Dear Colleagues,

a joint symposium of the ‘Euro-Linguistischer Arbeitskreis Mannheim’ and of the scholars who identify with the aims of ‘2.000. The European Journal’ will be held at RomaTre University on 22-23 September 2016. The themes of the symposium are:

1) Theodor Mommsen and Cicero. For Theodor Mommsen’s (1817-2017) bicentenary.
2) Genesis and Migration of Indo-European Languages- Research and theories on their origin.
3) On the origins of the idea of Europe.

Those who would like to take part should send an abstract of their papers, along with a short c.v., to Matthew Fox and Ermanno Malaspina for Ciceronianism, to P. Sture Ureland for Eurolinguistics, to Vincenzo Merolle for European Studies, along with a short c.v., by the end of May.

This will be the first of a number of symposia, to be held in the coming years, in Rome or at other European universities.

The underlying idea from a philological point of view is that of analyzing the current development of European languages and of selecting a common vocabulary for Europe and the West. From a philosophical point of view it will be that of promoting the ideas of tolerance and civilization proper to Western democracies.

Therefore, we invite the submission of papers and participation on the part of colleagues who, we are sure, will appreciate our efforts towards the advancement of learning. This first symposium, as well as those that follow, will be rigorously Spartan, because, apart from an inborn passion for learning, we don’t have much else to offer.

Participants could be asked a small entrance fee (of no more that €30 per person), unless we are able to find some form of grant or sponsorship. All of you can be sure of our full commitment to the success of our common endeavour.

Sincerely

On behalf of the editorial board
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Rome, 1 March 2016

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International Observer

Putin, the latest tyrant of the Kremlin

The publication of the last interview with Boris Nemtsov in the December issue of our journal raised interest, mainly because of the accurate analysis of the situation in Russia, on the part of a man who must be regarded as a martyr of the ideas of liberty. We have therefore received exhortations to carry on with our forays into the world of politics.

Putin, no doubt, is the latest tyrant of the Kremlin. He exploits atavistic fears of the Russian people, riding the wave of Nationalism. The lack of a pacific settlement in eastern Ukraine is the obvious consequence of his policy, along with a renewed distrust on the part of the West.

A collaboration and a settlement of the differences in Ukraine would have been advantageous to all of us, Europeans, Americans and Russians, but reasoning with dictators has always been difficult. Sanctions have been the obvious answer on the part of the West, sanctions that ordinary people are suffering in Russia, but unfortunately not, along with them, the millionaire friends of the dictator.

We are sorry when thinking of the situation in Russia, and sad to think that further sanctions -for example, the exclusion from the Swift code of international payments- if adopted in due time,
we are too well informed about Russia

yes, he supports government policy, but

and elsewhere, if asked would say that

true. The man in the street, in Moscow

port Putin, we read something that is not

When we read that 80% of Russians sup-

As for our contemporary European world, languages are nowadays silently discarding words that are not shared in common, and the needs of communi-

The aim of our project, from a linguistic point of view -here, as in its other aims, sketched in broad lines- is that of accompanying this process of selection, a process we must become fully aware of, and which we shall not simply receive from daily practice, but conscientiously direct and command.

The world is in fact becoming a 'glob-

The 'Euro-Linguistischer Arbeitskreis Mannheim' (chairman P. S. Ureland, Mannheim), together with the scholars who identify with the aims of "The European Journal", (editor Vincenzo Merolle, 'La Sapienza', Roma), convinced, as they are, that our civilization needs a greater endeavour aimed at superior understanding and maturity, have decided to unite their efforts to run joint symposia on 'Ciceronianism, European Studies, Eurolinguistics'. The symposia will take place every year, in autumn, e/o a European uni-

The symposia will take place every year, in autumn, e/o a European uni-

would have been effective in convincing the bulk of the people that something is wrong with the policy of the little tyrant. Notwithstanding the traditional disin-

formatja, largely adopted by the media of that country, public opinion will not ignore for long what the real situation is. People will not long believe that, in the West, we have gone mad, as Putin's media tells them. Young people in Russia use the internet, a source of information that goes far beyond the official one of the government media, while many facts are discovered by word of mouth. So, for example, the mothers, who want to know where their sons, who were doing military service, died, and why they died outside Russia. And young people want to study in the West, and to get to know the West.

We happily live in a world in which tyrants do not leave heirs, and where the truth cannot be concealed for long. When we read that 80% of Russians sup-

upport Putin, we read something that is not true. The man in the street, in Moscow and elsewhere, if asked would say that yes, he supports government policy, but we are too well informed about Russia and its history to believe that people, in that country, are so credulous. The tradition of Stalinism and of the cruelties suf-

fered, along with a government which is substantially authoritarian, explain why citizens are so prudent when expressing their own opinions. Putin sits on a powder keg, which will soon explode, obliging him to a hasty retirement.

As for Ukraine, Russia gave it just a dip with the price of gas, preventing its economic development: like the one of Poland, for example. The market econo-

my is the great conquest of the West, but in Russia they are discovering it with great difficulty, so the Ukrainians rebelled. We must not forget, obviously, that Ukraine has always been the victim of its powerful neighbour. Who remembers what the vlodimor was, in the thirties of last century, when millions of Ukrainians starved, in consequence of the criminal policy of Stalin and of his gang?

Responsibilities of the West in the Middle East

The foreign policy of the West for the last few years has been largely inadequate. As for Iraq, once toppled the bloody dictator, America had the duty to assist the young democracy in that unlucky country. This was done with a short-sightedness that caused all the subsequent events. And so the Iraqis were left substantially alone to fight both ISIS and foreign fighters, their Ministers complaining that they had been left even without weapons.

We are not Americans and cannot speak in the name of the Americans, but we are certainly part of the Western community. Let history judge if toppling Saddam was a wise move or not, but illnesses, both in the human body as in the body of society, must be cured before they spread. And so the short-sighted foreign policy of the in-

cumbent American administration was no doubt at the origin of the spreading of the ISIS and of the consequences that we are now facing.

It took a long time for Mr Obama, who speaks well but does not act equally well, to learn, in consequence of what hap-

pened in Iraq, that the weak Afghani government cannot be left alone, because democracy cannot be imported with an edict, but must conquer the hearts of people. He has therefore announced that the forces of the coalition will not aban-
al village’, and the next step, the one which we aim to achieve, is a comprehensive picture of European civilization and of the history of our continent and the West.

For this aim we need the cooperation of more cultural associations, which only apparently have different aims, but whose efforts are directed to the end, common to all of us, of uncovering the roots of our history, in order to know and understand our modern world.

Languages reflect the history of peoples and, in our effort, linguistics will be one of the main fields of research. Communication is in fact what civilization principally needs, in the sense that peoples, when communicating, and therefore achieving a better knowledge of each other, realize that there is much in common between them, and fewer or no reasons at all for enmity and confrontation. The expansion of democratic ideas, which we have experienced in Europe after the tragedies of the last century, is mainly due to the spread of the means of communication, which demonstrate every day to all of us how humankind is everywhere the same, and that what is needed is a greater consciousness of this reality. The spread of learning produces, as a natural consequence, this consciousness. Its advancement is therefore the preliminary premise to a higher level of civilization, and will be our principal concern.

From a historical and philosophical point of view, as said above, our ideas are moderate and liberal, in the sense that the authors of liberalism, from Cicero, and then from Locke onwards, have taught us. We are therefore open to debate, ready to listen to the arguments not of those who are called adversaries, because in the world of learning there is no room for the concept of being an adversary to anybody, but simply the arguments that are not necessarily coincident with our own. We are in fact convinced that only through dialogue and debate on ideas can we arrive at truth, a truth that must be verified in a process of uninterrupted debate, and in the context of daily experience. And the truth is not necessarily, and exclusively, the possession of the majorities, often so changing in democracies, but lies, for their own part, also with the minorities, whose rights we must be ready to acknowledge. Democracy, as recent experiences show, cannot be exported with weapons, while past experiences justify us in the fear that it might not be ‘irreversible’, not a conquest forever. By contrast, democracy needs the maturity of generations, the superior consciousness of the nature of humankind and its aims. Acquiring such concepts, humankind can avoid passing through more tragedies such as the ones that last century covered both Europe and the world with blood.

Summarizing our aim: we want to accompany the historical process that is taking place, since historical change is uninterrupted; we want to be witnesses of our history, but with a glance towards the future.

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What is the Enlightenment? Essay no. IX

The Idea of Progress and the End of History

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Essay no. 1 has been published in no. 2 Dec. 2013, essays nos. 2 and 3 in no. 1 June 2014, nos. 4 and 5 in no. 2 Dec. 2014, nos. 6 and 7 in no. 1 June 2015

1. Introduction
Of course many eighteenth-century writers believed in progress. The problem is that the idea had no repercussions. It remained the vague idea that mankind, particularly in Europe was getting more civilized. J.B. Bury wrote a long report on the quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns and quoted Charles Perrault:

La docte Antiquité dans toute sa durée
À l’égal de nos jours ne fut point éclairée.6

That sounds promising, but all that Perrault had in mind was freeing literature from the tyranny exercised by the humanists since the Renaissance, who dictated that the Classical models should be strictly followed. David Spadafora has pointed out that the Christian idea of linear progression remained an important source of inspiration for British authors in the eighteenth century.7 However, amongst them the relation between progress and providence was far from clear. Bossuet wrote an eloquent story of providence in his Histoire Universelle of 1684, and he ended his story with the reign of Louis le Grand (Louis XIV), which was the culmination of Christian civilization. Now Bossuet had no problem explaining how mankind got to the seventeenth-century French monarchy, for the biblical story explains the route. However, the philosophers of the Enlightenment had to find the sign of progress in a secular human history, and the remarkable thing is that they did not even try. In another context Hume’s argument in the Dialogue at the end of his Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals focused on how, in Classical Greece, homosexuality and the murder of former friends were functional to society, because these manners were accepted. This might instead of bringing them down. Without considering, obviously, that a minority, helped by a military foreign force, cannot rule against the majority. Let us therefore end with the words, Ciceronian in inspiration, of Alexis de Tocqueville:

“Si la démocratie a plus de chances de se tromper qu’un roi ou un corps de nobles, elle a aussi plus de chances de revenir à la vérité, une fois que la lumière lui arrive, parce qu’il n’y a pas, en général, dans son sein, d’intérêts contraires à ceux du plus grand nombre”; “les lois de la démocratie tendent, en général, au bien du plus grand nombre, car elles émanent de la majorité de tous les citoyens, laquelle peut se tromper, mais ne saurait avoir un intérêt contraire à elle-même”; “Il y a plus de lumières et de sagesse dans beaucoup d’hommes réunis que dans un seul”.

Spectator
read as an invitation to cultural relativism, but Hume was firmly convinced that eighteenth-century Scottish morality was by far superior to Greek morality. So how did we get from Greece to Scotland? Hume had no intention of explaining this and if we repeat this question to Voltaire or William Robertson we also draw a blank.

But if eighteenth-century society was so much better than that of Greece, what about utopian schemes in this century? When we think about the Enlightenment, Carl Becker's The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers has accustomed us to think of it in utopian terms. However, utopias did not play an important role in the discussions between these philosophers. Abbé de St-Pierre's scheme of perpetual peace was cited by Bury as a prime example of such a utopian scheme, but the plan of the Abbé is, as we shall see, pragmatic, if not very realistic in the short term.

We might formulate the problem of this essay by remarking that the eighteenth century philosophers had an idea of progress, but no theory of it. No theory of progress? What then about the four stages theory? The four stages are 1. the stage of hunters and food gatherers, 2. the stage of the shepherds, 3. the stage of the farmers, and 4. the stage of commercial society. Ronald Meek has shown how the theory was discussed in the eighteenth-century and led to a sociology of the different stages. What is not so clear is whether those who used the theory presented a clear projection of progress in four stages, or merely presented a commentary on different ways of life.

I have argued in an essay on Hume's History and the End of History that his set of essays on English politics makes it clear that the regimen mixtum that came into existence in Britain after 1689 was unstable. It could only work, when the King respected the Commons and the Commons did not interfere with the daily business of government. That recipe for stability I call the end of history, because it leaves no option for a substantial reform of the system. It is either stability on Hume's terms, or chaos.

In France there were no outspoken statements on politics, basically because no one talked about politics or rather political science in the salons. As far as the philosophes are concerned, it means that they were critical about details of the Ancien Régime but had no attention to topple it.

Bury pays a lot of attention to Condorcet's Esquisse. And indeed with his Esquisse Condorcet provided a theory of progress. However, it is a product of the revolution and there is very little in Condorcet's career during the Ancien Régime, which prepares us for his role during the Revolution. He is an example how writers can drastically change their perspective under the influence of a shift in public opinion. There is another astonishing example of this. J.C.D. Clark carefully documents in his The Language of Liberty the political discourses among English dissenters. This discourse led to Richard Price's reply to Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France and Tom Paine's The Rights of Man. Price and Paine introduced a new definition of human rights, which formerly had remained sub rosa till the Revolution provoked people like Price and Paine who turned the discourse into classics of a new radical message. This introduction sets down my task. I shall first of all pay attention to the peace plan of the Abbé de St Pierre. Then I shall turn to a discussion of the

10 They were not alone. See Jefferson's famous second sentence in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights."

2. The Peace-Plan of the Abbé de St-Pierre

Voltaire called him Saint-Pierre d’Utopie, but he was rather a pragmatic busybody than a utopian schemer. Charles François Castel de Saint-Pierre (1658-1743) belonged to “la bonne, sinon à la meilleure noblesse de Normandie”. As a son of the aristocracy he had the choice between the army and the church as a career. He chose the latter. It was said that he was about the only abbé who kept the vow of celibacy though he was not a practicing Catholic, let alone a practicing priest. Saint-Pierre was a man of plans. He made one for the education of girls; he designed a chair, which would ease back pain; and there was his Projet pour Rendre la Paix Perpétuelle entre les Souverains Chrétiens, which appeared in Utrecht in 1717. It is a boring book to read, because Saint-Pierre constantly repeats himself. He justified his repetitive style by saying that he wanted to draw attention to the important points of his project. That was a bad advice for himself and his reader who easily loses his way in the 719 pages of a modern edition. However, Saint-Pierre was no fool, as is demonstrated by the following summary of his plan.

1. All European princes conclude an alliance, which gives them security against foreign and civil wars.
2. Each prince contributes to a fund for maintaining peace.
3. A conflict between partners in the alliance will be settled by arbitration.
4. When a prince refuses to obey a decision taken by three quarters of the members he can be forced to obey.
5. New rules can be added by a unanimity of votes to the basic rule that

12 J. Drouet, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, p. 3.
war will never again be used to settle a conflict within the alliance. This cannot be called a utopian scheme. It presages the Holy Alliance of Czar Alexander that had to be a bulwark against revolution (1815). And indeed the most remarkable aspect of Saint-Pierre’s scheme is that it is an alliance of princes, not of nations. This betrays his conservative outlook. Otherwise his rule that princes can be forced to obey the fundamental rule to submit to arbitration is quite forward. It makes him the forerunner of institutions of arbitration in the present day, such as the International court in The Hague. However, there is no trace of an idea, let alone a theory of progress in his project.

3. The Four Stages Theory
Next to Meek, John Pocock has dealt with the theory of the four stages in the fourth volume of his Barbarism and Religion. Meek reconstructs the story as moving through four stages leading up to the situation as we know it today. I prefer Pocock’s treatment of the theory, because he stops in the eighteenth century and looks at the theory of stages as intellectuals of the eighteenth century used it to suit their situation. Seen from this perspective the theory of stages served two purposes. First of all it could help to find an answer to the question on how we can match the biblical story with the new experience of the expanding colonial empires. The Europeans met savages for the first time in person, particularly the North American Indians, and linked their experience to the history of the Chinese, Persians and Turkish empires, and to the story of the Huns and the Islam. The second purpose, particularly evident in Voltaire’s Essai sur les Moeurs, was to find a secular alternative to the histoire sacrée, to history as the message of God’s revelation to the Christians.

Goguet seems to have been one of the first who used a theory of the four stages in his De l’Origine des Lois, des Arts et des Sciences, which was published in 1758 in three volumes. Pocock’s chapter dealing with Goguet’s work is entitled “The Confusion of the Tongues and the Origin of Civility”. Goguet fitted new material about Persian and Chinese empires into the biblical story starting with the building of the tower of Babel which, according to the Bible, led to the confusion of tongues. Goguet used the four stages theory to stress the importance of the stage when people settled down to become farmers. This was for Goguet the origin of civilization, leading to its culmination in the monarchy of Louis XIV. If we follow the use of the theory, apart from Goguet we first of all meet Turgot.

a. Turgot
In 1750 as student at the Sorbonne Turgot delivered a speech “Sur les Progrès Successifs de l’Esprit Humain”.

Turgot considered intellectual achievements to be the force of progress. There is no mention yet of the theory of the four stages. That came two years later in a sketch, which was only published in 1808. So Turgot’s legacy to a theory of progress was that his assistant Condorcet picked up his notion that the progress of ideas is at the centre of a general theory of progress.

b. Adam Smith
In 1752 Smith became professor of moral philosophy in Glasgow. His lectures were very popular and some students made transcriptions, presumably to sell these to other students. In 1897 Edward Cannan published one of such transcription, and in 1958 a second set of notes was discovered. Together they were published as Smith’s Lectures on Jurisprudence. In these lectures Smith must have said:

There are four distinct states which mankind pass thro: 1st, the Age of Hunters; 2dly, the Age of Shepherds; 3dly, the Age of Agriculture; and 4thly, the Age of Commerce. This is a clear statement of the theory of the four stages, but Smith only used his theory to point out how property rights came to be established moving from stages 1 to stage 4. In his Wealth of Nations – that is the age of commerce – he had no need for the theory.

c. Adam Ferguson
Ferguson’s Essay on the History of Civil Society (1767) provides the most detailed formulation of the four stage theory. Ferguson, however, was not interested in a theory of progress. His four stage theory provides, according to Meek, an “evaluation of both the savage state and the modern commercial state”. Ferguson pointed out the hazards at each stage and, as far as commercial society was concerned, these hazards were the decline of military valour and the dangers of the division of labour for the workers involved.

d. John Millar
According to John Millar:

There is thus, in human society, a natural progress from ignorance to knowledge, and from rude to civilized manners, the several stages of which are accompanied with peculiar laws and customs. That sounds promising, but the way Millar treated the civilizational process is rather one-sided. He wrote that he used the theory:

To mark the progress of society, with regard to the power of the husband, the father, and the civil magistrate.

He demonstrated how gradually – through the stages – the position of women improved. Millar’s work on The Origin and Distinction of Ranks, though popular in his time, was, I think, inferior to the works of Ferguson and Smith. He introduced a general notion of human progress, but that seems to end in his own time.

16 R.L. Meek, Social Science and the Ignoble Savage, 154.
17 Adam Smith shared Ferguson’s fear that the division of labour would turn workers into mere brutes.
The distinction of ranks is there to stay and the idea that mankind will and must progress, which would turn his idea into a theory of progress, is absent. The way these philosophers of the Enlightenment used the four stages theory was to enlighten the public for a special purpose, and their approach opened no vista on the general progress of mankind.

4. Four Historians: Voltaire, Hume, Robertson and Gibbon

If a theory of progress should be evident, it is in the histories of these four representatives of philosophical histories, but it is not there. History for Hume was no engine of progress. He wrote at the end of his history:

Above all, a civilized nation, like the English, who have happily established the most perfect and most accurate system of liberty that was ever found compatible with government, ought to be cautious in appealing to the practice of their ancestors, or regarding the maxims of uncultivated ages as certain rules for their present conduct. An acquaintance with the ancient periods of their government is chiefly useful by instructing them to cherish their present constitution, from a comparison or contrast with the condition of those distant times. And it is also curious, by shewing them the remote, and commonly faint and disfigured originals of the most finished and most noble institutions, and by instructing them in the great mixture of accident, which commonly concurs with a small ingredient of wisdom and foresight, in erecting the complicated fabric of the most perfect government. This is an advice to both the Tories and the Whigs not to trust old formulas, but concentrate on the present. That is what history teaches us. The reading of history must liberate us from the past.

a. Voltaire

Voltaire wrote a number of histories. Among them Le Siècle de Louis XIV and the Essai sur les Mœurs are the more important ones. His Siècle de Louis XIV came first (1751). It was a great success. He glorified the reign of the King, because his firm administration brought peace and because he made Versailles the centre of culture in France. Given Voltaire’s criticisms of the rulers who came after him, this laudatio may be surprising, but Voltaire also had two major criticisms of Louis the Great. The eviction of the Huguenots from France in 1685 was a grave mistake. The revocation of the edict of Nantes was a direct breach with Henry IV’s policy of religious toleration and, secondly, Louis’ ambition to gain hegemony in Europe was illusory and brought France on the verge of ruin. How do we match the laudatio with this criticism? I think Voltaire wanted to point out to Louis XV (Louis XIV’s grandson) how to administer France in a fair and firm way, and maintain the court as the centre of culture. Louis XV could do neither.

I did not discover the point of Voltaire’s Essai sur les Mœurs (1756), till I read Pocock’s second volume in the series Barbarism and Religion. He made it clear to me that Voltaire wanted to create an alternative to biblical history as world history. Voltaire pointed out that the world had seen other centers of civilization beside Christianity. As an answer to Bossuet’s Christian-centric version of universal history he presented a secularized version. But Voltaire’s Essai remained Europe-centric. The Chinese and the Persian empires had had the great merit of adopting a sort of ecumenical monotheism, but Voltaire’s history culminated in the institution of Christian monarchy, of which eighteenth-century France was the model. If we consider how difficult it was to get away from the biblical story, Voltaire’s Essay has considerable merit. Again it was a celebration of monarchy as the most advanced regime. Many contemporaries in and outside France shared Voltaire’s belief that a monarchy was the most modern regime and that republics are only fit for city-states. The American Republic was founded (1787) about only forty years later. That republic turned into a successful regime and a world power.

b. Hume

Hume used the conventional form of the chronicle to present his unbroken chain. Each English king has its chapter or chapters. However, behind this conventional façade Hume conceals an ambitious focus. As a Scot, he looked with fascination at the evolution of English kingship. In English history it was the natural centre of central government: something, which was lacking in Scotland. He wrote to his printer William Strahan in 1757 that he should have started his History with the Tudors: “It is really the Commencement of modern History”. According to Hume the Tudors installed absolute kingship in England and the history of the Tudors make it clear why he considered absolute kingship a modern institution. Of course, he was also aware that fundamental economic and social changes were beginning to appear in Tudor England and in the Western world in general. However, precisely because of these changes Eng-


land needed kings who could maintain their authority.  
These changes were of consequence for the development of kingship since the Tudors, for the Tudor kings never managed to organize a standing army, and so they remained vulnerable to popular pressure. When Charles I went too far in the direction of the French type of absolutism, he lost his head. Hume considered the outcome of the revolution of 1688 to be a happy, but unstable one, because of the uneasy accommodation of civil liberty and (what in fact remained) absolutist kingship. In book II, after Richard III had been slain at the battlefield of Bosworth, Hume gave a general overview of the times to come:

Thus we have pursued the history of England through a series of many barbarous ages, till we have at last reached the dawn of civility and sciences...25

And Hume is fully aware of what this ‘dawn’ implies. A page further on he adds:

The rise, progress, and the decline of art and science, are curious objects of contemplation, and intimately connected with a narration of civil transactions. The events of no particular period can be fully accounted for, but by considering the degrees of advancement, which men have reached in those particulars.26

The way he solved this problem was by adding often copious notes to his political history, but in doing this he developed no theory of progress. Even in his political history he did not think in terms of a constitutional evolution. In a note he added to the fourth volume in 1762, he wrote that “The English constitution, like all others, has been in a state of continual fluctuation”,27 not evolution.

c. William Robertson

Robertson, Principal of Edinburgh University and a moderate minister in the Church of Scotland, wrote The History of the Reign of Emperor Charles V (1769). His preface to his history bears the promising title “A view of the progress of Society in Europe”. Felix Gilbert remarks in his introduction to a separate edition of this preface that it has a providential character. Robertson described the revival of civilization since the dark ages as part of the divine scheme for the future of Christianity. He ends his history with the following remark:

It was during his administration [that of Charles V] that the powers of Europe were formed into one great political system, in which each took a station, wherein it has since remained with less variation than could have been expected after the shocks occasioned by so many internal revolutions, and so many foreign wars.29

That is as close Robertson gets to a general statement about the reign of Charles V. His History is a bland description of battles and political intrigues. Robertson describes how events led to a system of an international balance of powers and he leaves it to the reader to draw his own conclusions. Was the reign of Charles V the end of empire as people knew it? Robertson does not tell us. He adds to his discretion by ending his story more then a century before that system of balance came into being under William III, the stadholder-king.

d. Gibbon

Gibbon wrote a history of decline; so we cannot expect a theory of progress in his case. But a discussion of this work belongs in this essay for a reason he gave himself:

[A] philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and civilization. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own, or the neighbouring kingdoms, may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies.30

So Gibbon shares the view of his contemporaries that Europe as one republic, as a concert of nations, has become the pinnacle of civilization, and is there to stay. This was favourite conclusion of the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Gibbon, like them, believed in the progress of civilization, but this also meant that the world after the Ancien Régime (here taken in the wider sense) would not substantially alter. Now remarkably Gibbon does in no way refer to this European development. His History as a story of decline and fall is the alternative to that of modern Europe, and his leading thoughts are two:

1. His History closes the book of the Roman Empire as a viable regime.
2. No other people outside the Roman Empire were capable to rehabilitate the regime invented by the Roman citizens. Instead, under Diocletianus, “Rome became”, in the words of Patricia Craddock, “openly a monarchy in the Persian style”.31

I shall elaborate on these conclusions in an Appendix attached to this essay, because my explanation will take up too much space here.

30 E. Gibbon, The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (London 1995: Penguin, D.Womersley ed., II, 511; Gibbon uses republic for a regime that takes care of the welfare of its inhabitants and allow them a fair measure of freedom; not, in other words, as a regime without a king.
Condorcet's Theory of Progress

Nos espérances sur l'état à venir de l'espèce humaine peuvent se réduire à ces trois points importants: la destruction de l'inégalité entre les nations; les progrès de l'égalité dans un même peuple; enfin la perfectionnement réel de l'homme. This quotation is of interest for two reasons. First of all, we have here a theory of progress which will lead mankind by necessity to a future with an open end; secondly it is typically a product of the revolutionary era. It emphasizes equality between men and nations. Equality was hardly discussed (except in the most abstract terms) during the Enlightenment.

Jean-Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, wrote his *Esquisse* under threatening circumstances. He had to hide from the henchmen of Robespierre. He was betrayed and locked up, and the next morning he was found dead in his cell. Murder? Suicide? A heart attack? Nobody knows.

Condorcet's theory was that human inventions and discoveries will find their way to practical applications, and thus fuel progress. Invention and application are the two key elements of progress. Condorcet writes:

"...et, soit qu'on y rende compte d'une découverte, d'une théorie importante, d'un nouveau système de lois, d'une révolution politique, on s'occupera de déterminer quelles effets on doit en résulter pour la portion la plus nombreuse de chaque société: car c'est là le véritable objet de la philosophie, puisque tous les effets intermédiaires de ces mêmes causes ne peuvent être regardés que comme des moyens d'agir enfin sur cette portion qui constitue vraiment la masse du genre humain."

Condorcet believed in the revolution and it made him naïve. See the following quotation:

Nous montrerons pourquoi les principes sur lesquels la constitution et les lois de la France ont été combinés, sont plus purs, plus précis, plus profonds, que ceux qui ont dirigé les Américains.

After the brouhaha of many constitutions, the French Revolution temporarily settled down to a conservative regime, and it took as long as the Third Republic (1875), before the French accepted a regime they could live with. The American constitution gloriously withstood the test of time.

However, Condorcet was also a prophet. As David Williams remarks:

"The dynamics of progress that he elaborates in the *Esquisse* only really makes sense in the light of what he has to say about probability, actuarial science, rights, the civil order, justice, the constitutional process and human nature itself." Condorcet was one of the pioneers of the theory of probability. It made him aware of the possibility of predicting the unintended effects of inventions and, according to his theory of probability, these effects might become real. Hence he emphasized the necessary character of progress. He had the insight that, if you want progress, you must obey certain principles of justice, freedom and democracy. The first two were a legacy of the Enlightenment, the last mentioned was a product of the French Revolution. Condorcet looked to the individual, rather than to the collectivity, as the engine of progress. So he was a liberal rather than a socialist. But both liberals and socialists were children of the French revolution. The ideological message of that revolution was that man could create his own world and Condorcet was it major messenger.


6. The End of History

The end of history is a concept, which Fukuyama borrowed from Hegel and, since then, has been sensible enough to retract. It means that the future will hold no more surprises, if nations stick to principles of free trade and peaceful negotiation. When applied to Hume, the idea is that you will have political stability if the partners in a mixed government conclude a pact of mutual non-interference. The end of history in Hume's case has the implication that there is no room for a parliamentary democracy, which depends on osmosis of the executive and legislative branch of government. The concept is not applicable to a philosophe like Voltaire. The most remarkable thing about philosophy as political science in the French Enlightenment is that it is not there. It is amazing how ill prepared Frenchmen were at the eve of the Revolution. Even when the decision was taken to convene the *États Généraux* after more than 150 years, no one had a firm idea of how to reform this rickety institution. The end of history in the French case must indicate that, for the philosophes, it was inconceivable that the Ancien Régime could disappear and the société des ordres with it. So there was no fertile ground for a theory of progress. In the nineteenth century two dynamic forces fuelled the theory of progress. One was the ideology that we can create a just and free society. The other force is the Industrial Revolution, that started to change society and political relations in an unprecedented way. Comte, Marx, Spencer: we witness a great number of theories of progress in this century. All the reformers shared the illusion that mankind would be able to use economic developments for the own benefit of their theories. Moral progress would control technical progress. John Stuart Mill, a strong believer in moral progress, warned in 1848 that, if Englishmen were not able to regulate their number of children, economic competition would remain a rat race without purpose. He was the first to face the prospect of a stationary state with equanimity. Some forty years later the Industrial Revolution started to effect nations and peoples on a global scale, and then it became evi-

35  In 1875 the national assembly voted against re-installing the monarchy with a majority of one vote and opted for the republic which was there to stay.


54 Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 172.
dent that population growth could not only be a brake on growth, but one of its causes. Now, 160 years later again, few observers still have the illusion that economic growth will automatically lead to moral progress. The problem has become how we can stop economic growth in its present form. Perhaps our present predicament makes it of some interest to study the philosophers of the Enlightenment who believed in moral improvement while things remain as they are.

Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall: An appendix

Let me repeat the quotation which I gave in the preceding essay to indicate that Gibbon firmly believed in the central tenets of the Enlightenment:

[A] philosopher may be permitted to enlarge his views, and to consider Europe as one great republic, whose various inhabitants have attained almost the same level of politeness and cultivation. The balance of power will continue to fluctuate, and the prosperity of our own, or the neighbouring kingdoms, may be alternately exalted or depressed; but these partial events cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies.

And the last sentence of his General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West, which ends book three reads:

We may therefore acquiesce in the pleasing conclusion, that every age of the world has increased, and still increases, the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race. Gibbon shared the idea of Enlightened progress and, like his fellow writers, he held the complacent view that, since Europe had come this far, things would stay as they are. Like Voltaire, Goguet, de Guignes and other writers, other civilizations had added to the progress of arts and sciences but, at present, there was no viable seat of civilization, alternate to that of eighteenth-century Europe. And, as to the Roman Empire, they could destroy it, but could not replace its civilizational order. The days of the Roman republican freedom are over. In a heated conversation with the Abbé de Mably, who extolled the idea of virtue as portrayed by Livius, Gibbon “defended generally the monarchical government.”

Like Voltaire, Hume and many others he saw monarchy as the regime most convenient to eighteenth-century civil society.

Why then did Gibbon write a history of decline and avoided to discuss any signs of progress in European history? As I pointed out in my preceding essay, his history of decline is an alternative to how we usually write European history since the fall of the Roman empire in the West. And why did he not end his story in 476? The more so as Gibbon writes that the “story of its ruin is simple and obvious”. Why pursue the story of the Byzantine empire for another thousand years, “a story which is a “tedious and uniform tale of weakness and misery”?

The answer to these questions is that, how Gibbon wrote his history of decline, tells why he did write it. The general caption of John Pocock’s five volumes dealing with Gibbon’s works – Barbarism and Religion - is useful in dealing with this answer.

What about religion? The ending chapters (15 and 16) in the first volume were published in 1776. In them Gibbon discussed the rise of early Christianity, and so created a bitter controversy with the British clergy. Gibbon’s main point (mentioned earlier) was that he wanted to give a wholly secular description of that history and, even if he had tried (which he did not), he could not avoid the conclusion to be drawn by his readers, that Christian history as the story of God’s providence, the histoire sacrée, was no longer valid. That was one of the main messages of the Enlightenment and had been -as we have seen- the guiding perspective of Voltaire’s Essay sur les Moeurs. Hume’s Natural History of Religion, which Gibbon knew very well, did not even deign to make the point that there could be a sacred history.

Now Hume was the great infidel, according to the Christian ministers who attacked Gibbon’s history of early Christianity, and they thought that Hume’s theory, that the source of religion was fear for the unknown, was absurd anyway. However, Gibbon’s analysis came too close to their own doubts to the story of the histoire sacrée. And hence some of them reacted so violently, particularly because Gibbon added irony as an insult to the injury of his masterly secular version.

Pocock has pointed out that chapters 15 and 16 are “departures” from his main concern about the influence of Christianity on the decline of the Roman Empire. More important in this respect is chapter 28 in which Gibbon related the ruin of paganism under Theodosius. Senator Symmachus made an impassioned appeal for the maintenance of the pagan rites. He argued “that the Roman sacrifices would be deprived of their force and energy, if they were no longer celebrated at the expense, as well as in the name, of the republic.”


46 I mentioned dr Watson’s reaction in my essay on Deism. His reaction was courteous, but to the point. If Gibbon did not want to discuss God as the primary cause of the rise of Christianity, there was no possibility that he and Hume could reach an agreement on the proper story of early Christianity.


paganism with its statues and temples was eradicated from public life, and with it went the Roman conception of patriotism. Instead, the official church went on to incorporate pagan superstition with its veneration of saints.

The religion of Constantine achieved, in less than a century, the final conquest of the Roman empire, but the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals.49 As a consequence, the Roman Empire turned into an oriental despotism by its fusion of polity and church. The Roman citizens of the republic had interpreted freedom as the patriotic duty to defend their city. In the reign of Theodosius that kind of republican freedom only existed in name, but now they also lost the other freedom: the freedom of thought. The Roman form of oriental despotism lived on in the Byzantine Empire till the fall of Constantinople. “Rome became openly a monarchy in the Persian Style”, as Craddock observes in relation to the reign of Diocletianus.50 The Roman Empire joined the eastern empires, but lacked the military strength of these empires. And the Pocock’s caption of barbarism? In chapter 2 Gibbon described the “Union and internal Prosperity of the Roman Empire in the Age of the Antonines”. It was what Pocock calls the “Antonine Moment” in Roman history. The Empire had secure borders, an efficient government and strong armies at the borders. Communications were excellent and trade and agriculture prospered. And then with Commodus the rot set in and in the end:

The army was licentious without spirit, the nation turbulent without freedom: the Barbarians of the East and West pressed on the monarchy, and the loss of the provinces was terminated by the final servitude of the capital.51

Gibbon used the term barbarism as a generic notion for those who attacked and tried to destroy the civilized life of the Roman Empire.52 So the barbarians included the Germanic tribes, the Huns, the Persians, and later on the Tartars and the Arabs. In fact Gibbon’s relation of Byzantine history tends to be short and even perfunctory. Instead, he has long chapters on the Arabs and their conquests, the Bulgarians, Zingis Khan and Tamerlane (or Timour), and of course Mahomed II, who eventually conquered Constantinople. Gibbon was impressed by the achievements of these princes, but his verdict of Tamerlane stands for them all: “If some partial disorders, some local oppressions, were healed by the sword of Timour, the remedy was far more pernicious than the disease”.53 His conquests destroyed old states without replacing them with a new order and, if his reign had any benefits, these evaporated at his death. The object lesson of his story is that Tamerlane’s regime was inherently unstable and could never create a new Antonine Moment within the Roman Empire. And what applies to the Tartars applies to the Turks. The Ottoman Empire was much more stable, but Gibbon’s portrait of Mahomed II is as unflattering as that of Tamerlane.54 He was a military despot and everything remained the property of Mahomed II and his successors. They could replace the military strength of the Roman Empire, but not its civilization. So here we have the reason why Gibbon wrote his story at great length and focussed exclusively on the decline of the Empire. He wanted to make it absolutely clear that the Roman Empire could not be resurrected. That was his message to his contemporaries. The alternative for Europe had to come from the balance of power between nations.

So the Christian religion, particularly as state religion, was a cause of weakness, and the barbarian attacks made it impossible to maintain order and civilization within in the Empire. Perhaps the fundamental cause of the decline came from Rome’s expansion from a city-state into an empire. In his Discorsi Machiavelli had suggested that the constitution of the city state was not suitable for an expansion by conquest and Montesquieu added to this the notion that the internal dissension between the tribunes and the senate caused disorder in the late republic. Gibbon included all these explanations in his story. It could be that one of the reasons why he added another thousand years after the fall of Rome in 476 is that he wanted to show that a military regime such as the Roman Republic, afterwards Empire, is an inherently unstable regime. If this was his intention, he did not theorize about it, but told its story.

In his chapter “Autobiography in Time of Revolution”55 David Womersley analysed six drafts of Gibbon’s Autobiography, which his friend Lord Sheffield used to assemble a memoir after Gibbon’s death. Womersley gives the reason why Gibbon hesitated to publish his autobiography in his lifetime. He had read Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790). He was deeply impressed by Burke’s argument that a just regard for the established religion is essential for the well-being of society. In draft E - which he intended to publish himself but could not because he died in the meantime – Gibbon toned down his involvement with the French philosophers and retouched his motives for writing the chapters on early Christianity. As I read Womersley’s analysis it is the story of a stalemate. Gibbon could not really undo his reputation as a critic of Christianity, but in vain he tried to make room for a Burkean analysis of organic change.

To me the interest about Gibbon’s memoirs is that he must have realized that the French Revolution had shattered his confident idea of a concert of European nations, which – see the peace plan of the Abbé de St. Pierre – depended on the Ancien Régimes of pre-revolutionary Europe. Gibbon had written the story of the end of classical Empire realizing, after he had finished it, that, given the events of the French Revolution, he no longer knew what would replace it. Gibbon is often regarded as the first historiographer, and he earned this qualification because of his brilliant gift of collating disparate facts into a convincing story. In this respect he was only rivalled by Leopold von Ranke among the nine-teenth-century historians. Gibbon obeyed Ranke’s dictum that “Jede Epoch ist unmittelbar zu Gott” before it was even written down. He ended his Epoch in convincing style.

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50 P. Craddock, Edward Gibbon, 46-47.
52 Consequently he also regarded the crusaders as barbarians. The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, vol. 3, ch. 58.
Latin
as a lingua franca in Europe,
national languages,
my European Dictionary A-C1, Ciceronianism2

The subject of this colloquium deals with the question: 'Maintaining and Saving Lesser-Used or Regional Languages in Europe. Progress or Failure?'. Although I am not a linguist, my subject-matter being social and political sciences, I will try first of all to give my own answer to the question submitted by the organizers.

In general we can say that, from a purely scientific point of view, there has been a progress in our knowledge of minor languages. Nowadays we have many cultural societies, and the means of communication, thanks to the internet, are virtually unlimited. Indeed the world is progressively becoming a 'global village', and the necessity of communication is obviously pre-eminent.

Therefore, there is certainly some progress in the sense of pure scientific knowledge, since people of the present generation know more than those of the past generation, and are willing to preserve the heritage of the past, being conscious of its importance.

Nevertheless, it must be said that there has been a substantial failure in keeping minor languages alive, partly as this is possible only within local communities. In our daily usage we are in fact in command of a limited vocabulary, and the so-called multilingualism, or even bilingualism, are concepts that need some explanation.

In fact, knowing a language means being able to perceive the subtle nuances of the words, the sense of humour that they express, when one is being expressed, and even their regional differences and meanings. And I willingly admit that, in my case, now that I write mainly in English, sometimes it happens that only with difficulty do I find a corresponding word in my mother tongue. This is not to mention the technical terms, or jargon related to the arts and professions. Who can boast of knowing the whole of it? Not even a professional lexicographer, I am sure.

Furthermore, the limited vocabulary that we use on a daily basis is adequate for the ordinary person. Even in good newspapers, apart from the inserts specialized in particular subjects, the number of words recurring does not exceed a certain number, so as not to risk becoming scarcely understandable to the ordinary reader.

In conclusion, I shall repeat that, although there has undoubtedly been progress in the sense of pure scientific knowledge of regional languages, I would also state that there has been a substantial failure in maintaining them.

Certainly, I am far from emphasizing the role of the enlightened ideas, of some of them in particular, the ones, I mean, which so often led to aberrations damaging to society and to the progress of mankind. So, for example, when the French Revolution emphasized the role of the langue nationale, «car on vit dans les idiomes locaux un obstacle à la propagande révolutionnaires», and the Abbé Grégoire, on 28 May 1794, wrote the famous Rapport sur la nécessité de détruire les patois. Philosophically and politically the true, authentic intellectuals, consider themselves solely as observers of the state of society and of all that it offers. They are indeed refractory to the idea of taking part, or of being involved in political struggles.

Therefore, I observe that, while past generations inadvertently abandoned traditions, by contrast we must be conscious of the course of history as it actually takes place. Scholars are mostly conscious of this, thanks, as said above, to the means of communication and to the quantity of information that is available to them nowadays, but ordinary people follow the historical change inadvertently, and cause it mostly unconsciously.

This is the underlying idea of my European Dictionary, the first part of which I have been able to compile with a hard work 'that hath made/ both heaven and earth co-partners in its toil, and with lean abstinence, through many a year, faded my brow'. Nevertheless I don't know if I will be ever able to resume the work in order to bring it to its conclusion. Also, as everybody knows, the work of a dozen of men cannot be performed, hélas!, by just one man.

Europe, a unified entity
Although all of us have been brought up in national states, in which the purely national entity was well defined quite above the concept of unity, at an early stage of my scientific career I began to realize that Europe is a unified entity. This concept, needless to say, should have been transmitted to me, as having been able to compile a hard work 'that hath made/ both heaven and earth co-partners in its toil, and with lean abstinence, through many a year, faded my brow'. Nevertheless I don't know if I will be ever able to resume the work in order to bring it to its conclusion. Also, as everybody knows, the work of a dozen of men cannot be performed, hélas!, by just one man.

2 This paper was delivered on 16 March 2016 at the ‘Council of Europe’ in Strasbourg, in cooperation with the Kulturzentrum ‘René Schickele Gesellschaft’.
5 Dante, Paradiso, canto XXV, lines 1–4; trans. by Henry Francis Cary.
to all of us, by the educational system which, I am sad to admit, was often unable to match its tasks. The second world war had just ended, a war that had seen the European nations as fierce enemies towards each other, as if they were separate entities never to reconcile, and this idea was scarcely popular. But history ran its course, more books were progressively available to scholars, and with the books came more opportunities to communicate. Mostly against the current, I began to wonder whether the century of Enlightenment had actually been cosmopolitan, and to what an extent it had actually been so. In the reality, it was then that writers such as Hume, Voltaire and Kant, abandoning Latin, or the ‘lingua franca’, began to write in their national languages, and a system of translation of their works into the principal European languages was soon established, while teaching in the universities ceased to be done in Latin.6

The common cement of our tradition remained nevertheless Latin, and Cicero was the author who more than any other was a recognized authority in this tradition. This brought about the notion that, at the present stage of cultural development, an effort was needed to consider the European tradition in its entirety, and the European languages as a unified entity, that could, and should, be commanded as such. Hence my idea of compiling the European Dictionary, of which only God knows if I will ever be able to give the finishing touches.7

6 For example, in Edinburgh, in Professor Stevenson’s class of Logic, in which prize essays were entered from 1737 to 1751, about half were written in Latin, and the other half in English. Latin survived longer in the Faculty of Medicine, where theses were composed solely in that language until 1833: see D. B. Horn, A Short History of the University of Edinburgh 1556-1889 (Edinburgh, 1967), 47. Similarly, in Germany, “in die Hörsäle der Universität drang das Deutsche erst seit 1687 durch Christian Thomasius in Leipzig. Noch bis in 19. Jh. mußten in einigen Fächern Doktordissertationen lateinisch verfaßt werden”; see P. von Polenz, Geschichte der deutschen Sprache (Berlin-New York, 1978), 93.

7 Last, Schopenhauer in 1830 published in Latin his Théorie Colorum Physiologica. For the other dictionaries whose publishers declare that they are multilingual, they are in the reality no more than a mere concocting of words printed near to each other. Even the Webster and Merriam Webster publish a final section with a multilingual dictionary, as they call it, which does not differ from the other ones. This proves that even the editors of the two, majestie dictionaries, lack a real insight into the history of European languages, and into their nature of unified entity. On the multilingual dictionaries see in particular my paper delivered at the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’ for the symposium held on 19-21 April 2011, now in Studies in Eurulinguistics, Vol. 8, edited by P. Sture Ureland, pp. 207-217, particularly pp. 213-4.

8 This Friday 5 February 2016 I have read in ‘Le Figaro’, one of the main French newspapers, an article in the front page, of which I transcribe here both title and summary: “La Réforme de l’Ortographie suscite un Tollé. <Ognon>, <nénufar>, l’accent circonflexe supprimé dans certains cas … Adoptée en 1990 par l’Académie Française, la simplification de 2400 mots sera systématisée dans de nouveaux manuels scolaires du primaire à la rentrée”. This seems to me rather ridiculous, and proves how little the savants of the Académie Française command the whole of European civilization, how little they understand it in its entirety. And yet such an Academy should do something more useful than to revel in its own success, playing such a little game. It could rather help to compile a European Dictionary, a real ‘European’ one, as the one of which I have compiled myself a large part, with a hard work.

The same observation, obviously, is valid for the reform of the German spelling of words, that took place years ago, and that bit, as it was to be expected, only into the surface of reality.

And, regrettably, I have to admit that this idea, this concept, is still in part alien even to a large part of the academic world. We are certainly the heirs of our national histories, and all of us have a mother tongue, which has been shaped through the centuries within our nations, when there was very little contact with the rest of the continent. This represents a severe limitation to our capacity of expression, but the world has been dramatically changing during the last fifty years, and the world of learning continues to plod along with difficulty.

In sum, as we repeat here, European and Western civilization must be considered in their entirety. Not to understand this, means not to understand both modern civilization and the world in which we live. It is from this perspective, then, that ours is a worthwhile effort, even if it doesn’t add much to linguistics as a science. Much, very much, is added to our understanding of European civilization, to the training of young generations, to the ‘advancement of learning’, as Lord Francis Bacon would call it, or to the Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts, as the title of Lessing’s work states, or to the incivilimento -i.e. civilization, refinement- to cite from the Italians of the eighteenth century. And this is exactly my aim: i.e. Die Bestimmung des Gebrechens, or the Vocation of the Scholar, in J. G. Fichte’s words. Whether my efforts will be successful or not, only time will tell.
Therefore, in order to communicate, people are obliged to know more languages, and bilingual dictionaries are like islands that do not communicate or, rather, communicate between, not among them. Consequently, they will soon become old-fashioned, becoming less and less useful, for future generations. They represent exactly the opposite of my point of view. It is true that in 1,500 pages there can be no room for idioms, slangs, or informal language, of which, however, I have selected and explained numerous examples. But I am not compiling a bilingual dictionary or, even worse, a monolingual dictionary. I am compiling a ‘European’ dictionary, in which the meaning of a word must come out from its etymology, from its history, and from its similarity with the same word in the principal European languages. With German this is sometimes difficult, since the roots of that language are often distant from the Latin roots. And for this our German friends should blame Arminius for his ambushing of my ancestors, the ancient Romans, at Kalkriese, or Teutoburger Wald. Nevertheless European languages are progressively uniting, discarding what is not shared in common, and in the future all the educated Europeans will learn, and use, a vocabulary that will be understandable to most of them. If we continue down the track of using slangs, idioms, etc, we will continue to live on separate islands, and the cultural unification of our continent, not to mention the Western world in general, will never take place.

This being said, however, the world is changing. It changes every day, although, in our daily experience, we don’t realize the extent of this change. And what may now appear as a purely intellectual analysis of a language of learning, will surely no longer appear so to future generations. This means that my dictionary might be considered today as an academic work, and thus not able to meet the demands of the general public, of the market, of the numbers. This may, in fact, be the case.

The task of funding such a dictionary should be that of the so-called institutions, but my being, by instinct, a contrarian, doesn’t render it likely that I shall ever meet the favour of these ‘institutions’, i.e. of the world of politics, a world, by the way, that I view with some distaste.

The aim of my dictionary, which is both ‘historical’ (that of demonstrating the substantial unity of our past history), and ‘cultural’ and ‘political’ (of helping to create it), is nevertheless intellectually challenging, although, admittedly, not particularly appealing to the general public which provides the market for this work.

**The role of Euro-Latin in European linguistics**

I will now outline a few considerations, from a purely ‘cultural’ perspective, from the point of view of what I call the world of learning. It is a fact that the Reformation tore to pieces the cultural unity of Europe, to such an extent that, from that moment onwards, even for learned people it became difficult to understand each other. Even today, for example, for a Spanish scholar it is difficult to understand German, and vice versa, on anything more than a superficial level, simply because we don’t really understand a language (the learned part of it, I mean), unless we are able to understand the etymology, i.e. the history, of the words. And Spanish and German come from different, dramatically different roots, the only common, although substantial, cement, being the Latin element in the German language. The translation of the Bible into the principal European languages emphasized definitively the national element. This was followed, of course, by the several battles for the purity of the national languages, well known to linguists and historians, and soon began the foundation of Academies, Sprachgesellschaften, and so on. Among them, the so called battle for the Sprachreinigung in Germany deserves particular mention, for its obsessive cleaning of the German language from any foreign influence. It largely affected the politics of that country and, in return, was strongly influenced and boosted by it. It was the product of the romantic movement, as the reaction to the influence of French culture and language under Frederick the Great, or to the Gallicomanie, as Herder called it. And let me repeat that Enlightenment was certainly cosmopolitan but, paradoxically, saw also the definitive, if something is definitive in history, affirmation of the national states and of the national languages. The result, sad to say, is that persons like Campe, von Stephan, and others, separated Germany from the rest of Europe, severely damaging European civilization and mankind.

In France and in Italy academies were soon founded, for the purity of the language, but it is difficult to maintain that they conveyed a nationalistic aim. So Samuel Johnson was certainly far from any nationalistic idea, when establishing, with his Dictionary, a vocabulary for the English language; or Manzoni, when choosing the fiorentino parlato, or spoken Florentine, as the language for his The Betrothed.

**A political manifesto for Europe**

It seems pointless insisting on the criticism of these pernicious phenomena of irrationalism and nationalism which, nevertheless, are a large part of human history.

Yet due relevance to the consideration for anything is individual or particular should be given: in a word, for what we call the history of mankind. This is the only way to get to the roots of our tradition, to know ourselves, beyond the dictates of the abstract reason, as the

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lifers used to call it. After all, as Littré wrote, "imposer à la langue des règles tirées de la raison générale et abstraite telle que chaque époque conçoit cette raison, conduit facilement à l'arbitraire. Un dictionnaire historique coupe court à cette disposition abusive."

In the history of our continent we have seen the replacement of classical Latin by the dialects, shifting to national languages, which were then codified by the Protestant Reformation. Hence the century of Enlightenment, having as its highest point the French Revolution and, subsequently, the reaction to it, with Romanticism and Liberalism. All these phenomena are at the roots of linguistic changes, which were the consequence of spontaneous movements. The difference with the present situation in Europe is that we certainly have a spontaneous or natural movement towards unification, the natural consequence of the new, until now unforeseen, possibilities of communication among nations, enabled by advancing technical means. We also have an educational system which embraces the totality of the individuals, rendering possible a rational intervention, a possibility of commanding, or directing, this immense historical change, not only of European but, increasingly, of planetary dimensions, towards its own aims.

Cicero. His legacy

After campaigning for my dictionary, and being allowed, thanks to the kindness of our president, P. Sture Ureland, to deliver my historic-philosophical papers in these symposia of linguists, I should now speak about Cicero and his legacy to modern civilization. And it is an axiom that this legacy is immense, boundless, as is well known, and as all who have read my book can well see, even if the great Theodor Mommsen, a towering figure in German historiography and a sworn enemy to Cicero’s republican ideals, emphasized that his dialogues were inferior to those of his Greek models.

Nevertheless Cicero gives a vocabulary to the West, where after him Greek had virtually disappeared, until the translation of Aristotle’s Politica into Latin, by William of Moerbeke, in the XIIIth century. Only the fall of

Constantinopoli, in 1453, when many scholars moved to Western Europe, and translations from Greek authors became frequent, revived it. But Latin vocabulary means Cicero, and in the writers of the eighteenth century, for example, one finds references almost exclusively to Cicero and to Horace’s poetry.

I don’t need to repeat, here, what I have been saying for more than fifteen years in my papers about the relevance of Latin not only in Romance languages, Italian, French, Spanish, but also in English, and then in German and Russian. In particular, let me think of Russia and the European tradition.

The difference with the present situation in Europe is that we certainly have a spontaneous or natural movement towards unification, the natural consequence of the new, until now unforeseen, possibilities of communication among nations, enabled by advancing technical means. We also have an educational system which embraces the totality of the individuals, rendering possible a rational intervention, a possibility of commanding, or directing, this immense historical change, not only of European but, increasingly, of planetary dimensions, towards its own aims.

Cicero. His legacy

After campaigning for my dictionary, and being allowed, thanks to the kindness of our president, P. Sture Ureland, to deliver my historic-philosophical papers in these symposia of linguists, I should now speak about Cicero and his legacy to modern civilization. And it is an axiom that this legacy is immense, boundless, as is well known, and as all who have read my book can well see, even if the great Theodor Mommsen, a towering figure in German historiography and a sworn enemy to Cicero’s republican ideals, emphasized that his dialogues were inferior to those of his Greek models.

Nevertheless Cicero gives a vocabulary to the West, where after him Greek had virtually disappeared, until the translation of Aristotle’s Politica into Latin, by William of Moerbeke, in the XIIIth century. Only the fall of

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for some years. The first symposium is forthcoming, at the end of September 2016, at RomaTre University.

**Reasons for my Mommsen and Cicero.**

Since I am an historian of social and political ideas, and since we are in Strasbourg, the political capital of Europe, I should speak in particular about the relevance of Cicero’s ideas in modern European civilization.

Sad to say, I have to observe that, scholars who work on the eighteenth century, generally don’t know much about classical antiquity, while classical scholars scarcely know anything about the eighteenth century and modern society. Yet the meaning of Ciceronian tradition in the history of Western civilization cannot be adequately known unless one is well acquainted with the philosophy and cosmology of the eighteenth century and, vice versa, one cannot really understand the true meaning of the philosophy and cosmology of the eighteenth century unless one knows Ciceronianism.

These were the main reasons why, after working for so long on the history of the eighteenth century, I decided to write my *Mommsen and Cicero*. In the book I developed in particular two lines of interpretation.

First of all, the meaning of the concept of mixed constitution in modern constitutional history, particularly in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, in Montesquieu and in the authors of European liberalism, where we come across not only Ciceronian concepts, but even wording. The harsh Ciceronian criticism of Caesar and of tyranny is no more than criticism of modern limited democracy and tyranny.

Secondly, the general concept of the constitution of the universe, with the ‘optimism’ of eighteenth-century philosophy, at least until the arrival of the physics of Maxwell and Einstein, is undoubtedly Ciceronian.

These concepts need further debate, and will be studied in detail in the series of symposia we are working for.

**A statue for Cicero**

Cato the Elder (234–139 BC) used to conclude his speeches in the Senate with the famous sentence: *Caeterum censeo Carthaginem delendam esse* (‘moreover I consider that Carthage must be destroyed’). As for myself I shall conclude expressing the feeling of disappointment that I feel when walking in Via dei Fori Imperiali in Rome, the majestic road opened in 1924–32 by our ‘great Dictator’ who, of course, filled it with the statues of the emperors.

The most unbearable thing is that, almost right in front of the Curia, of which Cicero was the *princeps*, there is a statue to ‘Iulio Caesari Dictatorii Perpetuo’, or of Julius Caesar the tyrant, as we shall call him. This statue should be removed, because it represents an affront to the believers in the ideas of liberty, of advancement of learning, of civilization. And a statue to Cicero, the champion of Republican ideals, should finally be raised in its place.

To achieve this aim, a committee should be established, to promote the project and raise funds. Let me submit this idea to you in Strasbourg, the capital of Europe, our continent, our common nation, which is based on principles of liberty and democracy: in short, on the ideas for which Cicero fought and lost his life.

Nevertheless, a statue of Cicero in front of the Curia, in Rome, would only be the first step. We just observe that the European Union chose Beethoven’s ‘Hymn to Joy’ for its anthem. When a political and cultural manifesto for the Union had to be jotted down, the former French President Mr Giscard d’Estaing emphasized the role of the French Enlightenment, or Lumières, causing the reaction of Catholic and Christian establishment.

It is undoubted that, without wishing to offend anybody, one must admit that Ciceronianism is the fundamental chapter in European cultural heritage. In the words of Walter Rüegg, commenting on Dilthey, Cicero’s writings “appear as having exerted the strongest influence in the shaping of the European spiritual world, along with the Bible”.

A statue of Cicero should therefore be erected in front of the European Parliament, especially if considering what his political thought, what his concept of the ‘mixed constitution’ mean, for the modern ideas of liberty.

**Vincenzo Merolle**

University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’

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