ETHNOGRAPHY AND ETHNOLOGY IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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Anthropology did not become an organized discipline until the first half of the nineteenth century, but many of its problems, ideas, and characteristic activities are very much older. In a paper read before the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Kroeber Anthropological Society in 1963 I argued that the beginnings of anthropology are to be sought in the Renaissance movement in Italy in the fifteenth century, and specifically in Renaissance archaeology and related activities. What we find in the fifteenth century, however, is little more than a point of view which made anthropological observation possible, the beginnings of an interest in differences among men. In the sixteenth century there was a great expansion of anthropological observation, and we find the first attempts to classify and interpret anthropological data. The subject of sixteenth century anthropology is too complex to cover in a single paper, and what I propose to do in this one is to report on an aspect of it which has a special interest for the later history of anthropology, namely sixteenth century developments in ethnography and ethnology.[1]

It is a fact of some interest that the word "anthropology" is of sixteenth century origin. It is foreshadowed in the title of a Latin book on human anatomy published at Leipzig in 1501, the Antropologium, or "discourse on man" of Magnus Hundt the Elder. The word "anthropology," as the general name of a subject, comes, however, from another Renaissance Latin form, anthropologia, "study of man," which is first attested in 1506, appearing as the title of one section of a popular Latin encyclopaedia by the Italian writer Raffaele Maffei of Volterra. The section entitled Anthropologia was a dictionary catalogue of famous men. In 1533 another Italian, Galeazzo Flavio Capella, published a small book of Italian essays entitled Anthropologia which, according to the title page, dealt with "the praise and excellence of men, the dignity of women, the wretchedness of both, and the vanity of their efforts." Anthropologia was used again in 1596 by Otto Casmann as the title of a Latin work on psychology and human anatomy. The English form "anthropology" dates from 1593, when it was used in a work of dubious scholarship by a contentious British astrologist named Richard Harvey. Harvey used it to designate an attempt to define "normal" human behavior.[2] None of these sixteenth century uses relates to a subject which would now be considered anthropological.

The words "ethnography" and "ethnology" were not coined before the late eighteenth century. When a sixteenth century writer proposed to deal with subjects which we would now label ethnographic he usually used some phrase like "life and customs" in the title of his book. The closest sixteenth century equivalent to "ethnology" was the phrase "moral history" used by José de Acosta in 1590 as a parallel to "natural history." The word "history" in these contexts has its original meaning of "research" or "a report on research," while "moral" is derived from the Latin word mos, moris, "custom."

Many travel books and geographical treatises of the sixteenth century contain sections or passages on the customs and institutions of the areas discussed, but there were also works the ethnographic content of which was of primary importance. There was enough public interest in foreign customs so that the fact that a book contained ethnographic information was sometimes emphasized in the title. As examples we may note The life and location of the Circassians by Giorgio Iteriano (1502, in Italian); The beliefs, religion and customs of the Ethiopians by Damião de Goes (1540, in Latin); The established laws, customs and other remarkable and memorable matters of the Kingdom of China and of the Indies, a collection of letters from Jesuit missionaries (1556, in French); Story of the most remarkable matters, rites and customs of the great Kingdom of China by Juan González de Mendoza (1585, in Spanish). The last work includes some information on the Philippines.

In numerous other cases, the ethnographic interest of a travel account was indicated by a descriptive subtitle. So in 1578 Jean de Léry, writing in French of his journey to Brazil, offered to describe also "The customs and strange ways of life of the American savages, with a colloquy of their language."

The ethnographic information provided in sixteenth century books is usually disappointing to a modern reader, however. It is seldom detailed or specific and is likely to be particularly weak on matters of family life, social organization, and curing. Ethnographic observations were made by amateurs, usually inexperienced ones, and were published for the entertainment of a general public which was more concerned with curiosities than with acquiring systematic information. There were no learned societies to provide audiences with technical knowledge and interests.

A surprisingly high proportion of the ethnographic data published in the sixteenth century relates to the New World. There is some for Ethiopia, the Near East, Japan and China, but less than the frequency of European contacts with these areas or the popularity of books about them would lead one to expect. The amount of information provided for Africa south of the Sahara and for India is particularly disappointing.

Although ethnographic information on the New World in sixteenth century books is somewhat more abundant, it is scattered, in the sense that there is relatively little information on any one people. Perhaps there is only one New World culture for which it would be possible to put together a reasonably full ethnography from sources published in the sixteenth century; I refer to the Tupinambá of the Brazilian coast, described by André Thevet, Hans Staden, Jean de Léry, Michel de Montaigne, Manoel da Nóbrega, and others.[3] It was not until the twentieth century, however, that anyone undertook to collect and organize the data on the Tupinambá; as far as I can determine, no stay-at-home European writer in the sixteenth century who discussed the Tupinambá cited more than one of the sources on them.

Those readers who are familiar with the very extensive sixteenth century sources on Mexico and Peru used by modern students of these areas may be surprised at my claim that only the Tupinambá were reasonably well described in sixteenth century books. The point is that many of the best sixteenth century accounts of Mexico and Peru, works such as those of Bernardino de Sahagún, Diego de Landa, and Cristóbal de Molina, remained in manuscript until modern times.

The development of higher standards of ethnographic field work was seriously delayed by the fact that much of the best sixteenth century work was not published promptly. Publication outlets were limited, and in Spain there was both an ecclesiastical and a civil censorship.

It is worth noting that a substantial part of the ethnographic reporting done in the sixteenth century was a form of applied anthropology, being carried out at the request of government officials or in connection with mission programs. The Spanish government seems to have been the first one in the sixteenth century to recognize the importance of applied anthropology, probably as a result of the influence of the Italian scholar, Pietro Martire d'Anghiera (1457-1526), who was influential at the Spanish court in the first quarter of the century. Unfortunately, secrecy, or at any rate avoidance of publicity, was a fundamental tenet of Spanish official policy, so the reports made at government request were generally placed on file rather than published. One of the factors in the failure of the Portuguese to conquer more of India than they did may well have been the lack of interest in applied anthropology displayed by Portuguese officials. The Portuguese in India never understood native social organization and custom well enough to be able to deal effectively with their colonial problems.

Europeans of the sixteenth century had some other sources of ethnographic information besides written reports. Many natives of far countries were taken to Europe as slaves or captives, sometimes for the express purpose of exhibiting them. For example, Cortés took a very large party of native Mexicans to Spain with him in 1528, including two princes, eight jugglers, and twelve ball players.[4] The jugglers were sent on to Rome where they performed for the Pope.[5] Fifty Tupinambá were taken to Rouen in 1550 to participate in a pageant put on by the city in honor of the King of France.[6] A diplomatic mission from Japan called on the Pope in 1585, and the envoys were objects of great public interest. During their stay in Europe they were repeatedly questioned about Japanese customs.[7] Ethnographic specimens were also collected. Ferdinand of Hapsburg had a collection of Mexican carvings and feather work which was part of the treasure Cortés had taken to Europe; part of this collection is still preserved in Vienna.[8] Michel de Montaigne, who never visited America, owned a number of Tupinambá specimens, including a hammock, a sword club, a wrist guard, and a stamping tube.[9] Some of the ethnographic accounts published in the sixteenth century were illustrated with woodcuts or engravings. The pictures varied greatly in accuracy. The first accurate and informative ones were the woodcuts accompanying Hans Staden's account of the Tupinambá, published in 1557.

It is unusual in sixteenth century ethnographic accounts to find comparisons made with other contemporary native peoples; most men who made ethnographic notes had no prior experience of their own with non-European peoples and had not read earlier ethnographic accounts. On the other hand, since Greek and Latin literature was the basis of education, such accounts frequently included comparisons with Greek and Roman customs or with the customs of such peoples as the Scythians or the ancient Germans on whom information was available in Classical sources.

There were some sixteenth century books which purported to be general comparative studies of particular aspects of culture. I have found

comparative studies of divination, government, burial customs, and dress which include contemporary ethnographic data.[10] In all of those which I have seen, however, the primary comparison is between sixteenth century European customs and institutions and those recorded in Classical literature. The contemporary ethnographic examples cited represent only a fraction of those on which there was published information, and they are not central to the argument. With all their limitations, however, these studies constitute the beginnings of an attempt to determine the range of variation of human behavior.

The work which served sixteenth century readers as a standard general survey of customs throughout the world was The customs, laws and rites of all peoples by Johann Boem, first published in Latin in 1520 and often reprinted and translated.[11] The original work was a selection of remarks on customs taken from the general histories available to the author, particularly the uncritical compilation of Marco Antonio Coccio, Enneades, 1498-1504. It covered only Europe, Asia and Africa and included few contemporary data. In some of the later editions, however, such as that of 1542, the author's coverage was supplemented by additional information derived from the explorations of the time. In 1556 Francisco Tamara published a Spanish translation of Boem's work containing a supplement on America of 190 pages.

Let us turn now to a consideration of ethnological theory and interpretation in the sixteenth century. In order to understand what happened it is essential to make a distinction between ethnological theory and social philosophy and to recognize that they represented separate intellectual traditions in the sixteenth century, as, indeed, they continued to do until the second half of the nineteenth century. The tradition of social philosophy influenced the ethnological tradition from time to time, but there was little influence in the other direction.

Social philosophy grew out of the attempts of Greek philosophers, notably Plato and Aristotle, to deal with problems of human behavior and social institutions by a logical argument which took for granted the values of Greek culture and the kinds of institutions with which the Greeks were familiar. The Classical tradition of social philosophy was revived in the Renaissance movement. It maintained its traditional limitations in the sixteenth century and later, broadened only to the extent that the historical experience of Europe was taken into account and Christian values were combined with Classical ones. Social philosophers did not regard ethnographic information on strange peoples as significant to their endeavor, and they made little use of it.

As an example of a social philosopher we may take Jean Bodin, a French writer of the sixteenth century who made important contributions to political theory. In a book on the problems of history published in 1566 Bodin argued that the customs of men are so varied and so subject to change that there is no point in studying them. The significant differences in human temperament are determined by climate and topography, a notion which is ultimately derived from Greek sources, notably Hippocrates.[12] The implication is that the way to take care of the problem of human differences is to study physical geography, not anthropology. Bodin's discussion of political theory is based on European experiences only.

Anthropology starts with the notion that differences among men are significant, attempts to establish the facts of human variation, and approaches theoretical problems through systematic comparison. Ethnological theory, within this framework, must bear some relation to ethnographic observation.

This is not to say that ethnological theory is uninfluenced by preconceived ideas and popular prejudices. When the men of the sixteenth century came to consider the variety of human behavior their thinking was deeply influenced by a set of traditional categories inherited from the Middle Ages and modified by ideas found in Classical literature. These categories were based on different kinds of distinctions and hence might overlap, but they provided a rough framework for classifying mankind.

One of the favorite categories of mediaeval thought about man was that of the savage, literally "forest dweller" (Latin silvaticus), called in German wilder Mann, "wild man," "wild" here having the sense of "not tamed or domesticated." In mediaeval theory the savage was a naked man covered with hair who lived a solitary life in the forest, slept in caves or under trees, subsisted by hunting and gathering, and had no religion and no social and political organization. He was a man who lived like a wild beast and had the qualities attributed to wild beasts, their virtues as well as their vices. By calling attention to the more noble aspects of what was supposed to be savage character, a preacher could use his example to shame ordinary men. In origin the savage was a refugee from human society and could be reclaimed or tamed by kind treatment and education. The savage was a popular subject in European art of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.[13]

The savage had become a firmly fixed stereotype before the discovery of America, and the accumulation of evidence about the actual varieties of mankind since then has introduced only minor modifications into the popular notion. The idea of the savage has had a persistent and pernicious influence both on ethnographic observation and on ethnological theory.

The European explorers were much interested to find that the New World appeared to be full of "savages." For most sixteenth century Europeans the classic "savages" came to be the Tupinambá, who wore not even a fig leaf and ate war captives. Visitors to Brazil, such as André Thevet, were impressed by the fact that the Tupinambá were not at all hairy, but for some reason they saw no particular significance in the fact that these American "savages" lived in stockaded villages.[14] In the logic of the Europeans it followed that, if the natives of the New World were savages, they must be men without law or government, and probably also without religion. It made an unforgettable rhyme in French: sans roi, sans loi, sans foi.[15] Some version of this phrase is found in almost every sixteenth century work which deals with American "savages." On the other hand, it was a matter of observation as well as expectation that the "savages" were more courageous and generous than most Europeans.

Another important traditional category was that of heathen. This concept was derived from the Biblical Hebrew category of gōyim, "the nations," "the gentiles," i.e., all non-Jews. The Hebrew word is translated in the New Testament by the Greek word ethnē, "nations." The

English word "ethnic," as in "ethnic folkways," is derived from the adjective form of this word. When the Christians took over the category they tended to apply it to all peoples who were neither Jews nor Christians, although sometimes the Moslems were also excluded, on the grounds that they also worshipped the God of the Old Testament. Religion was the most important basis for the distinction between "us" and "them" in sixteenth century Europe, and "we" in a broad sense were Christians, while "they" were heathen. The word "nation" in sixteenth century literature frequently carried the Biblical meaning of "heathen people" and could appropriately be applied to native peoples in the newly explored areas.

There were statements in the Bible about the characteristics of the heathen, or gentiles, which helped to form the expectations of European travellers and readers. The "abominations of the heathen" in the Old Testament were idolatry, child sacrifice, divination, consulting familiar spirits, and witchcraft.[16] Saint Paul listed as gentile vices lust, greed, lying, stealing, anger, and evil speaking.[17]

In the letters which Saint Paul addressed to Greek readers the term "barbarian" is occasionally used. In Classical Greek usage this word meant "non-Greek" and was applied even to Romans. Renaissance writers picked it up from secular Greek literature, giving it a wider currency and some new meanings. Within Europe, each people felt free to call its neighbors "barbarians," as a sixteenth century Scottish writer complained: "euere nations reputis vthers nations to be barbariens, quhen there tua natours and complexions ar contrar til vtheris."[18] In a broader sense sixteenth century Europeans used the word "barbarian" to designate peoples who were not Christian Europeans or ancient Greeks and Romans, the term thus taking on nearly the meaning of "heathen" when used to refer to contemporary people. It was one of the commonest terms applied to the inhabitants of all the newly explored lands.

The term "barbarian" also implied certain characteristics or qualities, all of them bad. In particular, barbarians were "rude," i.e., rough, bad mannered, and with reprehensible customs. Montaigne saw the significance of this usage very clearly when he considered the application of the term "barbarian" to the Tupinambá:

> Every man calls what is not his own usage barbarism; in fact, it seems that we have no other view of truth and reason than the example and idea of the opinions and usages of the country where we are. There is always located the perfect religion, the perfect government, perfect and accomplished usage of all things.[19]

Most other European writers of the sixteenth century were earnest in their ethnocentric judgments, however.

The final sixteenth century category we need to discuss is "civility," of which "policy" (in special senses, now obsolete in English) was a common equivalent. These terms were derived from Greek and Roman political theory, referring in the first place to the existence of organized government and in the second to the qualities expected of a good citizen. The sixteenth century English translator of La Perriere's Le miroir politicque provides a clear statement of the first of these meanings:

> Policie is deriued from the Greeke woord politeia which in our tongue we may tearme Ciuilitie, and that which the Grecians did name Politicke gouernement, the Latines called the Gouernement of a commonweale, or ciuile society.[20]

The second meaning of "civility," good citizenship, was associated in sixteenth century thought with familiarity with the ethics and political theory of Greek and Roman philosophers. It was supposed to be a product of the kind of literary education which the Renaissance movement had introduced. Europeans, as Montaigne said, regarded themselves as models of "civility" in both politics and letters, and they were duly critical of "barbarians" who did not share their values. In effect, "civility" was the sixteenth century equivalent of the later term "civilization." The term "civilization" did not become current before the end of the seventeenth century.

The word "primitive" existed in the sixteenth century but was not used in ethnological contexts. It was a term found mainly in theological discussions of the beginnings of Christianity, used in expressions such as "the primitive church," meaning the church in the first century.

For most sixteenth century writers the terms and categories we have discussed constituted a basis for loose descriptive classification without any implication of sequence or development. However, a number of widely read Greek and Roman writers had suggested that the earliest men were naked forest dwellers, the authors most commonly cited on this matter in the sixteenth century being Plato, in the Protagoras, and Vitruvius, On architecture.[21] It was possible to draw from this idea the logical implication that modern "savages" provide evidence for the appearance and manner of life of the early inhabitants of Europe, and at least one sixteenth century European drew this implication and did something with it. John White, who was governor of Sir Walter Raleigh's colony in North Carolina in 1587, has left us a fine series of water colors of the life of the natives of "Virginia."[22] After his return to Europe, White made a drawing of an ancient Briton which was evidently influenced by what he had seen of the "savages" of North America.[23]

The Renaissance rediscovery of the Classical theory that the earliest men were naked forest dwellers provided a basis for the development of a theory of progress. This development took place in the sixteenth century, about a hundred years earlier than Bury suggested in his well known book on the subject.[24] It took place in the tradition of social philosophy, not in that of ethnological theory.

The scholars of the Renaissance movement turned to Classical antiquity for inspiration, with the conviction that the ancients were superior to the moderns in such important fields as literature, art, philosophy, political organization, the art of war and natural science. Respect for antiquity undermined the ethnocentric self-assurance which had previously characterized Europeans and thus prepared some of them to be both more observant and more tolerant of contemporary cultural differences. The Renaissance attitude was incompatible with a theory of progress. As the sixteenth century wore on, however, the view gained ground that modern achievements were at least equal to ancient ones, even in literature and

art. This idea was advanced as early as 1539 by Cristóbal de Villalón. It was developed into a theory of progress by the social philosopher Loys Le Roy in a general essay on change published in 1575. Le Roy cited Plato for the naked state of early man, commended the cultural achievements of Classical antiquity, and then argued that sixteenth century Europeans either had surpassed or were capable of surpassing their Classical predecessors. He made no attempt to relate this record of progress to the Biblical tradition, and he skipped lightly over the Middle Ages. Ethnographic facts play no part in Le Roy's argument for progress, which is simply an interpretation of the history of Europe based on selected data, part of which were purely hypothetical. Le Roy's statement of the idea of progress contains all the standard ingredients of eighteenth century statements except the optimistic predictions of future glories which inspired eighteenth century speculators.

The problem of classifying the varieties of mankind was met, in the ethnological tradition, by the development of a theory of cultural evolution. The key figure in this development was the sixteenth century Jesuit scholar, José de Acosta, who spent the years 1572-1586 in Peru and 1586-1587 in Mexico, taking advantage of the opportunity to collect information on the natural history and ethnography of the areas in which he lived. In a work on missionary policy, which was written in Peru in 1576-1577 but not published until 1589, Acosta proposed to classify all "barbarians" into three classes: first, those who have the knowledge and use of letters and hence possess a high degree of civility, like the Chinese and Japanese; second, those who lack writing but have an organized government and religion and live in stable settlements, like the Mexicans and Peruvians; and third, those whom he classified as savages, like the Caribs and the Brazilians. Within the third class he made a distinction between savages like wild beasts who have no sort of organization and somewhat superior ones who have the rudiments of organization and are more peaceably inclined.[25]

This is a general ethnological classification related to specific contemporary peoples. It is organized explicitly as a hierarchy of excellence with the people most like Christian Europeans at the top and the ones judged least like them at the bottom. The categories are borrowed from common sixteenth century usage, "barbarian" being used in the sense of "heathen" (the people for whose conversion Acosta was arguing), and the concepts of relative civility and savagery being used to subdivide the barbarians. Acosta had limited personal acquaintance with peoples in his third category and had obviously read little about them, so that the influence of traditional stereotypes is particularly clear in his treatment of this group. Acosta's scheme is so similar in principle and even in some of its details to Lewis H. Morgan's famous scheme of 1877 that it seems almost unbelievable that there were three centuries between them.

In his work on missionary policy Acosta did not suggest that his ethnological classification represented an evolutionary sequence. However, in a companion work, The nature of the New World, written in Peru between 1577 and 1582 and published in the same volume with the one on missionary problems, Acosta argued that the ancestors of the American Indians were probably savages, and that the political organization found among some Indian nations in the sixteenth century was a local development from savage origins.[26]

It should be noted that Acosta claimed this development only for the natives of America; he did not suggest that it applied to the Old World as well. It may be that he was unwilling to attempt an Old World application of his theory of development because to do so would involve some contradiction of Biblical tradition. The narratives of Genesis allowed for no stage of primeval savagery. Acosta argued that the descendants of Noah who migrated to America went by land, passing no more than a narrow strait, and that they became savage hunters in the course of their wanderings.[27]

Acosta's book of 1589 containing his treatise on mission policy and The nature of the New World was written in Latin, the international language of sixteenth century scholarship. It was reprinted in 1595 at Salamanca, in 1596 at Cologne, and in 1670 at Lyon. Between 1587 and 1589 Acosta himself translated The nature of the New World into Spanish and expanded it into a much more comprehensive work entitled The natural and moral history of the Indies, the first edition of which appeared in 1590. The natural and moral history was one of the most widely read and influential books of the time. There were at least three Spanish editions published before 1600, together with translations into Italian, French, and Dutch. The Dutch version was translated into German in 1601, while a Latin translation appeared in 1602 and an English one in 1604. It would be interesting to attempt to trace the influence of Acosta's ethnological ideas on seventeenth and eighteenth century thought, but the task would be difficult. Writers of that period did not necessarily feel impelled to cite their sources, and Acosta's scheme embodied a substantial amount of lore which was the common property of sixteenth century Europe.

Acosta was apparently the first writer who attempted to formulate a body of ethnological theory distinct from the tradition of social philosophy. He outlined a hierarchical classification of non-European peoples based on the categories of European popular usage. Then, perhaps partly under the influence of the nascent theory of progress, he turned the part of his scheme which related to America into an evolutionary sequence. It is particularly important to note that the categories of the classification did not arise from detailed comparisons of ethnographic data but were derived from European popular conceptions into which Acosta fitted the meager data that he had. The idea of progress similarly was not based on the study of a continuous historical and archaeological record of the past but on limited historical data which were selected to fit the theory, on speculation, and on ethnocentric value judgments.

In the situation prevailing in the sixteenth century it can, perhaps, be argued that any ethnological theory was better than none, and if so Acosta deserves great credit for an original combination of ideas which became the foundation of an important intellectual tradition. It is hardly creditable to twentieth century anthropology, however, that the popular prejudices of the sixteenth century still form the framework in which many anthropologists try to handle the problems of variation and change.

NOTES

[1]A shorter version of this paper was read at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Kroeber Anthropological Society, Berkeley, April 25, 1964. In addition to the works specifically cited, a general acknowledgment is due to the great Oxford English Dictionary for references which clarified the philological problems involved in this study. I wish also to express my thanks to John F. Freeman and Dorothy Menzel for helpful comments.

Margaret Hodgen's 1964 book, Early anthropology in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, came into my hands only after the research for this paper was substantially complete, and I found no reason to make changes in the argument after reading it. In so far as we have used the same references, I came to them independently.

[2]For comments on Harvey's significance, see Kendrick, 1950, p. 99.

[3]I refer specifically to Nóbrega, 1955, pp. 442-446 (first published 1551).

[4]López de Gómara, 1554, f. 283-283v.

[5]Díaz del Castillo, 1632, ch. cxcv, ff. 226v-227.

[6]Denis, 1851.

[7]More than twenty publications resulting from the visit of the Japanese envoys are listed by Carayon, 1864, pp. 75-84.

[8]Nowotny, 1960.

[9]Montaigne, 1580, bk. I, ch. xxxi (Des cannibales); 1962, tome I, p. 237.

[10]Peucer, 1560; Román, 1575; Guichard, 1581; Boissard, 1581.

[11]Compare the discussions of Boem's work by Hodgen, 1953, and 1964, pp. 131-146.

[12]Bodin, 1951, p. 313.

[13]Bernheimer, 1952.

[14]Thevet, 1557, ch. xxxi, ff. 57v-58; 1878, pp. 151-152; Léry, 1880, ch. viii, tome I, pp. 123-124, 131-133.

[15]La Popelinière, 1582, bk. III, f. 11-11v; compare Thevet, 1557, ch. xxvii, f. 51v; 1878, p. 134.

[16]Deuteronomy, xviii, 9-14; II Kings, xvi, 3; xvii, 8-12, 16-17; xxi, 2; II Chronicles, xxxiii, 2-7.

[17]Ephesians, iv, 17-31; I Thessalonians, iv, 5.

[18]Anonymous Scot, 1549, ch. xiii; 1872, p. 106.

[19]Montaigne, 1580, bk. I, ch. xxxi (Des cannibales); 1962, tome I, p. 234.

[20]La Perrière, 1598.

[21]On the influence of Vitruvius on sixteenth century ideas of early man, see Panofsky, 1962, pp. 33-67.

[22]Lorant, 1946, pp. 185-224.

[23]Kendrick, 1950, pls. XII-XIII, pp. 123-124.

[24]Bury, 1932

[25]Acosta, 1589, De procuranda salute indorum, proemium, pp. 115-123.

[26]Acosta, 1589, De natura novi orbis, bk. I, ch. xxv, pp. 70-71; 1590, bk. I, ch. xxv; 1954, p. 39.

[27]Acosta, 1589, De natura novi orbis, bk. I, ch. xx-xxi; 1590, bk. I, ch. xx-xxi; 1954, pp. 32-35.

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APPENDIX

The ethnological theory of José de Acosta;
selections from his writings translated from the original languages
by John Howland Rowe.

I

From the introduction to How to procure the salvation of the Indians, written in 1576-77 and published in 1589 (original in Latin).

It is a popular error to treat the affairs of the Indies as if they were those of some farm or mean village and to think that, because the Indies are all called by a single name, they are therefore of one nature and kind. . . .

The nations of Indians are innumerable, and each of them has its own distinct rites and customs and needs to be taught in a different way. I am not properly qualified to handle the problem, since a great many peoples are unknown to me, while even if I knew them well it would be an immense task to discuss them all one by one. I have therefore thought it proper to speak primarily of the Peruvians in this work, so that what I write may be more applicable to all barbarians. I have done so for two reasons, the first of which is that these provinces of Peru are better known to me, so that I can speak of them with greater certainty, while the second is that this kind of Indians has always seemed to me to have, as it were, an intermediate status, by comparison with which the extremes can be more easily judged. For although all those barbarians who have been discovered in our time by the Spanish and Portuguese . . . are called Indians, and although all of them are without the light of the Gospel and are alien to human institutions, they are nevertheless not all of the same order. "Indian" differs greatly from "Indus," as I may say in jest; one barbarian is far superior to another.

Approved authors define "barbarians" as persons who reject right reason and the common usage of men (St. Thomas, on the Epistle to the Romans, ch. 1, lect. 5, and I Corinthians, 14, lect. 2). Hence the better known writers commonly speak of barbaric stupidity, barbaric wildness, and also barbaric deeds of strength, qualities which are far removed from the usage of other men and have little or no share of wisdom and proper reason.

All the barbarians of the New World were, I believe, called "Indians" because to the ancients India was the very remote region where the lands of the world were thought to come to an end, a country to which Alexander the Macedonian and Trajan Caesar penetrated, and which religious and secular writers mention with great respect, as if they were speaking of the end of the world. Following their example, it seems to me, our people transferred the name to the peoples whom they had newly discovered. At first, however, the western barbarians were not called Indians but "islanders" or "Antilleans."

Although the provinces, nations and kinds of these people are very numerous, it seems to me that there are three classes, as it were, of barbarians, differing greatly from one another, to which these Indian nations can in general be reduced.

The first class includes those who do not diverge greatly from right reason and the usage of mankind. These are for the most part people who

have a stable state organization (respublica), public laws, fortified cities, respected magistrates, secure and prosperous commerce, and, most important of all, the notable use of letters. Wherever literary traditions and books exist, the people are more humane and especially politic. The foremost people of this kind appears to be the Chinese. I have seen their written characters, which are very much like the Syriac ones. The Chinese are reported to flourish greatly, with an abundance of books, splendid academies, authoritative laws and magistrates, and magnificent public works. Next to them are the Japanese, and then the greater part of the provinces of the East Indies, to which I do not doubt that Asiatic and European institutions formerly penetrated.

These people, although they are in actual fact barbarians and differ in many respects from what is right and from natural law, should nevertheless be called to the salvation of the gospel in the same way in which the Greeks and Romans and the rest of the peoples of Asia and Europe were in earlier times called by the apostles. They are noteworthy both for their power and for having some human wisdom and should be overcome and brought under the sway of the Gospel mainly by their own reason, God working within them. If you undertake to subject them to Christ by force and violence you will accomplish nothing except to render them exceedingly hostile to Christian law.

In the second class I include those barbarians who, although they do not know the use of letters or have written laws or philosophical or civil studies, nevertheless have their own regular magistrates, a state organization, populous and stable settlements where they maintain their polity, military leaders and military organization, and some solemnity in their religion. In short, they are governed by some degree of human reason. Of this kind were our Mexicans and Peruvians, whose empires, state organization, laws and institutions anyone can justly admire.

Unbelievable as it may seem, the Peruvians made up for their lack of letters with so much ingenuity that they were able to record stories, lives, laws, and even the passage of time and numerical calculations by means of certain signs and aids to the memory which they had devised and which they call quipos. Our people with their letters are commonly unable to match the skill of the Peruvians with these devices. I am not at all certain that our written numerals make counting or dividing more accurate than their signs do. It is altogether admirable how faithfully they preserve the memory of even insignificant details for a long time by means of their quipos. However, these people also deviate much from right reason and from the common usage of mankind.

This class is widely distributed and includes in the first place empires, such as that of the Ingas was, then lesser kingdoms and principalities, like most of those governed by caciques, and third, governments with public magistrates created by common agreement, such as those of the Araucanians, the inhabitants of Tucapel and most of the rest of Chile. All have in common the characteristics that they live in towns instead of roaming around like wild beasts, that they have definite judges and governors, and that their laws apply to everyone.

However, these people have such diverse and monstrous customs, rites, and laws, and there is so much license for violent behavior among the subjects, that, unless they are under the rule of a superior power and

authority, it seems unlikely that they will accept the light of the Gospel and a life worthy of freeborn men, or, if they do accept it at first, they will not easily persevere in it. The task itself, therefore, requires, and the authority of the Church directs, that Christian princes and magistrates be justly set over those who are converted to Christian life. This must be done in such a way, however, that the people are permitted free use of their goods and property and allowed to retain those of their laws which are not contrary to nature or to the Gospel.

The third and last class of barbarians comprises uncounted nations of men in different regions of the New World. It includes savage men like wild beasts, having scarcely anything of human feeling, without law, without a king, without concert, stable magistracy, or organized government, changing their places of residence frequently or having fixed ones which at most resemble the dens of wild animals or enclosures for cattle. Here belong in the first place all the people whom we call Carybes [cannibals], who have no other occupation than cruelty, are ferocious to all strangers, live on human flesh, and wear no garments, scarcely covering their manhood. Aristotle referred to this kind of barbarians when he wrote that they could be hunted like wild beasts and subjugated by force. There are innumerable hordes of such people in the New World, for example the Chunchos, the Chiriguaná, the Moxos, and the Iscaycingas, whom we in Peru know as neighbors; also most of the Brazilians and, according to report, the people of nearly the whole of Florida.

Also in this class belong those barbarians who, while not cruel like tigers or panthers, nevertheless differ little from cattle; they are also naked and are timid and given over generally to the most abominable vices of Venus or even of Adonis [i.e., heterosexual and homosexual behavior]. Of this kind are said to be the people whom we call Moscas in the New Kingdom [i.e., the Chibcha in Colombia], the mixed multitude of people of Cartagena and of its entire coast, those who inhabit the great plains of the immense river of Paraguay, and the numerous peoples who hold the infinite tracts between the two oceans not yet fully explored but notorious by report. In the East Indies many of the islanders, such as the Moluccans, seem to be of this kind.

Here also belongs another kind of tame barbarian, but one of very scanty feeling. These people seem to be somewhat superior, displaying some rudiments of state organization but having laws and worship as if in jest. Of this kind are said to be those who dwell among the innumerable islands called the Solomons, reported to lie adjacent to the greatest of continents [the supposed great southern continent].

All these men or near men must be taught human ways, so that they may learn to be fully men. They need to be instructed like children. If they can be led to better things voluntarily by coaxing, so much the better; if not, the task should not be abandoned. If they resist their salvation and oppose their teachers and physicians with violence, they should be restrained by proper force, so that they do not hinder the spread of the Gospel. They must be confined to ensure their submission and removed from the forests to cities and human life, thus being, as it were, compelled to enter the Kingdom against their will (Luke 14).

It is not proper to judge all Indian peoples by the same standard, unless we want to make serious mistakes. Cupidity and tyranny should not

be allowed to master the Gospel, but it is equally harmful to set the idle theories of philosophers who have had no experience of the situation ahead of the tested faith and certain experience of the facts themselves.

II

From Bk. I, ch. xxv of The nature of the New World, written between 1577 and 1582 and published in 1589 (original in Latin).

I devoted much time to enquiring whether any report existed among these barbarians as to whence their first ancestors had migrated to these parts, but I was so far from being able to obtain information on the matter that they think rather that they were born and created in this New World, unless they are restrained by the Catholic belief that all kinds of men proceed from a single origin (Acts 17).

Famous authors maintain by plausible conjectures that for a very long time these barbarians had no kings nor any regularly constituted state organization but lived promiscuously in bands after the fashion of the Floridans, the Brazilians, the Chiriguaná and numerous other Indian nations, who have no regular kings but hastily improvise leaders as the fortune of war or peace requires and try out whatever behavior lust and anger suggest. With the passage of time, however, men outstanding for strength and diligence began to rule by tyranny, as Nimrod did in times past. Increasing gradually [in power], they constituted the state organization which our people found among the Peruvians and Mexicans, an organization which, though barbarous, was very different from the barbarism of the rest of the Indians. Reason itself, therefore, leads to the conclusion that this savage kind of men has proceeded principally from barbarous and fugitive men.

(Acosta's own Spanish version of this passage published in 1590 differs in significant details from the earlier Latin one - JHR.)

III

From the prologue to the Moral History, in The natural and moral history of the Indies, written in 1588-89 and published in 1590 (original in Spanish).

Having treated that which pertains to the natural history of the Indies, the remainder of the work will deal with their moral history; that is, with the customs and deeds of the Indians. . . .

If anyone should wonder at some of the rites and customs of the Indians and despise them as ignorant and stupid or detest them as inhuman and diabolical, let him observe that among the Greeks and Romans who formerly ruled the world we find either the same customs or other similar ones, and sometimes worse, as he can readily learn not only from our [Christian] authors, Eusebius of Caesaria, Clement of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and others, but also from their own [pagan ones], such as Pliny, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Plutarch. For, since the master of all unbelief is the Prince of Darkness, it is nothing new to find among unbelievers cruelties, filthiness, nonsense and madness appropriate to such teaching and instruction. It is true, of course, that in worth and natural knowledge the ancient pagans greatly excelled these of the New World, although things worthy of remembrance were found among these also; on the whole, most of their affairs are those of barbarous peoples who lacked not only the supernatural light but also philosophy and natural doctrine.