HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS
VOLUME I
HELLENISM, ROME, AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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HELLENISM, ROME, AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY
General Introduction to the Series

I

This edition of History of Political Ideas represents the first complete publication of the typescript of Eric Voegelin’s primary work of the fifteen-year period between 1939 and 1954. The decision to publish the "History" as part of the author’s Collected Works was made during a meeting of the Advisory Board in September 1986. Although the Collected Works was not conceived as a critical edition of Voegelin’s work, it was one of the board’s primary goals to make as many of the author’s writings as possible accessible to a larger public without delaying the publication into an indefinite future. Of Voegelin’s previously unpublished work, the "History" is, without doubt, of central importance for an understanding not only of the author’s own intellectual development but also of the fundamental theoretical problems that shaped his later work. There was general agreement at the time that without the "History" it would be difficult to justify the purpose of the Collected Works both to the publisher and to the public at large.

Once the decision to publish the "History" had been made, however, a number of questions needed to be faced, including whether Voegelin himself would have acceded to its publication and what form he would have wished to give to it. Neither question had an easy answer. On the one hand it could be argued that Voegelin himself had published individual chapters or parts of chapters during the 1940s and early 1950s.1 He also had permitted John Hallowell

to publish substantial parts of the chapters on the modern period under the title *From Enlightenment to Revolution* in 1975. On the other hand, it was much more difficult to establish whether the author would have allowed the publication of the entire manuscript. For this reason the board initially intended to call the series *Studies in the History of Political Ideas*, in the sense of the German term *Materialien*, so as to indicate that these volumes neither represent the form in which Voegelin himself would have published the manuscript nor constitute a complete text with a beginning and an end. If we now return to the book’s original title after all, we must at the same time stress that the “History” published herein is an unrevised remnant of a much larger manuscript that was mined for other works, especially volumes 2 and 3 of *Order and History*. The brief discussion of Israel was expanded by the author into the large volume *Israel and Revelation*, volume 1 of *Order and History*.

In order to answer important questions about its text to the editors’ satisfaction as well as to give the reader as accurate a picture of this monumental abandoned work as possible, we must go back and trace its genesis and development. Voegelin himself repeatedly spoke about the “History,” most notably in his *Autobiographical Reflections*, where he briefly summarized the process of writing the “History” from its inception in 1939 to the “breakthrough” of 1951 that occurred while he was preparing the Walgreen Lectures that became *The New Science of Politics*. There, faced with writing a concise theory of representation and existence in truth, Voegelin was forced to think through problems that had arisen in the course of more than a decade. Voegelin’s realization was that he “had to give up ‘ideas’ as objects of a history and establish the experience of reality—personal, social, historical, cosmic—as the reality to be explored historically.”

When he discovered that he could apply the problem of Gnosticism to modern ideological phenomena, Voegelin

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2. Initially elicited by tape-recorded interview in 1973 for, and published in substantial part in, Ellis Sandoz, *The Voegelinian Revolution: A Biographical Introduction* (Baton Rouge, 1981), the “Autobiographical Memoir” (as it is sometimes called) was fully published as *Autobiographical Reflections*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge, 1989), for the quoted passage see p. 80.
had found an important key to solving the problems of political order. But what had led up to that point is reflected in the "History of Political Ideas" and the slow and often painful process of its genesis.

II

On February 9, 1939, Eric Voegelin signed a "Memorandum of Agreement" with McGraw-Hill Book Company for a book to be entitled "A History of Political Ideas." The book was to be a college textbook of approximately two hundred pages, and the manuscript was to be delivered to the publisher some time in 1940. The editor of the textbook series at McGraw-Hill at the time was Fritz Morstein Marx, a political scientist whom Voegelin had met at Harvard and who subsequently taught at Queens College in New York City. Voegelin must have seen an opportunity to write a book for an American audience and at the same time to add a work in English to his list of publications, something that would clearly be an asset in planning his professional career in his new homeland. He had just accepted a position as assistant professor at Bennington College, and a two-hundred-page book must have looked like a manageable undertaking.

Instead of accepting a generous renewal of his contract at Bennington, however, Voegelin went to the University of Alabama in the fall of 1939. The new teaching responsibilities as well as such civic obligations as "16 talks in fraternities, veterans' organizations, and women's clubs" took their toll on the progress of the "History," as Voegelin wrote to Morstein Marx in April 1940. While he anticipated the completion of the "ancient period" by the end of the spring semester of that year, the Middle Ages and the modern period could not be completed until the summer, which he would spend in Cambridge, Massachusetts, researching materials on the Middle Ages at Harvard's Widener Library. At Morstein Marx's urging, Voegelin agreed to complete the manuscript by September 1, 1940. Fall and winter came and went, and in April 1941 Morstein Marx again inquired about the state of the book. This time, Voegelin responded with a table of contents for the parts that he considered ready for publication. His letter to Morstein Marx of May 6, 1941, is of interest because it is also a statement about the direction in which his work had been going. A central position in the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern period was held by the
"paragraph" on "The People of God," which gave a "survey (30 MS.-pages) of the movements from the tenth century to the present, which means that it contains the revolution-problem, medieval and modern." "Incidentally," Voegelin continued, "The People of God is in my opinion a very important synthesis of the dynamics of Western ideas, which has never been given in this way."

The author's only worry was that Morstein Marx would find the "unorthodox treatment too much at variance with the expectations of readers who live in the time when Queen Victoria was young and beautiful." By the summer of 1941, however, the delays had become disturbing to Morstein Marx. He was no longer to be placated with optimistic prognoses, because he had seen the earlier outlines and was justifiably concerned that the work was far from being finished. "This is not to be a tome, you know—and the publishers might not like too much delay," he wrote in a brief note on July 31. Voegelin replied with a long letter, dated August 4, 1941. The letter spells out what Voegelin saw himself doing in 1941 and how he labored under the restrictions imposed on him by the textbook format. "I cannot write outrageous nonsense on essential questions and ruin my reputation in order to comply with the picture of the world of the text-book tribe," he says about his dilemma, which had at last reached the critical stage. There was no more point in hiding the problem. The truth was that the project could not be done as a textbook, because the discrepancy between the actual state of "science" and the sorry state of the academic discipline of political theory in America was simply too great. And no amount of "argumentative support of the results" was going to make the book acceptable to his colleagues; this fact was becoming exceedingly clear. The outline of the manuscript with an exact page count of the parts already typed that was attached to the letter was most likely a last-ditch attempt to show Morstein Marx that the book did indeed exist and was eventually going to be published.

Morstein Marx in turn showed that he was quite capable of reading between the lines and of counting manuscript pages. In his response to Voegelin of August 9, he openly mentions what he had previously managed to suppress: the book might no longer fit into the series because it had grown "too fat" and the publisher was now in a position to use the delays as an excuse for dropping the project. In the same breath, Morstein Marx acknowledges "that just this very book is sorely needed" and speaks of his willingness "to hunt
for another publisher myself if . . . .” On August 21, a last appeal went out to Voegelin to send the entire manuscript by late September. It was never sent. Not until the spring of 1944 did Voegelin approach his editor again to tell him the good news that “the ‘History’ has reached a stage of completion where conversations concerning publication can be started” and that it had now become a three-volume treatise. Would McGraw-Hill still be interested, or could Morstein Marx help find another publisher? Perhaps Macmillan might be interested? On October 4, 1944, Morstein Marx was able to write a letter congratulating his former author on the successful conclusion of a contract with the Macmillan Company. “I am quite serious when I say that the appearance of the work will have historic meaning for the development of political theory in this country.” The second phase of the “History” had begun.

III

It is much more difficult to relate the history of Eric Voegelin’s association with his new publisher. Not only did this association last much longer—ten years—but there was as well no sort of linear development of Voegelin’s work that can be told as a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Rather, the pattern that already had become visible during the first years of the writing of the “History” now became more pronounced. True, it appeared, the conditions of the new association were quite different from those that existed under the agreement with McGraw-Hill. When Voegelin signed his contract with Macmillan on September 27, 1944, he agreed to deliver a three-volume work that had only very few of the restrictions that had made his work on the textbook so difficult. Not only had the editor at Macmillan, Charles Anderson, seen the manuscript for the two completed volumes of the “History,” but it was also understood that Voegelin’s work would be marketed as an ambitious replacement of the existing standard works on the history of political theory, those by William A. Dunning and George H. Sabine. Furthermore, the time pressure that had hampered Voegelin’s first attempt was absent. Major new publishing projects could wait until the end of the war, and thus the author, having finished two-thirds of the work, could turn his attention to the last volume and to revising the two earlier ones. His own professional situation at LSU (where he had been appointed in January 1942) had become
stable, and thus the future of the "History" seemed bright. The publisher expected three volumes of four hundred, five hundred, and six hundred pages, respectively, and was prepared to send the manuscript to outside reviewers for their critical comments.

If one follows only the correspondence between Voegelin and Macmillan, one does not get the impression that anything might go wrong. In October 1945, Voegelin reported that he had made good progress during the summer, having added another two hundred pages to volume 3, "The Modern World," he was expecting to finish by "the earlier part of 1946." The conclusion of World War II had, in fact, removed any remaining obstacles to publication, be they economic or scholarly, the latter affecting "the final formulation of this or that problem of current interest." Moreover, the author professed a lively interest in "publication at the earliest possible date" for reasons "of my position and career." The real question was whether all three volumes should appear simultaneously or if the work "would make a bigger splash" if individual volumes were published in short intervals. And, Voegelin asks, if the latter was to be the case, should the publication of volume 1 "be delayed longer than absolutely necessary for technical reasons?" This, clearly, is not the voice of a scholar about to change his work, let alone abandon it. Indeed, Macmillan submitted the manuscript for volumes 1 and 2 to an outside reader, Professor Francis W. Coker at Yale. His report came back in April 1946 and proved on the whole very favorable, even though Coker's Anglo-American sensibility was somewhat disturbed by Voegelin's "fondness for finding mystic, mythical, symbolic implications in political writings." Voegelin did not hesitate to write a personal letter to Professor Coker in which he pointed out that this "fondness" was not a mere whim on his part, but a fundamental principle of interpretation that he had developed "after the breakdown of an attempt to write a systematic theory of politics (around 1930)." Furthermore, Voegelin added, not without a touch of irony, there was a new monographic literature by scholars such as Alois Dempf, Erich Przywara, Ortwin de Graeff, and Hans Urs von Balthasar that had set the "scientific standards" for his work.

3. Voegelin to Francis W. Coker, May 1, 1946, Eric Voegelin Papers, Hoover Institution Archives, box 9, file 21. Other cited correspondence and manuscript material is also to be found in this collection of Voegelin's papers, hereafter cited by box and file.
Another review initiated by Macmillan reached Voegelin in February 1948, and that reviewer also saw only the first two volumes. His report was considerably more critical than Coker's and not only suggested major stylistic changes but moreover raised questions about Voegelin's theoretical emphasis on "evocative ideas" and myth. The reviewer clearly cared little for Voegelin's "point of view," which he largely ascribed to his "continental background." He noted, "This point of view is largely unfamiliar to English and American scholars, and probably less familiar to students of government than to students of intellectual history." What Voegelin was up against is most evident in the report's closing paragraph:

It does not seem likely, however, that American or British scholars will develop the somewhat mystical attitude toward such beliefs that seem to be implied especially in Voegelin's account of Plato. So far American scholars have shown themselves more likely to turn to Freud for a reputedly scientific account of the way myths are generated by the Unconscious and projected into human relationships. The "growth of the spiritual substance which determines the contents and scope of the political evocation," or the "spiritual singularity of human spirituality" are not current American ways of talking.

It does not come as a surprise that the reviewer also remained skeptical about the book's sales prospects. Macmillan's editor, Charles Anderson, in transmitting the report, asked Voegelin for his reactions and raised the possibility of putting the three volumes into two books, thus improving the work's marketing chances. Voegelin's response was swift. In seven pages he addressed himself to the questions of the work's organization, style, and "point of view." While not disagreeing with Anderson's idea of two volumes, he made it clear that parts 1 and 2, that is, "The Ancient World" and "The Middle Ages," would have to be bound in one volume, because the volume on the modern period would be as long as the other two together. As to the criticism of his style, Voegelin wryly remarked that such obvious authorities as Robert Heilman and Cleant Brook agreed "that the style is excellent English."

In the absence of any definition of what the Reporter considers idiomatic or unidiomatic I consider it a possibility that, what impresses him as unidiomatic, is the philosophical language of the

treatise. There is, for instance, the author's complaint about "the use of words in unfamiliar senses" (giving no examples). It is possible that the Report's complaint is literally justified: the senses of the words are unfamiliar to him. That does not mean, however, that they are unfamiliar to the English language.  

The task of dismantling the reviewer's criticisms about Voegelin's "point of view" and his predictions concerning the book's sale proved to be even easier. To the reviewer's remarks about this point of view's unfamiliarity to English and American scholars, Voegelin had some rather caustic responses:

I can only say: I hope so—what sense would there be in writing and publishing a book if the reader can find only things in it which are familiar to him already? The Report goes on: this point of view "is probably less familiar to students of government than to students of intellectual history." Again: this is quite true; political science has become somewhat of an intellectual backwater; it is high time that somebody makes the profession familiar with what is going on in the world.

There are no records of any correspondence between Macmillan and Voegelin for several years. We know that during the intervening time Voegelin saw Charles Anderson at least once, in March 1949 when Anderson was in Baton Rouge. At that time, Waldemar Gurian, the editor of the *Review of Politics*, wanted to publish chapters from the "History," and Voegelin received Anderson's permission to "prepublish" the sections on Machiavelli, Bodin, and Marx. As Voegelin put it to Gurian, Macmillan considered such a publication a form of advertisement. Subsequent years did in fact see the publication of those parts of the "History" mentioned earlier as well as *The New Science of Politics*, published in 1952. When the correspondence resumed, with a letter from Anderson to Voegelin dated October 20, 1953, it had also entered its final phase. Anderson had hoped to see Voegelin during another visit to Louisiana, but Voegelin had been teaching that summer at the University of Southern California. His inquiry about the state of the manuscript was answered promptly. In a detailed letter, Voegelin told Anderson that the work should have a new title, "Order and Symbols," for

the “older title [History of Political Ideas] is inadequate, because the liberal ideology on which it was based is by now exploded in critical science by the development of the experiences of order and their adequate symbolization.” Voegelin then explained the composition of the three volumes:

The first volume deals with the three great symbolic forms developed in antiquity, that is, with Myth, History, and Philosophy; it closes with Aristotle. The second volume begins with Alexander, and deals with the respective orders of Empire and Christianity, down to the time of their crisis in the Reformation. The third volume is a systematic unit insofar as it deals with the development of Modern Gnosis and its crisis in our time. The sequence of subject-matter, thus is no longer a simple string of authors and ideas in time.⁸

He approximated the number of manuscript pages: for volume 1, 1,450; for the subsequent volumes, 1,200 and 1,800 each.

Nearly eight months later, Voegelin was able to announce to Anderson that the manuscript “now really is coming” and installments were being sent to the publisher.⁹ But by that time a significant shift had taken place in the editorial rooms at Macmillan. Henry McCurdy, the executive editor of the College Department, had taken personal charge of Voegelin’s project, and he did not hesitate to point out that the new format of the “History” bore no resemblance to the one contracted for in 1944.¹⁰ Voegelin immediately tried to clarify the situation. His contact with Charles Anderson had been mostly in the form of personal conversations over the years, and it was to Anderson that he explained the manuscript’s increasing size. The time had come to summarize those explanations: “The history of ideas, as a science, has undergone radical changes during the last decade. The changes pertain [1] to the increase of materials to be covered, and [2] to the development of methods in treating materials.” The works of Werner Jaeger and Olof Gigon, the six volumes of Arnold Toynbee’s Study of History, and, above all, the Chicago Oriental Institute’s studies on Egyptian and Mesopotamian history were among the most important landmarks of these changes. “Moreover, I myself have learned a few things in the course of the work, as you may see from my New

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⁸ Voegelin to Charles D. Anderson, October 25, 1953, box 24, file 8.
⁹ Voegelin to Anderson, June 7, 1954, box 24, file 8.
¹⁰ Henry B. McCurdy to Voegelin, June 30, 1954, box 24, file 8.
Science of Politics which has come out in the meanwhile," Voegelin added almost as an afterthought. Despite all that, he insisted, the nature and intention of the work had not changed: "It is still a history of political ideas, as competently as possible representing the present state of science. The trouble is that the state of science in this field, as represented by me, has gone up substantially during the last ten years. What you get as the result of the labor, is a standard treatise on the subject that runs no danger of finding a rival in less than a generation."\(^{11}\)

Voegelin obviously had to walk a very fine line. On the one hand, he was trying to persuade his publisher that the work for which he had originally been contracted was the one he was going to deliver, albeit in a vastly increased size. On the other hand, the Voegelin who spoke here as an advocate of his work was a scholar who was very much aware of what he had achieved and who was asking his editor to appreciate the merits of this work, regardless of the difficulties its publication might present. Most important—and this takes us beyond the scope of recounting the external circumstances of the work's development—Voegelin knew that the addition of a new part on Israel had given the work an entirely new dimension, which "will make it a 'must' in theological seminaries and for reverends, because (though that may sound almost unbelievable) no book on the political ideas of Israel has ever been written at all. Besides the Part on Israel is particularly well written and should, therefore, appeal to a general public that is interested in Jewish history." There was, finally, the "expansion of the pre-Socratic history, and especially the new interpretation of Homer," which would make the volume a "must" in classical studies.\(^{12}\)

McCurdy's reply offered a conference with Voegelin, who was going to pass through New York on his way to Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the summer. "I am obliged to say, however," McCurdy added, "that the information you have given presents a matter of real concern to me."\(^{13}\) The conference took place, and it becomes clear from the ensuing correspondence that Voegelin put up a stiff fight for his book. While this has relatively little anecdotal significance, it is important for our understanding of the genesis of

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\(^{11}\) Voegelin to McCurdy, July 5, 1954, box 24, file 8.
\(^{12}\) Ibid.
\(^{13}\) McCurdy to Voegelin, July 9, 1954, box 24, file 8.
Order and History. Not only did the editors suggest that the book be moved from the College Department to the Trade Department, but they also suggested a different arrangement of the three volumes. Voegelin wanted to be flexible, as long as his work would receive an audience, an audience that he could now define very well: not merely college students and their professors, but “political scientists, philosophers, classicists, theologians, etc.” This time, the editors took their time in answering Voegelin’s letter. They must have known that they had reached a stage where they had to either commit themselves to sailing uncharted waters or tell Voegelin that they no longer had a contract with him. Henry McCurdy, consequently, left no doubt that the latter was the case. In assigning the future fate of the book to Macmillan’s Trade Department, he had made the decision. Voegelin knew that the “History” would most likely not be published by Macmillan, for in his response of September 21, 1954, he stated: “In case the decision should be negative, I shall send you a New York address to which I beg you to forward the MS.” He did not have to wait long. On October 11, McCurdy sent the final word: “In view of our long association, we regret that your work is not to bear our imprint. We shall, however, look forward to its publication with every wish for its success.”

The forwarding address Voegelin had given to Macmillan was that of Helen Wolff, who, together with her husband, Kurt Wolff, was then running Pantheon Books. The correspondence between Helen Wolff and Eric Voegelin perhaps sheds more light on the eventual transition from “History of Political Ideas” to “Order and Symbols”—or Order and History, as the published volumes were to be called—than any other documents. For the transition from one to the other was anything but an abrupt abandonment of what, in view of the text that comprises the volumes following this introduction, is the very core of Eric Voegelin’s life work. Rather, it was a gradual recognition, on Voegelin’s part, that he had indeed completed the

15. “I am therefore, submitting, with your approval, your manuscript for volume one together with the table of contents for volume two to our Trade Department for their consideration. I will, at the same time, attach your letter of August 20 to Mr. Cloudman in which you have given some suggestions regarding possible publication of your manuscript in more than two volumes” [McCurdy to Voegelin, September 17, 1954, box 24, file 8].
central portion of this work, except that it was no longer a history of political ideas, as he had steadfastly told his Macmillan editors, but a history of consciousness. This theme will be resumed in part V of this Introduction.

While the Wolfss were beating the bushes to find funding for this monumental work, looking, among other possibilities, at the Bollingen Series, Voegelin was equally busy looking at ways of cutting the manuscript down to a publishable size. At the Wolfss’ suggestion, he submitted it to Oxford University Press; at the same time, he was ready to preserve the manuscript as much as possible or, better, to preserve its very core. By February 1955, he was able to make a new proposal to Helen Wolff:

But I have thought over the matter in the meanwhile, and I wonder whether it would not be the best way to get around the difficulties of a vast project by dissecting the whole work into its major component parts and to publish them separately. This thought suggested itself particularly, because in the course of this fall I have completed the study on Moses which was still missing in the MS you have seen [I left a gap in the pagination, where it would fit], with results beyond my best expectations. Now that this gap is filled, it turns out that I have completed in fact a study of the Exodus problem, that is, of the emergence of Israel in historical form from the cosmological civilization of Egypt.

What follows is nothing less than the admission that the entire weight of the work had shifted.

Hence, I consider now the possibility of publishing the study of Israel separately. It is a manuscript of about 550 pages; even in decent format and printing it should be possible to keep it under 400 pages in print. If I can get that block out of the whole work, I [could] have the Greek part published again separately. Perhaps even Macmillan would take it after all as the first volume of a two-volume history of political ideas.17

Voegelin even suggested possible titles for the projected volume, such as “’Israel and History,’ or ’Exodus. The Creation of History through Israel’, or ’From Myth to History.’” A few days before, he had written to the editor of Oxford University Press and enclosed a description of the manuscript he was submitting. It will not come as a surprise that the formal description does not tell the entire story as well as does the letter itself. For it is there that Voegelin

really throws caution to the winds and describes the nature of the work:

The work in question is a study on the history and philosophy of symbolic forms of order. It is supposed to be entitled Order and Symbols. The first part of the study, an independent work, is now finished. It deals with the systematically and chronologically first three symbolic forms, that is, with Myth, History, and Philosophy. The remainder of the study is substantially finished, but will require two or three more years to be fit for publication. It will deal with the second set of symbolic forms, that is, with Empire, Christianity, and Gnosis. It will again be an independent work and, therefore, is of no further importance for the present question.18

The reader of Voegelin’s Order and History and his later published works will easily recognize the pattern that had evolved as the central concern of his mature work. The two sets of symbolic orders shaped his later thought, with empire becoming the most important one, dealt with at length in The Ecumenic Age, volume IV of Order and History. When Voegelin approached his former publisher one last time in this matter, he excluded the volume on Israel from consideration and submitted a proposal for three volumes with the following titles:

1. Polis and Philosophy (Greece to 300 B.C.)
2. Empire and Christianity (from 300 B.C. to A.D. 1500)
3. The Gnostic Age (from A.D. 1500 to the present)

Again the task of rejecting Voegelin’s proposal fell to Henry McCurdy. The history of the “History” ended with this paragraph:

From the start we have been thinking that your projected work would replace the Dunning volumes as a standard reference work as well as a text for courses in political theory, but in our judgment, which is based on the material we have seen, your work would not serve the purpose we have had in mind without considerable revision and reorganization of the whole project. Furthermore we do not think dismemberment, which you have suggested, would do. Your volumes have a tight theoretical framework, which is the result of your many years of study and work in this field, and to a considerable degree the meaning of the parts depends upon an understanding of the whole frame of reference, which we think is too intellectually sophisticated for undergraduate and many graduate students. To reach them we believe that the whole work would have to be recast, but in doing so your own original contribution

to political theory would thus actually be played down or perhaps deleted. In view, therefore, of the possible result it follows that your important contributions would be presented in a form to receive the attention they merit if you left the work essentially untouched and arranged for its publication abroad as you suggest. 19

On May 25, 1955, Voegelin signed a contract with Louisiana State University Press for a work entitled “Order and Symbols.” Four days later, he wrote a letter to the director of the press, Donald Ellegood, in which he offered one amendment: “Concerning a title, I have to make the following suggestion: ‘The Symbols of Order and the Order of History.’” The press might have had a fortunate hand in the final form of the title.

IV

As we have pointed out, the story of the publication of the “History” is not the complete story. The real story of the “History” emerges from Voegelin’s correspondence with his friends and colleagues. For the author of the “History” and of Order and History was not a loner. Long before he came to America, he had made it a point to be a part of a circle of friends who either had interests similar to his own or possessed the kind of background and judgment that enabled them to be critical readers of his work. Thus, when the Voegelins arrived in the United States in the middle of 1938, they not only had friends there already but were soon followed by others who became readers, listeners, and critics, just as they had been in Vienna before. Among them were the historian Friedrich Engel-Janosi and the social theorist and philosopher Alfred Schütz, as well as the lawyers Maximilian Mintz and Eduard von Winternitz, to name only those with whom Voegelin was most closely associated before and during his years in America and who had been part of the “Geistkreis” in Vienna, which included besides Voegelin the economists Gottfried von Haberler, Friedrich von Hayek, and Oskar Morgenstern. Leaving the European makeup of this circle of friends aside, it is probably fair to say that Voegelin showed his work to anyone who was interested, and he accepted criticism gladly whenever it pertained to scholarly details or principal theoretical questions. Thus, the circle of people who saw at least parts of the

"History" came to include the American literary scholars Robert Heilman and Cleanth Brooks as well as Leo Strauss and Karl Löwith, together with others to whom his manuscripts were passed by friends. The correspondence with several of these friends, most notably that between Voegelin and Friedrich Engel-Janosi, Alfred Schütz, Max Mintz, and, to lesser extent, Leo Strauss and Karl Löwith, stresses different aspects of the work in progress, oscillating among the historical, the political, and the philosophical. 20 From the first mention of finished chapters of his book in a letter to Alfred Schütz in March 1939 through a letter to Friedrich Engel-Janosi in December 1955, the correspondence offers remarkable insights into the theoretical and material questions that shaped the revisions of the manuscript over the years and that ultimately resulted in the three volumes that were published as Order and History. The general nature of this Introduction does not allow for a detailed account of this correspondence; in its place, a brief synoptic overview will help to guide the reader through the various stages of the development of the "History."

Even though the correspondence, the extant tables of contents, and the actual typescript give an unusually detailed picture of the development of the "History," the manuscript cannot be completely reconstructed. Too much material was culled out of especially the first volume to be able to say with certainty what the manuscript submitted to Macmillan actually looked like. Nor have the editors been able to find a copy of the complete introduction, which, as we know from Voegelin's correspondence, was sent to several people, among them Maximilian Mintz, Alfred Schütz, and Karl Löwith, and was included in the manuscript submitted to the publisher. What does remain is an eight-page handwritten manuscript of an introduction that dates back to the early months of 1940. That introduction, which is reproduced as Appendix A in the present volume, is followed by two sets of handwritten manuscripts, each of which contains chapters whose headings are identical with the chapter headings of the later typescript. These two manuscripts are, however, considerably shorter than the typescript versions, and even without having a complete transcription at this

20. The correspondence between Strauss and Voegelin is comprehensively gathered in Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 1934-1964, trans. and ed. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (University Park, Pa., 1993).
point, it appears most likely that the holograph represents if not the original version of the "History" then at least one of the earliest. This assumption is further corroborated by the fact that the first set of handwritten chapters comprises, in addition to the introduction, ninety-nine pages on the ancient Orient and Greece, equivalents of which are not to be found in the typescript. Of particular interest is the section on Plato, not more than twenty pages in length, with four parts entitled "The Myths of Plato," "The Polis of Plato," "The Nomoi of Plato," and "The Eros of Plato." Similarly, the second set, beginning with "From Alexander to Actium," is a highly condensed version of the later typescript. Altogether, even this ostensibly early holograph already comprises approximately nine hundred pages and clearly shows that the conception of the "History" remained fundamentally unchanged from its inception. What did change was its breadth and depth.

As significant as these findings are, their detailed presentation will have to be part of a future critical edition of Voegelin's writings. They do not essentially alter our perception of the text that appears here as History of Political Ideas. What is at issue is whether Voegelin was engaged, from the very beginning, in writing a systematic work rather than a college textbook.

V

A question that has preoccupied not only the editors of the Collected Works but also many students of Eric Voegelin's thought is one that was repeatedly addressed by Voegelin in his later years while he was continuing work on Order and History. In light of what we know of the genesis of the "History," Voegelin's remarks concerning the "abandonment" of the "History" seem not to clarify the complex process that led to the changes in the project but rather to obscure the issues for readers who have not had the opportunity to study either the 1930s writings or the manuscript of the "History." Thus, a categorical remark such as that in Autobiographical Reflections (which dates from 1973) may put the reader on the wrong track. When Voegelin says, "I had to give up 'ideas' as objects of a history and establish the experience of reality—personal, social, historical, cosmic—as the reality to be explored historically," 21 he

21. Autobiographical Reflections, 80. For the analysis in this section I am indebted to Jürgen Gebhardt.
seems to claim that "ideas," whether political or not, are obsolete, because they represent defunct theoretical approaches to reality—that is, they are the last vestiges of that artificial split in reality which ruled Western "science" from Descartes to the various neo-Kantian methodologies.

But if "ideas" are not objects of theoretical explorations, we must ask ourselves why the author of the "History of Political Ideas" insisted on his publisher until the end that he was indeed delivering such a history and why in his correspondence throughout the 1940s there are no traces of any conscious, deliberate abandonment of the original project, but only signs of an enhancement, a deepening of what had been begun in 1939. Could it be that "political ideas" were carried through Voegelin's work well past the changes that led to Order and History, but that they underwent perhaps a reduction in status, that they were moved from the center to the periphery of the theoretical inquiry? Several signs speak for such a development, but in order to be able to read those signs, the student of Voegelin's thought must seriously ask: what precisely was meant by "political idea" when Voegelin first agreed to write its history? It is not surprising that the most systematic attempt to answer this question will be found in the introduction to the original version of the "History." This text existed as early as March 1940, as we know from a letter in which Max Mintz discussed several points in Voegelin's understanding of political ideas and political theory. What makes this introduction particularly important is not just that it represents Voegelin's earliest theoretical statement concerning the subject and method of his "History." Rather, it is the continuity of problems and their formulations in Voegelin's work since the early 1930s that strikes the reader, and it is this continuity that deserves our attention.

The organization of Voegelin's introduction to the entire "History" (see Appendix A) permits the conclusion that it was directed to an audience of lay people, and there is no indication that the text as it is presented here for the first time was an unfinished fragment. It rather appears that Voegelin retained this introduction throughout the 1940s and only later may have added additional sections.

22. Cf. Max Mintz to Voegelin, March 22, 1940, box 25, file 23. A verbatim quote in this letter indicates that Mintz was referring to a typewritten version of the text presented here as Appendix A.
to highlight specific new results of his work on the "History," as he prepared it for publication in the 1950s. This later typewritten version unfortunately seems to have been lost.

It is clear that Voegelin's concern in the introduction found in Appendix A was only secondarily historical. Instead, the focus of this text is on the reality of the "idea" in the formation of political societies. The question posed is whether political societies represent a truth that legitimizes their existence or whether the political is ultimately little more than an imaginative construct that has no ontological foundation. In some respects, this introduction bears a strong resemblance to the preface with which Voegelin, fifteen years later, opened Israel and Revelation, volume I of Order and History. For what is at stake is nothing less than the "primordial community of being," with, however, one major difference: the partnership in the cosmic community has not yet become a partnership. Rather, the whole burden of making sense of his life rests on man. In order to make sense of his life, to guard against the disintegrating forces from without and within, and thus find shelter from these destructive forces, man creates government and thus enters into the imaginative process of creating political order in analogy to the whole that surrounds him, the cosmos. Thus comes into being that "little world of order," the "cosmion." The term, borrowed from the Austrian philosopher Adolf Stöhr and his book Wege des Glaubens, was never abandoned by Voegelin, because it raises to consciousness a fundamental fact about all societies: they are, even in their most secularized form, analogous to man's imaginative vision of the cosmos.²³

Years later, in a letter to Alfred Schütz, Voegelin made reference to the origin of the term cosmion and declared it equivalent to the term subuniverse, coined by William James and made the object of one of Schütz's own major theoretical texts, the paper entitled "On Multiple Realities."²⁴ The cosmion, whose function it is to simulate the wholeness of the cosmos by analogy and thus to act as "shelter" against the forces of disintegration, is always a

²³. Adolf Stöhr, Wege des Glaubens (Vienna and Leipzig, 1921). This work was reprinted in Philosophische Konstruktionen und Reflexionen, ed. Franz Austeda (Vienna, 1974).

²⁴. In a letter to Schütz dated October 6, 1945 (box 34, file 10), Voegelin specifically refers to his introduction and claims that he based his "History" on the meaning of the subuniverse of political action. The reference to Stöhr's book appears in this context.
product of the human imagination, but since it manifests itself in history as real political societies with real political and social institutions, it leaves a historical trail of rationalizations of its shelter function, a trail made up of "what are commonly called political ideas." Voegelin detected three "sets of ideas" within the permanent structure of political ideas, which in retrospect can be said to have guided his own inquiry into the historical dimension of political ideas: "the ideas concerning the constitution of the cosmos as a whole; the ideas concerning the internal order; the ideas concerning the status of the cosmos in the simultaneous world and in history." These sets of fundamental ideas, in turn, undergo variations that have determined the more specific ideas concerning man, "the religious, metaphysical, and ethical ideas of the meaning of human life," as well as other factors, such as economics, science, and tradition.

As much as the political cosmos is designed to "create a world of meaning" that is ultimately to endow the "fragmentary personal life" with meaning as well, Voegelin also stresses the alternatives to "the finite cosmos of meaning" supported by political ideas, those "fundamental answers to the experience of the fragmentary and senseless character of human existence" that are found in the monastic and anchoritic attitudes that became particularly important in Western Christianity during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and "influenced decisively the whole pattern of Western political attitudes up to the present." Here the reader may perhaps find the heart not only of the introduction but of the intellectual structure of the "History" as a whole. Voegelin the political scientist, who had been tracking political ideas ever since the 1920s and found them, among others, in the race idea and in the idea of equality, the subject of the abandoned Herrschaftslehre, understood long before he sat down to write his "History of Political Ideas" that the ideas that constitute a substantial part of the political cosmos and give meaning and institutional shelter to the individual life do so at a very high price: the price of the truth of human existence. The human beings who inhabit the cosmos forget that they are functioning in a finite cosmic analogy and not in the absoluteness of the cosmos. Any system of political ideas, Voegelin argues, must devote itself to solutions to this conflict between finiteness and absoluteness, and the measure of its historical substance is the extent to which it succeeds in resolving this conflict. From the polytheistic
systems of representing the divine through the mediation of kingship to the more complex solutions of monotheistic systems such as the “incorporation of the political function into the charismatic order of the body of Christ in the Carolingian empire,” the aim has always been the linking of the finite with the absolute. Only in our time has the substitution of the cosmion for the cosmos taken such extreme forms as we find in nationalism, the racist ideologies of National Socialism, or the totalitarian systems of Communism. The elimination of the apolitical realm of experience in modern political systems is “an attempt to create an absolute cosmos out of the finite forces of human desire and will” and for this reason “may be called magic.”

This central insight into the dilemma of the existential representative function of the political cosmion had been evolving as one of the main elements of Voegelin’s political thought throughout his life, and it links the “History” with his later work. But from this insight also derived the methodological approach that set the “History” on its precarious course and necessitated the repeated revisions that ultimately led to the break with its original conception, the thesis that claims, “The political idea is only to a limited extent descriptive of any reality; its primary function is not a cognitive but a formative one. The political idea is not an instrument of description of a political unit but an instrument of its creation.” When Voegelin speaks of the “magic” of the political idea, he does not mean to make a vague metaphorical comparison. Instead, with full knowledge of what his claim implies, he argues that the political idea is a powerful symbol capable of conjuring up, of calling into existence, the cosmion and its parts in the same way primitive magic sees an immediate ontic relation between a name and an object the name denotes. Creating the political cosmion and symbolizing the relationships between ruler and ruled is an act of evocation, as Voegelin called this magic process throughout the years of his work on the “History.” This understanding of the nature of the political idea is so central to the theoretical framework of the “History” that it forms the basis for the introduction to the last part of the work and the reflections on “phenomenalism” as the formative characteristic of modernity. In substituting phenomenal for substantial reality, modern man has in fact changed reality, and the horror of the nuclear bomb that underlies the conclusion of the chapter on Schelling and Hölderlin was only the most recent and
most real manifestation of the magic act of substitution that is also at the basis of any act of evocation.\textsuperscript{25}

Voegelin’s emphasis on the “reality-character” of the political idea by no means exhausts the theoretical problems of the “History.” On the contrary, by claiming that political ideas have their own status in reality as its constituents, Voegelin opens up a whole gamut of questions regarding the role of the political thinker and the role of theory in describing and analyzing the reality constituted by the ideas. The main part of his introduction is therefore devoted to the dialectics of idea and theory. For, as political ideas are the result of evocative acts, solidifying what Voegelin during the years of working on the “History” used to call “sentiments” and what he would later call “experiences,” political theory is the practice of contemplative analysis. As such, theory “has to explain the cosmos as what it is, as a magical entity,” and in doing so it uncovers the relativity of the cosmos and the ideas that sustain it with their claim of providing “an absolute shelter of meaning.” We cannot stress enough the fundamental importance of Voegelin’s understanding of theory—that is, of contemplative analysis. It is nothing less than the experience that underlies his self-understanding as a political scientist from his earliest years as an emerging independent thinker to the time when the very question of contemplative theory became thematic in the process of writing the “History.” Thus, truly theoretical contemplation puts the theorist at odds with his society and its ideas, because he is essentially engaged in undoing the imaginative, magic web of ideas and institutions when he begins to ask questions about their meaning. Consequently, political theory can itself not be a community-creating practice but is a lonely pursuit in which the theorist engages in spite of his own social and political ties to the concrete society of which he is part. “Political theory,” so Voegelin states categorically, “has hardly a chance to be developed otherwise than by the efforts of outstanding individuals; it is almost

\textsuperscript{25} Voegelin, in a letter to Schütz dated September 17, 1945 (box 34, file 10), just a few weeks after the dropping of the two nuclear bombs on Japan, answers Schütz’s question of “how on the basis of phenomenalistic assumptions hundreds of thousands can lose their lives”: “It is on this complex of problems that the entire ‘History’ is based. Ideas, and especially political ideas, are not theoretical propositions about a reality, but they are themselves constituents of reality. This reality-character of the idea I dealt with in the introduction to Volume I, under the title of ‘Evocation.’”
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ago: "Since the time of Dante the spiritual realist is faced with the problem that the surrounding political reality of the Western world no longer can adequately absorb the spirit into its public institutions. The incision in Western history corresponds to the time of Heracitus in Hellenic civilization" (["The Church and the Nations," B5, 327, 536f.]).

The "History," although not Voegelin's last word on our present and on history, nevertheless demonstrates, step by step as it were, how, past Nietzsche's nihilism, we can regain reality without dogma.

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of the actual historical patterns that emerged during the Middle Ages and that constitute the foundations of modernity, we must return once more to the question of the political idea and its relationship to reality as it unfolds in history. Voegelin's discussion of the nature of the political idea in his overall introduction, which stresses the idea's evocative character, stays within the limits of what could be called a phenomenological analysis. Thus, his later contention that he did indeed abandon the notion of writing a history of ideas demands to be taken seriously. What did Voegelin mean when he repeatedly said he was forced to give up writing a history of political ideas, when he continued to tell his publisher that he was submitting such a history, even if it was not going to be a conventional one? It remains true that there are evocative political ideas that create political reality, as Voegelin had stated to Schütz, but political reality is not exhausted by that aspect of it that articulates itself as ideas. "I understood that ideas are nonsense." Voegelin, as late as 1983, somewhat harshly formulated this change in his thinking; he added: "there are no ideas as such and there is no history of ideas; but there is a history of experiences which can express themselves in various forms, as myths of various types, as philosophical development, theological development, and so on."

Under the impact of working again through Schelling's philosophy, Voegelin appears to have experienced not so much a sudden

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29. The manuscript pagination follows that given by Voegelin as the binders [B] stood on the shelf of his study in 1985. The number following the semicolon in this and in subsequent references is to the comprehensive pagination of the typescript in the Eric Voegelin Institute's copy of the "History."

conversion—there is no evidence of it in the correspondence—as a slow shifting away from the emphasis on evocation and theory that had guided the conception of the “History” until then. As he explicitly states in Autobiographical Reflections, Voegelin soon realized that the actual symbolizations he was studying—for instance, Egyptian coronation rituals and Sumerian New Year festivals—simply could not be considered ideas, but it would have been equally off the mark to call them evocations. By his own admission, Voegelin did not yet know exactly how our understanding of “ideas” is shaped by the Stoic notion of the koinai ennoiai, those common, self-evident opinions criticized by Locke in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding. The terminology to describe symbolizations other than evocative ideas and theoretical concepts required the kind of rethinking that characterizes Voegelin’s later work but that could be initiated by reflecting on precisely the problems that led Schelling to write Philosophie der Mythologie and Philosophie der Offenbarung. What are “myth” and “revelation” if not evidence of a plurality of symbolisms that themselves reflect a plurality of experiences that are capable only of symbolic expression and must not be transformed into ideas? That is, they are concepts “which are assumed to refer to a reality other than the reality experienced. And this reality,” Voegelin states categorically, “other than the reality experienced does not exist.”

There can be no doubt that the change in the conception of the “History” was a complex process that dates at least as far back as the anamnestic experiments of 1943 and became the subject of extensive conversations and correspondences with Schütz. It was the result of Voegelin’s turning to a philosophy of consciousness that touches on problems articulated in the phenomenological discussions but ultimately goes beyond these problems. There is an interesting document that shows just how far Voegelin’s thinking had advanced by 1947. In a letter to an old acquaintance who had asked why the Chinese yin and yang symbols should be considered elements of a nature myth that explained spiritual contexts, Voegelin responded:

You ask: what kind of explanation does such a nature myth offer to the understanding of spiritual connections [geistige Zusammenhänge]? ... What else is a nature myth if not a projection of

31. Autobiographical Reflections, 63 ff.
32. Ibid., 78.
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most touching and sincere account of the purpose of his work and deserves to be quoted in full:

The occupation with works of art, poetry, philosophy, mythical imagination and so forth, makes sense only, if it is conducted as an inquiry into the nature of man. The sentence, while it excludes historicism, does not exclude history, for it is peculiar to the nature of man that it unfolds its potentialities historically. Not that historically anything "new" comes up—human nature is always wholly present—but there are modes of clarity and degrees of comprehensiveness in man's understanding of himself and his position in the world. Obviously Plato and Shakespeare are clearer and more comprehensive in the understanding of man than is Mr. Jones of Cow College. Hence, the study of the classics is the principal instrument of self-education; and if one studies them with loving care, as you most truly observe, one all of a sudden discovers that one's understanding of a great work increases [and also one's ability to communicate such understanding], for the good reason that the student has increased through the process of study—and that after all is the purpose of the enterprise. (At least it is my purpose in spending the time of my life in the study of the prophets, philosophers, and saints.)

What I have just adumbrated [most inadequately, to be sure] is the basis of historical interpretation since Herder and Baader and Schelling. History is the unfolding of the human psyche; historiography is the reconstruction of the unfolding through the psyche of the historian. The basis of historical interpretation is the identity of substance (the psyche) in the object and the subject of interpretation; and its purpose is participation in the great dialogue that goes through the centuries among men about their nature and destiny. And participation is impossible without growth in stature (within the personal limitations) toward the rank of the best; and that growth is impossible unless one recognizes authority and surrenders to it.37

That these insights and the new patterns of the order of history they engendered were the result not of a sudden "vision" but of a gradual and often painful process is attested to by Voegelin himself, both in Autobiographical Reflections and in such utterances as one to Engel-Janosi in a letter of December 1948, where Voegelin talks about "black reflections" into which he had been thrown by a critical question Engel-Janosi had concerning the sections on Locke and Marx that Voegelin had sent him: "Do we actually understand history or do we not? Or can we perhaps understand it if we have

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to write of “the Protestant scripturalism of the Anonymous” as its most revolutionary element, rejecting papal supremacy and asserting on every page of the Tracts “the free and independent interpretation of the Scriptures without regard for the traditions and institutions of the Roman Church. The general priesthood of the Christian is not a mere theoretical proposition, but is living reality in the attitude of the Anonymous” [B3, 95; 320]. These are sentiments lethal to the sacrum imperium itself. “The York Tracts revealed what had happened and what was going to happen. If the tenets of the Anonymous concerning general priesthood and the usurpation of Rome were not more than a partisan argument... they could be brushed aside as inconsequential, but they were more, for they implied a fact: the fact of the free personality of the author who could live in the age of Christ under the guidance of the sacred writings without assistance from the Church of Rome” [B4, 96; 321]. These sentiments grew in England and are traceable in various ways in Piers Plowman (ca. 1370), in the work of John Wycliffe (d. 1384) and his followers, in the constitutional developments of Sir John Fortescue (d. 1476?), and into the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century.

The “new realism” of the Anonymous also echoes in Thomas Aquinas, where it is almost as revolutionary [Summa theologiae Ia–IIae, question 106, article 1]. Voegelin writes:

The lex nova is written by the Grace of the Spirit into the hearts of the faithful, only secondarily is it a written law. With a radical sweep, not eliminating but at least not mentioning the Church, the essence of Christianity is put directly in the faith, in pietis, in the Pauline sense. ... The principle of justification by faith is made the essence of the lex nova. Within the framework of orthodox Catholic theology this is perhaps the strongest possible expression of the principle of free Christian spirituality. [B4, 247–48; 491–92]

Voegelin is at pains to stress that Thomas was not endorsing “the principle of Lutheran Christianity,” a phrase he wrote, then lined through in the manuscript, then went on to explain in a long footnote. Rather Thomas was “stressing to the utmost the spiritual element of faith at the expense of ecclesiastical mediation.” But the principle itself indubitably became the mark of Lutheran Protestantism as sola fide.

4. This, however, is no embrace of the Reformation itself, which Voegelin characterizes harshly as destructive of amicitia and the
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the bleakness of imprisonment in human nature without Grace” (B8, 50; 1144).

7. Averroism, Joachimism, the intramundane emphasis of Franciscan spirituality, and the hierarchicalism of pseudo-Dionysius are other major factors eroding Christian community substance and disorienting it from spiritual communion in Christ and toward collectivism, immanentism, and authoritarianism. The anti-personalistic collectivism of the Averroist (from Averroës, or Ibn Rushd, d. 1198) principle of intellectus unus— with its consequent monopsychism and monosomatism— holds that only one Intellect (uno in numero) exists for the whole human race and is present as a spark in human beings to the exclusion of personal immortality, thereby undermining the notion of Christian personality. “This metaphysical assumption of the collective existence of mankind, biologically as well as intellectually, marks the first appearance of the intramundane Western divinities for which Hegel has found the classic formula of the Objective Mind.” A hierarchy of human types leads up to an intellectual elite. The hierarchy is determined by degrees of participation in the objective Intellect, so that the nonphilosophical or ordinary man is treated as an inferior type and even compared “to animals, an attitude that seems to crop up as soon as the Christian insight into the equal spiritual dignity of all men is abandoned” (B4, chap. 11, 199–200; 443–44). When combined with the principle of hierarchy, such collectivism decisively erodes Christian anthropology as it is rooted in the experience of the spiritual equality of all human beings with each man bearing imago Dei.

The freedom and independence of the intellect basic to Thomas [d. 1274] as a great spiritualist are followed within a generation by the authoritarianism of Boniface VIII in Unam sanctam (1302) and its intellectual groundwork by papal counselor Egidius Romanus, whose thought supplied the decisive formulas of the bull. A new sentiment of power is expressed in the scheme of hierarchy culminating in the absolute authority of the papacy over the church and over all temporal power as well. Voegelin’s contempt for these developments is patent. He characterizes them as “absolutist.”

41. The foregoing analysis of amicitia must be understood as assumed as the basis of the presentation given in Eric Voegelin, The New Science of Politics: An Introduction (Chicago, 1952), 76–80.
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abstractions subject to reification with a life of their own when considered apart from the engendering experiential context. Dogmatic clashes of ideas replace philosophizing as the “dominant form of self-understanding” in Western thought to become characteristic of “hundreds of years of dogmatomachy.”42 In light of this discovery, as previously noted, Voegelin concluded: “I had to give up ‘ideas’ as objects of a history and establish the experience of reality—personal, social, historical, cosmic—as the reality to be explored historically. These experiences, however, one could explore only by exploring their articulation through symbols. . . . Hence, I gave up the project of a History of Political Ideas and started my own work on Order and History.”43 We have considered evidence that suggests there was more to it than that, and some of the complexities already have been identified.

A further aspect to be considered seems to lie in the conviction slowly arrived at that the aloof contemplative attitude of the philosopher and spiritual realist (with whom Voegelin steadily identified himself) cannot stand so far apart from the common lot of mankind as to achieve objective knowledge of truth in a radically different perspective from that accorded ordinary mortals. This is to abandon neither science nor its claim to critical knowledge through noesis. But it is to contract the distance that separates philosophers, seers, prophets, and poets from ordinary humans and common experience. The only reality we have is reality experienced in participation, Voegelin often insisted. There is no Archimedean point outside reality from which the dispassionate contemplator can pursue his investigations.44 The leap in being is not a leap out of reality—a tempting perversity. That is, even grandiose prophets and philosophers are constrained by the human condition in which they are participant. Thus, once it is differentiated there is only the perspective of participatory reality, the In-Between (metaxy) with indices of immanence and transcendence, as the ineluctable site of human striving and the arena of history and meditation. The tension toward the divine Ground and its differentiation over time

44. Voegelin, New Science of Politics, 79; Voegelin, Anamnesis, 293; Anamnesis, ed. Niemeyer, 153. “There is no Archimedean point from which participation itself could be seen as an object.”
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and pneumatic meditative consciousness, and to their comparative analysis in terms of structure, process, cogency, and equivalences. The reader of the pages of the prodigious work called *History of Political Ideas* senses a gloom deepening toward the near despair of "hopeless hope." At the level of surface events, modernity unravels down to the unprecedented destruction of the Second World War, whose underlying biological and economic justification is summarized in the murderous dictum "what can be done should be done"—a line Voegelin wrote six weeks before the first atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima [B13, 151a–b; 2037–39].

After the last monumental effort of recovery by Schelling [d. 1854] came Comte, Marx, and "the tragically absurd . . . spiritual revolt against the spirit" ending in Nietzsche's nihilism [B8, chap. 3, 7; 981]. How well Voegelin's mighty effort—admittedly a finger in the dike, as efforts on behalf of truth must ever be—"succeeds" is a question to be considered in the long term, but that it finds place in a noble philosophical pedigree is evident.

As becomes clear especially in the later years, the pedigree of Voegelin's great work of recovery must be so extended as to include the prophetic tradition, and this is implicit in the title mystic-philosopher he applied to the Hellenic philosophers and accepted for himself. The empirical (especially apperceptive) and scientific aspect controls Voegelin's attitude in this as in his attention to other modes of experience. All of the evidence must be taken seriously and considered impartially if the search toward authoritative truth aspires to adequacy even as representative truth. A hallmark of Voegelin's later work is the closing of the gap between faith and philosophy to form an experientially grounded noetic-pneumatic contemplative science searching the ground of truth of the reality inhabited alike by prophets, apostles, philosophers, sages, and mankind, past and present. There is a decidedly prophetic dimension to Voegelin's devotion to truth, one that occasionally results in the kind of blunt, even caustic candor seen from time to time in the "History" and evident elsewhere in Voegelin's writings.

The attitude is well illustrated by his famous inaugural lecture at the University of Munich. There a stir was made not only in the lecture hall but in the local press because the new political science professor had shown Karl Marx to have been a conscious and purposeful "swindler" who knew his claims were false. But
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of an internal conflict or impasse: as he worked through the materials for the "History of Political Ideas" he came to understand that such a project was "a senseless undertaking, incompatible with the present state of science." He came to realize that ideas are secondary conceptual developments that cannot properly be thought to have a history, much less be said to be the object of history. With the transformation of symbols of experience into concepts, they can be detached from experience and become, as it were, reified referents to a reality other than that of experience—that is, distorting pointers to a false reality. Consequently, Voegelin abandoned the "History of Ideas" in favor of what was to become Order and History, which, in the words of the first line of that book, "emerges from the history of order." If, on the one hand, Voegelin felt that the completed "History" was no longer entirely satisfactory and was moved to recast part of the materials into Order and History, he did not repudiate the earlier manuscript, but continued for a time to seek a publisher for it. The General Introduction has shown the unbroken process of maturation of Voegelin's method. Voegelin himself emphasized the continuity between his original project and the latest hitherto unpublished version:

The MS has changed since 1944, though the changes affect primarily its size, not its nature. The expansion has occurred in the areas which in 1944 were not yet treated at all, or in the form of insignificant summaries, because I did not yet know enough to handle them more thoroughly. The 1000 pages of MS. which are now in your hands, that is two thirds of the whole first volume in its present form, were practically non-existent in 1944 and not even planned to exist. The remainder of that volume, the sections on Plato and Aristotle, have increased only moderately, chiefly through the additions of analyses of the various Platonic myths which in 1944 had to be omitted, because I had not yet developed the methods for analyzing myths of this type.

The state of the manuscript reflects this situation of flux and reworking in the light of an increasingly differentiated method and

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historical materials. Theoretical threads of meaning are woven to
create a very broad canvas. Given the vast scope of the enterprise,
the immediate effect is less of an orderly shuttle than of stimula-
ting, illuminating, and perhaps also disconcerting leaps. The leaps
in this part of Voegelin’s work are not quite the same as those we
witness in other parts, and they are well worth making available in
print.

In one important sense the book presented here is not what
Voegelin would have wanted it to be: it does not reflect “the present
state of science.” He always used the term science for valid scholar-
ly work, without any concessions to English usage, which tends to
restrict its meaning to the natural sciences. Voegelin’s under-
standing of social science ultimately derived from Max Weber, though
he went beyond Weber in linking cognitive with existential truth. The
scientist is animated by intellectual integrity that seeks to
encompass all the available empirical evidence, without excluding
materials liable to undermine his given intellectual position. In
this he is juxtaposed and indeed opposed to the ideological dis-
tortions and self-delusions that are—as the honest scientist must
recognize—woven into the texture of any society. We know from
the correspondence that Voegelin fretted against the ideological
climate of academic opinion. But he was just as likely to protest
that critics failed or refused to understand his work, not because
they were wrongheaded, but because they were behind the times.10

Along with a measure of cultural pessimism, Voegelin mani-
fests a progressive optimism with regard to the advancement of
“science.” This is certainly linked—despite regressive rebellions
and “social amnesia”—to his view of human self-understanding
as generally unfolding in the course of time in a process of ever
greater differentiation and doubtless also to a sense that his own
work has epochal significance, coming at a time in which the em-
pirical materials made accessible by “the state of science” allowed
for the possibility of a new theoretical breakthrough of conscious-
ness. If the philosophical epoche is brought forth as a response to
the surrounding ideological crisis, it does not result from abstract
speculation. It emerges rather out of the meditative reenactment

9. On Voegelin’s debt and on the nature of his departure from Weber see Gebhardt,
10. Voegelin to Fritz Morstein Marx, May 6, 1941.
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Introduction

The Spiritual Disintegration

The final stages of the political breakdown of Hellas were accompanied by the type of literary production that might be expected under the circumstances. Athenian opinion was divided between a nationalist party, which wanted to make a last stand against Macedon, and a Macedonian party, which desired cooperation with, and submission to, the northern monarchy for the purpose of a pan-Hellenic war against Persia. The cleavage of opinion found its expression in the speeches of Demosthenes against Macedon and the speeches and pamphlets of Isocrates in its favor.

This type of literature, though well preserved, is, however, not of primary interest to the student of ideas. The last spasm in which the pathos of the polis expires is overshadowed by that great evolution of Greek thought in the period between Socrates and Alexander, which does not follow Plato’s heroic attempt to create a new Hellas out of the forces of his soul, but which continues instead the process of intellectual disintegration that had become fully visible in the age of the Sophists. The life and death of Socrates mark an epoch for this further evolution quite as much as for the line of thought represented by Plato. The symptoms of an intellectual emigration from the polis can be found as early as the sixth century, but the literary expression of a definitely apolitical attitude, which now appears in the works of the Cynic, Cyrenaic, and Epicurean schools, traces its ideas back to the teachings and to the conduct of life of Socrates. This problem of apolitism, however, with which we have to deal now, is somewhat complicated in structure and requires a few words of systematic comment.
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late; the year 338 and the battle of Chaeronea brought the end. A comparable phenomenon in our civilization is the pacifist attitude and the ideal of comfort adopted by the working and middle classes of the Western democracies after the First World War. The incident of the theoretic fund has its close parallel in recent French history; the government of Léon Blum introduced the forty-hour week, and thereby seriously diminished the productive power of the nation, at a time when the exigencies of the situation required the utmost effort to increase the production of war materials.

c. Formal Apolitism

The phenomena described so far are of a more or less general nature; they recur whenever the paradisiacal attitudes of the apolitic and ahistoric working and lower middle classes become socially effective through a democratic organization of government. Nevertheless, they reveal certain specifically Greek peculiarities that we have to consider. While the Western European proletarian and middle classes belong, on the whole, to the national stock, a certain proportion of the Athenian poorer citizens belonged by descent to the formally apolitical section of the population and owed its formal political status to reception into the community of citizens. In the second half of the fifth century this marginal situation was accentuated through legislative acts that withdrew citizenship in a wholesale fashion from persons who had one noncitizen parent. This problem of formal apolity has no parallel in modern Western societies; the attitudes to which it led should be carefully distinguished from the factually apolitical state of mind and its expression of paradisiacal ideals. The distinction is all the more necessary because the issue has been obscured by the Marxist interpretation of history, which subtly creeps into the work of historians who would be greatly surprised if they became aware of the origin of their ideas. The modern proletarian movements have induced Marx and Engels, and a host of scholars following them, to interpret revolutionary movements of the working population in Greece and Rome by analogy to modern phenomena. This interpretation by analogy can be considered relevant only if one accepts the unwarranted assumption that the economic status of groups is the all-decisive factor in history. As we have seen by now, the parallels run somewhat differently. While in both cases a state of
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no wants, and that to have as few wants as possible is the nearest approach to divinity for men. The idea was implied in the Platonic thesis that God is the measure of all things; and we found it again in the Aristotelian autarkeia [self-sufficiency] as the category of perfect existence, pervading the hierarchy of the universe, from God, through the polis, to man. The new attitude of the Cynics expresses itself systematically through the omission of the polis from the hierarchy of the self-sufficient entities. The life in the polis is no longer the perfect life. As a consequence, the Cynics can dismiss the fundamental Aristotelian problem of construing the bios theoretikos [contemplative life] as a life of political action. Ever since the early Ionians the Greek thinkers had directed their criticism against the polis; the Cynic apoliticism metamorphoses this tradition of criticism into a comprehensive system of negations. As a positive center nothing is left but a set of ascetic ideals and the sacrifice to the divinity through worthy individual conduct. The values of the polis negated included the Homeric gods, memories of the Persian wars, Attic drama, religious festivals and games, participation in political life, and the institutions of property and family. Moreover, since true liberty consisted for the Cynics in the freedom of the soul from vices, the divisions between citizens and slaves, between Greeks and barbarians, were declared to be irrelevant.

The new credo, however, was not revolutionary in the sense that the devaluation of the life of the polis did not lead to demands for reform. The Cynics did not demand, for instance, the abolition of slavery; they were perfectly willing to live in the status of slaves because the condition of slavery was a matter of indifference to the wise man. Neither did they demand the abolition of private property or wealth; they simply preferred to live as beggars because a life of poverty insures the self-sufficiency of man. In view of such indifference toward social institutions, and in the absence of sufficient sources, it is difficult to decide whether Antisthenes and Diogenes advanced any idea of a primitive, ascetic community life that would ultimately replace the life of the polis. It seems more probable that Cynic asceticism had an aristocratic tinge; insofar as it contained an appeal, it must have appealed to men who had the spiritual energy and the force of character to forgo the amenities of a civilized life that had lost its magic; the Cynics probably left alone the broad masses who are incapable of leading a life of asceticism. The only
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foundation of a school. Epicurus founded a school of conduct in the
double sense of establishing a body of doctrine that assists in leading
the ideal life and of founding a community in which the ideal
conduct is practiced. In contrast with the Academy and the Lyceum,
the school of Epicurus is not a place for intellectual training and
scientific research; the teachings of the founder assumed even in
his lifetime the form of a dogma, to be accepted without doubts and
to be transmitted unchanged from generation to generation. As a
consequence, the school, which remained in existence through four
centuries, acquired the character of a sect; because of this character
it was ranked with the early Christian communities, and, together
with them, it was accused for its atheism. Its appeal does not go to
the intellectuals, but to worried tender souls; and it receives women
and children into the community.

The school aims to implant ataraxy, that is, peace of mind, into
the souls of its members. This aim is an ominous symptom of that
beginning of restlessness of the soul that is to increase in the fol-
lowing centuries, until the soul becomes, in the late Roman period,
a seething chaos of anxieties and superstitions. Plato had developed
the concept of nosos to indicate the disorder of a mind that has lost
its religious and spiritual orientation; now, with the breakdown of
the polis, the nosos becomes a widespread social phenomenon and
reaches the point of a pathological warping of the mind. The nosos
of the mind is, just as the rise of psychology, a symptom of political
disintegration. The main function of the political cosmos is, as
we have seen, to assuage the existential anxiety of man by giving
to his soul, through the magic evocation of the community, the
assurance of having a meaningful place in a well-ordered cosmos.
When the magic spell loses its force, the primordial anxieties are
set free again; the surrounding world becomes a disorderly vastness,
full of unknown dangers, pressing in on the human soul; and the
mind that is exposed to this experience of disorder may crack under
the strain; it may become disorganized to the point that it will grope
for any idea or person that seems to hold out a promise of protection
and support. The social phenomena accompanying this period were,
in the Hellenistic time as in our own, the prodigious increase in the
number of private circles, of clubs, of spiritual and semireligious
communities and schools of thought, the rise of new religious
movements and sects, the appearance of saviors and leaders, and the
foundation of philosophies of conduct. The community of Epicurus

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Part One
From Alexander to Actium
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to the Greco-Roman environment, destined to make the "servant" of God more acceptable to the civilization that thought in terms of the "son" of God.

§3. The Conquest

Considering the obscurity of his antecedents, it is not surprising that the actions and ideas of Alexander have given rise to divergent interpretations. We cannot follow any of them; he was neither the incarnation of Greek youthful heroism, nor a despot with Oriental inclinations, nor even a great empire builder. His specific quality is his personal intangibility—the intangibility of a strong mystic personality, of a dreamer with the ability to transfer his dreams into reality, and of a revolutionary because of his position between the civilizations of his age. His importance in history is determined not by his permanent achievements, but rather by the chains of events that he set in motion by his mere existence. He was one of the greatest catalytic forces in history. The overwhelming impression of his personality is caught in the story, reported by Plutarch, of Cassander, who long after the death of Alexander, when he was king of Macedon himself, shivered all over when he happened to see a statue of Alexander at Delphi and recovered only slowly from the fit.

Alexander did not have any coherent system of political ideas. We do not know what shape he would have given his empire, because at the time of his death the military conquest was still in progress and had reached a point where its aims had become vague. The campaigns had started as a war of the Greeks and Macedonians against Persia with the aim of removing forever the Asiatic danger. The military success had led to the permanent conquest of the Persian empire into its farthest reaches and into India; and, considering the strength of the military apparatus, further conquests in the direction of Rome and Carthage were in the realm of possibility. But even at the stage they had actually achieved, the value of the conquests had become doubtful. A situation had been reached that resembled in certain respects the Mongol conquests at their climax when a doubt crept in with regard to the purpose for which the multitude of nations should be dominated by a central power. The technical performance of the conquest was not backed by an idea, and, as in the later Mongol case, the unit of conquest, which could
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it marks the beginning of a great development. Homonoia became the basic community concept of the Hellenistic and later of the Roman world (concordia), and through the Epistles of Saint Paul the idea became one of the founding elements of democracy. Wherever the Christian community idea has penetrated and the category of like-mindedness is effective (to name a late example: John Dewey's social theory) we are faced by effects of Alexander’s prayer at Opis. With the other element of Alexander’s idea, the function of the king as the harmostes, the harmonizer of the world, we shall have to deal later.
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from Diotogenes stresses the harmonizing and cathartic function of the king with respect to his subjects. The king has to draw himself up to the gods in his conduct, and when thus he achieves true majesty he will be able to put into order those who look upon him. "For to look upon the good king ought to affect the souls of those who see him no less than a flute or harmony." A fragment from Ecphantus elaborates the parallelism of this royal function with that of God, "for the king had the same love and communion with his subjects as God has with the universe and the things in it."

Another passage from Ecphantus merits consideration because it shows the blending of Stoicism into the other materials. The passage reminds us that we have left the sphere of the Hellenic polis community as well as that of the Oriental nations, and that rulership is exerted over a heterogeneous mass of men who have to work out their salvation individually. The Diadochic kings are not national rulers as were the Macedonians before Alexander, but they are elevated to rulership by personal fortune in a disordered world. Their personal problem is not different from that of any of their subjects, and this personal problem has found in the Stoic the expression foreshadowed in Aristotle. The concept of autarky [self-sufficiency] is now definitely narrowed down to the individual human being, if he wishes to lead the perfect life in imitation of divine existence he has to be self-sufficient for himself alone. Different men, however, are differently capable of realizing this aim, and the king is the man who is supremely capable of reaching it and thus to become the living pattern after which the rest of mankind can model their lives. Hence, the open cosmopolis, the anarchic community of the wise men, acquires an internal structure that does not leave the single human beings to themselves, but gives them assistance in their endeavor through the guidance of the king. On the king rests the duty to make himself as self-sufficient and godlike as possible, for only then will he be capable "of putting this good into human nature so that by imitation of him, their Better, they will follow in the way they should go." "His logos, if it is accepted, strengthens those who have been corrupted by evil nurture as if by drink, and who have fallen into forgetfulness; it heals the sick, drives out their forgetfulness which has settled upon them as a result of their

4. Ibid., 72.
5. Ibid., 84.
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Hellenism, Rome, and Early Christianity

constitutional government, and about what we may call secondary democracy. Here we are faced with a phenomenon that, in order to distinguish it from the Hellenic, we may call primary democracy. By secondary democracy we mean the increasing participation in government of sections of the population that formerly were denied such participation. By primary democracy we mean the original creation of a people as a community of free householders. The history of Israel does not present throughout a free community of this type. But it stands at the beginning as the reality of the Israelitic confederation, and its idea remains active to the end as a regulative principle of community life.

§3. Primary and Secondary Democracy

The element of primary democracy recurs, if not in the same classic purity as in Israel, at least as a strain in political life at later periods, as in the Swiss confederation, in Geneva and Zurich and in New England, with similar religious implications; and it recurs as an idea in the contract theories that aim at the constitution of a people, from Hobbes to Rousseau. There has been much controversy over whether the contract theory, for instance of Rousseau, meant to refer to a real event in an early phase of human civilization, or whether it was meant as an idea regulating the institutions of a given historic society. We may achieve a better understanding in this and similar cases if we understand them as the latent effectiveness of the berith-idea, which has come into the Western world through Israel. The case is, however, usually not quite clear in modern societies, because the historical setting of the Western national states is not that of an original federation, but of a dynastically created territorial and popular unit with an aristocratic ruling class. When the contract theories begin to exert their influence they carry, therefore, the momentum of the Israelitic and Christian past, but they are at the same time in the service of the secondary democratic idea of a fight for constitutional rights against the upper class in the established community. We notice, therefore, in modern political ideas the curious oscillation of the democratic idea between liberal and collectivist tendencies. The liberal tendency is due to the necessity of the fight against the established pattern of institutions and the claim for privileges equal to those enjoyed by the ruling class; the collectivist or even totalitarian tendency is
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god. Of the numerous practical implications of this theological position, we can touch upon only a few that have left lasting traces in history. The most important is, perhaps, the rationalism of social conduct, which is less a positive quality than a trait that emerges in the absence of other religious experiences. The great fundamental experience is the faith in the exclusive God whose assistance can be secured through the strict observation of his commands, and whose wrath will be incurred by a violation. As the confederation is a community of freemen, this means that every single member is responsible for his conduct, not only to himself, but also to the whole community, which has to pay collectively for the offense given by any member. The consequence is a careful supervision of personal conduct, preferably through priest-experts, who, by way of confession, try to find out whether any offense has been committed. The detailed provisions of the law are probably due to its development as a rational catalog of possible sins, used by the priests in questioning the confessing member of the community. The community interest in the details of personal conduct, producing a consciously rational puritan attitude, reappears in history in frequent, already mentioned instances of religious reformation in Switzerland, Holland, England, and New England. The social type developed under such discipline is what Max Weber has called the ideal plebeian. It is distinctly not an aristocratic ideal, nor does it satisfy the religious sentiment of the "mass" or the "people," which always needs genuinely magic relief from the oppressive reality of everyday existence and [seeks] personal salvation. This mass religiousness that we find in Hellas in the mysteries, in Egypt in the Osiris cult, is connected, however, with the orgiastic, vegetative, and chthonic divinities. As this whole section of religious life was in conflict with the exclusiveness of the war god, we find in Israel neither the individual religiousness of the mysteries nor the cosmological speculations in politics.

§8. The Evolution of Eschatological Sentiment

In the period of the monarchy and the prophets, this exclusiveness becomes the starting point for the internalization and spiritualization of Yahwism. We saw that the berith with the war god originated in the period of relative weakness of the great empires. With their regeneration, the Israelitic confederation of free peasants
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as an instrument by Yahweh for the redemption of the world. The person of God shifts between the old partner of the great berith who will ultimately subject the world to his chosen people and a world God who uses the suffering of Israel as a means for the redemption of all the nations, the meaning of the choice lying precisely in the redeeming of suffering. These conflicting aspects of figure blend into one another. Nevertheless, one idea emerges clearly, which has no parallel in any other civilization: the idea that the world will be saved through the suffering of an innocent, guiltless servant. It is obvious that this idea implies the decisive step toward an individualization of sin and responsibility. The original confederation idea is impermeable to any thought of its kind, because it is understood that the community will suffer as a collectivity for the offense of any one of its members—those who have no guilt together with the guilty, among those living at the time and into the third and fourth generation. The solidarity in suffering raises no problem since the individual personal substance does not yet exist; the single human being is nothing if not a member of the chosen people. This seems to be the profound reason for the surface confusion of images and ideas in Deutero-Isaiah; the discovery of the individual sufferer is made by way of the collective suffering of Israel as an individual among other nations. As far as it is possible to transpose the intricate logic of sentiments into a rational medium, the internal sequence of the idea would be the following: first the suffering of Israel becomes inexplicable as a temporary punishment inflicted through the instrument of foreign nations, because the success of others far outweighs the punishment of Israel; unless, therefore, the idea of the chosen people should be abandoned, the suffering must have a meaning independent of the sins of Israel. For these sins, compared with those of other nations, would not justify the disproportionate suffering. This deeper meaning of suffering without guilt makes sense, however, only in a world plan in which the suffering becomes the means of redemption for the whole world. Under these conditions the faith can be maintained, the suffering can become bearable, and the identity of the people, which is dependent on the berith, can be preserved with the utmost tenacity. But let us hasten to restate that Deutero-Isaiah is not a rational treatise; it is a kaleidoscopic series of images expressive of a soul in travail. Only in this medium where the images of Israelitic eschatology float as in a dream are the shifting accents possible that
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order earlier than the conquerors. The first great expression of the destiny hovering over the empires is the Book of Daniel. The anonymous author was a Jewish pamphleteer in the time of the Maccabean war [the book is to be dated ca. 166 B.C.]. His apocalyptic spirit and his experience of history created the famous dream of Nebuchadnezzar, forgotten by the king and then revealed and interpreted by the prophet. The king dreamed of a great image: “his head was of finest gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay” [Dan. 2:32–33]. “And a great stone smote the image, and became a mountain and filled the whole earth” [2:35]. The image is interpreted as the series of the four empires [Babylon, Media, Persia, Greece [the Greek-speaking empire of Alexander and his successors]] that in the end will be supplanted by the kingdom of God filling the whole earth [2:36–37; 8:19–21]. The myth of the metal ages appears in a new transformation; the ages are not phases of the anthropogenic process, but are marked by the concrete empires of the Jewish historical experience. The general pattern of Jewish eschatology, the period of trial and ultimate victory, is retained, but history itself is divided now in periods. The periodization of history as a sequence of great empires appears as a new idea; the pattern could be dissociated from the specific empires intended by the author of Daniel, and it proved adaptable to the empire speculation of the later Roman period.

§3. The Experience of Fortune

The periodization of Daniel is given with monumental grimness; the author does not introduce into his fateful sequence any analysis of underlying causes. The sentimental and intellectual clarification is due to Polybius and his Histories. Polybius deals with the portentous period of history from 220 to 168 B.C., which established Rome as the inevitably victorious power in the imperial struggle. With him, fortune is the principal category governing the destiny of empires; fortune under two aspects: subjectively, as the sentiment by which the actors of the struggle react toward the historical events; objectively, as the force determining the shape of history. In

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leaders who contend for the spoils of the state (in Rome, the period of the civil wars and the triumvirates), to be followed [6] finally by the establishment, by one of the leaders, of a new monarchy of the Caesarean type.

§7. The Tripolity—The Real Causes of Roman Success

Polybius did not yet dispose of the improved conceptual instruments that we have today, and besides his task was complicated because he had to use the same limited instruments in order to explain two phenomena that were in apparent contradiction. The first was the cycle of decay; the second, the resistance of Rome against the general workings of decay. The formal instrument that he had to use in both instances was the classic theory of the forms of government as developed by Plato and Aristotle. The general pattern of decay was rendered through the sequence of the forms of government from monarchy, through aristocracy and democracy and their respective forms of decay with corrupt monarchy closing the cycle. In order to explain why Rome did not follow the general law, or at least not as rapidly as the other poleis, Polybius used the theory of the mixed form of government that, after Plato and Aristotle, had received its final form through Dicaearchus of Messana. Dicaearchus developed, with Sparta as the model, the idea that an ideal resistant form of government would be the well-balanced mixture of the three forms, the “tripolity,” in which the decay of every single element would be checked by the countereffect of the other two. Polybius posited that the consuls of the Roman constitution represented the monarchical element, the senate the aristocratic, the tribal assembly the democratic, and that the checks and balances between the three preserved the effectiveness of Rome and thus predestined her to be the victor in the imperial struggle.

This explanation presents us for the first time, in an incipient form, a characteristic of political theory that will become more outspoken with every future century. To label the stages of the internal evolution and the final decay of a political community with the Hellenic names for the forms of government is a somewhat schematic approach to the problem that may prevent its understanding rather than further it. The sequence of the forms
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hieroglyphs, still rather small in the time of Polybius, increased rapidly with the accumulation of theoretical work, and we have to follow the problem closely in order to distinguish properly between the original sphere of evocative symbols and theory and the ballast of secondary literature, so dear to "the common intelligence of mankind," growing ever heavier with the centuries.
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HELENISM, ROME, AND EARLY CHRISTIANITY

The use he makes of these sources is on the whole hieroglyphic. We know this for certain in the case of Polybius, because we can compare the two authors. The tripility reappears applied to the interpretation of the Roman constitution, still less precise and realistic than with Polybius, one step further removed from its original meaning.

The case for Panaetius is not quite as clear because the basis for comparison is missing. It requires a more elaborate analysis. It seems that the Stoic idea of the world state, the cosmopolis, has developed by the second century further in the direction of egalitarian ideas. The fundamental metaphysical assumption is still that of the world spirit, the logos (ratio in Latin), or nomos (lex in Latin), setting off sparks—or splitting off fragments—that form the personality centers of men. There is a mutilated passage in Cicero, filled by conjecture in which it seems that the Cynic and early Stoic aristocratic setting apart of the wise man is retained (Leg. II.5). But the main trend of doctrine goes toward the assumption of the generic equality of men as a consequence of their equal participation in the divine logos; the universe is a community of God and men (Leg. I.7). The cosmopolis, which was not more than a sketchy outline with Diogenes, is now filling up with substance; the formula of Cicero needs only a little shift of accent to produce Saint Augustine’s idea of the civitas Dei. This trend is still more marked in the Somnium Scipionis. The elder Africanus explains to Scipio in his dream that the statesman should not conduct his life with an eye to the criticism of the vulgar mass and to future fame; he should take virtue alone as the measure of his action. To be praised by future generations does not mean much considering that “you are never mentioned by those who lived before you, who were no less numerous and were certainly better men” (Rep. VI.21–22). The commonwealth of gods and men is not a community between God and the living generation, but it comprises the diffusion of the divine substance among mankind during the whole magnus annus, the world year ending in the general conflagration; it comprises the living and the dead and those who are not yet born; the status of man is determined essentially, not by the repercussions in the tiny fragment of the commonwealth that is occupied by the country and the people into which he happens to be born, but by his status in the great commonwealth, which he owes to his participation.
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§7. The End of Cicero

The strange secret of Rome was her power to survive as a shell, in the governmental apparatus as well as in the idea, while her substance disintegrated and disappeared. While Cicero was saving the idea of Rome and laying the foundations of the myth of government and law, the Roman republic gave way to the Caesaristic type of political organization. But among the leaders who organized the disintegrated sources of power into a personal apparatus, there was only one Caesarean; the others were men of more sinister nature. After Caesar's death, Octavian and Marc Antony came to a temporary agreement, which included the mutual surrender of persons who were obnoxious to the respective leaders. Cicero was on Marc Antony's list; Octavian surrendered him. A man whom Cicero had successfully defended in a lawsuit asked for the special favor to massacre him and was granted the privilege.
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the golden age would be their offspring. But the child was a girl, and Antony fell in love with Cleopatra. The marriage between the two gave rise to a new series of symbols, fusing the Virgilian prophecy with similar predictions in the East and with the idea of divine kingship. The twin children of the pair were called Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene. The name of the boy brings together more than one line of myth and prediction. The Alexander part of the name continued the Macedonian tradition with the claim to the empire of Alexander, given substance to a degree by Antony’s preparations for the Parthian war, which was meant to bring the Persian realm back into the empire as an inheritance for the son. The Helios part took up the Sibylline prophecy of a rule of Helios preceding the golden age, suggested by the fourth Eclogue (5.10); it reflected, furthermore, the pharaonic sun symbolism (Cleopatra, as ruler of Egypt, was the daughter of Re); and finally the name may have been a claim to the Persian-Parthian sun symbolism. The concentration of imperial symbols went one step further on the occasion of the “Armenian” triumph of 34 B.C. The triumph was held in Alexandria, not in Rome, and it was followed by the so-called Donations, an elaborate distribution of titles and territories to Cleopatra and her four children. Cleopatra and her eldest son, Ptolemy Caesar, whom she had from Caesar, were declared queen and king of kings, joint monarchs of Egypt and Cyprus, and overlords over the children and their realms; Alexander Helios received Armenia, Parthia, and Media; Cleopatra Selene, the kingdom of Cyrenaica and Libya; and the youngest, Ptolemy Philadelphos, Syria and Cilicia. Antony remained in the background, being officially

4. I am giving the opinion of Professor Tarn with some reserve. Personally, I am inclined to follow Eduard Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes. Geschichte einer religiösen Idee*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, vol. 3 (Berlin-Leipzig, 1924). Norden suggests that all attempts at finding the child that was envisaged by the Eclogue should be given up. Virgil was a man of great religious sensitivity, reacting to the horrors of the civil war and to the experience of the end of a time with the evocation of the new aeon. The symbols employed in the Eclogue belong to the Egyptian and Hellenistic stock of images for the soteriological world ruler, see particularly Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, 116 ff., on the parallel between Eclogue 4.15-17 and the Egyptian ritual for the enthronement of the pharaoh. The same pattern of symbols forms part of the Israelitic tradition and can be discerned in the prophecies of Isaiah and in the narration of the birth of Christ in the Gospels. I have retained, nevertheless, the conjecture of Professor Tarn in the text because Virgil was, after all, not beyond identifying the leader of the golden age with a definite historical personality, as Aeneid 6.791 ff. proves. The search for the child is, therefore, perhaps not quite as “amusing” as Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, 12, has it appear.
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Part Two
Christianity and Rome
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of Jesus to perform faith healings because they would be taken as "signs," or outward inducements to believe in him, while the metanoia should be operated through the free transformation of the soul without "proofs." In the Gospel conception of the mana and the faith, there is already distinctly preformed the later Pauline doctrine of faith, which "does not mean intellectual acceptance of a creed or proposition, but loyalty, love, and devotion, something like what in Indian religion is known as bhakti." 9 The limits of the mana become clear from the experience in his hometown (Mark 6:1–6), where Jesus has no power to do any mighty work because his family and his neighbors see him as the ordinary man whom they knew as a child. The biographical knowledge of the person prevents the experience of the mana. 10 The mana of Jesus and the faith of the believer are corresponding personality elements that can communicate with each other and thus constitute a kind of community substance. This interaction between Jesus and the faithful is the closest we can come through our sources to the constitution of the Christian community as a divine and at the same time historically active substance. The mana conception of the community between Jesus and the believers is the basis of the later Pauline interpretation of the community as the body and the spirit of Christ.

d. Physiological and Spiritual Spheres Not Separated—Thaumaturgic Kingship

In the mana, there is no clear distinction between a physiological and a properly spiritual sphere. In Mark 16:17–18, the characteristics of the believer are enumerated as follows: "In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and the sick shall recover"—sin, possession by demons, and physiological diseases for a series of

10. The scene is worth closer attention. I can only remark in passing that the materials on the life of Jesus, as incorporated in the Gospel, came from persons who were sensitive to the mana of Jesus and who had for this reason not the attitude of a biographer who treats his subject with skeptical detachment. The fact alone should preclude a use of the Gospel sources as a historical narrative. Elements of a biographical nature that have entered the Gospel have in any case passed through the atmosphere of mana and faith.
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but it is probable that inclination of this kind was not quite absent from the hearts of some of even the earliest believers.

k. The Contrast between the Sermon in the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount

We have to envisage this possibility if we take the Gospel text as reflecting the movements of early Christian experiences. There is the contrast between the Sermon in the Plain and the Sermon on the Mount to be accounted for. The two Gospels of Luke and Matthew are supposed to be roughly contemporary, independent of one another, but going back to the same stock of source materials. The structure of the two sermons is on the whole the same, though the sermon in Luke is much briefer. But the Sermon on the Mount shows the characteristics that are usually called "spiritualization." A careful analysis in detail [which I cannot give in this context] would show that the "spiritualization" does not impart a new meaning to the sayings, but that Matthew tries elaborately to find formulas that, by their wording, prevent misunderstandings to which the text of Luke might be exposed if it fell into the hands of simple souls. The Beatitudes in Matthew are not followed, as in Luke, by a series of Woes to the rich and saturated, and the Beatitudes are not said simply of the poor and afflicted, but attributed to states of the soul that are supposed to be more readily found in poor than in rich people. The author of the Sermon on the Mount seems to have taken conscious care to preclude aberrations from the eschatological meanings of the sayings to reflections of a social nature.

l. The Regulative Function of the Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount has become the centerpiece of the teaching of Jesus. The doctrine of the sermon is an eschatological doctrine. It demands a change of heart and imposes rules of conduct that have their meaning for men who live in the daily expectation of the kingdom of Heaven. It is not a doctrine that can be followed by men who live in a less intense environment, who expect to live out their lives and who wish to make the world livable for their families. Following the doctrine of the sermon to the letter would in each individual case inevitably entail social and economic disaster and probably lead to an early death. The pressure
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the way to Emmaus. The tradition obviously was not uniform. This is made even more plausible by the fact that we can distinguish two groups of reports: the one group, probably the older tradition, places the first appearances of Christ in Galilee; the other places them in Jerusalem, probably in order to enhance the prestige of that city’s community. The interpretation that was put on the visions emerges from the words attributed to the Resurrected. In Matt. 28:19 ff. Jesus parts from the disciples with the command: “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations. . . . Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” In John 20:29, the crucial question for the coherence of the later community is touched, when Jesus says to the unbelieving Thomas: “Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

c. The Constitution of the Community through the Descent of the Spirit

After a series of appearances to individual disciples or smaller groups of disciples, the actual constitution of the new community came about with the Descent of the Spirit on the assembled community on Pentecost day (Acts 2:1 ff.). The event was interpreted by Peter to the witnesses: “Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs . . . ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he has shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:22–36).

Jesus, the man, is dead, but Christ lives, and under the guidance of his spirit the community continues to exist as it did when he was present in the flesh. From the context of Acts 2, it is also clear that the community under Christ is still living in eschatological expectation of the early arrival of the day of the Last Judgment. With Paul and his circle begins the transformation of the eschatological community into the Christian community that sees the day in a
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§2. The National Cores

a. Syrian-Egyptian-Greek-Western Christianity

The difficulties of Paul were a premonition of the later problems leading to the church splits. Wherever Christianity penetrated, the regional and national traditions produced variations of the Christian experience that became the seeds of schisms. The interpretation of these splits is complicated to an unusual degree because it is not simply a question of the Christian community breaking asunder along older national lines. Other elements enter the picture in bewildering number, and in many instances it is impossible to disentangle the factors and to arrive at an adequate formula for the events and the ideas that produced them. Before entering into the intricacies, let us state therefore the general result about which there can be no doubt. The first community to split off from the Great Church was Nestorian Christianity; the Nestorian party separated after the Council of Ephesus in 431; the national core of this church was the upper Mesopotamian population. The second split ensued after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 when the Monophysitic Church separated, with the Egyptians as the national core. The tension, finally, between the Greek East and the Latin West dragged on for centuries, the final split coming only in 1054, when the Orthodox Church with the Byzantine Greeks as the national core separated from the Catholic West.

b. The Cross-Pattern of Factors—National, Civilizational, Dogmatic

While the outlines are clear, we cannot speak of more than national cores in the separate churches for they are distinctly not national Christian organizations. We have to take into further account at least the following three factors: (1) ethnic boundary lines in the Mediterranean and the Near East were not strict; the colonial settlements of the Hellenic poleis, the conquest of Alexander, and the expansion of Rome had resulted in an intermingling of populations that defied unraveling; (2) the older ethnic differences were not always causative in the Christian situation because Hellenism had overlaid the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor with a civilization that frequently, and particularly in the cities, determined intellectual and spiritual affinities more strongly than the ethnic
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c. The Marcionite Movement

The internal problems of the Johannine Gospel as well as the problem of the Christian Sacred Book were continued in the Marcionite heresy. Marcion came from Sinope (like Diogenes), his foundation of the Redeemer Church reached its first great power between 150 and 190. He made the systematic attempt to eliminate from Christianity its historicity. The achievement of Paul had been the conception of the revealed kingdom of Heaven under Christ as constituting the ultimate historical reality of mankind; the Jewish prehistory was integrated into the conception as the period of preparation provided by God; the new epoch was the fulfillment of the promises made by God under the old order. Marcion reversed the Pauline construction and conceived of the God of the Old Testament as a wicked demon who could not be identical with the Father who ordered the appearance of Christ. The two Persian gods (Ahriman and Ormuzd) appear as the evil demon of matter and law on the one hand and the savior god who wishes to help the human race on the other.

As far as the sacred writings were concerned, Marcion therefore rejected the Old Testament entirely and created a canon of Christian writings consisting of a new gospel, which he composed himself by purging the Gospel of Luke of its Jewish elements, and of ten Letters of Paul. The Marcionite canon became the model on which the canon of the Great Church was built: the Gospel and the Epistles of Paul replaced the law and the prophets.

d. Montanism—The Paraclete—The Third Realm

The movement of the Johannine type reached its climax in Montanism. Montanus, formerly a priest of Cybele in Phrygia, was soon after his conversion to Christianity overcome by the Spirit and became convinced that his body housed the Paraclete whose appearance was predicted by John. The Montanist sect as such had no particular quarrel with the Great Church, but the appearance of the Paraclete, speaking the will of Christ directly through Montanus, was a challenge to the Church, which was just about to organize herself under episcopal authority. The episcopal charisma of office would be of no avail against the Spirit of God in person. The episcopate of Asia arose fiercely and condemned the new prophecy
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not a "religious" measure in the modern sense since apparently no abjuration of faith was demanded of the Christians. That the persecution was, indeed, an event in the Magian struggle becomes clear through the close relation of the Decian measures with the somewhat earlier parallel measures in the Sassanid empire. In 216 Ardashir I had been finally victorious over the Arsacid dynasty; the victory was followed by a strongly centralizing reorganization of the nation with support of the Mazdaean clergy. Under Ardashir and Shapur, Mazdaism became the state religion, and the establishment was confirmed by persecutions of the non-Mazdaean communities (Jews, Christians, etc.). The successes of the Sassanids were a strong inducement for Decius to try a similar experiment for the Roman empire. The vacillations that were characteristic of the Roman policy also have their parallels in the Sassanid measures. Under Shapur I, Mani appeared in Ctesiphon and found favor. Under Varahran I (224–275), Manichaeism, which had expanded, was rudely exterminated under pressure of the Mazdaean clergy and Mani was executed.
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e. The Protectorate of the Princeps

To the obligation of the citizenry as "clients" corresponded the obligation of the princeps to protect the republic against internal and external dangers. In order to enable the princeps to fulfill the duties of a lord protector vast discretionary powers were decreed for Augustus in 29 B.C. The powers were renewed for him and his successors and comprised a practically complete dispensation from the law of the republic. They allowed the princeps to have recourse to special measures whenever he deemed it necessary in the interest of the public weal. This unlimited power of the *cura et tutela rei publicae* (care and protection of the republic) may be said to have been the all-important legal basis on which the principate could evolve into an absolute monarchy of the Oriental type. Curiously enough this aspect of the Augustan protectorate is frequently neglected by historians in comparison with another feature of the delegation of discretionary powers. Vast power was transferred to the princeps by a formal law, a *lex* of the people, the *lex de imperio*, usually later called the *lex regia*. This *lex* implied the legal construction of a transfer of power from the people to the princeps. While in the Roman imperial situation this element of transfer was distinctly not the most important feature of the institution, in the political theory of the Middle Ages it became an argument in the discussion about the allocation of political power when anti-imperial publicists insisted that the imperial power rested originally with the people and that the emperor held it only by delegation.

§3. Eastern Influences

a. The Divinization of the Roman and Italic Emperors

The contact of Rome with the Hellenistic East had caused an influx of elements of ruler worship even in republican times. Heroization of outstanding personalities was foreign to Rome, but Romans had received divine honors in the East, and by the time of Caesar and Augustus the heroization of rulers after their death was acceptable without resistance. Caesar became the *Divus Iulius* [godlike, divine Julius] and Octavian, as early as 40 B.C., the *Divi Filius* [son of the divine one]. The princeps himself, however, was not considered a god in his lifetime, but rather a being ranking between man and God, a man surrounded by an aura of divinity that emanated
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§1. The Greek Heritage

a. The Structure of Legal Theory

The theory of law developed between the end of the Roman republic and the end of the Roman empire into a body of doctrine that has retained ever since in Western history the status of a comparatively self-sufficient discipline within the wider framework of political theory. The variations of doctrine are infinite, but the foci of speculation remain fairly stable. They are determined today, as they were in the period under observation, by the complexes of *ius civile* [civil law], *ius gentium* [the law of nations], *ius positivum* [positive law], *ius naturale* [natural law], and *ius divinum* [divine law]. We have to attempt, therefore, at this juncture a systematic survey of the topics and inquire into the structure of the conceptual instruments that are fixed by the pagan and Christian theorists, as well as into the process of their formation.

We said that the theory of law acquired a comparatively self-sufficient status; this does not mean, however, that legal theory is an independent body of thought either with regard to its object or with regard to its categories. On the contrary, legal theory is a secondary discipline in the sense that the frame of fundamental concepts within which it moves is determined by ideas and evocations that lie outside the theory of law itself. The self-sufficiency is due partly to the fact that the great mythical determinants have not changed since the early Christian era, and partly to the fact that such changes as have occurred and occur at present penetrate extremely slowly into the field that is dominated by the legal mind. The theory of law is, within the field of political theory, the specific
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that has identified *ius gentium* since the Renaissance with *international law*.

The quotations, isolated fragments as they are, give a fairly clear impression of the transformation that the older Stoic ideas underwent in the period. The idea of the cosmopolis as late as the time of Cicero was a shell empty of institutional content; single human individuals were its members by virtue of their participation in the logos. Cicero had brought the identification of world order with Rome. Then the identification of the law of nature shifted from Rome to the institutions that are common to *all* nations. And, ultimately, the law common to all nations was discovered to be not quite as ideal as it should be, and it was put consequently in opposition to another law of nature that is free of the less desirable elements of *ius gentium*. The most important step in this evolution is the discovery of the *gentes* as the cause of imperfection in the world. The discovery in the sphere of Roman law runs parallel to the discovery of nations, *ta ethne*, as the obstacle in the path of a universal Christian order by Saint Paul. The *national* and civilizational diversification of mankind is in itself an imperfection; man as we know him historically is a fallen creature, fallen from a state of innocence in which all men were equal as living beings.

d. *Seneca’s Critique of Civilization*

The law of nature in opposition to the law of the *gentes* implies a critique of civilization. The critique had found expression, independent of the context of legal terminology, in Seneca’s conception of the golden age as a state of innocence from which man had fallen through his inventiveness and acquisitiveness. The symbols are inherited from Hesiod, but the setting of the myth has changed. The Hesiodian golden age reflects the tensions of the Hellenic polis; the golden age of Seneca reflects the tensions of the Roman-Hellenistic world civilization. Seneca’s lengthy reveling in the pleasures of primitive, precivilizational life, his detailed critique of the benefits of civilizational comforts, his symbolization of the two ideals of life in the persons of Diogenes, the wise man without wants, and of Daedalus, the low mind who wants to improve the material environment, create a new anticultivizational myth of nature that

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understood as caused by the Fall. The institutions of the actual order that were incompatlible with the paradisiacal natural law were due to Original Sin. While the trend toward deification of the worldly order went too far on the one side, the assumption of Original Sin and human wickedness as the exclusive source of undesirable institutions went too far on the other side and would have made any compromise with the world of sin extremely difficult. The way out of the dilemma was indicated by elements in the theory of Seneca that qualified somewhat the simple sequence of a natural state of innocence and a civilized state of imperfection.

e. The Compromise—The Relative Natural Law

In the pattern of the simple sequence, the golden age would be the state of natural law, the civilized stage that of positive imperfect law. The transition from one to the other is caused by the viciousness and acquisitiveness of man. This romantic picture of the Epistula XC is rectified by Seneca on other occasions, particularly in De Tranquilitate Animi,7 through the introduction of the idea that the coercive institutions of government are not simply bad, but contain the remedy for the evils of human nature. The nature of man being what it is, the compulsory organization of society is the proper instrument for making the life of man livable at all and raising it to its highest possible ethical level. From this position, the church fathers could develop the theory (which is perhaps best in keeping with the Pauline tradition of considering governmental authority as a divine instrument for the punishment of worldly evil) that the order of the world, while being a consequence of the Fall, is at the same time ordained by God as a punitive and remedial institution. The conception of an absolute natural law that governs the primitive state of man can thus be supplemented by the idea of a relative natural law, also ordained by God, which governs the fallen state of man. The idea of the relative natural law of fallen man can be traced from Irenæus through Ambrosius, Augustine, and Gregory the Great to Isidore of Seville as the dominant conception of natural law that was transmitted to the Middle Ages.8

8. In presenting the three positions, I follow closely the analysis of Troeltsch, Social Teachings, 150–55. For the ample presentation of materials see R. W. Carlyle

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the rhythm of his language. The combination of these two factors alone would have made Augustine the great intellectual mystic, the metaphysician, and the theologian. His political will, added to his intellectual and spiritual powers, enabled him to penetrate the political and historical problems of the age in all their complications. The absorption of this vast political material and the apologetic intention in its presentation have, however, damaged the consistency of the metaphysical system to a certain extent, as critics have rightly remarked; the Civitas Dei has become so closely linked to the [historical] situation that the philosophy of history and politics has turned almost into a sociological critique of the Roman-Christian civilization, the receptive-fatalistic sentiment outweighing the will to spiritual order. But whatever the civitas Dei has suffered as the system of Christian politics it has gained as the grandiose expression of Christian political existence. One cannot expect that the man of the Confessions, who is fascinated by the historical growth of his own life, will free himself of the intimate structure of his personality and not be deeply impressed by the determinants of the political situation as they have grown historically.

§2. The Situation

a. The Emperors and the Church

By the time of Augustine, Christian history had evolved along lines rather different from those envisaged in the imperial idea of Paul. The revealed kingdom of Heaven had progressed stupendously, but by no means to the extent that it could have absorbed paganism. The main phases in the struggle can be distinguished: first, the period of increasing persecution since the Antonines and Severi, reaching its first climax under Decius, its second under Diocletian. A reversal, then, of the persecution policy began under Constantine, with the Toleration Edict of Milan in 313.\footnote{Concerning the question of whether there ever was an Edict of Milan, or whether the term is a symbol expressing the result of a series of acts, see N. H. Baynes, Constantine, CAH, vol. 12 (1939), chap. 20, and the further literature quoted there.} The new policy did not imply, however, a spiritual domination of the empire by the victorious Great Church. By the time of Constantine the internal ethnic differentiation of Christianity had gone a long way and the
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aging and tending toward an inevitable end, caused by the spectacle of disintegration in the surrounding world, lies like a blight over the philosophy of Augustine. It remained the prevalent Christian sentiment in the following centuries. It expressed itself strongly in Gregory the Great (590–604), who witnessed the crumbling of the empire, and it reached deep into the Middle Ages.

d. The Senescens Saeculum

The systematic importance of Augustinian symbolism can be scarcely overrated. The elements of the system were furnished by tradition, but their organization is Augustine’s own. The epochal division of history into the periods before Christ and after Christ is elaborated into an analogue of world creation. The world of politics has found again its parameters of order in the cosmos, as in the Mesopotamian evocations. But it is no longer the cosmos of celestial revolutions, returning to the original constellations and thus creating the aeons, but the cosmos as the work of God according to his plan. Hence the analogue of the cosmos can furnish a meaningful line of evolution, the ahistorical element of the cyclical revolutions being eliminated. The analogue can be carried over into the Christian constitution of the epochs by means of the ancestor line of Christ, and it can be carried over into the world of man by the symbolism of the human ages. God, Christ, and man are thus linked into a firm system of meaning. The construction has only one weak point, but one of decisive importance: the history of the Christian world has no structure of its own. After the appearance of Christ, history simply goes on having no internal aim until at some unknown point of time the aimless course is cut short by the second appearance of Christ, an appearance that, as far as the internal structure of the Christian community life is concerned, might come today as well as tomorrow in a thousand years. The history of Augustine is not constructive action looking to the future; five ages of history have passed, the sixth, the senescens saeculum of the crumbling world, holds no hope beyond its end except for the heavenly peace, the pax coelestis. The position of Augustine at the end of the ancient world is in this respect parallel to that of Hegel at the end of the age of the national state: when the Idea has evolved through thesis and antithesis to the synthesis in the objective morality of the state in the present, we stand at
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which Augustine uses the terms *civitas*, *res publica*, or *regnum*, all of which are usually, but rather imperfectly, rendered by our modern word *state*. The term *state* is inadequate, because in modern usage it signifies a sphere of organization, legal order, and power that is ideologically independent of the spiritual organization of mankind in the churches. The Christian system of politics in general, and that of Augustine in particular, on the contrary conceives of the sphere of power and law as a realm that is intimately connected with the spiritual sphere, though its foundations are natural. Our modern distinction of "politics" and "religion" has no place in the Augustinian system, and any attempt to discover Augustine's theory of the "state" can only lead to a severe misunderstanding.¹⁰ I prefer to speak, therefore, of the theory of the *res publica*, the republic, because Augustine takes the Ciceronian theory as his starting point.

b. The Critique of the Ciceronian Conception of the People

The Ciceronian definitions of the people and the republic proved useless in the Christian system because they were built, as we have seen, on the assumption that a search for spiritual order was unnecessary; the problems of government were solved by identifying the Stoic conceptions of the world state and the world *nomos* with the vocabulary of the Roman republic. A refreshing trait of Augustine's theory of government, a trait that is not always sufficiently appreciated, is the ruthlessness with which he shakes up the complacent aggregate of Ciceronian hieroglyphs and replaces it again by realistic problems. He considers the Ciceronian equation between *res publica* and *res populi* and finds that there never could have been a Roman *res publica* if we accept the equation because there never was a Roman people in the strict sense of the Ciceronian definition of the "people." The people is, according to Cicero, a multitude held together *consensu iuris*, by the consent to a right order, so that the existence of a people would depend on its being organized in a "right order." But, Augustine asks, how can there be a *ius*, a right order,

¹⁰ A good example of such a misunderstanding is Carlyle's presentation of Augustine's theory of the republic in his *History of Medieval Political Theory in the West*, vol. 1. See Professor McIlwain's criticism of the presentations of Carlyle and Figgis in his *Growth of Political Thought in the West* (New York, 1932).
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[destined] to rationalize remains the same. The permanent general structure comprises three sets of ideas: the ideas concerning the constitution of the cosmos as a whole; the ideas concerning the internal order; the ideas concerning the status of the cosmion in the simultaneous world and in history. The variation in details is determined by a greater number of factors of which some typical are: the conception of man; the religious, metaphysical, and ethical ideas of the meaning of human life; the economic structure of society; the ethnical composition of the groups; the genesis of the political organization; the elements of tradition preserved or excluded; the role of science and rational speculation; etc.

To write a history of political ideas would be a comparatively simple undertaking if the subject of these ideas were exhausted by the clear-cut nucleus that I have just outlined. The difficulties arise as soon as we start to unfold some of the implications of the initial statements. We can observe in frequent instances in history an inclination to interpret the shelter function of the political cosmion from a utilitarian point of view. But the utilitarian argument, while not being without sense in justifying a political order, does not reach the emotional center of the [cosmion], this center being the desire to create a world of meaning out of these human [emotions/aspirations/appetites] and desires, such as the desire for procreation and to outlive the [2] fragmentary personal life by a projection into the life of [emotion and character] or of a more comprehensive tribal or national group; the desire to give to the questionable achievements of an individual life an added meaning by weaving it into the texture of group achievement. Interpreted in these terms, the political cosmion provides a structure of meaning into which the single human being can fit the results of the biologically and spiritually [productive, procreative] energies of his personal life, thereby [relieving] his life from the [disordering aspects] of existence that always spring up when the possibility of the utter senselessness of a life ending in annihilation is envisaged. The peculiar problems involved in the enterprise to create a finite cosmos of meaning can be seen perhaps more clearly in comparison with other fundamental answers to the experience of the fragmentary and senseless character of human existence. There have always been men who have held the belief that out of the perishable qualities of human existence no earthly structure of intrinsic meaning can be built, that every attempt at creating a
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and murder of incompatible possibilities in the character of man and of conflicting values. Every type of political order brings to the fore the men who fit its style and refers to second rank the nonconformist minds. A military society cannot be governed by a class of Confucian scholars; a society [basing its values] on income will not develop.

[5] When the evocative power of an idea has been seriously shattered under the pressure of disenchanting analysis it may shade off into the twilight of an ideology. A further class of ideas are the utopian dreams. They occur frequently in history since there are always men who wish to overcome the misery of the finite imperfection of the political cosmos by the invention of an order of intrinsic value that would settle definitely the struggle of the evocative forces. Dreams of this kind [assume always], openly or silently, that one or the other of the essentials of human nature [with need for] change can be eliminated from a social order. The elimination of an essential feature of human nature may be said to define technically a utopia. And, finally, men have cherished the idea of abolishing political order altogether and [living] in an anarchic community. Thus the ideas range from evocation to abolition of the cosmos, and all of them have a claim to be called political ideas. A thinker who interprets man may detest the phenomenon of political order and wish to eradicate it, but he cannot ignore it. He has to take into account the experience of life and death, of the anxiety of existence, and of the desire and force to create out of the perishable existence a cosmic analogy. The problem of politics has to be considered in the larger setting of an interpretation of human nature.

The preceding analysis makes it possible to determine the function of political theory in the development of political ideas. The term theory is used somewhat loosely, and frequently it is treated as a synonym to political idea. For the present purpose I intend to use the term as meaning contemplation, theoria in the Aristotelian sense. A political theory, then, would be the product of detached contemplation of political reality. Political theory in the strict sense obviously must be a very rare phenomenon in history. It is doubtful if an attitude of complete detachment has ever been obtained at all, and certainly there is no continuous process by which a theory of politics evolves and grows into a system, as theoretical physics does. A political theorist, being a human being, is brought up in a
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with the renaissance of Aristotle in the thirteenth century, does the full weight of Greek theory make itself felt again. The historic account has to begin, therefore, at least with the early empires of the Near East, and a good point could even be made for starting with an analysis of more primitive stages of human society, because their traces can be found in the later history. There are certainly the reflections of a gynaiocratic stage of development to be found in Plato’s idea of a community of women, in the role of Diotima, in certain remarks of Saint Paul, in the [Carpocratian and similar Gnostic accounts] as reported by Clemens Alexandrinus, and still in certain formulas expressing the equality of women in the Codex Iustinianus. Primitive ideas of the totemistic period reach into the structure of the Greek polis, of the Christian communities and the Mithras communities ideas of Roman soldiers. But considering the space at my disposition I thought it better to confine myself to an occasional remark concerning those problems, and in general not to go further back than early Asiatic ideas.

This divergence from the conventional pattern is not conditioned by any internal problem of a period, be it the Greek or a later one, but by the necessity of drawing the lines that connect one evocative situation with another. To bring out carefully the connecting lines seems to be the most important task, because otherwise the history is in danger to degenerate into a collection of essays on important theoretical achievements that are not held together by anything but the covers of a book. I have tried, therefore, [8] to [pose] the mainstreams of tradition as the organizing principle throughout, always [marking] the point where a new evocative element enters the scene and either splits up or sums up the accumulated [mass]. The Oriental and the Greek developments, to a certain extent separate from one another, unite in the period of Alexander and the Diadochic empires. The organization of the Roman empire, unifying the Eastern and the Western [cultures], marks the next stage. With the appearance of the [...] tribes the East embarks, after centuries of [slow] separation, on a new independent development in the Byzantine and the Islamic empires, while the West crystallizes around the Carolingian empire. The crusades mark the beginning of a new period of contacts between East and West, leading to the renaissance of the Eastern intellectual heritage in the West. This period is a particularly complicated one because the intellectual absorption of the East coincides with the dissolution of the Western
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Eric Voegelin (1901–1985) was one of the most original and influential philosophers of our time. Born in Cologne, Germany, he studied at the University of Vienna, where he became a professor of political science in the Faculty of Law. In 1938, he and his wife, fleeing Hitler, emigrated to the United States. They became American citizens in 1944. Voegelin spent much of his career at Louisiana State University, the University of Munich, and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. During his lifetime he published many books and more than one hundred articles. The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin will make available in a uniform edition all of Voegelin's major writings. In some thirty-four volumes the Collected Works will include the monumental, never-before-published History of Political Ideas; important published essays not previously collected in book form or published only in German; previously unpublished essays; selected correspondence; translations of seven books, four of them never before available in English; and the five-volume Order and History.