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Corrado Vivanti

When Lucien Febvre revealed as far back as 1929 the first results of his research on the history and evolution of the term *civilisation*, it could be said that the problem he confronted was seriously laid out for the first time. Thirty years later the situation is naturally quite different and, following the studies by J. Moras and E. Beneviste, one gets the impression that the shadowy areas should no longer hold many surprises. What remains to be done, it seems, particularly concerning the first appearances of the term, is to compare it with the equivalent and contemporary English term, to connect it with the expression *civilité*, which in the 18th century represented no more than a concept of human dealings and social harmony, and then to study the maturation of the term *civilization* itself. At the end of the 17th century it was a form of legal usage to indicate the transformation of a penal trial into a civil one. It matured in the culture and in the very consciousness of groups much wider and open than those of the legal world, in the circles of Enlightenment intellectuals, whose links with the milieu of parliamentarians and robins were by no means negligible.

On the other hand, we may examine how this term managed to assume its form and fertile vigor in relation to a whole series of opposite concepts (barbarity, the wilderness stage, the state of nature, etc.). Or we may consider how it was impermeated with precise historical concreteness—temporal and geographical—thanks to research on those developments, on those progressions of civilization, which became possible by comparing civilizations, comparisons which were able to give the history of humanity a much more spacious, rich, and varied hori-

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zon. If we make such a study, we will perceive that it is not possible to limit this kind of study to the semantic problem alone. Of course, such a restriction might be motivated by the desire to understand these phenomena of mental collectivities, if it is assumed that only a very few fully-determined notions—real and actual idea-forces—embody them. Often, in fact, their appearance and spread truly took on a meaning worth underlining. Moreover, by enlarging the field of research to that large family of words transmitted to the Romance languages by *civitas* and *civilitas*, one risks losing from sight completely the precise content attributed to *civilisation* during the 18th century, and of stripping this inquiry of all *specific* historical significance. Much the same thing happens in some older studies of socialism which, having lost sight of actual modern phenomena, apply themselves to the exhumation of ancient Utopias and vague myths of the Golden Age.

Thus, for example, in Italian the usage of *civiltà* goes back to the age of Dante, and is tightly bound to ideas of a political order pervaded by an extra-temporal finality. For their part humanist texts offer us different examples whose meaning cannot always be restricted to courtesy and refinement of manners.² It is also true, however, that at the end of the 18th century, just to signalize a rupture with a term already overused and thus lacking the dynamic strength considered necessary, *incivilimento* comes to reproduce the meaning of the French word *civilisation*. This term remained alive for a major part of the 19th century with the meaning of “the act and effect of civilizing and becoming civilized and, more often the condition of civilized people.’’³ The influence and fascination of German culture, towards the end of the 19th century, and the repercussions of the *Kulturkampf*, thereafter introduced new elements of growth into the history of that concept.

Therefore, to extend our inquiry beyond the semantic problem without flattening it or falsifying it in anachronism, it will be useful then to keep a certain liberty of action with regard to the precise term *civilisation*. But at the same time one must hold firmly in mind what value and content it has assumed and what function and renovative force it possessed from the time of its spread through Europe of the Enlightenment.

In the early days of 1604, Giuseppe Giusto Scaligero, reknowned professor at the University of Leiden, received a letter from a French correspondent, Henri Lancelot du Voisin de la Popelinière, a minor Huguenot nobleman, then over 60 years old, who, after having completed
solid humanistic studies in his youth and having participated in the religious wars, now dedicated his life to the passionate study of history, but to a type of history of unusually vast horizons for his times, intertwined with a whole series of geographic interests which impelled him in just those years to undertake the translation into French of the great universal Atlas of Mercator.

To Scaligero, whom he was urging to embark on an historical work of great scope, La Popelinière mentioned his perplexity and his insufficient preparation: “in order to approach the perfection of history,” it he thought first necessary to “harden” his knowledge to the last degree and his critical spirit, and this appeared to him possible only by means of “a journey and careful observation of foreign countries.” It was not a question, he declared explicitly, of “simple curiosity” and still less of a desire for adventure—for which he was no longer young enough—nor of a thirst for honors and riches. By an accurate and direct study of different countries, on the contrary, he intended to understand in what manner “from the savage and reclusive individuals they are said to have been, men have gradually become social and united by various bonds of human polity.” La Popelinière brought out in effect that the philosophers, the historians, and the classical jurists—Greek and Roman—had thus dealt with “the source, form, nourishment, progress, and varying effects of all the good and bad habits of people,” of the natural and civil law and of the law of peoples, but only in general.” Moreover, their horizon was extremely limited: they “hardly knew lands outside Babylon, the Euphrates, and Egypt,” and the oriental countries were excluded from their experience. Therefore he found it necessary to study various human institutions—their origins and their development—through a comparison among those existing close to the “civilized countries and those which were called, somewhat improperly, savage.” “Improperly,” he emphasized, because “we have little knowledge of those which truly are.” This comparison should be extended not only to the civilized peoples of his times, but also to the “older and more celebrated among the civilized nations.” He explained to Scaligero that he was “upset that nobody in our time has undertaken something so grand” and, seeing that all modern travellers “cared only about their profits,” or were driven by ambition or by “the curiosity of the young,” he thought himself of leaving for the countries of the Far East which were the site of the most ancient civilizations. He needed, however, the support of the famous humanist in obtaining from his Dutch hosts permission to board a merchant vessel sailing directly to those lands: “my aim does not seem to me to be too ambitious for a noble-
man," he concluded, with a comment that not too many noblemen of his times would have subscribed to, "given that it is easy, profitable, and satisfying to a simple merchant."

Unfortunately the grandiose plan of La Popelinière did not come to pass. Indeed, we know that he died in Paris five years later in great poverty. Although one can regret that such an excellent plan failed, it would nonetheless not be pointless to try to understand how he could have come to conceive of it and how, already at the beginning of the 17th century, a vision of human civilization presented itself in rather precise and coherent terms as a phenomenon constituting a single universal whole, but situated at different degrees and levels in relation to the progress among them and understandable exactly through a comparison between primitive and civilized peoples, and between one civilization and another.

A fleeting intuition? A project conceived in a moment of leisure or of desperation amid the hardships of a miserable existence? The reasons were diverse: in reality we are speaking of the results of an entire series of studies and reflections, the fruits of an intense intellectual activity which is worth the effort of being looked at afresh.

II

The first scholarly interests of La Popelinière awoke in the stimulus of his war experiences. In 1571, following the peace of Saint-Germain between the Catholics and the Huguenots, he published in Paris the translation of a treatise on the military arts: Des entreprises et ruses de guerre . . ., ou le vray pourtrait d’un parfait general d’armée, by the contemporary Italian, Bernardino Rocca. However, at the same time he intended to exploit his experiences of the civil wars by sketching La vraye et entière histoire de ces derniers troubles advenus tant en France qu’en Flandres et pays circonvoisins: there were few capable historians, according to him, who demonstrated with sufficient skill and precision what seemed to him to be one of the cardinal principles of historiography, the course of battles and the conduct of wars. A historian who was also a soldier, he thought, should be able to satisfy these requirements. There was nothing exceptional in this: the interests and tastes of the time lent themselves to that type of reading resounding with the clash of armies in battle and with the commands of the orders of the condottieri, and the work of La Popelinière had its success. But—unfortunately for him—the author also cherished another preoccupation, fairmindedness. In his history he wanted to avoid every hint of
polemics and sectarianism. To that end he managed to eliminate from his vocabulary such terms, then commonly used, as "Papists" and "Huguenots." He decided to place himself exclusively at the service of "truth," and in the preface of 1571 he observed that [the truth] "is so explicitly expressed that many persons . . . wanted me to postpone the edition, assuring me that it was as displeasing to the Catholics as to the Protestants." His friends were not misled: The Catholics did not show any particular appreciation of his stance, and only some plagiarists of "Jesuit" tendencies profited by its calm style to publish two unauthorized and somewhat censored editions. His impartial approach and some observations not entirely respectful of the house of Navarre led Henry de Bourbon, the future sovereign, to denounce his work to the consistory of La Rochelle and afterwards to the National Synod of Reformed Churches, which condemned the work of La Popelinière as written "to the detriment of the truth of God." Theological truth was evidently not historical truth: it was a lesson he had to painfully learn as did another historian, his contemporary and a Catholic, Jacques Auguste de Thou, who also suffered from the conflicts and difficulties provoked by his church. "Dilecta coelo, candida Veritas,/Invisa terns, horrida Veritas,/ O diva quo periclitantem/ Ancora et arx fugis innocen-
tem?" this scholar implored at the opening of the History of his Times. It is easy to understand the hostility of Roman Counter-Reformation circles, early in the 17th century, to de Thou, with his openly "paci-
fist" positions, but it is more difficult to find a reason for the earlier hostility to La Popelinière. Ideas of religious unification were much more diffused in his age and also accepted among Protestants. Besides, the Huguenot historian limited himself to keeping a certain equidistance from the two struggling factions, simply deploring the civil wars as such. On the religious level, he considered it impossibility that the Protestant conscience could yield "to long prison sentences, torments, stakes and fiery flames, or to any violence; though it might yield to argument, to the text of Holy Scripture, or to a free sacred Council, which, if not general, would at the very least be national." Now the suggestion of a council surely could not have seemed scandalous to the Protestant leaders; they in turn resorted to it often in order to justify the schism and to affirm the impossibility of healing it with the customary repressive measures.

Perhaps more suspect on the eve of the St. Bartholomew massacre was La Popelinière's trust in the ability of the king of France to exercise his power of arbitration over the conflicting parties. Without doubt it would be an exaggeration to assert that the Huguenot historian consid-
ered it necessary to leave the religious problem to the shrine of individual conscience, super-imposing the general interest of the state upon the convictions of the individual citizen. However, it is undeniable that those French, both Catholic and Reformed, who rallied around Henri IV towards the end of the century seeking to overcome civil discord and the religious struggle, found in La Popelinière something more than a precursor.

III

Perhaps the bitterness this religious condemnation caused him supplied a stimulus that drove the Huguenot historian to deeper reflection on the studies he had hitherto undertaken along traditional lines. And the various revisions of his work in these same years give us evidence of a disquietude probably caused by a critical pondering which made him aware of the limits of this kind of work. Later he became a harsh critic of historiography both in its traditional forms and in the very way the classical models, proposed by the humanists. By that time, he must have become convinced that history could not be reduced to a chronological compilation—however truthful and accurate—of contemporary events; and later, when he tried to outline the Dessein de l'Histoire nouvelle des Francois, it became obviously necessary for him to find an explanation of national historical events in the customs and institutions handed down by the peoples who dominated the country. According to La Popelinière, in fact, these traditions had endowed France with a series of organic structures capable of absorbing the shock of events and tempering their effects. Other concerns, provoked from without, must have contributed to drawing him away from such a line of thought; the resumption of the religious wars, above all from 1576 on, and the anarchy into which the country was precipitously plunged drove him to the bitter accents of his revision of the Histoire de France published in 1579. It must have become difficult for a Huguenot to keep his faith in the monarchy after Henri III, newly returned from Poland, had revealed his warlike intentions by proclaiming himself head of the Holy League. The position of the French Reformeds was becoming increasingly more dangerous, so that once again they had to seriously question their patriotic feelings and their political ideology.

Nonetheless, to understand La Popelinière's impulse towards other concerns and other studies, we cannot take into account only these "negative" elements. In the second half of the 16th century, repercussions of new geographical discoveries, distant voyages, and the extraor-
dinary horizons that navigation had opened up to European culture, prompted curiosity in France as elsewhere about the new territories. But given Atkinson’s work, we need hardly dwell on this at length.\textsuperscript{15} Of course we often see on the shelves of many libraries of the period travel books arrayed next to chivalric poems and novels old and new.\textsuperscript{16} We must conclude that the tragic events of those years were not been irrelevant to the circulation and the success of these writings, capable of transcending, by means of imagination, the bloodstained frontiers of the country. But in all this literature there are hints and motives which go beyond the curiosity then in fashion, the desire for escape and the thirst for novelty. In this literature, there were facts and observations that set people’s consciousness profoundly in ferment and which contributed actively to transforming not only geographical horizons, intellectual concepts, the cultural traditions of the classical age, but also historical-religious problems and the fundamentals of morals and of social life.

The limited Mediterranean world now appears in all its narrowness, and the equilibrium of the old \textit{Respublica Christiana} is shattered and overthrown under the pressure of awareness of the causes that underlay the origins of Spanish power.\textsuperscript{17} The reader of those books also discovers the unsuspected expanses of unknown lands and oceans; he reads about the Far East, where states are sustained by the most ancient civilization and perfect organization, where religions are found not at all different from those the medieval tale of the three rings had traced to a common Biblical origin and where there is coexistence, without the conflicts of faith, among diverse creeds. Little by little, this last element assumed the force of a myth in shaping the idea of tolerance. From the Western part of the world, from those lands whose discoverers, still resigned to the narrowness of their universe, had called India, other information threw the edifice which European culture had constructed into disarray. Even more than the American Empires, with their social customs and strange rites, the discovery of the “savage” stirred imaginations and provoked reactions which only enlightened thought could encompass and develop theoretically.\textsuperscript{18} But even then, the manner in which the “savage” was treated by his new rulers was immediately taken up by anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish publicists. They hastened to expose the violence and the cruelty to which the indigenous Americans were subjected on the pretext of “civilizing” them and converting them to Christianity, and the wars of conquest which “under the cloak of religion” the same Spaniards waged in Europe. To such polemical ends the first French translation of the celebrated work of Las Casas was presented under the opportune title \textit{Tyrannies et cruautez de Espagnoles...}
perpétrées ès Indes Occidentals qu'on dit le Nouveau Monde . . . pour servir d'exemple et advertissement aux XVII Provinces du Paris Bas.  

A facile moral in rhyme was offered on the same title page: “Happy the man who wisdom gains/By learning from another’s pains.” Certainly the distich should also have sounded a warning to the French—not to just the Huguenots—who had had close acquaintance with the uprisings in Flanders (provoked by the intervention of the Duke of Anjou) and who were feeling the weight of the Spanish intervention in the dramatic events of their own civil wars.

It is probable that polemical motives, accompanied by the weariness of internecine warfare, spurred La Popelinière to undertake his new studies. The immense wealth of the territories beyond the oceans, he might have hoped, would influence the sovereigns of Europe to cease their vain disputes “to dominate a small country, . . . in order to gain an advantage which in the end proves to be of brief duration and ill-secured,” and to induce them to seek elsewhere for glory and power. In publishing his book on *Les Trois Mondes*, he intended to display to Henri III and his chanceller—to whom he dedicated his work—the infinite possibilities offered by the new lands.

We are dealing here with a really strange book: full of different things, disorganized and chaotic. Yet, despite its extravagances and its frequently rehashed doctrines, the impression is always of a new and lively book. A work of geography and of history both, it displays all La Popelinière’s thirst for knowledge, his passion for research, his enthusiasm to encompass a world vast, fascinating, unknown, and rich. Faced with the extraordinary novelties offered by his readings, he seeks to embed them with originality in a vision free of the old philosophical, theological and pseudo-scientific schemes, but always unitary and capable of giving a significance to those extraordinary gifts that nature offers, with such generosity, to man.

“The earth is strangely vast,” he exclaimed, moved by the boundless horizons of the landscapes that he tried to describe not only in terms of their geographical characteristics, but also by sketching the original elements of their history. History very different, in its essentials, from his previous work: history of the customs and institutions, and of the navigation and commerce which could unite countries so diverse and distant in a single vast network. His admiration for the lands of the Far East which, in contrast to what had occurred in America, had been able to resist European colonial conquest, is clearly expressed. Since he is discussing Portugal, there is no reason to suspect that his admiration grows out of his anti-Spanish politico-religious convictions. He in fact noted
that these people are “so . . . well ordered, equipped and armed at all
times . . . that in the end the Portuguese were forced to adopt other
means than the use of arms in order to continue their commerce with
those countries.” 21 In “order”—that ancestor of civilisation—he therefore
found an element of force and cohesion, and a resource with which
to resist the foreigner, which had to be analyzed and put in a clear light.

Nevertheless, what most interests La Popelinière is to picture—
especially to the men who govern his country—the existence of a third
great continent, capable of “compensating for the error committed by
our first Princes who ignored the sound advice that Columbus, the Gen-
oese, had given them” and abandoned the rich prize to the Spanish
(“who later made savage war on them and nearly destroyed their king-
dom”). 22 Taking a hint from Villegagnon’s attempt to colonize Brazil
and from the celebrated account by Thévet, 23 he affirmed that the
“Third World” surely must be full “of all sorts of goods and excellent
things,” stretching as it does “from the Equator to as far south as 30°
and constituting a territory of much vaster expanse than all America.”
As shown in Mercator’s Atlas, for example, a vast continent existed in
the southern hemisphere, extending from Tierra del Fuego and from the
Straits of Magellan to the northern coast of Australia; from that point its
coast swept off not far from the Cape of Good Hope, reaching without
discontinuity the regions to the south of South America. Convinced of
the adaptability of man, La Popelinière was not disturbed by the climate
of this immense Antarctic terrain. “Although it is more comfortable to
live in tropical lands, . . . man can live in any part of the earth he
chooses.” So he countered the possible objections of those “who wish
to be satisfied with whatever is already discovered”; thus, he hopes that
if not the King himself, some wealthy person at least would engage in
the “enterprise.”

Always concerned with these problems, La Popelinière published an-
other book three years later, dedicated this time to one of the favorites of
Henri III, Anne de Joyeuse, admiral of France. It was a repeated invita-
tion to the youth of France to devote themselves to the journeys and
discoveries made possible by the great technical and scientific advances
now available to navigators. Thanks to these, it was possible to surpass
the voyagers of antiquity. Though capable of great undertakings, their
inadequate equipment and very limited conditions made it impossible
for them to navigate beyond a very restricted orbit. “Virtue,” he ad-
monishes, “lies in action, not in the vain speculations of books,” and it
is necessary to commit all one’s energies “to the honor and profit of all
and especially to the state in which you were born.”


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To this end, he seeks to trace the entire history of mankind in this original monograph from the particular perspective of the history of navigation, criticizing the customs and beliefs of antiquity and exalting the superiority of his contemporaries. To this end, he argues vigorously against the humanist practice of writing in Latin and defends the dignity of the Romance languages, especially French, appealing to national principles and warning of the danger that the use of Latin might further the cultural and intellectual domination of Rome. La Popelinière also outlines an impressive sketch of the developments of the Latin language that had proceeded hand in hand with those of culture and social life, and arrives at conclusions worth taking the pains to elaborate.

"Greek arrogance," he writes, "... calling Barbarians all those who do not speak as they do, then from the language extending the word to customs, to identify as such all those people who do not possess the civilization [civilité] of Greece; that arrogance was picked up as a legacy by right of succession by the Romans. Even prouder than the Greeks, they did not consider themselves inferior to them either in language or in civilité mondaine, and appropriated to themselves all the advantages due to a state superior in power, taking even less account of those whom they subjugated to their Empire, seeing them as inferior both in language and culture [civilité] regarding them indeed as slaves to their pleasure ... We do not yield to the Greeks in anything, neither in the administration and the extent of the State, nor in sweetness of language, nor yet in the probity of customs, courtesy, in humanity, and in general in all things that could be called human Civilization [civilité]."

The use made of the term civilité should without doubt be underscored: it is certainly not possible to limit its meaning to "courtesy" or "refinement of manners." We must relate it to a much larger set of judgments of value, linking it to the ripening development in La Popelinière of a vivid historical awareness. This vision of the world was clearly tied to the conditions of his time, but he was resolutely bent on attaining a deeper understanding of reality by means of dynamic elaboration of accumulated facts and the all-embracing articulation of felicitous conjectures. Establishing a whole range of connections between contemporary societies and the more ancient civilizations, between those in which he lived and those savage and underdeveloped already evolved buy in every way different from those in Europe toward which he sought to direct his research, he reached a particular interpretation of the phenomenon of civilization, one closely linked to the idea of progress. Mankind, in the course of its evolution over many centuries, was capable of enriching itself with the entire sum of the experience of di-

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verse civilizations: it is this that made for the superiority of modern societies.

Clearly, this interpretation comes from an examination of his last great work, a work born evidently from his extensive and considered reading throughout the greater part of his life, but written out only after the civil wars had ceased ravaging the country: *L'Histoire des Histoires, avec l'idée de l'Histoire accomplie.* On the title page a claim is printed which at first may appear an idle boast, but which was not unusual in proud humanistic circles: "A work not hitherto seen nor attempted by anyone." Certainly, the study of history underwent a great revival in those years. Bodin’s methodology, though it has had no imitators, had aroused much interest. Yet, La Popelinière’s work seems to be of truly exceptional value and one cannot but agree with Atkinson, who, devoting several lines to it, declares: "One does not really expect to find, in a book dated 1599 and written by a forgotten author, the quality of judgment which is found therein." Indeed, we must acknowledge that it is not easy to find any precedent for this sweeping panorama of the history of historiography which begins with the most ancient documents (much older than the classical texts of Herodotus and the like), with materials which were created at the very dawn of civilization in order to transmit the memory of particular events.

The work begins with a comparison between the sciences and history according to the degree of their development, which he believed could have gone further than it had in his time. He rejects the "always doubtful assumptions of sceptics and Pyrrhonians." La Popelinière was convinced of the possibility of attaining significant progress, "in view of the advantages... that our contemporaries have over the ancients." He then debates the origins of literature and the sciences among the different peoples of antiquity, crediting voyages and social institutions with having developed and diffused civilization. Thus the Phoenicians, sailing to Greece for their trade, "molded the Greeks, whom they found rustic and uncivilized, drawing them into social and political life by means of the letters, arts and sciences which they left among them." On the other hand he denied that Moses was the "author of the first historical work, as claimed by the Jews, because he was born under one of the greatest monarchies of his day, that is to say, the Egyptian, which already had knowledge both of sciences (by which a state holds itself in honor and promotes its prosperity) and of history, without which no civilized country has ever been renowned."

He next passes to an examination of the development of historiography in which he distinguishes four stages. The first type of history
arises from "the natural impulse of early peoples, almost rustic and uncivilized," is based on oral tradition and on monuments erected to commemorate men or events that they wished to "eternalize." The Gauls and Germans were still at this level when Caesar and Tacitus collected their traditions. But also "all the richest and most powerful peoples, in Africa as well as in America, who have been discovered in the last century, plainly demonstrate that they have thus preserved the memory of ancient things from earliest times." Their past can be known by studying "certain traits of religion and the various modes of exalting the graces and virtues" of their ancestors, commemorated by "public and private dances, with prescribed chants accompanied by movements of their bodies." It is undeniable that without turning La Popelinière's work into a precursor of modern ethnographic and anthropological studies, we must note in these pages a rare penetration and originality of interpretation of the historiographic values of these unusual materials.  

With the successive civilizing of peoples we reach a second stage in which the memory of the past is transmitted by means of poetry, particularly of epics which we find "not only among ourselves and the Greeks, but also among Asians, Europeans, Africans, Americans and others in all parts of the world." Having recorded some examples from antiquity—Moses, who wrote his song of victory over the Egyptians "even before he composed his account of his origins," the Gnomic Greek songs, the poems of the fetiales and of the Patrician Fathers among the Romans, etc.—in order to display the possibility of a comparison with analogous texts of the peoples inhabiting the newly discovered lands, La Popelinière expressed the conviction that "in the old days theology, history, philosophy, astrology, etc., were written in verse," if only to preserve the sacred character of esoteric initiation into these sciences.  

These poems finally yield to prose, both in history and in philosophy which in turn assumes a style that is "clear, familiar and suitable for teaching," and men begin to "inquire into truth in ordinary language." But in this phase of transition, all nations, "happy with a simple chronicle, at first compose it of gross, crude, and faulty accounts of the most important matters of the day, and as these accounts occurred every year, they were called "annals" by the Romans." Only later, with the development of the organization of the state, and then of the arts, sciences and culture in general, "history, however brief, narrow, and condensed it had been, was broadened, extended and enriched."  

From these general observations La Popelinière passes to detailed
examination of historiographic works, divided into these various stages, noting that "the peoples and states which order themselves only through contact with strangers retain their original institutions in crude and rough form, still showing traces of their semi-savage nature." The first part of this review is devoted to the ancient peoples up until Roman times. He notes how with the fall of the Western Empire "the cultivation of letters and sciences decline until in the end they seemed to return to their original state"; history itself deteriorated in those days to the status of annual records. Thereon, beginning with the Italians, the author examines the works of the various peoples who emerged from the ruins of the Roman Empire and ends with his own times. We shall not pause over this "immense intellectual and critical effort"—as Atkinson justly defines it—preferring to outline the second part which is more interesting from the methodological point of view: L’Idée de l’histoire accomplie.

From his first pages La Popelinière was concerned with the possible reactions to his criticisms of ancient authors then widely judged to be indisputable authority. He alludes to the conviction that the only possibility of healing the schism or of justifying proper doctrines lay in an appeal to the authority of the Fathers of the church, a conviction widespread among contemporary humanists, ecclesiastical historians, and polemicists. They felt that "one ought to believe those good old fathers were endowed with better sense and therefore with more certain knowledge, being closer to God and to the beginning of the world." To him, however, this "reverence for antiquity" seemed excessive and in some ways irritating and hypocritical. It seemed "to have something of the theatre and public parade . . . pretexts adapted to gain the favor of the common people," but in reality it functioned "contrary to reason" and in some ways contrary to experience. One should note, rather, the method that the ancient writers followed; it skillfully answers these forms of humanist dogmatism: Plato and Aristotle did not fear to criticize their predecessors, however great and famous they may have been. Modern writers should follow their example without forgetting that "knowledge of the truth has always been free and freely offered to all those engaged fully in the study of true Philosophy." From this point of view he criticizes Bodin, who had held the ancients to be unsurpassable without considering that time itself works in favor of the moderns, who are superior precisely because time "has made known to us" through the writings of the ancients "all that they knew and what they availed themselves of; further, it gives us knowledge of many rare and excellent things that the ancients did not know and that
Nature has produced since then.” And at this point, he launches into a veritable hymn to modern science that allows us to grasp the breadth of this scholar’s interests.

“We cross all the seas, leaving nothing unknown in all the universe; we search for new worlds in this old world and with more likelihood of success than Alexander the Great who based himself on the fantastic assumptions of Anaxagoras. And we should have discovered and settled them already, found them even more fit than those previously discovered to accommodate our people, if only the bounty of our Princes, who prefer to expend their means on trifles, had been willing to favor us to the degree that our judgment and courage allowed us to advance. At least, among other fruits of such noble designs, our people have managed so that this commerce, so profitable (if well managed) to a more favorable upkeep of this human society hitherto base, feeble, poor and so little practiced that we did not know anything about India and other countries, except by our wildest imagination, has now grown so rich, noble, and full of all the curiosities of the world, that all the greatest monarchs are involved in it.”

In his enthusiasm, he sees the world combined in a single system of civic and commercial relationships such as no one before him had ever thought to foresee: “All the peoples of the Universe, formerly barbarians, savages, and enemies, or totally unknown to one another, come to know each other, visit each other, love each other, and help each other; indeed they seem to live together, normally in this world, just as they would in a city with every form of cooperation and human civility.”

But these are not the only advantages of the voyages and trade: thanks to them there was a tremendous development in geography “and other mathematical sciences, which were earlier very confused and badly handled.” For lack of experience the ancient writers had also rejected or scoffed at various phenomena (such as the existence of the antipodes) since firmly accepted; nor did they know of that whole series of scientific advances and technical improvements that modern talent and theory have generated: leaving aside these many excellent articles of iron, wool, and other materials produced in so short a time to the great benefit and marvelous convenience of this worldly society, the invention of printing that enables us and all other people to see as quick as lightning all the finest ideas in the world—would not this along win the palm over all the most exquisite subtleties of the ancients?” And with justified pride he concludes: “It is a trait of a man faint of heart and feeble of spirit not to be aware of the strengths of his century, or to judge them so poorly.” Already in this enthusiastic assertion of his, full of vigorous
optimism, we can sense that he is the heir of the highest and most ardent humanism of an age that saw so many souls, without consolation, withdraw into themselves, unable to see beyond the tragic political happenings and religious dead ends of their time, unable to see the progress of human civilization taken in its broadest and most general terms, a progress from which La Popelinière drew such sure and trusting signs of the possibilities granted to men of the modern age. But probably in this very dissonance of feeling lies the reason for the scanty fortune of these unquestionably innovative works, alien to the interests of his contemporaries and later forgotten. “To everything there is a season,” we may repeat with Ecclesiastes, “. . . a time to keep and a time to cast away,” and the years of La Popelinière—or at least those years towards the end of the 16th century and at the beginning of the 17th—were characterized by a strong cultural tendency of an erudite and conservative nature, unfavorable to his critical daring and impulsive enthusiasm about the future development of human knowledge.

In addition to all this, he examined the particular nature of history and criticized those who have dealt with it not to show what it is, but to demonstrate its value and advantages. In this way, the advantages of history are demonstrated, but its essence is not grasped, or else an etymological analysis of the idea of history is given, which fails to provide sufficient insight. Even Bodin, the greatest scholar of the problem of historical method, did not understand that it was necessary “to take history as a narrative of human, rather than divine actions, or any other matters.” Departing from this vision, we end by “talking extravagantly about the universe,” without knowing “the motives, the designs, the progress, the issues and outcome of the whole,” and so fail to produce a work of history. On the other hand, it is not enough to define history as “a true and detailed narrative of things that have been done or have happened”: the annals, too, as well as records and commentaries, must enter into the writing of history but of themselves do not constitute a true history. This must have a rational construction, and besides truth, order, a critical choice of facts, and the distinction of times and places, “a right and solid judgment” are necessary conditions for the work of the historian. However, when it is necessary to give a definition of history, La Popelinière does not entirely escape from the ideas and prejudices of humanistic historiography. Indeed, he proposes to consider history “a general narrative, eloquent and judicious, with the most important actions of men and events therein described, according to their relationships, their causes, progress and outcome.” In any case, his statement of the “totality” and the “humanity” of history appears very
advanced, for he had to overcome all teleological and providential presuppositions. For its time, this work is exceptional in its critical premises.

IV

Should we still be surprised by the boldness of the letter that this dispassionate scholar sent in 1604 to Scaligero? This appears to us a natural landfall after a long voyage of intellectual maturation, various stages of which have been summarized here. Clearly, just as it would be useless to ruminate over the failure of the projected sea voyage to the South and Far East, so there would be little point to insist on La Popelinière's importance as a "precursor" or even to deplore the rarity of response to his works by his contemporaries. More interesting, but obviously removed from the task undertaken here, is to probe more deeply into the reasons for the paucity of his fortunes, tied undoubtedly, as has been noted, not so much to the particular events of his life, but mainly to the change in tastes and interests and in the mentality itself of that period. And evidently it would be necessary to examine in what way his work takes root in the culture of the time and in what measure it rejects it.

With respect to our inquiry, it seems indubitable that it is in sources of this kind that the first manifestations of the modern concept of civilization and the values associated with it are to be found. If one does not wish to be limited to the semantic study of civilisation, it is difficult to believe that the technicalities of jurisprudence gave birth to a concept intimately linked to the ideas of progress and the general development of human society, to new horizons opened in all fields of knowledge by the philosophy of the Enlightenment. It seems probable, rather, that the birth of this term, in a form still connected to the ancient Latin root (whose use was limited in application to the body of external rules governing the relations between the individual and the community), should be associated with the attempt, provoked by the great discoveries, to establish on a new basis and in more complex and dynamic terms the totality of historical, political, and scientific experience. This was a gradual change of long duration, like the one that took place in moral ideas and in conscience, the outcome of which only the most ardent and critical minds were in a position to perceive in advance. European culture could assimilate and accept the full extent of this mental change, a true revolution, only much later, only after reexamining not only its systems of knowledge and
scientific philosophical doctrines, but its own social structures and ide-
oologies, the basis of its long-lasting civilization.

Università di Torino

APPENDIX

Letter of Henri Lancelot du Voisin de la Popelinière to Giuseppe Giusto Scali-
gero, in Epistres francoises des personnages illustres et doctes à M. Joseph
Juste de la Scala, mises en lumiere par Jacques de Reves, Amsterdam, 1624,
pp. 303-307 (Bibl. Nat. of Paris, Inventory No. Z. 14322).

Sir:

Because by your last letters in which you confirm my dissenting view of
oracles, you advised me to compose history so as to generalize from the particu-
lar on the most important matters, both human and natural, I decided that, since
judgment is the most noble and essential faculty of man, there is nothing better
to harden it than a journey and careful observation of foreign countries, in order
to approach the perfection of history. Although the customs of some of the
peoples inhabiting the islands and shores of Africa and America has helped me a
great deal - particularly to understand and to better judge the origins, form,
growth, progress and varying effects of all the good and bad habits of men, that
is, of everything that has been said, though only in general, by the Greek and
Roman philosophers, historians and jurists, whether on natural or international
or civil law of each people - in considering that the most notable actions of all
men derive from these three institutions or usages, I thought that one could find
them only among the civilized peoples and those who are improperly called
'savage.' We have too little knowledge of those who truly are [savage]. So that,
though I can more or less judge, either by those whom we have discovered, or
by the works of writers who have left some account of others, what the differ-
ence is between the savages and the civilized peoples, yet I still need to see the
developments and various actions of the oldest and most famous of the civilized
peoples, who have always been thought to be the Asians and, most of all, the
Orientals. These were the first, according to many accounts, or at least, if not
the very first, were sooner warmed by the rays of that great fire, and so were
able to receive, certainly the most active, clearest, and most continuous effects
of those heavenly bodies, thus making them more suited to give birth to so
many great human institutions. So much so, that it is astonishing that for so
many centuries down to our own, there has been a lack of will or courage, or of
means or desire to go and see them. All the more so since the path has been well
worn for the last hundred years, either by land or sea; yet danger seems to have
deterred them, except for Marco Polo, Ludovico di Varthema, Amerigo Vespuc-
chi, Christopher Columbus, and a few others who have raised the banner for
us and lit a beacon to show a sure route. But none of them, it seems to me,
directed his voyage to the aim which so commendable a purpose deserved: to

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discover the common means by which men, from the savages and reclusive individuals they are said to have been, have gradually become social and united by various bonds of human polity, for simple curiosity to see unusual things seems to have inspired the first two, while the others were lured by profit and honor. Thus they have left in their writings only trifling things of little importance for any one of us, not a single aspect worthy of serving as an example for any of our States.

Therefore it is necessary to aim at a just and complete knowledge of men, both from within and without, and then of each State and government of these peoples, of the land that feeds them, of the sea which brings them its wealth and dangers, and thence it is possible to go on to observations about the air and the sky which yield, besides the influences so much praised by astrologers, certain useful and advantageous signs for the conduct of their voyages as well as for their other daily activities.

As you well know, the most celebrated of the Greeks: Solon, Democritus, Empedocles, Pythagoras (if he may be called Greek), Lycurgus, Plato, and others hardly knew lands outside Babylon, the Euphrates, and Egypt; whence nevertheless they brought back most of what they incorporated in their writings, either because the East became accessible to the Greeks only after Alexander’s conquests, or because they lacked the courage or the means, or because it is we who lack knowledge of antiquity. I am persuaded that a man of good judgment could observe wonderful things there, if he had the means to meet the expenses of the voyage, of making purchases, writing, painting, illustration and being able to pay his way back. Democritus exhausted all his fortune, rich as he was before, and on his return was ridiculed by his neighbors and relations, just as Aristotle reports the ridiculing of the Seven Wise Men. Solon did better, taking fruits and merchandise from his country and by trading covered the expenses of his sojourn and return to Greece. This Greek prince should be emulated. That is why I am upset that nobody in our time has undertaken something so grand, and I would like to tell you of my desire to accomplish it, if and when you approve. What I have in mind is the possibility of joining your Dutch people who, I hear, are departing each year about this time. I cannot believe that you are not well acquainted with them, and even less that you would be unwilling to support me with letters to your friends, and also that the gentlemen of Leiden would not do as you ask, in requesting them to receive a gentleman who could serve them in whatever capacity they wish. The purpose is not to impede their trade nor to diminish their profits, but to satisfy a need of the spirit. Everybody seems to have cared only about their profits, so swayed by insane ambitions, and so lost in vain youthful curiosity, that the times have never, it seems, been worse disposed to recognize true interest and honor.

You will tell me that one ought to abide these vexations, to live within one’s means, and not to aim too high. You would be right, and I have lived this way for over forty years, but my aim does not seem to me to be too ambitious for a nobleman, if it is easy, profitable, and satisfying to a simple merchant. If I succeed in my plan, I shall be the first to sound the glory of those who assisted
me. If not, I shall console myself that the desire was sound and the effort
praiseworthy to do what others did not want to undertake. Moreover, there is
the satisfaction of witnessing to posterity that this century, despite wretched
circumstances, is not completely devoid of men of honor and courage as our
descendants and even strangers might think. At least it will be seen to be better
supported and better equipped with tools and implements suitable for creating
beautiful things, as well as with craftsmen worthy of designing them and bring-
ing them to perfection.

I await your reply by return of post, and I shall abide by your decision. In this
expectation I pray to God, Sir, that He hold you in his grace as I stand in yours,
just as I trust to remain always your humble and affectionate servant.

Popellinière
Paris, January 4, 1604.

NOTES

in Civilisation, le mot et l’idée, Proceedings of the “1st International Week of
Synthèse,” Paris, 1930; J. Moras, Ursprung und Entwicklung des Begriffs der
Zivilisation in Frankreich, 1765-1829, Hamburg, 1930; E. Beneviste, “Civilisation,
contribution à l’histoire du mot,” in L’Éventail de l’histoire vivante,
Paris, 1955. As part of a comparative analysis of major modern historiographic
concepts associated with national mentalities, Alphonse Dupront of the Univer-
sity of Paris, is at this time engaged in a vast inquiry which includes the term
“civilization.”

2. For a somewhat brief sketch of the history of the term “cultūra,” see the
note to page 105 of the study by R. Romeo, Le scoperte americane nella cos-
cienza italiana del Cinquecento, R. Ricciardi, Naples, 1954. For the period
under review the notable study by J. Niedermann is of importance: Kultur,
Werden und Wandlungen des Begriffs und seiner Ersatzbegriffe von Cicero bis
Herder, Bibl. of the Archivum Romanicum, Section I, Vol. 28, Florence, 1941.
The cursory remarks of D. Cantimori in his introduction to J. Burckhardt, Medi-
tazioni sulla storia universale, Italian translation Florence, 1959, p. xxxv,
note 1, offer valuable suggestions, above all concerning the Italian usage of the
terms civilta, incivilimento, and cultura.


4. For biographical data on La Popelinière, born in 1541 in the village from
which his family took its name, cf. the entry devoted to him in France Protes-
tante under “Voisin.” See also the entry in Moreri’s dictionary: “Lancelot (du
Voisin).” The letter referred to was published by Jacques de Reves in Epistres
francoises de personnages illustres et doctes à M. Joseph Juste de la Scala,
Harderwyck, Widow of Thomas Henry, Amsterdm, 1624, pp. 303-7. The

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rarity of this publication and the interest of the letter lead me to reproduce it in
the appendix.

5. The French edition of Mercator’s *Atlas Mineur* bears the date 1608. The
following year appeared L’Atlas, ou *Méditations Cosmographiques de la Fab-
rique du Monde et figure d’icelui, parachevé par Jodocus Hondus et traduit en
françois par M. de la P.*, in folio. At this same time La Popelinière considered a
translation of the well known work of Leandro Alberti, *Descrittione di tutta
Italia* (Ed. prin. Bologna, 1550), of which a brief MS sample survives in the

6. “Seigneur de la Popelinière,” Pierre de l’Estoile wrote in his *Journal*
opinion, has well described the troubles and civil wars of our France concerning
religion, died at this time [Dec., 1608], of a disease common enough to honor-
able men of letters such as he was: of misery and need.” L’Estoile regrets that
the final volumes of his work on the civil wars were not on a par with the first
ones, and celebrates his “boldness, liberty, and truth (on account of which he
risked his life at La Rochelle, having received in payment a sword-stroke
through his body).” In effect the point is made that the argument he employed
was “annoying and thorny for that period of the century.”

7. It is the translation of Sorprese, *Strattagemmi ed Errori militari* (Ed. prin.
Venice, 1566), printed at Paris by N. Chesneau.


9. The first edition was published in 1572 (Basel), another in 1573 (La Ro-
chelle), an enlarged edition in 1579, and an even larger revision published under
the title *Histoire de France* in 1581, republished three times in 1582, 1583, and
522-70, is preserved a MS fragment attributed to La Popelinière which appears
to constitute a continuation of the work through 1591.

10. Jean Le Frère and Fr. Emile Piguérer plagiarized the first edition in 1573
and the third in 1584, limiting themselves to correcting and censoring some
passages of the work that could have sounded anti-Catholic. Cf. J. A. Rigoley
de Juvigny, *Les bibliothèques francaises de La Croix du Maine et de Du Verdier

10a Cf. Jean Aymon, *Tous les Synodes nationaux des Eglises Reformées de
Rochelle, 28 June, 1581.

11. The poem, under the Greek title *Aletheia,* was first published in the
collection of lyrics by de Thou, *Crambe* (R. Etienne, Paris, 1609, p. 28) and
was placed at the head of the 1620 edition of his history, probably in accordance
with the wish of the author, who had died the year before and who had com-
posed this lyric just after his monumental work had been placed on the Index.

length the speech of the Archbishop of Valence, Jean de Montluc, to the assem-
bly at Fontainebleau in 1560: this prelate recalled the end of the persecutions
and the convocation of a council in which the Huguenots also participated. For
the incident which happened to La Popelinière in his relations with the Reformed Church in France see: *Lettres et mémoires touchant l'histoire de Lance-lot du Voesin, sieur de la Popelinière* in Bibl. Nat. of Paris, Dép. MSS, Fonds Dupuy, No. 744, fols. 230-268. In particular, the letters of apology from La Popelinière to the Prince de Condé (fols. 240 and 242) and to the king of Navarre (fol. 241); the accusations of the latter to the magistrates of La Rochelle against La Popelinière’s history (fol. 248) and the acts of condemnation of the Reformed Synod of Aulyn (fol. 254). The letters that were exchanged between the historian and Théodore de Bèze (Jan. 15 and March 29, 1581, fols. 235 and 237) are also of interest: in them the latter gives a substantially favorable judgment of the new edition of the *Histoire de France* without, however, compromising himself. In the Fond français (no. 20797, fols. 457-463), a *Résponse pour l'histoire* is preserved in MS attributed to La Popelinière, which seems to constitute his apology presented in defense of this work condemned by the Protestant ministers.

13. See the appendix to *Vraie et entière histoire de ces derniers troubles*, composed of poetry and epigrams: on peace, to Charles IX, on the justice and piety of the king of France (represented on the throne with the symbols of these virtues, and devoid of all warlike attributes), against the hardships of war, on the King and peace. The collection ends with the chant of invocation to God: “Remember, for it is time, O Lord,” in which the return of peace to France is foreseen. For the myth of an empire founded in peace and of an author of a general Christian *renovatio*, see above all, as concerns France, Frances A. Yates, *French Academies of the XVth Century*, London, 1947; “Considérations de Bruno et de Campanella sur la Monarchie française” in *L'Art et la pensée de Léonard de Vinci*, Actes du ler Congrès International des Historiens de *L'Humanisme*, Paris-Algiers, 1953-54, pp. 411-422; *The Valois Tapestries*, London, 1959; and for the whole question, considered afresh in a panoramic survey, “Charles-Quint et l'idée e'Empire” in *Fête et cérémonies au temps de Charles-Quint*, Paris 1960, pp. 57-97.


16. See, for example, the interesting suggestions contained in the now classic work of L. Fevre, *Philippe II et la Franche-Comté*, Paris, Champion, 1912, on the libraries of the great bourgeois of this region on French language and culture; in particular pp. 358-361.

17. Cf. the important considerations devoted to this problem at the outset of his work by Jacques Auguste de Thou (*Historiarum sui temporis libri*, London, 1733, pp. 14 ff.)


20. Paris, Pierre l’Huillier, 1582; dedicated “to the noble and illustrious lord, Messire Philippe Hurault, Vicomte de Cheverny.” In the Avant-discours he declares: “I have had no other aim than to acquaint our remote descendants with the marvels of God’s judgments in the discovery of the East and West Indies through the strangest circumstances ever produced by nature and, in contrast to the highly praiseworthy boldness of Italians, Portuguese and Spaniards so remarkably bold in risking death, to show the pathetic poverty of the French who have never yet dared to attempt so praiseworthy or comparable an enterprise.”

21. ibid., p. 1", fol. 53. See in general, the whole chapter, devoted to the Oriental States.

22. ibid., p. III, fol. 53v.


24. Les Trois Mondes, p. III, fol. 53v. It should be borne in mind that the idea of this third world is not a pure fantasy of La Popelinière. Apart from the maps of Mercator we know that the Portuguese cosmographer and mathematician Bartolomeo Velho was persuaded of the existence of this great southern territory. He communicated this to the merchant and banker of Lucca, Francesco Dal Bagno who, in turn, in a letter of April 8, 1566, wrote to Charles IX proposing that the monarch undertake an expedition to discover and conquer this territory that was excluded from the Bull of Partition of Pope Alexander VI. Later, Velho, having fled to France, addressed a memorial to the King along the same lines, but without result. Cf. E.T. Hamy, “Francisque et Andre d’Albaigne, cosmographes lucquois au service de la France,” in Bull. de géographie historique et descriptive, 1894, pp. 405-34; and “Nouveaux documents sur les frères d’Albaigne et sur le project de voyage de découvertes présenté en 1566 a la Cour de France,” ibid., 1895. (I owe these references to Dr. Elena Fasano Guarini, whom I thank.) It is important to recall these precedents because we are not so much concerned with treating an original hypothesis of La Popelinière as with underscoring his ability to elaborate in a manner characteristic of him information and ideas that came into his possession.

25. L’Amiral de France et par occasion de celuy des autres Nations, tant vieilles que nouvelles, Paris, T. Perier. 1585. It is interesting to observe how he bases his exhortation on considerations inspired by a rather ingenuous Euhe- merism, but which in nonetheless presupposes a critical approach of some significance. “Those who employ these means conducive to the honor and profit of their country,” he wrote (p. 80), “and others, who by profitable inventions and new developments in art, science, polity, and other advantageous matters are seen to desire nothing but the advancement of their own people, are respected for it, then made gods of and worshiped as such, and so may expect no less good after their death than they have enjoyed by way of benefits during their lives.”

26. Cf. “Foreword, showing why the author writes in French rather than in another language.” The influence is plain of the celebrated Défense et illustra-
tion de la langue francaise by Du Bellay (1549); but according to a reference in the Bibliothèque by La Croix du Maine (ed. princ. 1584) La Popelinière had written before 1583 "a very learned volume full of fair research and most worthy of praise, viz., a treatise on the first language employed among the French or Gauls, and the changes it has undergone, together with the changes under the French Republic"; this treatise was not published and is now lost (cf. J.A. Rigoley de Juvigny, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 24.)

29. p. 5. "We do not possess any perfectly developed science, any more than history approaches perfection. It is true that the sciences differ in this way: they are drawn from those secret things hidden in matter. But history has only the more common actions of men for its substance. And if the mode of expressing it cannot come close to the difficulty of the matters contained in the sciences, . . . it has in common with the sciences that they are all addressed by the same frailty of human understanding. So that taking into account the extent to which history shares in that imperfection . . . I do not hesitate . . . to advance in the form of a paradox that we do not possess a history equal in value to the actions of any people, nor even that we could construct such a one."
30. ibid., pp. 20-21.
31. It is likewise interesting to see what Campanella wrote: "Oporteret ab accolis Novi Orbis suas traditiones accipere, nam scriptura caruerunt." Cf. T. Campanella, Tutte le opere, ed. L. Firpo, Milan-Verona, 1954, Rationalis philosophiae pars V, videlicet Historiographiae Liber unus iuxta propria principia, pp. 1222-55 (the citation is on p. 1254). This work, from about 1619, does not however specify in detail which are the "traditions" to be preserved.
31a. The Pater Patratus was the chief of the priests charged with the wardship of the common law.
32. L'histoire des histoires, p. 41. The whole passage is worth underscoring in which (pp. 36-37) he affirms the necessity of proceeding in this type of inquiry by means of working hypotheses, without limiting oneself to information firmly secured; otherwise no science would be possible. "Languages, arts and human sciences could never have begun save by trial and error and simple presuppositions, which could be confirmed little by little; such principles have been proposed so that in the end the sciences have been brought to the form in which we now see them."
33. ibid., p. 48.
34. ibid., pp. 158-9.
35. ibid., p. 235.
36. "Many, perhaps more enamored of antiquity than of reason, will find it deplorable that we are the first and only one to detect so many faults not in one or two, but in all historians in general," he notes not without pride; "that we have been so bold as to upset received opinion of the ancient authors in many matters that in general opinion of learned men regard as entirely certain." He decisively refutes the belief that ignorance "has increased among mankind in
proportion as it has receded from its origins, thus accounting for the natural and general corruption of our century, and so it is necessary to believe in Antiquity, even without proof, and in case of doubt to return to the opinion of the ancients.” (Histoire accomplie, pp. 1-2.)

37. ibid., pp. 3-5.

38. ibid., pp. 12-13. It is interesting to note how La Popelinière insists, on the other hand, on the necessity of imitating the ancients in their freedom of criticism: no people of antiquity “ever suggested that the ancients had closed the path nor barred their way to ascent to the summit of immortal glory” (p. 15).

39. ibid.

40. Ancients and moderns, he affirms, “have failed from the start, beginning their treatises on history by praising it. For their first task is to make known what history is.” Instead they have limited themselves to representing it “some, by its effects and its accidents rather than by the substance and merit of the subject, others by etymology and deducing names; the former speak of it as ‘the eternal treasury of examples,’ or ‘a vivid image of human life as it may be found in all ages.’ the latter of ‘the book of kings and legislators,’ many offer ‘edifying instructions and true preparation for political actions and noble self-discipline, which teaches how to bear the vicissitudes of fortune’; and most Latin writers, following their ancestor in eloquence, offer their histories as ‘mistress of human life, messenger of antiquity, soul of memory, light of truth and witness of the ages.’ ” None of these apologetic definitions in fact permits any “conception of the substance of history,” he concludes contemptuously (pp. 20-22).

41. pp. 29-32. La Popelinière does not allow the appropriateness of “embracing” within history “divine as well as human, natural as well as heavenly matters.” History is solely human. Yet Campanella (op. cit., p. 1238) still divided history into divine, natural, and civil.

42. ibid., p. 36.

43. It is difficult to know how much truth there could be in the account given in passing by the anonymous author of the Histoire veritable de plusieurs voyages adventureux et perilleux faits sur la mer en diverses contrées... par I.P.T., Capitaine de Mer (Rouen, 1600, Bibl. Nat. of Paris, inventory No. G 24582) on a voyage by La Popelinière to Brazil in 1589 (p. 175). In that year two ships and a “cutter” are said to have left from La Rochelle for St. Helena and Brazil; in the course of the Atlantic crossing the French flotilla attacked and captured two Spanish merchant vessels and to secure their prey turned about for their port of embarkation, “one of the said vessels with Seigneur de la Popelinière aboard, who had embarked on the said voyage in order to see that country.” One cannot understand why the Huguenot historian would have abandoned his quest so close to its goal. Certainly, if one also takes into account the text of the letter to Scaligero, one must reject the interpretation of this citation given by Charles de la Roncière (“Les routes de l’Inde, le passage par les poles et l’isthme de Panama au temps de Henri IV,” in Revue des questions histor-
iques, Vol. 38, 1904, pp. 157-209) who, on the basis of this bare recital, constructs a comical-heroic adventure, perhaps for the purpose of erasing all traces of a piratical escapade that might offend the memory of a historian turned sailor and adventurer. What he in fact wrote was: "Sea sickness, alas! got the better of his courage: by stopping at the island of St. Helena this hero of science delayed the discovery of Oceania by twelve years." One might well ask whether the name of La Popelinière was not added by the author of the Histoire veritable to add credibility to his own tale.

44. There was more of an echo, though, in his day of the Histoire de la conquête des pays de Bresse et de Savoye, (Paris, 1601) dedicated to Sully (then still Marquis de Rosny). It was written to celebrate the rapid actions taken by Henri IV against Carlo Emanuele I, probably in the hope of reward by the King, perhaps the office of royal historiographer, vacant since the death of Jean de Serres, but later awarded to the more courtly Pierre Matthieu. The work is purely apologetic, executed according to the traditional models, and not at all reflecting the ideas expressing in the Histoire accomplie.

45. Cf. what F. Chabod has written in his study on Botero (Rome, 1934) showing how only the combination of vast problems, a critical spirit, and an uncommon historical sense permitted the Piedmontese thinker to produce an articulate and complex vision of the shaping of civil society, a vision which owed much to the knowledge of the life of primitive peoples made available to Europe by the new geographical discoveries. As concerns the relationship between the ideas of civilization and progress see also the work of F. Venturi, L'antichità svelata e l'idea di progresso in N.A. Boulanger (1722-1759), Bari, 1947.