in order to distinguish my subject from the directly related but more inclusive form, the anthropologist's "culture." "Kultur" is the form which allows the illusion that we have choices in the order of things.

The mood is admittedly desperate, and my title may seem self-contradictory. Meditation is measured consideration. Related etymologically to "mete," it implies a stepping-off of boundaries. It takes care in counting the steps, then recounting and letting the variances in number play against one another until the process arrives at a definitive stasis. Desperation, however, is the sense of measure lost, to the extent that one's steps are no longer counted, but merely taken, without hope, but also without recourse.

The paradox is at least partially resolved by the fact that the desperation is not personal. In an attempt to find out, simply, where I am, I am forced—we all are—into the role of kultural history, and, as such, I engage a desperate situation. The kultural historian stations himself precisely on the bounds between thought and act, whence he must become aware, as Antonin Artaud writes, ". . . there is a curious parallel between the generalized collapse of life at the root of our present demoralization and our concern for a culture which has never been coincident with life, which in face has been devised to tyrannize over life." Only one of the paradoxes the kultural historian confronts is that the terms of our freedom and the terms of the tyranny we suffer are forever on the verge of melting into one another.

If I have dwelt on the decay, I have done so in a nervous system that is habitually attuned more to change than to constancy, perhaps in the submerged belief that the dialectic play of dead forms is a womb and the shadowy hope that our protests are the fitful cries of the birth spasm.

1

The extent to which Artaud's statement was already a cliche when it was made in 1938 might be seen in a brief consideration of the reputation of Vincent Van Gogh. A decade later, Artaud would find an image for himself in Van Gogh, "the man suicided by society," but by that time the painter had already become a universal scapegoat in the imagination of the twentieth century. His vitality, madness, and death were the three acts in the only cogent tragedy to be witnessed. He attracted not only so diverse a group as to include Karl Jaspers, Rainer Rilke, Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, Henry Miller, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Julius Meier-Graefe, but also, through the office of Irving Stone, he became the ritual substitute and redeemer for an army of middle-brow readers who had been likewise suicided in their own quiet and desperate ways. It was the life and letters, which speak from the mysterious circle the artist draws around himself when he creates and, at the same time, makes the mystery approachable by drawing it on commonplace ground, rather than the paintings themselves, that made Van Gogh not only the representative artist for the twentieth century but also the representative man. Although one must be sympathetic with the numerous attempts to call attention back from the biography to the paintings, the life has, thus far, provided more that has been of spiritual use. The era has required a ritual insanity arising from a man's attempt to live purely amidst the sanity of things, of colors and shapes. Had he been a poet or musician, it would have been enough for him to treat language or sound as sanely.

Van Gogh preserves a world that is barely recognizable. Although we look through thick brush strokes, the obviousness of paint, the image is immediately there, presented fully in its senselessness. Compared to a typical cubist painting, Picasso's "Three Musicians," for example, it is clear that the simple there-ness by which Van Gogh's images grasp the attention has given way to an explicable geometry contained purely in the painting. Van Gogh's paintings, even in their vitality, seem to speak from the other side of the grave. They have a literal clarity of focus that seems possible only to the *unconditioned* eye, an eye which sees neither what is conventionally expected nor what is supported by the sanity of a theory. One can only speculate about the expense at which Van Gogh cast his work into this unredeemed space, but the authority of the myth derives from that desperate act.

By way of a measure of how far we have come in our understanding of Van Gogh's work, I will mention only two brief passages. They seem to say what can be said at present. They mark our ignorance.

The first passage is from Martin Heidegger's *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. He is considering what is for him the first and, in a sense, the only

question of metaphysics: "Why are there essents, why is there any thing at all, rather than nothing?" It is not a question which the mind *proposes* to itself but one which, in the immediacy of experience, happens. A painting by Van Gogh, among a number of other examples he mentions, is one of those things which, rather than nothing, are:

> A pair of peasant shoes, nothing else. Actually the painting represents nothing. . . . What is here? The canvas? The brush strokes? The spots of color?
>
> . . . All of the things we have named *are* and yet—when we wish to apprehend being, it is always as though we were reaching into the void. The being after which we inquire is almost like nothing. . . .

Heidegger asks about the life of the painting, what it arises from, that which takes one in: "you are immediately alone with it [i.e. the painting] as though you yourself were making your way wearily home," but precisely in that aloneness with the painting, one discovers that the vibrancy of life which opens the grounds of its origin—allows one, alone, to entertain one's self in it—is also spectral. It is not a problem of transcendental elusiveness. What he inquires after, the brush strokes, the canvas, is immediately there, but another life, the one that is daily lived, interposes between the questioner and the answer he wants and needs.

There was a time, Heidegger tells us, when things rose and spoke of Being to men, as it were, spilled out of themselves to fill men. That happy time has long passed, and now "The spiritual decline of the earth is so far advanced that the nations are in danger of losing the last bit of spiritual energy that makes it possible to see the decline."

Ed Dorn's "Poem in Five Parts"—the other text that I want to suggest as a measure of the continuing embodiment of Van Gogh—opens with a speculation about "Boats on the Beach at Saintes-Maries." The implicit situation of the poem is a broken love affair, and, so, the fragmentation of the poem. The painting, however, is not used metaphorically. It lends itself to the occasion, establishing a relationship between the poet and the departed beloved. It is, in a sense, the landscape of the poem:

> Van goghs boats
> sat on the beach
> as I sit here
> good lord as I sit here
>
> and van goghs boats
> are upturned
> the bows set east
> as I do

and the crosspieces
on the masts
they are strung out
as my arms are

oh were I only
red&
white&
blue

and in the distance
more white as
the sails, the
lonely white
triangulars
are

dim-
inishing

how I am
only
as the distance
goes

blue

The distances which open, or are discovered, at the end of this movement were also discovered by Van Gogh in the process of making the painting. It shows, as he says in a letter, "more sea and sky on the right" than the original sketch or the water color study. It also adds, in the newly opened space, the four triangular sails which diminish along a line beginning in the lower left hand corner of the canvas, at the bow of the foremost boat, and vanishing in the emptiness of the sea. There is, however, no sense of setting out, of voyage, and the confrontation with whatever is beyond, as there might be in a Romantic painting. This shaft of space which thrusts out, beyond the canvas, and implicates the whole of space, becomes literally the presence in the painting of the empty dimensions in which the five parts of the poem fail to come together.

Where "she" is, the poet imagines in the last movement of the poem, "Henry James sits/on the table, an increment/of difficult sentences." Although Dorn probably did not recall this particular passage from James's preface to *Roderick Hudson*, it expresses precisely that fact of his work

which makes him the obvious counterpoint to Van Gogh: "Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily *appear* to do so." It is the last appeal of the man of kultur (the *last* man of kultur, as he appears in Pound's *Cantos*), the man who would, by artistic subterfuge, offer the *appearance* of space closed against its universal on-goingness.

Van Gogh looked at bits and pieces in a space which, splashed on the definitive canvas, becomes indefinite, like the sea and sky opening at the edge of "Boats on the Beach" or the arbitrary, indefinite landscape surrounding the solidity of the Pont de Clichy in "The Riverside in Spring."

The space of earth now is enclosed in itself, and the kultural organization has allowed us to locate its limits. Now the spaces open inwardly, space turns on, and into, itself, and we must reach into the tender heart of Being. The tools which the kultur machined for us are too gross and rigid to be of much use.

2

Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* has been more or less forgotten by the general reading public which was its original audience, and it has been treated harshly by scholars. It is, without doubt, frequently inaccurate in its historical information. Spengler, however, is neither philosopher nor historian but a poetic thinker, a myth-maker, who uses the languages and forms of philosophy and history. He seized upon the methodology of "the sciences of man," which emerged in the nineteenth century and realized its true content. The Copernican revolution had been recapitulated by Kant in Philosophy, by Darwin in biology, and was being effected by Spengler's contemporary, Freud, in psychology. Spengler conceived of his own work as a Copernican revolution in history, and, of course, it was. His methodology is precisely the step *beyond* kultur, the one line of thought which kultur cannot contain. It cannot both be and be the subject of the central question it asks.

The thesis is a simple one. It is that kultur, as the word is used in the phrase, "western kultur," must now be considered a completed historical unit, which began sometime after the writing of the Homeric epics—say seventh century B.C.—and ended sometime during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Charles Olson dates its disappearance with Schliemann's excavation of Troy (1871). It was not, as Spengler supposed, the failure of an essential condition of meaningful life, but the final exploitation of a sense of form which had served as the source of meaning for nearly three millennia.

One result of the disappearance of kultur—the recognition that the last of our true contemporaries died out not long after the kultur began to carry its historical baggage along with it—has been traced out brilliantly by Guy Davenport. In "The Symbol of the Archaic" (*Georgia Review*, V. 28, 642-657), an essay so densely structured that it does not appear to be quotable in its parts, he documents the ways in which twentieth-century poets and painters have turned to the pre-kultural past to find the forms of their own experience.

The other matters which demand consideration are the dark contradictions in the kultural order which still hang over us like a sentence, the ways in which the kultural order continues to inhabit much of our knowledge and to render it useless, and the nature of the forms which we can continue to depend upon. The problem which we face as kultur-less men and women is to find forms which make possible the passage from creation to knowledge, without dependence upon an institutional medium for common grounds.

3

The form, kultur, is barely large enough to contain both Plato and "the transvaluation of all values" (Plato inverted) of Nietzsche, Marx, and Kierkegaard. The lesser forms by which it shapes experience assumes that the crucial reality has its being in some distant and imprecisely located haven from time. Without reference to the realm of pure essences or to the ultimate revolution, the immediate and familiar present is shapeless, meaningless, and threatening.

The demi-gods of the kultural epoch are the figures of an unwritten book of Hesiod: the fourth generation. Like the second generation, which is variously reported to have reigned over a Golden Age or a time of cruel repression and conflict, it was a generation of multi-faceted contradiction. Whether the kultural order found its origin in abstract thought or in the sensuous and concrete, it was doubly troubled by the theoretical necessity of accomodating the *other* and the practical problem of finding a grounds for action. The sources of meaning and the contexts of action were related by such complexly manipulated dialectics that no *single* account can comprehend both the profusion of ideas and the bleak, empty landscape.

"The history of culture," Pound writes, "is the history of ideas going into action." Kultur is that organization of human life which is characterized most simply as the sum of institutions and personal modes of behavior which arise from the disjunction between thinking and doing. Arising from grounds which are totalitarian, the world itself, with its attendant demands and necessities—the limitations of man in nature—kultur appears as a zone

of freedom in which will is both initial and final. As such it allows an arrangement of first and last things, beginnings, middles, and ends, closed forms, and open season on any opposing power. It can be likened to the stone which is the sculpture's zone of freedom. The statue, however, *remains* in the blessed territory, free of necessity. The function of the pedestal is to set it apart, lift it above, its surroundings.

Kultur is possible only when a class or a people can similarly free itself, at least for part of its time, from the demands which life makes on the living. That is not to say that kultur is a function of leisure, but of a willful leap into an abstract space which leisure makes possible. In the Greek city-states, a large class of slaves allowed a few men to take up existence in a purely rhetorical cosmos—a reality of, and in, language. Although slavery and its stylized counterpart, serfdom, continued to anchor aspects of the kultural order until the nineteenth century, exploitable frontiers became for the Hellenistic Greeks, the Romans, and the Renaissance Europeans a field in which freedom could be exercised. From the time of Plato, the frontier or the empty space beyond the frontier became the locus of the kultural imagination. The mind found a space in Atlantis, Utopia, The New World, California, in which it could articulate an order of perfection, but, in the same stroke, it placed its best knowledge in an impossibly distant and ever-diminishing landscape.

As long as the life of the mind was conducted in a kultural medium, the historian came rather quickly to a place at which he could review the past, or, more precisely, the past fed so smoothly into the present, kultural history was hardly a concern. Doctor Johnson could look back on the poets of the previous century and accept them in a common way. It was not a question of kultural history as such, but of personal history, the *lives* of the poets. Their relationship to the kultur had not yet become problematic. The cultivation continued as work-in-progress by other hands.

After Baudelaire, however, all changed. The poet's work became corrosive: ". . . the thing is, to mutilate the mind." The work which had proposed a kultural coming-together became personal analysis, not for the purpose of creating a unity but solely to allow the horror and ecstasy of life to manifest themselves, the one in stark contrast to the other.

The bold assumption that the actual and the kultural might flow together gave way to the experiential fact that life exists on a grid which, no matter how neatly portioned-off, yields finally not a simple contradiction, not a clear affirmation against a clear negation, but a range of affirmation and negation in complex mixture. Freud's discovery that in the imagination and in dreams negation is meaningless had not only been borne out in the literature of the two previous generations, but it had been shown, further, that both negation and affirmation were responses to a reality which utterly

lacked determination. When Melville wrote *Pierre, or The Ambiguities*, it was done in the recognition that the "No, in thunder," which a year earlier he had valued in Hawthorne and which had seemed to him the key to power, had turned back on itself and re-appeared as the frayed ends of a thread of argument which had been lost.

4

The times which the kultural historian can hope to comprehend without bold and imaginative speculation do not extend for quite three millennia. Before the sixth or seventh century B.C., the organization of human life was, even when most complex, tribal and natural rather than cultivated. The origins of agriculture, the control of the flood-prone rivers of Asia Minor, and the development of the first cities appear to have resulted from the exercise of the same primordial intelligence that had directed biological evolution. The human organism is gifted with the ability to recognize useful accidents when they occur and to repeat them without understanding. The fabric of a way of life, which obviously cannot be called a "kultural order," was articulated by precisely those techniques that became the focus of Plato's attack on Homer.

Plato objects that the epics develop by accretion, that narrative reduces all to a before and an after, rather than a first and a last, so "meaning" arises only in an arbitrary series of incidents and coincidents. Furthermore, such meaning can only be transmitted by mimesis. The poet must recreate the entire action with all of the attendant accidents; he can make no distinction between significant fact and insignificant detail. The poet, then, is a purveyor not of truth but of habit. "Did you never observe how imitations," Socrates asks, "beginning in early youth and continuing far into life, at length grow into habits and become a second nature, affecting body, voice, and mind?" Plato was aware that mimesis had been, and continued to be for the majority of his contemporaries, the insecure handle by which a sense of life was grasped. Damon's maxim, which Socrates quotes with approval, that ". . . when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the state always change with them," recognizes that men had accomodated themselves to a musico-political environment in which random occurrence, mimesis, and habit defined the limits of creativity.

The historical data for the millennia or so prior to the beginnings of the Greek lyric and Greek philosophy give little indication of even a primitive ability to distinguish a field of mental and spiritual energy from the gross field of common life. The complex urban life of ancient Sumer differed from the social organization of a bee colony primarily as a result of the depen-

dence upon language, rather than genetic codes, as the medium of continuity. "The Greeks did not," as Bruno Snell writes, "by means of a mental equipment already at their disposal, merely map out new subjects for discussion, such as the sciences and philosophy. They discovered the human mind." They literally called into existence a human space which, like a fertile field, could be cultivated. "The discovery of the intellect," Snell continues, "cannot be compared with the discovery of, let us say, a new continent. America had existed long before Columbus discovered the new world, but the European way of thinking did not come into being until it was discovered; it exists by grace of man's cognizance of himself." The appearance of man as subject, this *potential*, self-conscious unity, coincided with the first experience of irreducible multiplicity. The function of the Socratic interrogative was, at once, to call forth a self-conscious sense of mind and a cultural order, not only because the products of the mind could be shared, through the essentially non-personal medium of argument, but also because mind sought to cultivate the harmony which was shattered by its appearance.

The distinction between things and the principles "in" things as they appear to the mind, once made, opens as a gulf at the beginning of history. To read a history of any kind beyond it is to shape those lives-lived according to patterns which are themselves merely historical. Our forms do not reach back to them. In the theater of human existence, the adventure of the mind appears as an experiment which has not yet reached its conclusion, perhaps even as an aberration, an evolutionary mistake which may still end in catastrophy. The resultant parochialism, however, is more or less unavoidable.

Even one of the best informed Sumerologists, S.N. Kramer, for example, finds himself embroiled in self-contradiction when he strays from the study of specific cuneiform texts. "The mature and reflective Sumerian thinker," Kramer writes, "had the mental capacity of thinking logically and coherently on any problem." In the same paragraph, however, he goes on to say that the Sumerian "philosopher" was hampered by his "lack of... such fundamental tools as definition and generalization". It is difficult to understand how the Sumerian dealt logically and coherently with any problem, as he seems to have possessed none of the basic tools of logic and coherence. One must suspect that, in his extensive understanding of the Sumerian's radically literal actuality, Mr. Kramer finds a logic and coherence which the Sumerian language could not register and which the Sumerian sage did not comprehend.

Georg Lukacs' comment on the Homeric situation applies equally, perhaps even more precisely, to the Sumerian. He suggests that the reason for Homer's preeminent success in embodying an answer to the question,

How can life become essence? is that "he found the answer before the progress of the human mind through history had allowed the question to be asked." The appearance of the mind which could ask the question was, in effect, the loss of the answer. When men came to experience palpably not only their own existence in the world but also the in-dwelling of the world in their own interior dimensions, they asked the question—who is this I to whom the world makes sense?—which made the given answer not untrue but inapplicable.

The Homeric epics are the product of a human situation on the verge of becoming lost in its own complexities. Whatever past Homer refers to—and it is sufficiently past that he comprehends it only with difficulty—the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* satisfy a demand for simplification. If, as J.A.K. Thomson conjectures, they "are not the beginning but the consummation of an artistic process of which the earlier stages are no longer discernible," Homer's task was to select and synthesize the crucial stories of an oral tradition of a people which had become mobile, whose histories had become confused, and whose knowledge had vastly expanded. We now have some measure of the vast field of available material which did not find its way into the Homeric poems. The chthonic elements of Greek religion are thoroughly expunged, and, generally, the selection is rigorous, leaving much to be filled in by the prior knowledge of audience. The poems are celebrations of light, of clarity of consciousness, to the limit that it was available.

The Achaians reached the limits of their organizational ability when they gathered at Troy. Odysseus, the one of their number who depends most on his wits, as a way of getting by, is also the one most likely to exceed those limits and find himself without the comfort of a way back home. Odysseus—who is dispersion, who travels to the limits of the Greek world—must re-gather himself. To accept simply the immortality which Kalypso proffers—and to reject it is the first act we see him perform—would be to accept an incomprehensible totality. Odysseus is a prime figure in the kultural insistence that eternity must be not only possessed but also understood. The "stubborn spirit" to which he appeals as the reason he cannot share eternal life with Kalypso is an inchoate mind, not yet reified but known directly, as he might know hunger—a spirit which, if he is to roam more widely must be renewed by a return to the sensible (i.e. "makes sense," as well as "of the senses") order of the kingly household. His return to Ithaka is required to bring him back into touch with the only ordering principle that he knows.

The propitiation which is required of Odysseus by Tieresias is, in fact, a reading of his destiny. He is again required to wander, not along the more or less known coasts of the Mediterranean but inland:

> . . . after you have killed these suitors in your own palace,
> either by treachery, or openly with the sharp bronze,
> then you must take up your well-shaped oar and go on a journey

until you come where there are men living who know nothing
of the sea, and who eat food that is not mixed with salt, who never
have known ships whose cheeks are painted purple, who never
have known well-shaped oars, which act for ships as wings do.
And I will tell you a very clear proof, and you cannot miss it.
When, as you walk, some other wayfarer happens to meet you,
and says you carry a winnow-fan on your bright shoulder,
then you must plant your well-shaped oar in the ground, and render
ceremonious sacrifice to the lord Poseidon,
one ram and one bull, and a mounter of sows, a boar pig. . . .

The passage is remarkable not only in itself but also in that the prophesy is never fulfilled, as far as we learn from the poem. Presumably, Homer's audience would have known the remainder of Odysseus's story, but, for some reason, only the vaguest traces of it have been preserved. From Proclus, we have a summary of a poem by Eugammon, the Kyrenean, called the *Telegoneia*, which is a sequel to the Odyssey. The summary, however, does not recount the story of Odysseus' inland quest, and it contradicts the Tieresian prophesy that Odysseus' death will come in some "altogether unwarlike way." One is forced to conclude that Eugammon disregarded the testimony of the *Odyssey* in more than a few details.

Odysseus, however, as a figure of the imagination, seems to have served the culture more usefully in that the traditions have left him at the height of his powers, with the inland quest before him. The lurid tale of parricide and witchcraft which Eugammon tells satisfies nothing. It seems a conservative attempt to exorcise the influence of the Odyssean recklessness. Odysseus was called into existence to fill a void in the imagination which could not be filled concretely until the nineteenth century. When a figure appears at the behest of a people's darkest necessities, he assumes a life of his own which ends only after his story has been played-out fully, literally, in the life of the tribe.

Odysseus' story is woven so intricately into the fabric of the kultural order that the ritual completion of his quest was postponed until the interior grasslands of the United States, Russia, and Africa were settled. His task, as Tieresias proposes it, is to experience earth as totality. The wanderlust of the eastern Mediterranean tribes, which is evidenced in the mixture of linguistic forms, names, and traditions in Homer, could not be satisfied until earth and sea were ritually rejoined and the emerging mind could find an image for its own unity in the earth itself.

Before the last half of the nineteenth century, a few nomadic tribes accomodated themselves to the grasslands of North America and Africa, but high civilization had been almost exclusively littoral. Pound judges Homer a greater poet than Virgil, in part, because Virgil did not know the *polu-phloisboios* of the sea, and until very recently, there was every reason to

believe that a knowledge of the sea's loud roarings was a prerequisite of the poet. The shoreline was the zone of the poem, the poets sitting on the beach, waiting to see what goddess the next tide would cast up. The reach of land between the manifest facts and the chaos, which extended both directions, into the oceanic depths and into the barbaric interior, was recapitulated in the auditory space of the poem—the manifest prosodic form which stood between the unknown world and the unknowns of the poet's interior.

The role of the sea in kultural history, however, is not simply metaphorical. The shoreline was hypostasized, and, from Plato to Nietzsche, it was the first fact of the kultural metaphysic. The world-wide occupation of the interior grasslands was the last stage of a kultural enterprise which lasted for nearly three millennia. The creation of a sense of form which did not radiate from a local center released Odysseus from the need to renew himself perpetually by contact with Ithaka. As the progressive realization of mind as a source of universal order offered the conquistador and the colonizer an independence from the energy which issued from a specific source, the accelerating spread of kultural order through space alternatively confirmed the emerging mind and required its further development. It was not until Odysseus celebrated Poseidon in a land so far from the sea that the oar was unknown that we were released from recurrent obsession with this figure which embodied the abstract will which found nothing in the world but an image of itself.

5

In the *Ethics*, which Aristotle addressed to his son, art is divorced from action and offered as a model of *behavior*. When we tell a child to *behave*, we mean for him "to hold his own counsel," "to stay inside of himself." It is in that sense that tragedy, according to Aristotle, is to purge its audience, to return it to itself, and at the same time, to arouse that sense of self which is both literally unnecessary and god-like in its freedom.

Mind and will are called into existence by resistance, by some limit of time, space, or nature, or, more immediately, by conflict of vision. The dialectic conflict which constitutes the fabric of Plato's dialogues, puts mind against mind in an attempt to further mind; the syllogism opposes the particulars of a situation to the general case. If the Homeric intelligence can comprehend only totalities which it mimicks, the abstract mind comprehends only differences. The here and here and here which is the perpetual condition in Homeric language becomes a doublet, a here versus a there. If the Homeric strategy creates a second body of habit, as Socrates claims, the Socratic strategy creates a second world which is continually on the verge of

conflict with the merely actual.

By locating the plot as the "soul" of tragedy, Aristotle made poetry safe for the Republic. The incidents are relieved of their burden as actions and can be arranged according to the demands of essential reality. Therefore, "Tragedy is more philosophic than history." The rhapsodist's song, which had been self-contained act, was half lifted from itself and became a temporal articulation of a timeless plot. Aristotle at once puts the poet as creator into competition with the Demiurge and removes him from the world. In the *Ethics*, he writes:

> . . . all art has to do with creation. It has to contrive and consider how to create some one or other of the things whose existence is possible rather than necessary and whose original cause lies in the creator and not in the thing itself. For art is not concerned with things that already are or that come into being by necessity or nature, for the original cause of these things lie in themselves. Creating and doing being different, the end of art must be creation and not action.

It is, for Aristotle, those causes which lie within the creative man that demand actualization in art. The reservoir of possibility, as against the simply necessary, is expected to lend its energy to men who are otherwise enmeshed in a web of self-contained and, it often appears, self-contradictory actuality. When a theory of art was first being formulated by the Greeks, the possibilities for the free fabrication of forms which respond to the inner demands of the human personality were relatively limited. Men were subject to the "laws of nature" in palpable and quotidien ways. In the creation of small forms, they were able to impose an order which was both simple enough to be grasped and—hopefully—large enough to inhabit, without the dangerous incursions of the numerous forces which seem to have no regard for human beings at all. The redemption which art offered, whether it created a society, a tragedy, a statue, or, for that matter, a scientific theory or a new tool, was a transcendent order which could be realized willfully.

The classical Greek era and the European Renaissance, the two periods in western history which devoted their energies to the arousal of the ego, established habits which could carry the universalization of mind into space. Both epochs found in musical harmony an image for the order they sought to cultivate. Music as a trope for the resolution of tension between opposites is crucial for Spenser and Shakespeare, as it is for Plato. Although the specific situations differed materially, both cultivated an individual restlessness which was, or was to become in the hands of others, the instrument of the will to find a unity in space comparable to the conjectured internal unity and, at the same time, to guarantee a universal order to replace the understanding which they had inherited from their pre-histories that the cosmos is insistently local (i.e. Attic, British, etc.). The mind was, in effect,

the first piece of technology—in a line of technological development which included the Roman roads and ships worthy of the Atlantic in its harshest moods—which allowed the extension of order beyond the river valleys, islands, and peninsulas which had previously defined the limits of any single state of human affairs.

Just less than five hundred years passed from the time of the death of Socrates (399 B.C.) to the beginning of the *Pax Romana* (96 A.D.), the period during which the Roman empire was geographically most extensive. The polis, as the center of a life which radiates its civilizing influence, was displaced by a transcendent order—one which informed not simply the Empire but extended wherever the Empire *might* extend. Toward the end of this period, it would be possible for Pliny, the Elder, to speak of the Roman mission in these terms: "to draw together in converse by community of language the jarring and uncouth tongues of many nations, to give mankind civilization, and in a word to become throughout the world the fatherland of all races." It may be only coincidence that a similar period of time transpired between the publication of Leone Battista Alberti's *Della Pittura* (1436), which formulated the theory of perspective as a convention by which abstract space became a perceptual habit, and Frederick Jackson Turner's lecture on the significance of the frontier in American history, but the parallels are too striking to go unnoticed. Turner says:

> What the Mediterranean Sea was to the Greeks, breaking the bond of custom, offering new experiences, calling out new institutions and activities, that, and more, the ever retreating frontier has been to the United States directly, and to the nations of Europe more remotely. And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going closed the first period of American history.

What was true in the United States was equally true, as H.J. MacKinder, the Scottish geographer and contemporary of Turner's, shows, on the world level. The phase of geographic expansion which began in the Renaissance had pushed, literally, to the ends of the earth. It would be pointless to draw an extended analogy between the two epochs—that is not the point. It is, however, a notable fact that the two epochs of frantic geographic expansion in human history both began with a theoretical reduction of space to an abstract concept (Alberti's sense of space would yield Cartesian geometry) and ended, literally, at a geographic limit.

The seventeenth-century epistemology, which was the perfection of the ego discipline begun by Plato and Aristotle, made consciousness the supporting foundation of all knowledge. By a use of language which allowed consciousness a privileged relationship to the things of nature, the rationalists established a dependence of their thought on a reality which was prior to

natural fact, and, so, nature became not the context in which thought and speech took place but the *subject* of enquiry. They created a cul de sac which appeared to offer an open course only because it embodied the paradox of the tortoise and the hare. Within two centuries, it led the culture into an impasse of geometrically diminishing possibilities. With the circle of consciousness drawn tightly about it, knowledge as the primitive reality was replaced by knowledge of knowledge; it could never allow a fact to become the guide into consciousness of self-caused things. The only object which could be known was man himself or, more accurately, as Charles Olson says, "the trope man," for man had become a metaphor for the object of knowledge. Like other metaphors, however, this one appears to have been constituted of a peculiar tension, an instability which derives from the simultaneous apprehension of likenesses and differences. Its beauty and the graceful utilization of the energy inherent in its instability, however, were both dependent upon a context which had been obscured by the very making of the metaphor. The human sciences, the appearance of which coincided roughly with the disappearance of the kultural medium, brought this arc of human development to its ultimate tautology; man was both the object and guarantor of knowledge.

As such, the human sciences came to replace the literary arts, much as the camera replaced representational painting. If the novel had been an instrument of social investigation (*Middlemarch,* for example, is subtitled "A Study of Provincial Life") and the lyric a guide to ideal emotional responses, they were replaced in these functions by sociology and psychology. To the extent that literature had been the proper study of mankind, it was replaced by anthropology.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, art had become absolutely fluent. The insights which the nineteenth-century novel or poem yield are largely conjectural, and the social scientist found techniques by which the metaphoric structures of Dickens, Eliot, Keats, and Wordsworth could begin to offer at least the appearance of positive truth. The proud positivism, however, should not be allowed to obscure the metaphors which are submerged in, and provide a foundation for, the work of Durkheim, Weber, Frazer, and Freud. The metaphor of the seasons is the organizing principle of Spengler's *Decline of the West,* and he speaks without apology of "vernal epochs" and "autumnal epochs." Spengler's use, in this case, is precisely his lack of sound scientific carefulness. As H. Stuart Hughes writes, "*The Decline of the West* formulated without qualification and with an attractive parade of 'scientific' language a view of Western society which Spengler's older contemporaries, like Sorel and Pareto and Weber, had merely sketched out or had left imbedded within their formal methodology." Spengler allows us to see clearly what we might have otherwise missed.

By the first decades of this century, given the powers implied in the Einsteinian equation of mass and energy, the growing possibility of controlling genetic structure, and the ability to literally re-form the landscape to fit the needs of the society, it was (and is) difficult to say that the cause of anything lies truly in itself. The basis for the Aristotelian distinction between creation and action was diminished to insignificance. It is clear at least that any exercise of the poet's or painter's will in the creation of his forms is relatively insignificant in comparison to the willful freedom which is the daily prerogative of the engineer. In that sense, Marinetti was correct in glorifying factories, tanks, and racing cars as the significant artistic structures of the age. It becomes apparent that, in our time, the practice of the *arts* of poetry or painting is frivolous. The beauty of art has always been closely associated with its power, and, for that reason, artists have never been clearly distinguished in the popular mind from sorcerers. Compared to the potential power to shape, to redeem, or to corrupt of the social engineer, who is supported by computers, the communication media, and the theoretical work of an impressive array of social scientists, the arts of poetry or painting seem mean and paltry things.

Poetry and painting, however, as well as dance, theater, music, and so forth (I list them to avoid the kultural designation, "the arts") were practiced before they became involved in the articulation of a transcendent kultural order. It is a sign of their perpetual vitality that their practitioners were among the first to ask whether any exercise of will is legitimate unless it participates fully in the necessity which "things that have their original cause in themselves" involve. During the nineteenth century, some of those people, whom we have been schooled for over two millennia to call "artists," began to recognize that, as D.H. Lawrence was to write, "The moment you can do just about what you like, there is nothing you care about doing." They began to seek not zones of freedom but the origins of meaningful necessity.

6

Tennyson was perhaps the last poet *of* the culture, in the English speaking world at least. The strength of *In Memoriam* derives from the fact that, in his private grief, Tennyson could speak for a vast, speechless privacy which was desperate in its lack of articulation. He was able to make an accomodation of thought and feeling with craft (these three, thought, feeling, and craft are the components of the kultural order) such that the general experience was enhanced. Images, occurring and recurring, assume a significance which has little or nothing to do with their proper content.

They become keys to responses, evocations of subjective states which, though appropriate to the general situation, lack the energy to emerge unaided. The short lyrics lend themselves to a contemplative mood, an almost static absorption, that would yield, if it could be sustained absolutely, a sense of the world vibrating in unison with the emotive shivers, almost literally, with the nervous system of the speechless public.

"All of the poems of the poet who has entered into his poethood," Martin Heidegger writes, "are poems of homecoming." The poem is a return into the proximity of the source which is at once "the destiny of a Providence, or as we now call it History" and the actual space of earth. The poet, in his homecoming, brings both space and time near, without destroying the distances which are normally perceived in them. The inevitable melancholy, if not despair, of *In Memoriam* is rooted in the imperfection of the poem's strategy for its time. The intuitive grasp of the world's unity, which is the basis for the comfortable sense of being at home in Tennyson's poem, must be perpetually renewed. By the last half of the nineteenth century, the required renewal made demands for energy in excess of what could be supplied by even the most forceful individuals.

Matthew Arnold and the Victorian prose writers were, like Tennyson, victims of a thoroughgoing kultural exhaustion. In Arnold's criticism, we recognize a man of *taste* looking back and misunderstanding men of kultur, Wordsworth, for example: "The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay too much stress upon what they call this philosophy. . . But in Wordsworth's case. . . we cannot do him justice until we have dismissed his formal philosophy." Arnold, however, as well as Leslie Stephens and Bishop Butler, the Wordsworthians whom he is confuting, are separating that which Wordsworth had at great expense managed barely and occasionally to make one. Literary criticism and kultural history emerged as dominant literary preoccupations in the nineteenth century precisely because the relationship between literary ideas and the active life, which had always been oblique, had been totally obscured. Literature, like the other arts, came to inhabit an institution at the intersection of a discipline of taste—something to be acquired along with other gentlemanly accoutrements—and a discipline which was closely allied with the emerging sciences of man—something that might be called "a sociology of the imagination."

Reality had become a question. Practical wisdom—the accretion of knowledge which makes life "a going concern," technology and its institutions—and the organization of economic life had assumed independent, hypostasized forms which could assimilate *any* content by making reference only to immediate formal demands. The prose writers, Carlyle, Newman, Ruskin, and Arnold, are only incidentally philosophers or critics or historians: they conjecture senses of reality from which philosophy or criticism or

history might derive. The degradation of public experience was so complete that artistic creation, which is neither subject to natural law nor, in that it does not carry its activity beyond itself, genuine action, came to stand in the place of reality. The realm of the aesthetic expanded because of the failure of any resistance. Aestheticism was not an evasion; it was an attempt to propose a reality where there was none.

The work of art became the object of a pilgrimage. The Copernican discovery of the cosmic distance and the Lyellian-Darwinian discovery of the immensities of the temporal order were being recapitulated in the discovery of desperately vast psychic space-time, most obviously by Freud's forerunners but more significantly in art and the *conditions* of art. The vision was bracketed in a space which was revealed only at the end of a more or less arduous approach. If the journey had been since time immemorial the underlying metaphor, whether as a journey home in the *Odyssey* or as a journey to redemption by way of the Stations of the Cross, the journey was *of* the vision, perhaps the vision itself. Blake's prophetic landscapes, which were found so genial by the writers of the later nineteenth century, however, reveal themselves in every respect but location. He offers a map *of*, but not to, Jerusalem. It was the age of the picture frame—the frame which distinguishes the painting from, rather than integrates it into, its surroundings—and the age of the museum. Art became the fetish of its own priestcraft, and the sacred zone of art was approached only with the guidance of the critic or the guide book. The poet no longer offered a shared vision—"what oft was thought," etc.—but his figure was invested with a specialness called "genius." The audience was required to cross the distances between its own particularities and those of the artists. Henry James, writing the introductions to his collected works, found himself in the difficult position of exhorting his readers to perform the purification which will allow them to make the passage to his work.

If the disappearance of kultur has gone more or less unnoticed, it should not lead one to underestimate the void its lack has left at the center of experience. Likewise, one should not be surprised that the kultural support could fall away from the social order and not be missed. In the gulf opened by the disappearance of kultur, the sciences of man have developed methodologies which perpetuate the *appearance* of continuity. As different as they obviously are, these disciplines are all essentially historical. History itself, in fact, only took on its modern character during the nineteenth century. Never before had men looked to simple chronology as a significant order. There had been 'histories," of course. Much that appears in the Babylonian and Egyptian texts might, in a remote sense, answer to that name. The focus, however, had been on genealogy, to establish rights to a crown, on the deeds of heroes, to perpetuate reputations, or on morality,

history treated as exemplum and fable. In the new history, however, the obsessive interest was to demonstrate that all events share an ontological condition which allows them to be arranged in a sequence of before and after. It was such an interest that inspired not only the obviously historical disciplines but geology and biology as well. The resistance which Lyell and Darwin met offers a precise measure of the extent to whch the old kultural order survived. The evolutionists were, in effect, proposing nothing more disagreeable than a vision of temporal continuity which reached *beyond* the limits of the kultural order. One can feel nothing but gratitude when the champions of truth prevail against ignorance and superstition, but the effect has been to substitute a one-dimensional and monotonous continuity in time for a rich, multi-phasic continuity of the unselfconscious kultur.

The promise of our most desperate disciplines is a simplicity which arises from and redeems us from confusion. There is Being or some Being, some rhythm, some grace of mind or body which bespeaks some ultimate grace, some integration or dissolution which is redemption. If the personal discipline is imperfect, and when action fails, we have come to expect some source of renewal in the working of history, in the tradition, in the accumulated wisdom.

The dangers of such a strategy are immediately obvious. The continuity to which we would join ourselves and in which we would find relief, by its very nature, separates us from the sources of relief. The reasons for objecting to the eighteenth-century versions of Shakespeare, which changed tragedies into comedies, and so forth, are perfectly convincing, but we are unnerved by them not only because they desecrate the texts but also because they manipulate time in a way we cannot allow. The producers of the eighteenth-century theater and their audiences did not feel, as we do, that time changes *every*thing. They could believe in the radical perfection of their own experience. In the nineteenth century and after, men were required to maintain the more complex belief that their experience was at once self-contained and related to other instances of self-contained experience by way of a temporal continuum.

The procession of events which occur wholly in language—poetry and fiction, or in the specialized languages, music, painting, dance, etc.—behaves according to its own dialectic. In music, clearly, technical developments are prior to meaning. Arnold Schoenberg's work, which *may* be seen to reflect unresolved tensions, arising from the loss of heroic passion, or, even, the sustained anguish of an empty and abstract egotism, is taken into account more directly and usefully by reference to the failure of post-Wagnerian composers to articulate a linear structure. In his cogently argued defense of program music, "Music, a Realistic Art," Michel Butor recognizes that the language—whether as song or, more generally, informing theme—

must arise from a self-renewing musical grammar: "There can be no pronunciation of a word without there first being the consciousness and mastery of a particular sound, of a particular rhythm, the establishment and control of a continuity and a distinction of timbre." Butor is an important critic and one of the crucial contemporary novelists precisely because he recognizes that *meaning* arises from and has its only being in formal invention. In a stroke, he renders the sterile debate over formalism pointless.

What is true of music is also true, though perhaps less obviously so, of poetry. A given array of technical capabilities imply a space which can be inhabited. That movement in English poetry which began at the end of the eighteenth century may well be understood in more abstract terms than those suggested by technical analysis of diction, prosody, and form. In fact, the only understanding of Romanticism to appear has been, for the most part, at these higher levels of abstraction. Over a century of work devoted to a philosophic analysis of poetic form, beginning with Coleridge, has failed to establish a usable vocabulary to name the stations by which formal invention passes to significance. This central problem has been left unsolved despite the abundant evidence, in the careers of Coleridge and Arnold, to mention only two cases, of what results when poetry begins to look beyond its own craft for its sources. The arts have implications of the broadest and most imposing kinds; they are philosophically significant, psychologically, socially, and morally significant, they are instruments of personal redemption, but they find their confirmation *in themselves*, not in their appeal to some, for them, extraneous authority.

Until the last half of the nineteenth century, this dialectic seems to have kept comfortable house with the more general dialectic of social change. The dialectics of which Wordsworth and Robespierre were agents, for example, however different, were explicably related. The radical promise of these diverse processes was commonality of vision and commonality of action, such that all men could share an abstract contemplation which issues in meaningful *praxis*.

The complexity of the situation was compounded by the substitution of the discipline of kultural history, as a study which was institutionalized as the sole concern of liberal education, for a viable kultural tradition. The discipline, which has its origins variously in Arnold, Ruskin, Marx, the German academics, Comte, Taine, Renan, Coulanges, and Henry Adams, appeared only as the *object* of study disappeared. That which had tenuously provided a shared reality became a question of debate. Ideology vied with ideology, and all ideologies defined themselves against a centerless cultivation of insatiable taste, which had appeared to stand in the place of kultur.

Some time before World War I, it became apparent that the common grounds on which art, social change, and science might meet had been lost.

The possibility of vision—in the sense which made life a viable concern for the Romantics—retreated with Rilke's terrible angels. "For beauty's nothing," Rilke writes, "but the beginning of terror we're still just able to bear." The dialectic of art and the dialectic of social change proposed versions of reality which were complete in themselves *and* mutually destructive. Both dialectics found their content in the same material—there is no question of evasion here—but they implied structures which were inherently competitive. The structures which had passed from instance to instance of experience became internally so complex that they could no longer be held in suspension. The step back from the spatial context or the step out of time, so the vision could be apprehended in its expanse, appeared as a step into the abyss. The self which remained, dissolved into unredeemed particularity and could only *behave*, lament human limitations, or praise the beautiful selvage of reality inhabited by men. It was hybrid action, mere activity, love without generation or regeneration. The impotence of Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises* or the various incompetent passivities of Kafka's characters, indeed the entire gallery of victims which inhabit our literature, are directly to the point. In retrospect, however, this new despair—it is, in that, like a new vision—had been abundantly manifest in the nineteenth century as a spatio-temporal disruption between the place where men have visions and the place where they obey the necessities of their lives.

7

As vision retreated into the distances, modes of action became more complex. It led, on the one hand, to the "all is permitted" of Dostoevski, because God was a kultural model of the transcendent unity of thought and action, and to terrorism, real action with symbolic meaning, on the other. That is, two assumptions were possible: that act was primary, utterly without meaning, the existentialist assumption, or that act itself *was* meaning, a realization of some occult or at least occluded necessity which invested act with significance. Conrad's caricature in *The Secret Agent* (1907) of anarchists who, having exhausted the reality of apparent targets, wistfully declare the desirability of bombing pure mathematics, did not appear so extreme after World War I. The search for resistant reality had carried men logically into such pathetic attempts to act meaningfully.

The reality which was proposed by the military-political fact of the war shared nothing with the order which was beginning to unfold to the generation of great artists who were born in the 1870's and 1880's. The cultural impasse which was created left everyone with unsure footing. Artists, having no other choice than to become commercial products perhaps, became

bohemians, and the engineers, both technical and social, were left with a rhetoric utterly without content. Ezra Pound went about London wearing a tourquoise ear-ring, so he would be known as an American aboriginal. Woodrow Wilson went to Europe with his wife and his feckless idealism. Europe itself was, of course, devastated and demoralized.

The energy which remained—and it was immense—could only be instrumented, it appeared, by the evil genius of men like Adolf Hitler.

Modernism and post-modernism, if those terms apply to something of more consequence than fashionable styles, are simultaneous movements. The paradox is explained by the fact that both have their origins at the end of time, or both are denials of the temporal order which had appeared to replace kultur. Neither movement has yet found its definitive statement. As what they intend is inchoate, the terms can only gather meaning in the process of their consideration. They serve as targets for meditation, by means of which the cultural historian attempts to find some coherence in his age. In the meantime, he can depend only upon instances of unusually pure assertion.

Eliot's statement of the modernist position in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" has been repeated so often that it *seems* definitive: "the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order." Eliot proposes what can be called a *creative* denial of time. He understands, as the scientists of man do not, the necessary multi-dimensionality of kultural order. The artist is compelled, by Eliot's audacious attempt to create, if not a kultur, at least the poet's equivalent of a kultur, to make the present in the image of a coherent ordering of the past. The poet is required not only to re-discover the existence of the tradition but also to create a present which it can inform. Eliot redeems himself from time by way of a truncated teleology, one which proposes the present, not some distant absolute, as the final cause. It is the ploy which would be elected only by a man at his extremity, because he bears his hope in the fragile vessel of perfected consciousness. Like gnosticism and puritanism, which depended on the elite consciousness, Eliot's tradition, failing its creative realization, is transformed into an article of faith.

As the following statement of Gertrude Stein's was made at roughly the same time as Eliot's, it represents an instance of *post*-modernism perhaps only in that it is less familiar: "The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends upon how every body is

doing everything." Stein, whose philosophic master was William James (c.f. Eliot's F.H. Bradley) finds eternity in *action* which responds to the immediacy of the situation. Rather than depending upon creation to make both the poem and the kultural order in which it can have its proper issue, Stein sees order arising from the chaos and revealing itself as an accomplished act. Time, in other words, may also be denied from the inside out. The structures of eternity are revealed in bits and pieces, not as the totality of the creative act, but as they occur in the doings of men.

The limitations of this distinction between modernism and post-modernism should be clear. Especially as it applies to works of art in themselves, it cannot be made with any precision. In seeking antecedents for an art which might have some use in this rigorous situation, however, the modernists turn to those elements of the tradition in which perfected form appears as the instrument of mysterious, if not mystical, insight—epiphany, the revelation of the transcendental power, the subconscious or the superconscious. The post-modernists, on the other hand, look for insight *in* the form itself. For them, form-making is not a ritual activity during which it is expected that the god will be made manifest; it is rather the tracing and re-tracing of a skin—a drum-head perhaps—on which the steps of men and gods come togehter in their action to create a single rhythm.

8

Santayana calls Whitman and Browning "poets of barbarism." He is somewhat mean-spirited about it. But they were—no doubt, they were. They are also our sources.

Olson, on Melville: "He was an original, aborginal. A beginner." A barbarian.

Whitman, Browning, Melville. The nameless poets of Sumer, the glyph-makers of the Yucatan, Homer. One might add Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and the barbaric philosophers, Will James and Charles Sanders Peirce. Such are the sources of the barbaric present.

Whitman writes of a poetry which responds to "the eternal bodily composite, cumulative, natural character of one's self."

Perhaps it would do something to right the balance in our understanding of ourselves, if we had a somatic history to complement intellectual history. Bruno Snell, in *The Discovery of Mind*, writes a few valuable pages which indicate a direction in which such a discipline might begin. He observes that the Homeric vocabulary is rich in words which refer to aspects of the body, but that Homer, lacking the concept of body as such, sees man as an assemblage of parts: "Again and again Homer speaks of fleet legs, of

knees in speedy motion, of sinewy arms; it is in these limbs, immediately evident as they are to his eyes, that he locates the secret of life." Much of our knowledge of the human body, however, as well as evolutionary history and the history of the physiological sciences would be irrelevant to the discipline, as they do not locate the *secret* of man's life at all. Most of Darwin's work would appear to the somatic historian as properly a part of intellectual history, the mind's treatment of the body as object. In this passage from one of Darwin's early notebooks, however, he would find hard evidence: "If we choose to let conjecture run wild, then animals, our fellow brethren in pain, disease, suffering and famine—our slaves in the most laborious work, our companions in our amusement—they may partake of our origin in one common ancestor—we may be all melted together." His first conclusion here—"they may partake of our origin in one common ancestor"—is, of course, the scientific proposition which made him one of the chief characters in our intellectual history, but the other comment—"we may be all melted together"—seems a recognition of the somatic shock of his insight. It might have been the fundamental premise in a phenomenology of body in which Hegel's phenomenology of the mind could have incarnated.

Lacking such a discipline, we have Whitman's uncouth assertion.

Whitman was one of those innovators whose precedent created a new order of poetry. *Leaves of Grass* was a realization of all that was unavoidable, if American poetry was to be more than a pale imitation of English verse. Like any true innovation, however, it was idiosyncratic—it could not be imitated. Whitman's means were so rooted in the articulated vision of the poem that they could not be abstracted for use by his followers. The characteristic problem for the American poet in this century has been to retain the advantages of Whitman's language, without degenerating into rhythmic incoherence. "It was you that broke the new wood," Pound writes in his grudging salute to Whitman. "Now is the time for the carving."

Without techniques, the modern poet was, with each new poem, thrown back on the primitive fact of language as his most definitive condition. His problem was directly parallel to the painters' who were, at the same time, discovering that paint and canvas were the realities of their art. William Carlos Williams voices the despair of the artist (whatever the medium) in this century, when he says, "Without measure we are lost. But we have lost even the ability to count." What is required, he goes on to say, is "a new measure by which may be ordered our poems as well as our lives."

Wherever an organism steps it steps, there is cosmos. It is radically particular, private, but it is *there*. Whitehead writes: "A young man does not initiate his experience by dancing with impressions of sensations, and then proceed to conjecture a partner. . . . The true empirical doctrine is that physical feelings are in their origins vectors, and that the genetic process of

concrescence introduces the elements which emphasize privacy." The second sentence can be translated thus: The whole world comes at you like a shot. It gets sorted out and placed in your composition (whether you are composing a poem or a life) according to what kind of being you are—what kind of being you have done. Whitehead's problem with language is that his nouns do not want to *stay* nouns. When a vector—a directional force, a river, a wind, a bullet—is turned into concrete, it creates a tense and unstable state of affairs, like a Brancusi sculpture, always wanting to fly away.

When the organism *counts* its steps, its privacy potentially becomes a public matter.

9

In their attempts to find ways around or through Whitman, both Eliot and Pound turned to Browning. As an English barbarian he seemed at least to have more devices for relieving his barbarism than Whitman, and his force has continued to play in our poetry.

Of the pre-Socratic Greek era Georg Lukacs writes: the Greeks "drew the creative circle of forms this side of paradox and everything which in our time of paradox, is bound to lead to triviality, led him to perfection." Browning, however, makes paradox into one of the central components in his recovery of the epic possibility. Paradox is the instrument of mind and the body of kultur. The tensions which arise between the world lived-in and the living-world of consciousness have been articulated so skillfully that an ironic, abstract unity has seemed a viable substitute for a more substantial place to live.

In his earlier work, Browning shows himself to be a master ironist, and he elaborates facets of his own ironic understanding of himself into an impressive cast of characters. His practice of the dramatic monologue, which, representing a limitless world in a limited zone of consciousness, is in itself a paradox, forces him persistently into questions which the pre-Socratic Greeks never formulated. By multiplying points of view in *The Ring and the Book*, he allows the range of paradox to expand geometrically. The abstract distances implicit in time and space are called into question and are allowed to return as the concrete shape's of the poet's creation.

The dramatic monologue became an important form at the time when both the limits of the self and the substantiality of external reality were being questioned. The advantage of character as a discipline of the poet's language is that it allows a clarity of center, without requiring a knowledge of limits. The self has a center and a limit which, to borrow a metaphor from Ludwig Wittgenstein, is something like a visual field. Its limits are not

definitively established except by the unperceived center. The writer of the dramatic monologue moves the center of *his* language—his language must always be an *agent* of himself—and allows character to develop there. It is this fact which both gives the dramatic monologue its peculiar dual quality of presenting the character as well as the poet and makes it preeminently a form not of expression but of exploration.

Browning's most persuasive gift as a poet is his ability to create the illusion of characters whose language is continually on the verge of breaking under the burden of selfhood. Their speeches are charged with all of the false starts, half-recognized truths, and half-recognized falsehoods of minds trying, by force of will, to combine personal desires for an ideal spiritual order with an unyielding and uncooperative actuality. It is for this reason that Santayana calls him a poet of barbarism. The "personages" in Browning's poems, he says, "quite like men and women in actual life, are always displaying traits of character and never attain character as a whole." He means of course that Browning's characters never become embodiments of ideas, either in themselves or for the reader. Browning was thrown into what must have appeared a limitless world. With each new discovery about the potentials of his language, the limits of the actual crumbled and re-established themselves just beyond thought. In "Andrea del Sarto," he suggests that the striving is self-justifying. That "A man's reach should exceed his grasp" may be true enough for the artist, because his reach is limited by his craft; psychologically, it is disastrous.

The Ring and the Book appears, first, as a demonstration of the failure of subjective testimony to yield a public reality. The question which Browning confronted was philosophic, or, so it must seem to us, as we cannot experience it as an absence of reality, and it is usually assumed that he gives a philosophic answer. What Pound and Eliot at least half-recognized in Browning, however, is that his work arouses the philosophic curiosity and keeps it in unrelieved excitement until another, more reliable, mind appears. It solves the problem of life by exhausting of our interest in the question. Browning draws the creative circle of forms utterly *beyond* paradox. *The Ring and the Book* demonstrates that knowledge is specific and does not depend upon some *ultimate* fact which must be first established.

It would be futile to illustrate at any length how *The Ring and the Book* exhausts the reader's will to transcendent knowledge, how it finally frustrates his attempts to answer the questions it requires him to ask. This passage chosen almost at random from the commentaries on *The Ring and the Book*, however, will show the process at work. Morse Peckham writes:

> Book I is a dramatic monologue uttered by Robert Browning... But what Robert Browning? Whose Robert Browning? Is Isa Blagden's Robert Browning the same as Julia Wedgwood's? Judging from the letters we

> have, one finds it impossible to think so. Is Elizabeth Barrett's Robert Browning the same as Elizabeth Browning's Robert Browning? Is the Robert Browning of this woman—or either of these two women—to be identified with Robert Browning's Robert Browning. Which Robert Browning's Robert Browning?

Of course, Mr. Peckham goes on to draw conclusions from his questions, but these are the kinds of unending meditations which the poem invites. Altick and Loucks list twenty questions of significant *fact* which are open to interpretation, to say nothing of the endless epistemological, theological, moral and metaphysical questions which the poem raises.

Of course, the dramatic monologue is, as a formal situation, fraught with philosophic implications, but Browning responds to them as a craftsman, not as a thinker. It was his *practice* as poet which allows him to retrieve for his time some measure of that sense of being at home which had diminished persistently since "the problem of life" had been stated as a philosophic problem.

The form of *The Ring and the Book* is not strictly speaking a series of dramatic monologues, or not simply so. It shares something with other maverick forms of the post-Romantic consciousness. If it raises philosophic questions, it gives them a grounds in which they can find a specific content. As in *Moby Dick*, the reality which is continually in danger of being lost in ambiguity is confirmed by an irreducible ring of fact. Browning provides a "guardianship," as he calls it in the last lines of the poem, a reality which can be inhabited, even if it is not relieved by grace. We are asked to share not a vision, like the dance at the conclusion of *In Memoriam*, which is presented as an alternative to *apparent* reality (that Henry Hallam is dead, etc.), but a process which harmonizes fact and action:

> Repeats God's process in man's due degree,
> Attains man's proportionate results—
> Creates, no, but resuscitates perhaps.
> Inalienable, the arch-prerogative
> which turns thought, act—conceives, expressed too.

If earlier in his career, Browning had used the dramatic monologue to distance himself from his material, to try out other philosophies and alternative selves, he underscores in *The Ring and the Book* the fact that all of the speeches exist in and through the poet. It is the lyric assertion, in a sense, but the lyricist proposes his subjectivity as the guarantor of vision. Browning appears only as the *agent* of a possible salvation, and in both of his monologues, he draws attention back from the made-thing, the poem itself, to the *act* of his work among the literal facts of the case. Browning is the ring-maker, the craftsman, but more importantly, he is the priest who presides at the wedding, as he says, "Linking our England to" Guido's Italy. The

energy of *The Ring and the Book* derives ritualistically from that fact. The most important evidence which *The Ring and the Book* brings to bear is in support of the more characteristic understanding of twentieth-century thought that the ritual activity of speech is precedent to speech-about-something as the condition of reality.

If Melville breaks through the rigidities of the ancient Greek conception of space, allowing space an immediacy which becomes both the form and content of post-modernist writing, Robert Browning re-opens possibilities for participation in space which had been limited by the Socratic injunction. The extraordinary circumstance which gives western kultur from Pericles to Victoria its unity is that character, the examined life, appeared as the theater of all activity. Browning's *The Ring and the Book* takes its beginning inside the limits which that theater proposes, but goes on to expose those limits, exceed them, and spill over into the street.

It may be argued that Browning merely substitutes one set of problems for another. Those who followed him most closely, Pound and Eliot, were inclined to combine something of Browning's practice with authoritarian politics and authoritarian religion. They sought in Browning's impersonality, which was effectively self-denying, a solution to the problem of the heroic. The romantic cult of personality had made exhausting demands on the will to integrate, and it appeared that, if integration were to be an open option, it required forms which could be constructed of largely impersonal matters, myths, theologies, kultural totalities, etc., in which the personal atrophies. Only in their late work, *The Pisan Cantos* and *The Four Quartets*, did they begin to allow the forms which occur of their own authority to emerge in their work. For Browning, however, the shock of history restored him to himself as participant in history. In the old yellow book documenting a late seventeenth century murder case, which was to become the source of *The Ring and the Book*, he found a cell of poetic energy which could be exploited, without the self-exploitation which had left his Romantic forebearers spent at an early age and his modernist followers whoring after authoritarian absolutes.

10

Edward Sapir is kinder than Santayana in his assessment of Whitman's and Browning's failures, perhaps because he grounds his argument in specific technical considerations.

Languages, he says, "are the invisible garments that drape themselves about our spirit and give a predetermined form to all its symbolic expression." The language of poetry, however, as he goes on to observe, is doubly

predetermined. In one of its folds, it reveals a form which transcends the structure of any particular language. To the extent that it draws its energy from that form—Sapir calls it "our intuitive record of experience"—it is translatable. In its other fold, it is the formal realization of the genius of a given language, and it arouses our interest in "the specific how of our record of experience."

The Darwinian vocabulary in which he describes the artist's situation reveals clearly the naturalistic bind in which his transcendental spirit finds itself. "The artist," he says, "has intuitively surrendered to the inescapable tyranny of the material, made its brute nature fuse easily with his conception."

The most fundamental testimony of the poetry of the past century has been that Sapir's tyrant is ourselves. Language begins to appear as a dimension of space, rather than a medium on which we impress what we merely think or feel, and, if it seems brutish and tyrannical, it is so in part because we have tried to deny it in the same way we have tried to deny our occupancy of the other three dimensions. From the present vantage—Sapir was writing in 1921—it is clear that the impulse which he condemns in Whitman and Browning has become the motive force in our poetry:

> Certain artists whose spirit moves largely in the non-linguistic (better, in the generalized linguistic) layer even find a certain difficulty in getting themselves expressed in the rigidly set terms of their accepted idiom. One feels that they are unconsciously striving for a generalized art language, a literary algebra, that is related to the sum of all known languages as a perfect mathematical symbolism is related to all the roundabout reports of mathematical relations that normal speech is capable of conveying. Their art expression is frequently strained, it sounds at times like a translation from an unknown original—which indeed is precisely what it is. These artists—Whitmans and Brownings—impress us rather by the greatness of their spirit than the felicity of their art.

As a linguist, a scientist of the spirit, he is no less bound by the soap bubble of the kultural order than Santayana. Whether one defines a human world to be studied inside the bubble, in natural space, or outside the bubble, in transcendental space, the discovered factuality inevitably reaches out of itself, and the energy of the new found knowledge is drained in its confrontation with the excluded dimension. What we know about ourselves is necessarily defined in three dimensions and the *illusion* of a fourth, which is the unknown and uncontrollable dimension curling into the human mind and body where the world repeats itself and opens itself to meaning. If Whitman and Browning fail, it is not because they *attempt* to reveal our intuitive record of experience" but because they do it imperfectly. The strained expression which Sapir hears in them issues from a syntax which strains

everything to an ordering of first and last things. Whitman and Browning enter language to show that the intuitive record of experience which language embodies speaks itself in forms arising at the intersection of the world's Being and human action.

The relationship to earth proposed in our knowledge has vacillated between asceticism and imperialism. The earth has seemed either chimera and dream or a territory to conquer. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, when man himself became the crucial scientific riddle, the vacillation, which had been historical, became immediatly personal. It is not proper to say that our knowledge is useless. Rather, it is disciplined, and we are not, so an immense gulf stands between us and what we know, especially about ourselves. A rigorous call to discipline, however, is beside the point and, in our time, seems always to lead to bad politics. It is possible to admire (the supposed) coincidence of freedom and discipline which was the foundation of eighteenth century decorum, but it is not possible to reconstitute the privileged moment when it seemed that a transcendent kultural order and a benign natural order supported and confirmed one another.

In 'Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man," Husserl asks, ". . . why is it that so luxuriously developed humanistic sciences have failed to perform the service that in their own sphere the natural sciences perform so competently?" He observes that the sciences tend to *close* the world in their disciplines: psychology becomes psychologism, history becomes historicism, etc. Even literary criticism appears as a self-contained mode of thought which defines itself apart even from literature. The sciences of man, in other words, substitute a self-contained methodology for a self-contained object of study. Husserl writes:

> . . . a consistent abstraction from nature does not, for the practitioner of humanistic science who is interested purely in the spiritual, lead to a self-contained "world," a world whose interrelationships are purely spiritual, that could be the theme of a pure and universal humanistic science, parallel to pure natural science. Animal spirituality, that of the human and animal "souls," to which all other spirituality is referred, is in each individual instance casually based on corporeality. It is thus understandable that the practitioner of humanistic science, interested solely in the spiritual as such, gets no further than the descriptive, than a historical record of spirit, and thus remains tied to intuitive finitudes.

There is, in other words, a silence in which our knowledge speaks but which it cannot fill. It is the silence of being, of earth, the silence of the kulturpoem. ". . . all the arts are dumb," as Northrup Frye says. "In painting, sculpture, or music it is easy to see that the art shows forth, but it cannot *say* anything. And, whatever it sounds like to call the poet inarticulate or speechless, there is an important sense in which poems are silent as statues."

Confronted by a knowledge which had withdrawn into the silence of its own methodology and a world which no longer seemed to make its Being manifest, the poem had no option, if it were to *be* at all, than to rise from the page and speak in its own character. I do not mean that the poem undertook to deliver itself of small bits of wisdom, or, in a more sophisticated sense, that it incorporated criticism, so it was both the work of art and its own critique, but, rather, it attempted to repossess the *source of speech* which has its existence prior to the differentiation of poetry and criticism.

The fact is that everyone needs *some* knowledge, about how he stands to himself, to other people, to the world, to the gods, and our *lack* of knowledge, just that kind of knowledge, begins to become crippling. Because of our ignorance, it begins to be difficult to get through the day, in the simplest sense.

This is not a personal confession, it is a verifiable fact. We may not be able to know much more than Homer did, but we desperately need to know that much. He may have been very close to the limits of what human beings are able to know. Of course, we have a massive technology for storing information and performing systematic transformations on it, so various parts come into relation with other parts, but we have no idea what parts should be stored or in relation to what, so we work our way through the permutations, filling the libraries and computers with all of the possible cases.

As long as knowledge was suspended in the collodion of a kultural order, even when irrelevancies were abundant, it offered a ground on which daily life could be conducted. Philosophy, oratory, and history articulated man's relationship to the cosmos, to other men, and to time, in terms which were infinitely criticizeable but useful in simple and direct ways. As Mallarmé writes, however, "Hugo reduced all prose—philosophy, oratory, and history—to poetry, and since he was himself poetry personified, he nearly abolished the philosopher's, speaker's, or historian's right to self-expression." That abolition was perfected by Mallarmé and his generation, for it became apparent that philosophers, orators, historians, and those who shared their discourse had bracketed man's symbolic behavior as an object of study and left themselves outside of it. The semiologists are correct in their assertion that their discipline is the root-study of the sciences of man. The paradox is, of course, that semiology is a science *of* signs, which is conducted in and through signs: it cannot provide itself with fundamental principles until *after* it has already completed itself. It seems a cruel paradox as we come now to the crisis which issues from the abolition of the prose disciplines. We are naked, alone, ignorant.

Fortunately, out of that nakedness and ignorance, poetry begins to propose not a science of signs but a science *in* signs. We begin to see that

language is more usefully inhabited than known.

". . . the whole function of thought," Charles Sanders Peirce writes, "is to produce habits of action." The medium of thought itself, language and its measure, reappears to fill the gulf between idea and execution which opened with the exhaustion of the kultural order. If it eliminates the possibility of final knowledge, even about the simplest things, it also creates an area of local discipline into which thought flows and completes itself in act. It provides a confidence that the steps from subject to object can be taken and, if they cannot be *known* as realizations of the whole, they do provide a regularity which can be repeated. Should they lead to further speech or action, they can be imprinted in the habitual activity of the organism.

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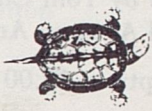

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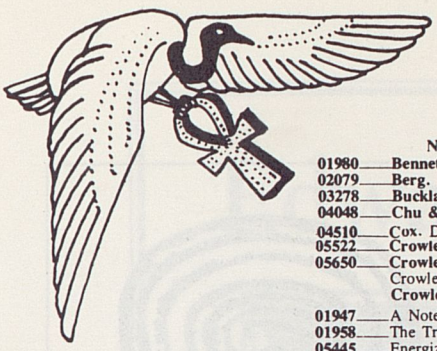

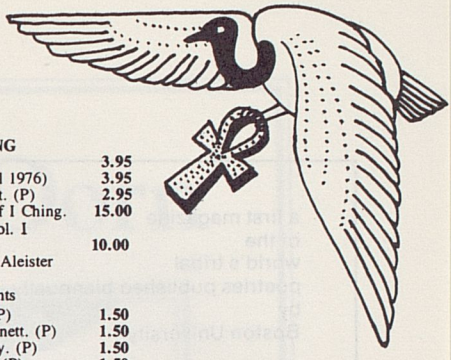

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