

MEDIEVAL FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

By GEORGE C. SELLERY, *Dean of the
College of Letters and Science, Professor of History
University of Wisconsin, and* A. C. KREY
Professor of History, University of Minnesota



WITH MAPS

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON MCMXXIX

MEDIEVAL FOUNDATIONS
OF
WESTERN CIVILIZATION

By GEORGE C. SELLERY, *Dean of the
College of Letters and Science, Professor of History
University of Wisconsin, and* A. C. KREY
Professor of History, University of Minnesota



WITH MAPS

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON MCMXXIX



COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY HARPER & BROTHERS

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

F-K



*All rights in this book are reserved.
It may not be used for dramatic, motion- or
talking-picture purposes without written
authorization. Nor may the text or part
thereof be reproduced in any manner what-
soever without permission in writing from
Harper & Brothers.*

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

THERE was a time when a goodly part of the period covered by this volume was called the Dark Ages. The title was justified by the way in which the age was treated by most of the writers who dealt with it. Any reader who came out at the far end of their accounts freely accepted the designation. Happily, the clouds of dust have cleared from the pages of modern writers and we see now the works and worth of the centuries between Romulus Augustulus and Richelieu. Despite all our modernity, we betray our medieval origins and we know ourselves better the more we know of our heritage from the Europe this book reconstructs.

The American who looks in reverence at the cathedrals and monuments of European civilization thinks of the thousand years that are looking down upon him. But behind the eyes that look up are the cultural traces of institutional attitudes of just as many centuries. Whatever the New World may have added to us, we are yet basically the heirs of European peoples and the modified products of European history. So much of what seems essentially European in this our heritage took shape in the ages covered by this volume, that the thoughtful student will have a growing sense that its pages are in a real sense an introduction to American history. The last chapter fairly carries him past the threshold of his own nation's history.

As I have read the manuscript, I have found pleasure in the skill with which the authors drew upon their own and all scholarship for fresh views and transferred to the printed page the skillful presentation that has hitherto been shared only by the students in their classrooms. As an editor, I have contributed little to the text. The book is wholly the work of Professors Sellery and Krey. I only helped contribute the "and."

GUY STANTON FORD

PREFACE

THIS book is intended to give the modern reader a background of familiarity with the medieval foundations of our contemporary Western civilization. For we of the Americas and of other lands settled by Europeans share Western civilization with Europe. This Western civilization has a varying color from country to country; but it is the variation of identical flora growing under different skies. It is one civilization. And it is one largely because we share a common heritage with Western Europe.

No one disputes the reality or importance of the contributions of the ancient Orient, Greece, and Rome to our civilization; and fortunate is he who knows, with some intimacy, what they have given to the common store. But it is to be remembered that their contributions, by and large, were made via the Middle Ages. We moderns are the immediate heirs of the Middle Ages. It is the conviction of the writers of this book that a fruitful understanding of our contemporary civilization demands the study of the temper, achievements, successes, failures, prejudices, and aspirations of our medieval ancestors.

For convenience of exposition the written record of medieval times is usually broken up into such fragments as politics, religion, economics, art, letters, and social institutions. Such a scheme carries with it the danger that the reader may fail to realize that these separate aspects of past civilization are knit together inextricably; that, for example, the economic life of the age affects political policies, and that both in turn shape and are shaped by social organization and the productions of art and literature.

And as their civilization was really a single fabric, although of many hues, so the medieval peoples, in spite of localism and the poorness of their roads, were intimately bound together in the common adventure of life. No major discovery, no major

disturbance left any part of Western Europe unaffected. The history of medieval Europe is more than the history of each of the countries composing it.

The authors of this work have endeavored to show the unity of medieval history and the interdependence of the various aspects of medieval civilization. They have centered attention upon the particular region of greatest activity for the time being, have shifted from one country to another as it has taken over the leadership, and have caught up the subordinate strands of national history at convenient and logical intervals. An enhanced sense of variety and unity in medieval development should result from this method of presentation. In their consideration of such topics as education, literature, art, and economics, they have likewise striven to illuminate the path traveled by our medieval ancestors, and have not been content merely to assert the progress of the important arts we inherited from them.

The annexation of an additional century and a half (1500 to 1660) to the medieval story is not intended to indicate a willful indifference to the customary periodization. It was carried out, *ad hoc*, because the authors were impelled to round out their survey with a study of the working out of some of the most significant and influential results of medieval effort. The era from 1500 to 1660 belongs as much to medieval as to modern times.

The authors are under heavy obligations to historical specialists. The footnotes and the bibliographies at the end give some general clues to their indebtedness to others. The text itself, in several places, will tell the historical scholar the sources to which the authors have gone for guidance. For bibliographical and kindred aid they gladly acknowledge their debt to Mrs. A. C. Krey and to Miss Faith Thompson and Mrs. Alice Felt Tyler of the University of Minnesota.

G. C. S.
A. C. K.

MEDIEVAL FOUNDATIONS
OF
WESTERN CIVILIZATION

C O N T E N T S

EDITORIAL FOREWORD	ix
PREFACE	xi
I. THE BACKGROUND OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY.	I
II. ROMAN OR TEUTON: 376-565.	21
III. THE SEPARATION OF EAST AND WEST: THE EAST TO 718. MOHAMMED.	38
IV. SEPARATION OF EAST AND WEST: THE WEST TO 700. THE MONKS.	49
V. THE RISE OF THE FRANKISH EMPIRE TO 850.	62
VI. THE BEGINNINGS OF FEUDALISM. EUROPE 850-1050.	77
VII. THE RISING POWER OF THE CHURCH. EUROPE 1050-1150.	100
VIII. EUROPEAN SOCIETY IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY. CLERGY.	124
NOBILITY.	136
THE CULTIVATORS OF THE SOIL.	145
IX. THE AGE OF THE CHIVALROUS KINGS. EUROPE 1150-1200.	155
X. THE AGE OF INNOCENT III, 1198-1216.	175
XI. FREDERICK II AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE EMPIRE, 1215-1273.	190
XII. THE RISING POWER OF FRANCE, 1180-1270.	201
XIII. COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.	216
XIV. EDUCATION AND LEARNING TO THE CLOSE OF THE THIR- TEENTH CENTURY.	240
XV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINE ARTS TO 1300.	265
XVI. ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND THE PAPACY. EUROPE 1300-1386.	278

XVII. POLITICS AND RELIGION IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.	301
XVIII. COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, AND TOWN LIFE, 1300-1500.	327
XIX. EDUCATION. REVIVAL OF LEARNING. THE FINE ARTS, 1300-1500.	355
XX. THE AGE OF CHARLES V. EUROPE 1500-1559.	374
XXI. THE REFORMATIONS: PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC.	406
XXII. HAPSBURG AND VALOIS: THE AGE OF PHILIP II. EUROPE 1559-1610.	437
XXIII. THE EPOCH OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR. EUROPE 1610- 1660.	459
XXIV. ENGLAND, IRELAND AND SCOTLAND, 1603-1660.	483
XXV. LITERATURE AND SCIENCE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER.	525
XXVI. THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERIES: THE PARTITION OF THE NEW WORLD AND THE ANCIENT EAST TO 1660.	547
BIBLIOGRAPHY	583
INDEX	617

CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY

THE ancient history of European peoples was centered in the Mediterranean basin. Other parts of Europe and adjacent lands were populated throughout antiquity, but the inhabitants were not sufficiently civilized to leave a written record of their activities. Mention is found only of those tribes which moved southward and invaded the Mediterranean circle. As the countries of the south developed, enterprising traders ventured into the northern regions and their observations ultimately found some space in the writings of the time. For all practical purposes, however, recorded ancient history was confined within the boundaries of the Roman Empire. One of the facts, therefore, which sets off medieval from ancient history is the breaking of that line and the inclusion of northern, especially western, Europe within the scope of history.

In general, historians have recognized a great difference between the life of man in ancient times and in the subsequent period to which the term medieval has been applied. They have likewise made efforts to fix a definite date before which society was ancient and after which it was medieval. They have not been able to agree, however, and their dates cover a range of five centuries. They do agree in regarding as ancient history events before 312 A.D., when Christianity was recognized by the Roman emperors as a legal religion, and as medieval history events since the coronation of Charlemagne in 800. But none of the suggested intermediate divisions has won general acceptance without qualifications.

Purely for the sake of convenience, therefore, we begin the narrative of medieval history toward the end of the fourth cen-

ture A.D. Certainly the persons then living were conscious of no radical change in their lives, and there was none. Christianity was gaining more adherents; there were more Teutons¹ within the Roman Empire; there were fewer people engaged in writing literature, or reading it; the Roman imperial officials had less power than formerly: all this is certainly true. But these changes did not take place all at once, and in some of the generations of the fifth century and in some localities the reverse was more nearly true. To the people then living there was no apparent break between what we call the old and the new; it required centuries to reveal the alterations that had actually occurred in the political and the social life of the people.

The complete description of affairs before the end of the fourth century belongs properly to ancient history, and we must here content ourselves with a brief survey of those conditions without which the events of the later fourth century cannot be well understood. Among these conditions and circumstances must be considered both the character of the population and the geography of Europe. It is essential also to understand something of the life of the uncivilized peoples of Europe before the beginning of the fifth century and the gradual transformation of the Roman Empire up to that time.

THE PEOPLES AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF EUROPE

Most of the peoples of Europe were similar in racial characteristics. Various methods of race classification have been urged, but none has found universal acceptance. One method, based upon a study of physical measurements and peculiarities, recognizes three distinct types in Europe—the Mediterranean, the Alpine and the Nordic. The members of the first group are relatively short in stature, with swarthy skins and dark hair and eyes. The second, or Alpine group, includes persons with larger frames, clearer skins and short skulls. The people in the third, or Nordic group, are long-headed, tall and blond. Under this

¹ The terms Teuton and German are frequently used as synonymous. In this book the term *Teuton* is used to designate the race, while the term *German* is used to designate that portion of the race which lived east of the Rhine, a territory covered by modern Germany.

scheme of classification the Teutonic peoples would be classed as Nordics, the Celts and Slavs as Alpine, and the majority of the Mediterranean population would fall in the first division.

An older classification has considered the peoples of Europe as belonging to four different branches of the Aryan, or Indo-European, race. This system is based upon similarities in language. According to it, most of the inhabitants of the Greek and Italian peninsulas are known as the Græco-Latin branch of the Aryan race; the people of northern Italy, Gaul, Spain and the British Isles as the Celtic branch; the people north and east of the Rhine, including the Scandinavian peninsulas, as the Teutonic branch; and the inhabitants of the interior of the continent, to the east of the Teutonic peoples, as the Slavic branch.

By the end of the fourth century A.D. these peoples occupied most of Europe, but the more remote regions of the north and the less accessible mountain regions of the south were inhabited by unrelated peoples of different races. This fact indicates that important racial movements had taken place in prehistoric times. One of the most extensive of these alien groups still existent is that of the Finns who occupy the frozen northland. Racially they are connected with the Turanian peoples of central and northern Asia. The Basques, inhabitants of the Pyrenees, and the Albanians, dwellers among the more rugged mountains in the western Balkans, appear also to be survivors of earlier races which once occupied more extensive territory.

In addition to these fairly distinct types of people, there were large numbers, especially in the Mediterranean lands, who represented the intermixture of many racial strains. This was most true of the servile population, but there had doubtless been some degree of intermingling among all classes and all peoples. Despite minor variations, however, the similarity of most of the peoples of Europe held a promise that, under favorable conditions, they might all develop a civilization as high as that of the Greeks and Romans.

The influence of geography has played an important part in determining the density of population and manner of life in the

various parts of the continent. In the Mediterranean lands, where water, warmth and vegetation were abundant, it was natural that population should increase rapidly and people develop the arts of civilization early. Farther north, where the climate was more severe and the soil more stubborn, the struggle for existence was so hard that population grew but slowly and people had but little leisure to devise elaborate means of comfort and well-being. In the south the Mediterranean, with its numerous arms and tributaries, furnished a natural route dotted with chains of islands to lure the more timid to commercial, social and political intercourse. In the north, on the other hand, rugged hills, forests and forbidding swamps interposed many obstacles to easy movement and so delayed the union of little settlements into large states. Streams, of course, afforded avenues of travel in both regions, but even these were more inviting in the south than in the north. As a result, the people in the south had developed large states and a highly cultivated life centuries before the people of the north had been able even to develop large tribes.

There were two areas in the region outside the Mediterranean circle where conditions changed rapidly and with important consequences for the inhabitants. One of these was in central Asia in the region of the grassy steppes. When rainfall was abundant this region was well suited to grazing, and the nomadic tribes which lived by grazing increased in size. When rain failed, as it did at intervals, much of this land became desert and the struggle for existence sharpened. At such times the herdsmen developed more warlike characteristics and, once started upon a career of warfare, they usually swept over the whole of the steppes country, which extended westward into central Europe. Their expansion was then felt east and west and south, though the mountains furnished some obstacle on the east and south.

The other of these regions was located in northwestern Europe around the western end of the Baltic Sea. The juxtaposition of two seas and numerous inlets combined to moderate the climate there. Fertile lands and convenient waterways favored not only the growth of population but also more extensive coöperation

than was usual among northern peoples at the time. Here too, however, seasons varied abruptly and on such occasions the population had the choice of battle, starvation, or migration. Probably in times past the inhabitants had tried all of these methods, but when they come within the range of history we find them usually choosing systematic migration. The direction of such migration was almost necessarily toward the south or southeast, preferably up the river valleys which flowed into the Baltic. These two centers, the one in Asia, the other on the Baltic, may be likened to ethnic volcanoes whose periodic outbursts caused disturbances from time to time affecting all the peoples who dwelt between them and the Mediterranean lands.

Such upheavals did occur in force in the first century A. D., again in the third, and, again, toward the end of the fourth century. In all, the migrations from the Baltic penetrated as far southeast as the Black Sea, causing turmoil among the peoples all along the route. The combined effect of these circumstances was pressure upon the Roman frontier. For nearly four centuries the Roman Empire resisted the farther advance of these people southward. The Romans fortified their northern frontier, using the Rhine and Danube rivers as natural barriers and strengthening the gap between them by a wall.¹ The northern part of Great Britain, which they had also included in their Empire, was strengthened against attack from the north by a series of walls. Along these fortifications were stationed garrisons of Roman soldiers, and, as a further protection, retired veterans were settled on these frontier lands. In a sense this frontier line acted as a dam against the pressure of tribes from the north, but it served also as a means of civilizing them, for peace was more common than warfare along its front. At any rate it furnished a line of constant contact between Roman and barbarian which could not fail to influence both.

¹The completed wall was rather a boundary mark than a formidable military barrier. In part it consisted of a ditch and mound of earth, the Pfalgraben, whose remains can still be seen in parts of southern Germany. Another portion of it was in the form of a low wall, the famous Teufelsmauer, much of which can still be traced. Military garrisons erected fortifications some distance back from this wall.

THE BARBARIANS BEFORE THE INVASIONS

As a result of this contact the Romans learned much about these people who were pressing on their border. Roman writers from the time of Julius Cæsar, who had actually invaded the land beyond the Rhine, had something to say about them. The most systematic attempt to describe them was made by Tacitus, who wrote more than a century after Cæsar. Thereafter the Romans seem to have felt so well informed that, though references to the barbarian tribes became more and more numerous, few writers felt it necessary to describe them. From the earlier accounts it may be gathered that these northern neighbors of the Romans were a people physically larger than the average Romans, larger even than the Gauls. Their manner of life was semi-nomadic, and included some practice of agriculture and grazing with a great deal of hunting and fishing. The chief occupations of the men were fighting and hunting, domestic economy (generously interpreted) being left largely to the women and some slaves. Their organization was simple. Resting upon blood-kinship, it extended little beyond the limits at which such kinship was recognized. They had a religion which reflected a high degree of enslavement to nature, for they deified the forests, swamps and ocean mists, as well as the more striking phenomena of sun, moon and lightning. Their language was well developed, but the art of writing was still in a very rudimentary stage, consisting of simple runic inscription. Their weapons, cooking utensils and other implements unearthed in recent archeological explorations indicate a degree of advance considerably beyond that of the North American Indians of our colonial period. From the investigations of philologists it appears that there were two large groups of these people—the West Teutons who occupied the regions on the other side of the Rhine, and the East Teutons who lived along the Baltic. Philological evidence also points to the existence of amphictyonies, or confederations of tribes for religious purposes, especially among the East Teutons. So much may be said with a fair degree of certainty about these people when the Romans first encountered them.

Many changes, however, took place among them in the four centuries during which the Roman frontier barred their progress southward. The most apparent change was that, toward the middle of the fourth century, these Teutonic tribes extended all the way along the Roman frontier from the mouth of the Rhine to the eastern end of the Black Sea, instead of merely along the Rhine and around the Baltic. Another noticeable change was in their organization. In place of the many small tribes indicated by Cæsar and more fully mentioned by Tacitus later, they were now grouped in large confederations, six of these holding the immense stretch of territory north of the Roman frontier, in place of the thirty or more small tribes which, in the time of Tacitus, had clustered around the Rhine alone. This consolidation arose doubtless from their experience in fighting the Roman Empire as well as each other and was likewise incidental to their migration. Some of the small tribes along the lower Rhine did not consolidate into a large confederation until the end of the fifth century.

During this period, too, the tribes along the border learned much of Roman ways of living. This result came about in many ways. Not only did Roman traders visit them and refugees from Roman justice seek asylum among them, but government officials were constantly going back and forth between them. In the earlier days many Teutonic tribesmen paid for their rashness in making raids into the Empire by being captured and sold into slavery, from which state they sometimes returned. Sometimes small tribes, fearing famine or their more powerful neighbors, were permitted to settle within the Roman frontier as agricultural laborers. This had happened frequently during the four centuries of contact, so that by 400 A.D. a belt from fifty to a hundred miles in width inside the frontier was dotted with such settlements. Then, too, the long-continued Roman policy of divide and conquer—*divide et impera*—had brought, at one time or another, nearly all the frontier tribes into alliance with the Romans against other tribes. During the third century, when many of the tribes had united against the Romans, the barbarian

8 THE BACKGROUND OF MEDIEVAL HISTORY

fighters had penetrated southward to the Mediterranean, even across the Pyrenees, and had returned to tell about their travels. More important, however, than any of these methods of contact was the practice of enrolling Teutonic warriors in the Roman legions. As soldiers of the Empire they saw service in all its provinces and were finally rewarded with the same allotments of land on the border as other Roman veterans. Frequently they returned to their own tribes. From the end of the third century the Roman emperors enlisted more and more of these tribesmen in their armies, in the course of time recruiting not merely individuals, but whole bands, under their own leaders. By this time, when the Roman army was chiefly composed of former tribesmen and commanded by men of similar origin, Teutons were no longer strangers to Romans, nor Romans to Teutons. The women and children, of course, had still to learn Roman ways from the men.

Perhaps the most convincing evidence of the spread of Roman civilization among the barbarians was their widespread adoption of Christianity. According to legend, a Roman family captured on a raid in the Black Sea country by a band of Visigoths was adopted into the tribe. The family was Christian, and a grandson determined to convert the tribe. To this end he went to Constantinople to study theology, and returned with several other priests to carry on the work of conversion. He was very successful in his mission, and Christianity spread from the Visigoths to the neighboring tribes so rapidly that practically all the Teutonic border tribes, except those at the mouth of the Rhine, were converted before the fifth century. Ulfilas or Wulfilas, as this first missionary is named, not only converted many of the Visigoths, but he also undertook to translate the Bible into their Gothic tongue. A copy of his Gothic version of the Bible is preserved today at Upsala, Sweden, as practically the first important example of the Teutonic language. Unfortunately for later events, the type of Christianity which Ulfilas taught the Visigoths was the Arian.¹ This type had been declared heretical at the Council of Nicæa in 325, but its adherents main-

¹ See pages 16, 31.