

the economic function of the cities of Germany in their historical development. A third essay, "The Origin of the Hansa and the Baltic," is primarily historical in conception. It had not been published before, but was intended as a first chapter in a larger book on the history of the Hansa, in general.

Thirdly, Rörig's essays, notably the crucial essay on medieval world economy, contain a lengthy exposition of and argument for a particular thesis on the role of medieval cities and medieval trade, in general. Among European economic historians two extreme positions had become elaborated, one represented by Bücher and Sombart, and the other by Pirenne, H. Bechtel, and Rörig. Whereas the former thought of the economy of the typical medieval town as limited in scope, extent, and variety of customers, the second group emphasized the essential international interdependence of urban economies. Whereas Bücher saw a historical development from a "town economy" to a "national economy," Rörig replies: "The real economy of medieval towns was at the same time always a world economy; only when national economies began to develop, the world economy had come, for the time being, to an end" (p. 391).

Much of the content of the essays collected in this book is an elaboration of this thesis. It is not possible to enter here into the dispute between Bücher and Sombart, on the one hand, and Rörig, Pirenne, and those siding with them, on the other. In part, this dispute is clouded by semantic problems. For example, such concepts as "town economy" or "world economy" are employed with different meanings. Moreover, whereas Bücher has in mind primarily the typical small town of the German plains, with some 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants, Rörig is inclined to think of the great emporia like Venice, Florence, Bruges, or Lübeck. But the conflict goes deeper than this, and though it cannot be said to be fully resolved—especially since the quantitative relations of medieval commerce are as yet too little explored—Rörig presents in the book under review a mass of ammunition for the "modernizers," as they have sometimes been called.

Surely in view of his arguments the Bücher-Sombart thesis cannot be maintained in its primary intransigent form.

In the course of developing his thesis of the oecumenical network of medieval trade, especially as it was carried on from and through the commercial centers in Northern Germany, Rörig presents a mass of valuable, challenging data and insights. His book is a pleasure to read, and anyone interested in the Hansa or medieval commerce will find it an indispensable companion. And last but not least, some of the essays contained in this work, such as the long essay on "The Market of Lübeck: A Topographical-Statistical Investigation of an Aspect of German Social and Economic History," are rare masterpieces of social-historical analysis which will long remain models for historians and students of society.

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MOSES HADAS. *Hellenistic Culture: Fusion and Diffusion*. Pp. vi, 324. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959. \$6.00.

The author has previously published the following important books: *A History of Greek Literature*, *A History of Latin Literature*, and *Ancilla to Classical Reading*. He is Jay Professor of Greek and chairman of the Department of Greek and Latin at Columbia University. In the present work he clearly indicates how Greek civilization after the career of Alexander the Great became strongly affected by Oriental civilizations, while at the same time it exerted a powerful influence in Syria, Mesopotamia, and northwestern India. This is naturally a most fascinating subject, and we are grateful to the writer for his scholarly treatment. He maintains with much justice that western civilization is greatly indebted to the process which he has described. The Christian church in particular drew heavily upon the culture of the Hellenistic world in which it originated and developed. It should be noted especially that the influence of Hebrew literature, chiefly the Old Testament, seems to have expedited the spread of Christianity in the eastern half of the Roman Empire.

Professor Hadas makes this significant statement on p. 264: "For the shaping of European civilization the emergence of unified conceptions of law and authority is the most meaningful consequence of interaction between east and west in the hellenistic age." In his opinion Virgil borrowed from the Jews the widely accepted idea that the Romans were an elect people. He was probably correct in making this remarkable conclusion.

There are altogether twenty chapters, which present somewhat scattered bits of information, leaving the reader in a state of mind in which he is still anxious to view the whole aspect in a more closely knit scene. The Books of the Maccabees, for example, receive more than the proper share of attention, chiefly because the author had published a great deal on this portion of Hebrew-Aramaic literature. We might also wonder why Mr. Hadas expresses this strange thought: "In Greek tragedy there are no villains: Clytemnestra and Aegisthus may not have sufficient justification for compassing the death of Agamemnon, but they have some" (p. 56). No doubt all villains have some justification for their peculiar actions, and yet we hesitate to magnify the extenuating circumstances. In general it may be said that the ancient Greeks were a bit lacking in personal virtue and have received more credit for sound ethics than they deserved.

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### ASIA

SIR MORTIMER WHEELER, C.I.E. *Early India and Pakistan to Ashoka*. Pp. 241. New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959. No price.

While Sir Mortimer Wheeler was the Director General of Archaeology in India, he initiated, on a scientific basis, a regular survey and excavation of prehistoric sites in India and utilized in it the most up-to-date scientific method evolved in Europe and America. It is, therefore, suitable that he should have presented to the learned

world the state of knowledge of prehistoric India in the form of this nicely printed and well-illustrated handbook. A comparison of it with Stuart Piggott's *Prehistoric India*, published in 1949, would give a fair measure of the progress and precision of knowledge achieved during the last ten years.

The author begins with a discussion of the chronology of the three types of wares which are of special importance in any study of Indian prehistory during the first millennium B.C. The "Painted Grey Ware," associated with the Bronze Age, is the earliest ceramic specimen yet found that belongs to a date posterior to the Indus Civilization. The beginning of this "earliest reputable pottery known to us from a number of town-sites, mentioned as already established before the Mahabharata war," is attributed by the author to the eighth century B.C., though Indian archaeologists, who excavated Hastinapura, would prefer to take it back to 1100 B.C. The initial date of the "Northern Black Polished Ware," which immediately succeeded the "Painted Grey Ware," is placed somewhere in the fifth century B.C. The third, the "Rouletted Ware," is placed, on more sure grounds, approximately at the beginning of the Christian era. With an initial gap of five hundred years—more or less—after the end of the Indus Civilization about 1500 B.C., the three types of wares mentioned above bring us through successive stages to the historic period.

The book also deals with the beginnings of the prehistoric age and gives a good account of the Stone Ages and the Indus Civilization, but its special feature is a clear exposition of the prehistoric culture of the period that immediately followed, and particularly its extension to the Ganges Valley and Central India of which very little has so far appeared in the form of a popular handbook. Sir Mortimer Wheeler writes in an easy and lucid style, and his book will surely be read with interest and profit by anyone who wants to possess general but authentic information about prehistoric India. The only blemish in the book is its last chapter dealing with the great Maurya Emperor Asoka, and the author would have been well advised to