NATIONS AND NATIONALISM IN WORLD HISTORY

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NATIONS IN ANTIQUITY

Has the lack of even a superficial familiarity with the Bible among historians today contributed to their reluctance to consider that nations may have existed in antiquity? One need only read as far as the first 12 pages of *The New Oxford Annotated Bible (NRSV)*, from Genesis 1 to Genesis 10, when the following appears:

> These are the descendants of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; children were born to them after the flood … These are the descendants of Japheth in [by] their lands, each with [according to] their own language, their families, and [in] their nations [*gôyim*, singular *gôy*] … These are the descendants of Ham, by [according to] their families, their languages, [in] their lands, and their nations … These are the descendants of Shem by [according to] their families and their languages [in] their lands and [according to] their nations … These are the families of Noah's sons, according to their generations in their nations.[1]
>
> *(Genesis 10:1, 5, 20, 31–32)*

In these verses, the historian comes across an anthropological classification that shows how the ancient Israelites understood the population of the world known to them. "Peoples" are distinguished from one another by descent, language, and territory. The Hebrew text uses the term *gôy* to designate a people known by its own territory and language. That term was translated in Jerome's *Vulgate* (384 CE), the Latin translation of the Bible, as *natio* (although sometimes as *gens*), from the verb *nasci*, "to be born," "to spring forth from," hence, to be *nativus*, "to be a native." It appears that in these verses, with the Hebrew *gôy* and, later, the Latin *natio*, we have a classification of a geographically relatively extensive, yet bounded territorial kinship.

More can be said about the ancient Israelite category *gôy* beyond that it appears to be a term signifying a territorially constituted society with its own language.

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From its description in the Book of Joshua, chapters 3, 4, and 7, the *gôy* was understood to encompass the family (*bêt 'āb*), the clan (*mišpāhâ*), which was made up of numerous families, and the tribe (*šēbet*), which included various clans. Each of the tribes of the Israelite *gôy* was designated in Joshua by its territory. Thus, the *gôy* of Israel is a term that also signifies a joining together of those families, clans, and tribes into a cultural unity through a history, as conveyed by the Hebrew Bible, a religion, language, and an image of a land thought to be their land.

The image of the land of Israel, according to the Bible, was one with clearly demarcated borders:

> Your south sector shall extend from the wilderness of Zin along the side of Edom. Your southern boundary shall begin from the end of the Dead Sea on the east; your boundary shall turn south of the ascent of Akrabbim, and cross to Zin, and its outer limit shall be south of Kadesh-barnea [in the Sinai]; then it shall go on to Hazar-addar, and cross to Azmon; the boundary shall turn from Azmon to the Wadi of Egypt, and its termination shall be at the [Mediterranean] Sea. For the western boundary, you shall have the Great Sea [the Mediterranean] and its coast; this shall be your western boundary. This shall be your northern boundary: from the Great Sea you shall mark out your line [draw a line] to Mount Hor; from Mount Hor you shall mark it out to Lebo-hamath, and the outer limit of the boundary shall be at Zedad; then the boundary shall extend to Ziphron, and its end shall be at Hazar-enan; this shall be your northern boundary. You shall mark out your eastern boundary from Hazar-enan to Shepham; and the boundary shall continue down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain; and the boundary shall go down, and reach the east slope of the sea of Chinnereth [Sea of Galilee]; and the boundary shall go down to the Jordan [River], and its end shall be at the Dead Sea.
>
> *(Numbers 34:3–12)*

These borders of the land of Israel are designated here with remarkable precision, although without, of course, the modern demarcations of degrees of longitude and latitude. Those borders were understood by the Israelites as designating not only the boundaries of a land but of a territory. To cross the border and enter into the land of Israel was understood as leaving an "unclean" land and entering into that land which was more than an area of land. It was a territory, ordered by the laws of Israel and the worship of its God, as described in Joshua 22:19, "if your land is unclean, cross over into the LORD's land where the LORD's tabernacle now stands."

The depiction in antiquity of a territory with precise borders was by no means unique to ancient Israel.[2] Often the borders of the territories of ancient societies were marked by pillars, forts, temples, and even constructed walls. The fashionable idea that the precise borders of a territory are only to be found in modern times, while in antiquity there were only geographically imprecise, natural frontiers, has been propagated by a number of philosophers and social scientists, and then repeated by

historians of modern societies.[3] It is an idea that, as many historians of antiquity know, is not supported by the evidence.

Although the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament is rightly understood as religious scripture, portraying, especially from Genesis 1 to 11, the relation between God and all of humanity, Joshua through 2 Kings is, in fact, the history of the nation of ancient Israel. From Genesis through Deuteronomy, God is described as acting to create the world and, following creation, sometimes in the history of his "chosen people." The description of those actions, for example, God separating the Red Sea in Exodus 14 and the Jordan River in Joshua 3, may be characterized by the historian as "mythical." However, from Joshua through 2 Kings, the portrayal of God as an active participant in human events is largely absent. For example, the accounts of the reaffirmation of the covenant in Joshua 24 and 2 Kings 23 are not between Israel and its God, but between Israel and the "book of the law." Moreover, miracles, that is, events that violate the laws of nature such as the separation of the Jordan River, occur rarely in the books of Joshua through 2 Kings; they are mostly limited to the descriptions of the acts of the prophets Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17–2 Kings 9) and, depending upon how interpreted, the sun and moon "standing still" in the victory of the Israelites over the Amorites (Joshua 10:12–13). The vast majority of the actions recounted from Joshua through 2 Kings are those of humans. Thus, although rarely is the literary complex of Joshua through 2 Kings read in the history courses offered by a university, there is good reason for it to be studied as an early, perhaps first, work of history. That history even has references to other previously written books, for example, "the Book of Jashar" (Joshua 10:13, 2 Samuel 1:17), the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" (1 Kings 11:41), the "Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel" (1 Kings 14:19), and "Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah" (1 Kings 14:29).

No doubt, the events contained in those previously written, but now lost books were re-interpreted by the "clerics" or religious intellectuals to form a historical account of the Israelite nation as having developed with an apparent inevitability from the stories about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in Genesis to the increasingly factual accounts of David, Solomon, Josiah, and others from 1 Samuel through 2 Kings. Many of those events were not the imaginary inventions of those early historians; rather, they were modifications of the description of those events as recorded in those previously written books and annals, and a reworking of numerous local traditions to create a cohesive historical development of the Israelites and their territory. For example, the Book of Judges has all the hallmarks of local traditions, such as the accounts of Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, which were woven together into a national history.[4] In the course of developing that history, some events were emphasized or even exaggerated, while other events were, as Renan had observed, ignored or may have been forgotten. Earlier regimes, for example David's rule over southern Judah, were recollected, but now recast as an integral part of the history of the developing image of the entire nation of Israel.

Some of those ancient Israelite intellectuals or historians were likely associated with the king's administrative staff of the ancient Israelite state. In 1 Kings 4:1–19,

ancient Israel, during Solomon's reign, is described as having an administrative staff consisting of a recorder, a commander of the army, a major domo, priests, scribes, an officer in charge of labor, and officials over the state's 12 districts. However, as with the historians of other nations, those intellectuals need not have been a part of the state's administrative center. Too often historians of modern societies assume that intellectuals were de facto agents of the state, enlisted to develop an image of the nation in support of the administration of power throughout the state's territory. But traditions of relatedness of varying kinds may very well exist separate from the political development and administration of a state. Consider, for example, the poet Ferdowsi (940–1019 CE), the author of the Iranian national epic, the *Shahnameh*, who, in that work, propagated an image of Iran that maintained, even glorified, the pre-Islamic traditions of Sasanian Iran, including its Zoroastrian religion, approximately 400 years after the Muslim conquest of Iran.[5] It is impossible to read the *Shahnameh* and not conclude that Ferdowsi lamented the Arab conquest of Iran, as the epic poem begins with a description of the evil monster Zahhak as an Arab, and concludes with the Iranian military hero Rostam's evaluation of the Islamic conquest as having ushered in a time when "strangers ruled Iranians," resulting in "justice and charity having disappeared." Not surprisingly, Ferdowsi's epic poem was denounced by Islamic poets and scholars for its lies and sins.[6]

We have observed that in the formation and continuation of any nation there are conflicting developments, as no national culture can be uniform or homogeneous. There are always different historical developments, some discordant with others, and different "interests." It is likely that these different interests account for some of the peculiarities of the history of ancient Israel in the Hebrew Bible. David is portrayed as the great king of the national state (the *gôy* of "all Israel"), the image of which would, along with, of course, the worship of Yahweh, sustain over time the nation and which would subsequently be the goal for its restoration in the future. This kind of portrayal is to be expected. He is, however, also described as an adulterer and seemingly indifferent to the rape of his daughter. Obviously, these latter descriptions of David indicate that the circle responsible for the literary complex of Joshua through 2 Kings conveyed the concerns of such religious intellectuals as Jeremiah, whose "interests" are represented in the speeches of Nathan (2 Samuel 12), where David is denounced for the sin of adultery and for having ordered the murder of the husband of his lover and future queen Bathsheba.

Perhaps the most peculiar aspect of the history of the nation of ancient Israel is that, during the 450 years of its existence—from Saul to the destruction of the First Temple (586 CE), for at most only 80 years—the period of the reigns of David and Solomon—do we find an ancient Israel whose territory approximated the description of its extent in Numbers 34 and whose population, "all the people of Israel" (1 Kings 8:2), included those who dwelt within that territory, "from Lebo-hamath [in the north] to the Wadi of Egypt [in the south]" (1 Kings 8:65). Thus, for most of its history, ancient Israel was divided between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah, and, at times, relations between those

two kingdoms were quite bellicose. Consideration of this fact raises the problem of determining just when did the Israelites understand themselves as being Israelite? How popular or, to use Anthony Smith's category, "vertical" was Israelite culture? How significant was the worship of Yahweh in uniting the population of the politically divided northern and southern kingdoms into a nation? How widespread was the use of those categories of the legal anthropology of territorial kinship such as "native of the land" (*'ezrāch ha 'arets*), "resident alien" (*gēr*), and foreigner (*nokrî*), as we find them in the laws of Leviticus?[7] When and how much of a focus had the traditions of David and Solomon achieved such that those who recognized them as their own were Israelites?

Some historians of ancient Israel point to the period encompassing the reigns of Hezekiah (c. 715–687 BCE) and Josiah (c. 640–609 BCE)—a period when the archeological evidence indicates a marked increase in literacy—for when those historical, religious, and legal traditions coalesced into a national culture.[8] The writings of the prophets from Amos (c. 750–730 BCE) to Ezekiel (c. 620–570 BCE) may be referred to as evidence for the consolidation of the image of Israel as a nation during this period, because in all of them the worship of only Yahweh throughout the population and land of Israel is demanded. Indicative of the contribution of these prophets to this image during this period is that for all of these religious intellectuals there are books that record their pronouncements. The existence of these books would not only have contributed to the consolidation of that image but also have been important to its stability.

Whatever difficulties may exist in the evaluation of ancient Israel as a nation before the destruction of the First Temple, we assuredly are on firmer ground for the existence of a national culture during the period of the Second Temple and the Jewish war with Rome. The approximately seven-year-long war between Rome and the Jews (66–73 CE) was, despite political differences among the Jews, a war that encompassed the entire population. Earlier, in another war (167–141 BCE), the Jews, under the leadership of the Maccabees, had liberated Judea from the Seleucids. There is nothing mythical in the account of that war of national liberation, as recounted in the biblical (in the Protestant Bible, apocryphal) book 1 Maccabees. The description of all of its battles are historically realistic. The story of the small amount of oil miraculously burning for eight days during the purification and rededication (*Hanukkah* in Hebrew) of the Temple in Jerusalem appears nowhere in 1 Maccabees, as it is a much later, rabbinic addition found in the Babylonian Talmud. Of course, the existence of the Jewish nation at the time of the Maccabean revolt and the later war with Rome would not have been possible without the earlier events of the period of the First Temple and the cultivated memories of them, which were maintained in Jewish scripture—a scripture that contained a national history.[9]

These kinds of peculiarities or complications posed by the history of ancient Israel to understanding the development of the nation of ancient Israel are often found in the history of other nations in antiquity. As noted, Israel was, from c. 920 BCE, the death of Solomon, to c. 620 BCE, when the collapse of the

Assyrian Empire allowed King Josiah to expand Judah into the Assyrian province of Samaria (the former northern kingdom of Israel), divided into two separate kingdoms. Despite the long history of this division, the traditions of the earlier "all Israel" under David and Solomon persisted; or if those traditions did not persist, they were capable of being revived and re-interpreted in support of the image of a nation of Israel. So, too, the nation of Armenia was divided from c. 72 CE between western "Lesser Armenia," as part of the Roman Empire, and eastern "Greater Armenia," dominated first by the Parthians and then Iranians.

Given this division between Lesser and Greater Armenia, what evidence is there for the historian to entertain the possible existence of the Armenian nation in antiquity? Similar to how the traditions surrounding David and Solomon contributed to the image of the nation of Israel, the past achievements of the kings Tigranes the Great (c. 140–55 BCE) and Trdat I (mid-first century CE) and the memories of those achievements became a focus of the developing Armenian nation. We learn of those achievements from Moses Khorenats'i's *History of the Armenians*, possibly written as late as 750 CE.[10] There were other histories, written earlier: P'awstos's *Epic Histories*, probably written during the last half of the fifth century CE; Agathangelos's *History of the Armenians*, written in the last half of the fifth century CE; and Elishe's *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, written at the end of the sixth century CE.[11] The very existence of these histories is significant for considering the possibility of an Armenian nation in antiquity, for they indicate that an image of Armenia had become a conceptual focus of attention, obviously so for those who wrote them but surely not confined to those authors. Nevertheless, Armenia in antiquity, both as a unified kingdom under Tigranes the Great and Trdat I, and subsequently as the separate Greater and Lesser Armenia, consisted of a number of relatively distinct territorial principalities known as the "*naXarar* system." How should the historian evaluate the relation between the local lords or princes, the *naXarars* of these principalities or, to use the Persian designation, "satrapies," and the king? We appear to have a symbiosis of centrifugal tendencies, as represented by the *naXarars*, and centralizing tendencies, as represented by the royal house and the emergence of a translocal nobility—a symbiosis that resembles the history of the European Middle Ages.

The fragmentation or centrifugal tendencies of Armenian society may be a reason for the historian to be reluctant to characterize Armenia during the first millennium CE as a nation; but the reluctance may be unwarranted if the historian keeps in mind that no nation, ancient or modern, has a homogeneous culture. In addition to those histories of Armenia, which, it should be noted, contained fairly precise descriptions of the borders of the land of Armenia, there appeared in the early seventh century CE Ananias of Širak's *Geography*, describing in considerable detail the borders of Armenia and its internal districts.[12] While Ananias's description of the territory of Armenia represented an ideal image of the land of Armenia, as had the biblical Numbers 34 for ancient Israel, its very existence is, like those histories, significant, for what constituted that territory had become an object of attention. But there are more reasons to support the evaluation of Armenia in this period as a nation.

The Armenians had their own distinctive language and, after 400 CE, their own distinctive script. That they did, while certainly suggestive of a national culture, is not, by itself, necessarily decisive for indicating the existence of a nation. What is significant is that this language was used as a category distinguishing the Armenians from other peoples as can be seen, for example, by the phrase "land of Armenian speech," which appears in P'awstos's *Epic Histories*. In addition, religion was a factor distinguishing Armenia from other societies. In the aftermath of the missionary work of St. Gregory the Illuminator in the early fourth century CE, Christianity became the state religion, thereby distinguishing Armenia from the Zoroastrian Iranians. By the fifth century CE, the Bible had been translated into Armenian by Mashtots', who had created the Armenian script for the translation. Religion not only distinguished Armenia from Iran but also from Rome and Constantinople. Having rejected the doctrinal decisions of the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) over the nature of Jesus, the Armenian state church became monophysite. Furthermore, even though during much of early Armenian history the country was divided between Rome and Iran, war against both Rome and Iran was surely a factor contributing to the formation of the Armenian nation. Indicative of that contribution is the subject of Elishe's *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*: the unsuccessful Armenian revolt of 450/51 CE against Sasanian Iran. Finally, we find variations of the same word to refer to both a land and the people who inhabit that land—*Hay* or *Hayk'* (Armenia or Armenians)/*erkir Hayoc* or *hayastan erkin* (land of Armenia or Armenian land)—a terminological conflation characteristic of the territorial kinship of a nation. Thus, while there are surely factors that may call into question the existence of an Armenian nation in antiquity, there are also developments that argue for its, albeit qualified, existence.

Before proceeding to discuss briefly other nations in antiquity and the problem posed to their existence by their relation to empires, let us clarify further the idea and history of territorial kinship in antiquity by examining the evidence for it from the ancient Near East. References to terms distinguishing one people from another are ubiquitous among the thousands and thousands of inscriptions that have been discovered during the last two centuries. From the early dynastic period (2900–2350 BCE), distinctions were drawn between numerous Sumerian city-states such as Ur, Uruk, Lagash, Umma, Nippur, and Kish. The territories of these city-states contained within their borders other, smaller towns and villages. An example of these distinctions, well known to historians of the ancient Near East, is the account of the conflict between two of them, Lagash and Umma.[13]

> Enlil, the king of the lands, father of the gods, upon his firm command drew the border between Ningirsu [god of Lagash] and Shara [god of Umma] … Eannatum, ruler of Lagash … made the border by extending the Inun-canal to Gu'edena [to the edge of the plain] … At that boundary-channel he inscribed new boundary-stones … If the man of Umma, in order to carry off the fields [take the fields by force] crosses the boundary-channel of Ningirsu [Lagash] … be a man from Umma [an Ummaean] or a foreigner, may [the god] Enlil destroy him.

There are several conclusions to be drawn from even this one excerpt of one inscription by Enmetena, King of Lagash.

In this account of the long conflict between these two city-states, of interest to us is that one person is distinguished from another depending upon which city that person was from, so "man from Umma," or an "Ummaean," in contrast to both a man from Lagash and a foreigner. This designation of "man (or "son") of city-state x," frequently found throughout Mesopotamian history, signifies that territorial location was a reference in self-classification. Of course, within, for example, the city-state of Umma, whose population during this time (c. 2450 BCE) has been estimated to have been approximately 20,000, an individual would have understood himself or herself to have also been a member of a family.[14] There was, thus, a co-mingling of two forms of kinship: descent within the territory of the city-state such that one was an Ummaean, and descent from the parents of the family.

This territorial kinship of those who are from, or of, the city-state is dependent upon the stability over time of an image of its territory. The classificatory salience afforded by the stability of that image will be achieved if there are relatively precise borders over time, in contrast to imprecise frontiers, fluctuating both geographically and over time often as a result of war. We see that in the description of the conflict between Lagash and Umma there were carefully demarcated borders, and specifically man-made borders: the boundary-canal and boundary-stones. Moreover, adding support to the recognition that we are analyzing a territory, in this case, that of Umma and that of Lagash, and not merely an area of land were two other factors, one found in the inscription and one found elsewhere.

We see from the inscription that Umma was the home of the god Shara, whose temple was there; and Lagash was the home of the god Ningirsu, whose temple was in Lagash. The territories of those city-states were the territories of their respective gods. Indeed, the border demarcating the territories of those gods and their city-states was depicted as having been drawn by the father of the gods, Enlil, thereby affirming the putative inviolability of that border. The temple, the ziggurat, was the largest building within the Mesopotamian city-state, and its priestly staff was the dominant institution throughout the city-state's territory. The temple was the physical, administrative, and conceptual center of the city-state, which, as such, unified its territory and population.

In addition to religion contributing to the transformation of the land of a city-state into a territory infused throughout with the worship of that land's deity, thereby joining together one inhabitant to another, territorial kinship was also expressed in law collections. In those collections is found the legal category of the Sumerian *lú* or its Akkadian equivalent *awīlum*, both terms designating the free adult individual.[15] As members of the city-state, the free adults claimed privileges and rights based upon their territorial descent and residence.[16] Of course, not all who dwelled within the territory of the city-state possessed authority over themselves and their property, as the Sumerian and Akkadian laws distinguished between, on the one hand, the *lú* and *awīlum* and, on the other, the indentured servant, slave, and foreigner.[17] In this

regard, the city-state of the ancient Near East differed from medieval and modern cities; nonetheless, it may very well be that the historian is justified in translating both *lú* and *awīlum* as "citizen."[18] Putting aside consideration of the merit of such a possible translation and its historiographical implications, the *lú* and *awīlum* are not merely legal categories, they are also implicitly anthropological categories signifying a territorial kinship with others who are recognized to be *lú* and *awīlum*. Surely, the territorial kinship of the city-state would have also been abetted by a division of labor, fostering an interdependence of its population. We have evidence of a developed division of labor quite early, from the so-called "Standard List of Professions" written c. 3000 BCE, in which there appear 120 terms designating such different professions as priests, gardeners, cooks, smiths, jewelers, and potters.[19]

While the historian, as we have seen, has reasons to conclude that the individuals of these geographically relatively small city-states recognized themselves as being members of those city-states, as being a part of a territorially constituted "we," doubts may remain about whether this was so for larger societies in the absence of public education and the modern means of communication and transportation that would have expanded the extent of the territory as being familiar to any one individual. After all, some of the early law collections that we have, for example, the "Laws of Ur-Namma" (c. 2100 BCE) and the "Laws of Lipit-Ishtar" (c. 1930 BCE), are those of city-states, respectively, Ur and Isin.[20] We may, however, continue by geographically expanding the territorial locus by turning to the larger Babylon, the territory of which was about 3.5 square miles and whose population reached several hundred thousand.[21]

At first glance, Hammurabi's laws (c. 1750 BCE) may have little to tell us explicitly about territorial kinship.

> If a man [*awīlum*] who claims to have lost property [and] then discovers his lost property in another man's possession … produces witnesses who can identify this lost property—the judges shall examine their cases … and the witnesses who can identify the lost property shall state the facts known to them … the owner of the lost property shall take the lost property, and the buyer [of the lost property] shall take from the [legally untitled] seller's estate the amount of silver that he weighed and delivered.[22]

Irrespective of whether or not this kind of legal pronouncement served as a guide for judicial decisions, it reveals the existence of judges to adjudicate disputes in accord with the relatively rational judicial procedures of having witnesses and examining their testimony.[23] This example, and the law collections in general, indicate the existence of the relations of a public, civil sphere distinct from the relations of the family.

Legal pronouncements of this kind are by no means the only evidence fairly early in the history of antiquity of the existence of a public sphere, where individuals have relations with one another and recognize that they do. The

standardization of weights and measures was a continual concern, the evidence for which is already found as early as in the laws of Ur-Nammi (c. 2100 BCE) of the Sumerian city-state Ur.[24] That standardization was necessary if the commercial exchanges of the market were to be equitable. In the marketplace were found goods from as far away as central Anatolia, and, over time, Afghanistan and even the Indus Valley.[25] Moreover, as early as the late third millennium BCE, and certainly throughout the second millennium BCE, there is evidence for contractual relations and partnerships between merchants and investors.[26]

What do these laws and economic regulations such as the standardization of weights and measures indicate? Recall that city-states included within their jurisdiction numerous villages and smaller towns. Furthermore, individuals from other, more distant areas would come to these larger cities to sell their goods and produce. When they did, they surely expected that the trading they conducted at the market of those cities would be done fairly, in accord with the laws and those economic regulations. Thus, through those laws and regulations the pattern of life of the city-state extended beyond the city-state, exerting an influence on those towns and villages beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the city-state. The assumption that in antiquity those smaller towns and villages were isolated, without being influenced by the culture of those city-states and ancient metropolises, should be rejected.

Religion, of course, continued to be another factor joining together individuals and their families, for example, as "Babylonians." Marduk was the god of Babylon; that is where his temple was located. All of the many inhabitants of Babylon would have had occasion to have been familiar with its center, the Esagila district, within which was Marduk's temple. During the festival marking the beginning of a new year, the epic of creation, the *Enuma Elish*, was re-enacted in the streets of Babylon, as the beginning of a new year was understood to be analogous to the creation of the world.[27]

When these various unifying factors—law, division of labor, the commercial exchanges of the marketplace, and religion—are considered together, the idea that even in city-states as large as Babylon a shared culture was confined to a narrow stratum of elites must be considered quite unlikely. The historian must also keep in mind that these large cities in antiquity such as Babylon exerted a cultural, economic, and legal influence on other villages, towns, and cities. Of course, the extent of that cultural influence would have varied within the population of the city-state and across its environs; but variation exists in modern metropolises as well.

But what of those societies that were territorially more extensive, that included more than one city? Was there recognition of relatedness such that historians are entitled to consider those societies as nations? It seems obvious enough that there existed a common culture of a territorial kinship for geographically smaller nations in antiquity, for example, ancient Israel. Outside the ancient Near East, there is evidence in the history of Sri Lanka for the developing relatedness of being Sinhalese, perhaps as early as the sixth century CE with the compilation of the *Mahāvamsa*, which, in its chronicle of the history of the island from the time

of the Buddha (fifth century BCE) to the fourth century CE, portrayed Lanka as a Buddhist land, and certainly by the eleventh through twelfth centuries CE.[28] Important in the *Mahāvamsa* is the account of the military leader Dutthagamani (c. 161–137 BCE), who is described as having unified the island in the name of Buddhism—an account surely exploited during the period of the kingdom of Anuradhapura, which came to an end in 1017 CE. During this period, war with the kingdoms of southern India contributed to the extension of being Sinhalese throughout much of the island. Throughout this history and especially when Sri Lanka was divided into separate kingdoms, the ideas of being Sinhalese and of Sri Lanka being a Buddhist land were maintained by the Buddhist Sangha (the monastic order). However, here, too, we are dealing with a territorially small nation, and one, as an island, that is geographically contained.

Historians have acknowledged that in antiquity a cultural relatedness spanning city-states occurred. In the history of southern Mesopotamia during the third millennium BCE, the city-state Nippur became the cultic center throughout the area, as its temple was the home of Enlil, the father of the gods, until the eighteenth century BCE when the supremacy of Enlil was supplanted in southern Mesopotamia by the deity Marduk, and in northern Mesopotamia by the deity Assur. Evidently indicative of that trans-city-state relatedness in southern Mesopotamia was the territorial designation "the land of Sumer," which appears in numerous inscriptions. Similarly, the oracle of Delphi was common to the ancient Greek city-states. However, the traditions of the city-states were too entrenched to be supplanted by a nation of Sumer or a nation of ancient Greece. There were no earlier, trans-local achievements and traditions of those achievements similar to those of David and Solomon for Israel or Tigranes the Great for Armenia or Dutthagamani for Sinhala (Sri Lanka) that could be appealed to and developed in support of an image of a nation as an alternative to those attachments to the city-states. There were no memories of previous territories that could serve as an image for a national territory that should exist, as evidently the Egyptian province of Canaan was for the image of the land of Israel. Still, the existence of both these cultic centers and their respective Sumerian and Hellenic relatedness presents the historian with a problem of classification.

There seems to be no way around recognizing the significance of territorial kinship being generally confined to the city-state for much, but by no means all, of the history of southern Mesopotamia. Hammurabi's expansion of Babylon to Babylonia (1766–1761 BCE) and the neo-Babylonian empire of the late seventh and sixth centuries BCE were notable exceptions. City-states also remained the primary form of social organization in other areas of the ancient Near East, for example, Ugarit (on the Mediterranean coast of what is today Syria), among the so-called Phoenicians (Sidon, Tyre, and Byblos), and Arameans (Damascus, Hamath). However, numerous designations of what seems to indicate a relatedness beyond that of the city-state clearly appear in other parts of the ancient Near East. We have just noted the territorial expansion of Babylonia during the reign of Hammurabi, and later during the seventh and sixth centuries BCE.

A city-state could expand to encompass other city-states. It is such an expansion that accounts for the historian's use of the term "Babylonia" as distinct from "Babylon." The city Assur, whose patron god was Assur, expanded to encompass a culturally and territorially stable area that included three cities: Assur, Arba'il, and Nineveh. Both Babylonia and Assur further expanded into empires, as did Egypt. In addition to nomadic tribes, the historian, thus, has reasons to use three other categories to aid in understanding different societies of the ancient Near East, obviously city-state and empire, but also nation. Let us turn to examine the evidence that further supports the use of the category nation beyond ancient Israel in the history of the ancient Near East.

The historian finds frequently the appearance of designations like "land of Babylonia," "land of Hatti," "land of Assur (Assyria)," and so forth. Those designations appear repeatedly in, for example, the so-called "Amarna Letters" between the Egyptian pharaoh and the rulers of other states in the ancient Near East during the mid-fourteenth century BCE.[29] They appear not only in correspondence between rulers but are also quite common in the historical texts of a particular society as self-referential designations. These designations are not merely geographical, for just as frequent are the designations "people of Babylonia," "people of Hatti," "people of Assyria," and so forth. These latter designations evidently convey a conception of territorial kinship, as a people is described by a territorial designation and distinguished from other peoples who, in turn, are described by respectively different territorial designations. To refer to one among numerous examples, in a letter from Hattušili, "king of Hatti-land," to Kadašman-Enlil, "king of Karanduniyaš (Babylonia)," the Hittite king asks the Babylonian king, "Did the people of Babylon ever mistreat the people of Hatti?"[30]

Indicative of this conceptual conflation between a term designating a land and a term designating a people that is characteristic of the territorial kinship of these geographically larger societies are gentilic adjectives that are used to describe both land and people. So, there is, in addition to the phrases "sons of the land of Asssyria" (*mar 'ē māt Aššur*) and "people of the land of Assyria" (*niše māt Aššur*), the gentilic adjective "Assyrian" (*Aššurāyu*),[31] as in, for one among many examples, the "Succession Treaty of Esarhaddon" (c. 672 BCE).[32] The use of this gentilic adjective is not confined to the Assyrian royal annals or treaties, for it also appears in other places, for instance, in the fourteenth-century BCE "Middle Assyrian Laws": "if there is an Assyrian man (*Aššurāyu*) or an Assyrian woman (*Aššurāyītu*)."[33] The use of this gentilic adjective to modify or imply the legal category *awīlum*, the free adult, clarifies the latter category's territorial jurisdiction.

Laws that distinguished someone as being a native of the land in contrast to being a foreigner would have clearly contributed to the formation and continuation of the territorial kinship of these larger societies. Nevertheless, the problem remains for the historian to locate other factors that would have led the peoples of these various, larger territories to have understood themselves as, for example, being an Assyrian or being an Israelite. Here, again, the historian finds that religion would have been an

obvious, contributing factor, for all of these societies had the god or gods of their respective lands. Historians of religion have developed and used categories to describe the religions where a society has its own god: "henotheism," the worship of one, ascendant god among a pantheon of other gods; and "monolatry," the worship of only one god by a nation, while recognizing that other nations have their own gods. The storm-god Teshub (or Taru) and the sun-goddess Arinna were the gods of the land of Hatti; Assur was the god of Assyria; Marduk was the god of Babylonia; Yahweh was the god of Israel; and so forth. In the so-called Moabite stele, King Mesha (c. 830 BCE) describes how Israel had oppressed Moab because "Kemosh [the god of Moab] was angry with his land."[34] Often temples or shrines of the god of the land were located at its borders, as we noted that King Jeroboam is described as having done. Pilgrimages were made to the god's home, that is, the deity's temple. Before the ascendancy of monotheism, which, as such, is indifferent, at least doctrinally, to territorial kinship, it was believed that to leave one's native land and dwell in another was to worship the god of the land of one's new residence (see, for example, 1 Samuel 26:17–20).

It was evidently believed that the prosperity of the land was dependent upon the appropriate propitiation of the god or gods of the land (see, for example, 2 Kings 17:24–27 and Jeremiah 44, the latter described as the views of the common people). The successful subjugation of a people and its land was often accompanied by the victor taking captive the statue of the god of the land of the defeated people.[35] The re-establishment of the sovereignty of the previously defeated people was represented by the return of the statue of that god to the land where it was believed to belong, as described in the "Marduk Prophecy," probably written in the late twelfth century BCE, and the renewal of the native cult, as described in the "Cyrus Cylinder" (c. 539 BCE).[36] Clearly, religion could be and often was an important factor in the formation and continuation of the territorial kinship of a nation in antiquity.

Careful consideration of religion, law, the territorial jurisdiction of both, a developed division of labor, the preeminence of ancient cities over villages and the countryside, and trade should evoke skepticism about the idea that, in ancient societies, cultural relatedness had to have been confined to narrow strata of ancient societies. Consider ancient Egypt. The approximately 3,000-year-long history of ancient Egypt—encompassing the cities of Tanis, Memphis, and Thebes—exhibits a cultural cohesiveness in which the distinction between Egyptians and foreigners, such as the Nubians to the south and the Libyans ("sand-dwellers") to the west, was a constant. That ancient Egypt was organized around the Nile River, whose flooding required careful attention to irrigation from much of the population, surely contributed to that cohesiveness. Religious ceremonies and festivals also brought together all strata of Egyptians, as did movements of the officials of the Egyptian state from village to administrative center. An understanding of the territory of Egypt was clear, as its borders were designated by forts, fortified towns, and boundary-markers from, beginning with the reign of Pharaoh Senusret III (c. 1878–1840 BCE), the second cataract of the Nile River marking the southern border demarcating Egypt

from Nubia (Kush); the fortified town of Tjaru at the "Ways of Horus" marking the northeastern border demarcating Egypt from its province of Canaan and later Israel; and a series of fortresses marking the western border demarcating Egypt from Libya.[37]

Where do these observations lead us in evaluating nations in antiquity? The all too typical point of departure of historians regarding when nations appear in history should be reversed. Rather than beginning with the assumption that a relatively extensive, yet bounded territorial kinship could only be modern, the point of departure of a historian should be to accept the analytical burden of explaining why a particular society in antiquity was not a nation. Of course, not all "peoples" in antiquity were nations. Either an identifiable, relatively stable culture was lacking, as seems to be the case for the Arameans or (possibly, and) those "peoples" were tribal societies or confederacies. And, as noted, one often finds "peoples" designated by their respective city-states. However, the historian encounters a different set of facts when considering a number of other "peoples," such as the ancient Israelites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites, and Iranians. It appears appropriate, given the evidence as described above, to consider many of those societies as nations. But, here, too, complications arise, for the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Hittites, and Iranians also created empires. Thus, the relation between nation and empire in antiquity must be considered.

During the reign of Augustus and increasingly so thereafter, the image of Rome and the Roman people became one with the image of the empire. The older, Republican term of the "*Imperium populi Romani*," which contained the image of a distinct Roman people exercising the imperium, became transformed into "*Imperium Romanum*," in which that core of the Roman people was increasingly irrelevant, where, now, to be Roman was extended throughout the empire, and manifestly so with the Edict of Caracalla (212 CE).[38] However, the relation between other peoples or nations and empire may be more complicated than what appears in Roman history. The historian must not be content with the characterization of Egypt during the so-called period of the New Kingdom (1552–1069 BCE), Assyria during the tenth through seventh centuries BCE, and Sasanian Iran (224–651 CE) as empires. While it is legitimate for the historian to use the category empire to describe these territorially expansive societies, the boundaries of which fluctuated depending upon military victory and defeat, doing so can nonetheless obscure the national core of each of them. The pattern of the relation between that national core and the empire varied from one instance to another.

Ancient Egypt expanded its influence to the south into Nubia (modern Ethiopia) and to the northeast into what is today Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. It occupied those areas with military garrisons and, especially in the south, administered them. When it did, especially in the northern area of Nubia, acculturation took place, as many Nubians adopted Egyptian customs. However, it appears that those areas in the south and north were never incorporated into Egypt as Egyptian territory. The Egyptians understood those areas under its military and

administrative control as foreign provinces distinct from the land of Egypt, from the nation of Egypt.

The Assyrians proceeded differently. Beginning with the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE), much of the area conquered by the Assyrians, as they expanded beyond their historic homeland of the area bounded by the cities of Assur, Arba'il, and Nineveh, were not considered to be foreign provinces; rather, the area conquered was converted into provinces as parts of an expanding Assyria. Each of these provinces had fortified garrisons, and imperial officials were deployed in many of the towns and villages.[39] For an ancient state, the bureaucratic control of those conquered provinces was remarkable, for example, systematic taxation in contrast to episodic tribute, and deportations of conquered populations from their homelands with their resettlement in different parts of the empire. The number of those deported and resettled over a period of 200 years may have reached several million.[40] What is of interest to us is the character of the incorporation of those conquered territories and their populations, as, over time, certainly by the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (774–727 BCE), the understanding of the land of Assyria and even being an Assyrian changed.

Throughout the history of Assyria, Assur was the supreme deity of the land of Assur (Assyria), where the use of the designation "Assur" indicates an Assyrian understanding that the "land of Assur" (Assyria) was an extension of, or inseparable from, the god Assur.[41] This conceptual overlap or conflation between the designation of a god, in this case, Assur, and a territory and the territory's population has already been observed; and it once again clearly indicates how religion could be an important factor in the formation and continuation of a nation. But with the incorporation of many of the conquered areas as provinces of Assyria, the idea of the land of Assyria (*māt Aššur*) expanded. This incorporation was conveyed in Assyrian inscriptions by the idiom, "I [the Assyrian king] annexed them to Assyria[n] [territory]" (*ana misir māt Aššur turru*).[42] Concomitantly, the idea of being Assyrian also expanded. Those living within the conquered areas that had been annexed to Assyria as now Assyrian provinces were considered to be "counted as inhabitants of Assyria" (*itti niši māt Aššur amnušunuti*).[43] Those who were previously foreigners now became legally and anthropologically transformed into Assyrians, *Aššūrāyū*, by virtue of living within the borders of the newly expanded land of Assyria. Having become Assyrian, they were subject to regular taxation and military service, but they were also afforded a life under a consistently enforced law and with the security provided by the standing, professional Assyrian army. However, not all lands conquered by the Assyrians were incorporated, as provinces, into Assyria. Some lands and their peoples remained semi-independent, as vassal or client states, under Assyrian domination but outside the "land of Assyria." Rather than being subject to a predictable taxation, those who lived in these vassal or client states paid an unpredictable tribute. The Assyrians had two different categories to describe the contrast between, on the one hand, those areas, as provinces, incorporated into Assyria and, on the other, those areas, as vassal states, which, while dominated by Assyria, were not incorporated: the

former were considered by the Assyrians to be part of the "land of Assur"; the latter were designated by them as being under the "yoke of Assur."[44]

In contrast to how the Egyptians understood Egypt, the Assyrian understanding of both the land of Assyria and even of being an Assyrian was capable of expansion. It may be that this difference indicates that the Assyrians had more of a conception of an imperial mission—to enlarge their borders incessantly, to subjugate what they understood to be the four regions of the world—than did the Egyptians.[45] Be that as it may, the historian's analysis of an Assyrian nation faces complications, as the expansion of the conceptions of the Assyrian land and people indicates that the distinction between nation and empire can at times become blurred. Nevertheless, it appears that the historic homeland of Assyria—the northern Mesopotamian area encompassed by the cities of Assur, Arba'il, and Nineveh, an area of approximately 13,000 square kilometers,[46] about the size of modern Lebanon—was always understood by the Assyrians as being distinct. Within the Assyrian empire, that area always had its own governor. That area was, after all, the land of the god Assur. Perhaps indicating a difference between that homeland and the rest of the Assyrian empire, the Assyrians did not demand that the god Assur be worshipped by those whom the Assyrians conquered, but only that the conquered acknowledge the superiority of Assur to their gods.[47]

Iranian history offers a further complication of the relation between nation and empire. What did it mean to be an Iranian? The concept of *Ariya*—and the linguistic variations of *Airya, Arya*, and *Ēr*—refers to a people who became conscious of being "Iranian."[48] The problems for the historian are evaluating what the concept meant at a particular time, how it changed over time, and the evidence for the concept signifying a widely shared, self-referential classification of being Iranian. An early appearance of the concept appears in the *Naqsh i Rustam* inscription on the tomb of the Persian king Darius I, who died in 486 BCE:

> A great god is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder sky, who created man, who created happiness for men, who made Darius king, one king of many, one lord of many. I am Darius, the great king, king of kings, king of countries containing all kinds of men, king of this great earth far and wide, son of Hystaspes, an Achaemenid, a Persian, son of a Persian, an Aryan [*Ariya*], having Aryan lineage.[49]

The perspective conveyed in this inscription is clearly imperial, as Darius is described as being king of not only the Persians or Aryans but of "all kinds of men" of the "earth far and wide." But Darius is also described as being an Aryan. What did that mean? To be an Aryan was to be of an Aryan lineage, likely implying to be of noble birth. It also appears that to be Aryan was to be a Zoroastrian worshipper of Ahuramazda, for in other inscriptions, Ahuramazda is described as the god of the Aryans.[50] There are, however, complications to even this conclusion.

Darius also describes himself as a "son of a Persian." Evidently being *Ariya*, a worshipper of Ahuramazda, encompassed, or overlapped with, being from Pars

(later, Fars), a Persian. The precise relation between being a Persian and being an Aryan is unclear; but, in any event, apparently some kind of territorial self-designation—Persian—within the imperial vision is being conveyed, along with being an Ahuramazda-worshipping Aryan of noble lineage. Still, the existence of these two terms, Persian and Aryan, indicates some kind of distinction, perhaps signifying that not all Persians were Aryan Zoroastrians and not all Aryan Zoroastrians were Persians. The problem is further compounded by the geography that was associated with being a Zoroastrian. The term *Airya* appears in the *Avesta*, the Zoroastrian scripture, the oldest part of which may have been composed, or had achieved some stability in oral transmission, by the sixth century BCE, if not earlier, and, in particular, in the *Yashts*, the hymns of pre-Zoroastrian sagas. At some point, the traditions of being *airya* were combined with the Zoroastrian worship of Ahuramazda. However, the geographical area conveyed by those *Avestan* sagas seems to be located in eastern Iran, while Pars is in southwestern Iran. How and when the Zoroastrian tradition of being an *airyan* worshipper of Ahuramazda moved west is also uncertain, but clearly it did. Perhaps some kind of religious proselytizing by Zoroaster and his followers occurred.

Alexander the Great defeated the Persians, whose territories were incorporated into the Seleucid Empire. A few generations later, in 247 BCE, the Parthians defeated the Seleucids, ushering in their own empire. The approximately 450-year-long Parthian empire (247 BCE–224 CE) disrupted the traditions of Aryan Zoroastrianism, at least at the official level of the state, for those traditions evidently continued at the regional level, most notably in Pars. And it was from Pars that the Sasanians, led by Ardashir (180–242 CE), arose to defeat the Parthians in 224 CE, until the Sasanians, 400 years later, were defeated by the Arab (Muslim) armies in 636 CE at the battle of Qādisiyya.

For our purpose of determining the consolidation of the image of a nation of Iran, of a people conscious of being Iranian, two, intertwined cultural developments under the Sasanians are important. First was the self-conscious rejection of Greek influence that had continued under the Parthians. An example of that rejection was the denunciation of Alexander for ruthlessly destroying Persia as described at the beginning of the *Letter of Tansar*—a letter, likely composed in the third century CE but subsequently revised, by the Zoroastrian priest Tansar written to the local lord Gusnasp, in which a part of Iranian history is recounted up to the time of the first Sasanian king Ardashir.[51] In Tansar's description to Gusnasp about how an ideal king should rule, as Ardashir is portrayed, we come across the second development. In the *Letter of Tansar*, Alexander is described as not only destroying Persia, but in doing so as also having burnt "the book [the *Avesta*] of our religion," thereby setting the stage for the period of Parthian rule as one of unremitting corruption.[52] The ideal Iranian king is described by Tansar as one who embraces the Zoroastrian religion, relying upon the "traditions of the ancestors" and "their faith" in order to abolish injustice and tyranny. And, in fact, under the Sasanians, Zoroastrianism became the state religion, for, as stated in the

Letter, "church and state are born of one womb, joined together and never to be sundered."[53]

The description of Alexander having burnt the *Avesta* may be Sasanian propaganda in the service of extolling a distinctive Iranian culture. Whether or not a written Zoroastrian scripture existed in the fourth century BCE, it is clear that the Sasanians from Pars (Persia) were worshippers of Ahuramazda and that they propagated their religious beliefs throughout the land of Iran. It appears that later, during the reign of Shapur II (fourth century CE), the collection of Zoroastrian writings into a scripture was completed. Perhaps the existence of Jewish and Christian communities, who had their own sacred texts, in Iran and the territories controlled by the Iranians was a catalyst for the collection and compilation of what became the *Avesta*. No doubt, the religious challenge of Manichaenism also served as a catalyst. Be that as it may, as Zoroastrianism was, certainly by the time of Shapur II, the official religion of the state and now having a collection of Zoroastrian texts, the interpretation of those texts by the priests in pursuit of their proper understanding was inevitable. Once there is a written scripture, proper interpretation of its ideas becomes a matter of dispute among religious intellectuals, especially so in light of new challenges and different interests, as took place in the history of Christianity, for example, the Councils of Nicea (325 CE) and Chalcedon (451 CE), and in the history of Judaism, for example, the Babylonian Talmud (c. 500 CE). If the chronology of these developments is more or less accurate, Tansar's statement in his letter that "until religion is interpreted by understanding, it has no firm foundation" would have likely been a later, sixth-century CE insertion into the earlier written, original letter, for it was during the reign of Khorsau I (531–579 CE) that an orthodox interpretation of the *Avesta* was promulgated and enforced throughout the land of Iran.[54]

There certainly existed during the Sasanians the category of "the land of Iran," "the land of the Aryans/Iranians," *Ērānšahr*. [55] This appearance of *Ērān* as a territorial concept represents a transformation of the earlier Aryan tradition, as the Sasanians molded together a cultural, religious, political, and evidently territorial unity. This coming together was not simply an invention of the Sasanian propaganda, but a transformation of earlier traditions conveyed by the Zoroastrian worship of Ahuramazda, one example of which was the much earlier reference to Darius being "Aryan." The idea that there was a homeland of the Aryans is found in the *Avesta*. However, that idea of an Aryan homeland was now re-interpreted to refer to the territory of Sasanian *Ērān*, as a kind of "successor territory"—a conceptual use of the image of a past territory as contained within the image of a later, different territory, perhaps similar to how the earlier Egyptian province of Canaan was transformed into the land of Israel.[56]

Here, too, the historian finds during this period that overlapping, or conflation, of terms characteristic of the territorial kinship of a nation. There is a term designating a territory, *Ērān/Ērānšahr* (Iran/land of Iran). There is also a variation of that term designating a people, *Ērān/Ērānegān* (Iran/people of Iran). And to turn again to the *Letter of Tansar*, one finds in it a list of those characteristics that were thought to

distinguish Iranians from others, self-consciously introduced by the declaration, "we are called the Iranian people."[57]

It will not do to understand the emergence of the categories "land of Iran" and "people of Iran" as descriptive references to relations limited to an aristocracy. There are too many developments for the historian to characterize the Iranians under the Sasanians as being an ethnic group or a "lateral ethnie." Those developments permit the historian to use the category "nation" to understand the Iran of that time. What are they?

The Zoroastrian religion, which under the Sasanians had its own separate organization with the *mobadān mobad* (the "priest of the priests" or high priest) at its head, united Iranians and their territory. Already from the inscriptions of Ardashir's son, Shapur I, who ruled from 239 to 270 CE, and those of the high priest Kartīr on the walls of the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt, we learn that Shapur constructed Zoroastrian fire-altars throughout the land.[58] We also know of a developed bureaucracy, with officials of numerous departments administering towns, districts, and provinces. A system of taxation existed, entailing a survey of the land for the determination of a land tax, levied according to the crops grown, such as wheat, barley, wine, figs, olives, and dates. Later, during the reign of Khosrau I (531–579 CE), the fiscal policy of the Iranian state included a tax on all the inhabitants of Iran between the ages of 20 and 50.[59] Large trading markets, bringing together countryside and city, existed. As to the relation between the countryside and city, throughout Sasanian history an impressive urbanization took place, with kings described as establishing many new cities. From the brief *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* ("Provincial Capitals of the Land of Iran"), likely written in the sixth or seventh century CE, we learn the names of many of those cities.[60] There was also a salary for military service. In light of all of these developments, the idea that Iranian society was so "segmented" as to preclude important expressions of a common culture does not seem at all plausible.

There are even further reasons to conclude that there existed a widely recognized image of Iran that co-existed with local attachments. There was a collection of law cases, *Mādayān ī hazār dādestān* (the "Book of a Thousand Legal Decisions"), which makes clear the existence of a developed property law, including what is characterized in the English legal tradition as "trusts" or "endowments" for "foundations," for example, for the construction and support of fire-temples and their priests. That collection of law cases also makes clear that there was an elaborate system of courts with provision for appealing the findings of a lower court.[61] Finally, indicating that the image of Iran had itself become an object of contemplation and determination, a history arose. We have already noted that the *Letter of Tansar* contained a history, but there were other and likely more important works such as the *Xwadāy-nāmag* (the "Book of Lords [Kings]"), the existence of which, while now lost, we know from the works of later historians.

The approach taken here that justifies the use of the category "nation" to characterize the recognition of an Iranian people finds additional support in the often-used distinction between *Ērān*, land of/people of Iran, and *Anērān*, land/

people that were not Iranian. There is no doubt that the Sasanian kings ruled over an empire. They were, however, continually described, beginning with Shapur I, as *Šahan-šah Ērān ud Anērān*, as the "king of kings of the Iranians and non-Iranians." It thus appears that in contrast to how the term *Arya* (*Ēr*) was used by the Persian Darius, Iran (*Ēr*) under the Sasanians had achieved a meaning that designated a distinctive people and land, *Ērān*, precisely because they distinguished *Ērān* from *Anērān*. In drawing this distinction between *Ērān* and *Anērān*, the Sasanian Empire was similar to the Egyptian, except that those non-Iranian peoples and their lands were incorporated into the administration of the empire. But what was the territory designated by the term *Ērān*?

The category of *Ērān* does not appear to have included the territories of Syria or Armenia, both of which were considered to be *Anērān*. This exclusion of Syria and Armenia from Iran is what we would expect; but Babylon was thought to be a part of *Ērān*. There thus appears, certainly from the perspective of what Iran was to become, some degree of territorial ambiguity of the image of *Ērān* that presents historians with a qualifying complication in their use of the category "nation." But such complications do not undermine the category "nation." What they do indicate is that a nation must not be viewed as a static relation. In any event, it is clear enough that under the Sasanians "being Iranian" had achieved a stability that, despite numerous and dramatic changes, for example, the spread of Islam, persisted throughout the Middle Ages and continues up to today.

The evidence from antiquity shows a preponderance of city-states or city-kingdoms and empires as forms of social relation. In addition to the Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, and Roman empires, there was imperial China. Because of the Chinese distinction between civilized and barbarian, prohibitive difficulties arise for the historian to employ in antiquity the category nation to China in any obvious manner. This is, however, not to say that during the approximately 400-year-long period of the Han dynasty (c. 200 BCE to c. 200 CE) there did not develop a noticeable degree of cultural unity. The existence of a standardized script, administrative practices, and a Han Confucianism are indications that a unity did develop. Nevertheless, while during this period the Chinese certainly viewed those outside the imperial dominium with scorn, even at times as being less than human, and even though, similar to Assyrian practice, they drew a distinction between those peripheral territories under their direct administration and those outlying territories that, while under their control, were not directly administered by them, there does not seem to have developed a clear conception of territorial kinship.[62]

In addition, however, to city-states and empires, there are also examples of a different kind of social relation, where there is a culturally relatively stable "people" that encompassed the populations of several cities as part of that people but which were not empires. Analytical difficulties arise when the historian seeks out categories to understand those peoples. Those difficulties are compounded when a city-state or a "people" develops into an empire, as in, for example, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Iran, and, for that matter, Rome. But certainly in at least the first four instances, it

seems that there were culturally stable cores to those empires that may be described as nations. And then there are other cases such as Israel.

The intention of this brief chapter was not to provide an exhaustive survey of those cultural communities of territorial relation in antiquity that the historian may characterize as nations. Ancient and early medieval Japan, where there was a long tradition of the Japanese viewing themselves as being a distinct people, worshipping the sun goddess Amaterasu, deserves a careful, calibrated examination, where the historian takes care not to import carelessly the conception of a "Japanese essence" into those earlier periods.[63] But as I have discussed Japan elsewhere and as early Japanese history has received considerable scholarly attention, no more will be said about it here.[64] The focus of this chapter was instead to show what kind of evidence the historian should pay attention to, and how that evidence should be evaluated. There are too many developments—religious, economic, legal, and political—for the historian to think that all of the societies of antiquity were so internally divided that there could not have been an image of that society shared throughout the population. It may even be appropriate for the historian to understand certain political and legal relations as indicating the existence of "citizenship" in the societies of the ancient Near East. To recognize those developments is not to deny a variation of the salience of that image across the population, nor is it to deny tensions or fissures within that shared image. For example, regional distinctions are certainly found throughout the history of Armenia and Iran.

There were also disagreements about how the past should be understood—disagreements that also involved how one should conduct oneself in the present. For example, was Bar Kokhba, who led the Jewish revolt against Rome from 132 to 135 CE, the messiah who would restore the national sovereignty of Israel, as the great Jewish sage rabbi Akiva thought, or was he a false messiah, a teller of lies, a military adventurer who had brought unnecessary destruction to the Jews, as other, later rabbis evaluated him, his war against Rome, and implicitly any future policy of opposition to Rome (or to Parthia and Iran)? Both views are found, indicating that in antiquity history could become an arena of contestation, as disagreements arose over how to evaluate the past. Indeed, there were differing views over the very nature of the messiah: a human, political and military leader; and a divine, other-worldly savior. But tensions or fissures of various kinds obviously also exist within the images of modern nations, as do disagreements about a nation's past. The historian must reject the assumption of a homogeneous, uniform culture as a prerequisite for the existence of any nation, ancient, medieval, or modern.

To recognize the existence of nations in antiquity is not to assume that they continue to exist over time. Nations enter into the historical record, and they also disappear from it. Consider, for example, ancient Moab (roughly in the area of today's Jordan). References to a land called Moab appear from as early as the thirteenth century BCE in Egyptian records and continue to the seventh century BCE in Assyrian inscriptions.[65] The designation Moab in the so-called Moabite pillar of King Mesha (c. 850 BCE) clearly refers to a territory encompassing

several cities. We further learn, as previously noted, from the inscriptions on that pillar that Moab had a god of the land of Moab, Kemosh.[66] Although we lack additional, cultural evidence for ancient Moab, the evidently lengthy existence of more than 500 years of the term Moab as a territorial, trans-city designation, and the existence of a god of the land of Moab should open up the possibility for the historian to consider using the category nation to describe Moab. Even those few facts that the historian has about Moab, above all, its territory, are obscured if one describes the Moabites as an ethnic group. Of course, there is no Moab today. It disappeared from the historical record by the fifth century BCE. That Moab has disappeared should not mean that the Moabites are better understood to have been an ethnic group, as if for a nation to exist it must persist over the millennia.

Nations are always changing, sometimes imperceptibly but at times dramatically. They appear, but they also, as had the Moabites, disappear. There are continuities, but there are also discontinuities. How a nation appears, continues to exist, or disappears depends upon numerous developments idiosyncratic to that nation such as its religion, laws, and the relation of the ruling center to its regional periphery. However, the historical study of any nation, including in antiquity, must also take into account broader historical developments. It is, for example, unlikely that the nation of ancient Israel would have arisen if it weren't for the collapse of Egyptian and Assyrian power from the twelfth through the tenth centuries BCE. Alternatively, it may be that an Aramean nation might have taken shape in the aftermath of the opposition of a coalition of Aramean city-states to the Assyrians at the Battle of Qarqar in 853 BCE; but the subsequent expansion of the Assyrian empire eliminated that possibility. Even when a nation exists, international factors will influence not only its continued existence but even its very character. The Iran of the Sasanians is not the same Iran after the Muslim conquest. Ancient Israel under David or Josiah is not the same Israel under the Hasmoneans (the Maccabees). But clearly there may also be continuities. To account for not only differences but also continuities, and the relation between both, is the task of the historian. In doing so, the category nation is often needed, although it must be used with care.

Notes

1 The minor, alternative translations are mine.
2 For other examples, see Steven Grosby, "Borders and States," in Daniel C. Snell, ed., *A Companion to the Ancient Near East*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2020), 225–41; and "Borders, Territory, and Nationality in the Ancient Near East and Armenia," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40/1 (1997): 1–29.
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4 For a recent analysis, see Serge Frolov, *Judges* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2013).

5 For a recent translation, Abolqasem Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, trans., Dick Davis (New York: Viking Penguin, 2006).
6 For those denunciations and the controversy surrounding Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, see Michael Cook, *Ancient Religions, Modern Politics: The Islamic Case in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 17.
7 For an analysis of these ancient Israelite categories of legal anthropology, see Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus* (New York: Doubleday, 1991–2001), 1417–19, 1493–1501, 2127; and Steven Grosby, *Hebraism in Religion, History, and Politics: The Third Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), Chapter 4, "The Territorial Contamination of the Blood."
8 For a discussion of the increase of literacy during this period, see William Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Seth Sanders, *The Invention of Hebrew* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009).
9 For the period of the Second Temple, see Doron Mendels, *The Rise and Fall of Jewish Nationalism* (New York: Doubleday, 1992).
10 Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, trans. R.W. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).
11 P'awstos, *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand*, trans. N. Garsoian (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989); Agathangelos, *History of the Armenians*, trans. R.W. Thompson (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1976); Elishe, *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, trans. R.W. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).
12 Ananias, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak*, trans. Robert Hewsen (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1992).
13 J. Cooper, *PreSargonic Inscriptions* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1986), 54–57.
14 For the population of Umma, see Piotr Steinkeller, "An Estimate of the Population of the City of Umma in UR III Times," in Yağmur Heffron, Adam Stone, and Martin Worthington, eds., *At the Dawn of History: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of J.N. Postgate* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017), 535–66.
15 See *The Assyrian Dictionary* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1956–2011), vol. 1, A, part 2, *amīlu*, 48–57.
16 Á. Kuhrt, *The Ancient Near East, c. 3000–330 BC* (London: Routledge, 1995), 614; and M. Van de Meiroop, "The Government of an Ancient Mesopotamian City," in K. Watanabe, ed., *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1999), 139–61.
17 See E. Von Dassow, "Freedom in Ancient Near Eastern Societies," in K. Radner and E. Robson, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 205–28; and D. Snell, *Flight and Freedom in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
18 In addition to the works cited in notes 15, 16, and 17, see also Claus Wilcke, *Early Ancient Near Eastern Law: A History of Its Beginnings*, rev. ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 49–51.
19 For a discussion of the "Standard List of Professions," see Marc Van De Meiroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323 BCE*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 30–35.
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21 M. Van de Meiroop, *The Ancient Mesopotamian City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 95.
22 Roth, *Law Collections*, 82–83, 9.

23 For an overview of difficulties involved in determining whether or not Hammurabi's laws were a legal code, see Marc Van De Mieroop, *King Hammurabi of Babylon: A Biography* (Malden, MA.: Blackwell, 2005), 99–111.
24 Roth, *Law Collections*, 16.
25 For overviews of trade in the ancient Near East, see Michael Astour, "Overland Trade Routes in Ancient Western Asia"; and Daniel Potts, "Distant Shores: Ancient Near Eastern Trade with South Asia and Northern Africa," in Jack M. Sasson, ed., *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2000), 1,401–20, 1,451–64.
26 For one discussion of an early example of partnerships and contracts, K. Veenhof, "'Modern' Features in Old Assyrian Trade," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40/4 (1997): 336–66.
27 For a translation of the *Enuma Elish*, Benjamin Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Bethesda, MD: CDL Press, 1995), 9–51.
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29 Especially so in letters 16 and 17; see W. Moran, *The Amarna Tablets* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
30 M. Chavalas, *The Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 277.
31 See S. Parpola, "National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-empire Times," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18/2 (2004), 13, note 37.
32 For a translation of the treaty, Chavalas, *Ancient Near East*, 356.
33 Roth, *Law Collections*, 170, 44.
34 Chavalas, *Ancient Near East*, 313.
35 See M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah, and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Century BCE* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1974).
36 For translations of the "Marduk Prophecy" and "Cyrus Cylinder," see Chavalas, *Ancient Near East*, 168–74, 426–30.
37 For a more detailed discussion of ancient Egypt's borders, see Steven Grosby, *Biblical Ideas of Nationality: Ancient and Modern* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 30–32. For the relation of Egyptian officials to localities, see B.G. Trigger, B.J. Kemp, D. O'Connor, and A.B. Lloyd, *Ancient Egypt: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). Bruce Routledge, "The Antiquity of the Nation? Critical Reflections from the Ancient Near East," *Nations and Nationalism* 9/2 (2003): 213–33, succinctly notes "the free movement [of Egyptian officials] between state and village based positions of responsibility."
38 See Frank W. Walbank, "Nationality as a Factor in Roman History," in *Selected Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 57–76.
39 See J.N. Postgate, "The Invisible Hierarch: Assyrian Military and Civilian Administration in the 8th and 7th Centuries BC" in J.N. Postgate, ed., *The Land of Assyria and the Yoke of Assyria: Studies on Assyria, 1971–2005* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007); and A. Grayson, "Assyria," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 3, Part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 71–161, 194–228.
40 For an estimate, see Oded Bustenay, *Mass Deportations and Deportees in the Neo-Assyrian Empire* (Weisbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1979).
41 See H. Tadmor, "Monarchy and the Elite in Assyria and Babylon: The Question of Royal Accountability," in S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age*

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42 For example, see Tiglath-Pileser III's Calah Annal 19 and Annal 9 in H. Tadmor, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III King of Assyria* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 42–43.

43 The phrase appears several times in Tadmor, *Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III*.

44 See J.N. Postgate, "The Land of Assur and the Yoke of Assur," *World Archaeology* 23/3 (1992): 247–63.

45 As suggested by Mario Liverani, *Assyria: The Imperial Mission* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2017).

46 Francis Joannès, *The Age of Empires: Mesopotamia in the First Millennium BC* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 29.

47 See Liverani, *Assyria*, 220–29.

48 Gherardo Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran: An Essay on its Origin* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1989), 5.

49 For the inscription, www.livius.org/sources/content/achaemenid-royal-inscriptions/dna/.

50 See Darius's Behistun inscription, Elamite version.

51 For the scholarly edition, see M. Boyce, trans., *The Letter of Tansar* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1968). The determination of the authenticity, origin, and transmission of the *Letter* is discussed in the introduction.

52 *Letter of Tansar*, 37, 33.

53 Ibid., 34.

54 See J. Duchesne-Guillemin, "Zoroastrian Religion," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* 3/2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 861–908.

55 In addition to Gnoli, *The Idea of Iran*, see T. Daryee, "The Idea of *Ērānšahr*," in Carlo G. Cereti, ed., *Iranian Identity in the Course of History* (Roma: Istituto Italiano per L'Africa e L'Oriente, 2010), 91–108; and "Ethnic and Territorial Boundaries in Late Antique and Early Medieval Persia (Third to Tenth Century)," in F. Curta, ed., *Borders, Barriers, and Ethnogenesis: Frontiers in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2005), 123–35.

56 On the idea of the successor territory, see Steven Grosby, "The Successor Territory," in Athena Leoussi and Steven Grosby, eds., *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism: History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation of Nations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 99–112.

57 *Letter of Tansar*, 52.

58 For a translation of those inscriptions, Martin Sprengling, *Third Century Iran: Sapur and Kartir* (Chicago: Oriental Institute, 1953). On Kartīr, see the entry in the *Encylopaedia Iranica*, www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kartir.

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60 For an English translation, T. Daryee, *Šahrestānīhā ī Ērānšahr* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2002).

61 For the English translation, A. Perikhanian, ed., *The Book of a Thousand Judgements (A Sasanian Law Book)*, trans. Nina Garsoian (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 1997). See also the discussion of law in *The Cambridge History of Iran*.

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63 See Joseph M. Kitagawa, "The Japanese *Kokutai* (National Community): History and Myth," *History of Religions* 13/3 (1974): 209–26.

64 For a fine overview of the history of ancient Japan and its religion, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 1, *Ancient Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

65 For a discussion of the Egyptian evidence, see Bruce Routledge, *Moab in the Iron Age: Hegemony, Polity, Archeology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 58–60. For one example of the Assyrian evidence, Hayim Tadmore, *The Inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser III* (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1994), 171.

66 For an analysis of the territorial implications of the Mesha pillar, see Bruce Routledge, "The Politics of Mesha: Segmented Identities and State Formation in Iron Age Moab," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 43/3 (2000): 221–56.

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4

NATIONS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

To begin with a digression, a chapter devoted to examining whether or not the historian is entitled to use the category nation to describe a number of societies in the Middle Ages may tax the reader's patience. It is, however, necessary to do so in order to continue to clear away unfounded prejudices that may get in the way of the historian's examination of evidence. The most obvious prejudice may be conveyed rather innocently, in the chronological sequence of the categories antiquity, Middle Ages, and modern times. The use of those categories in this book is only as a convenient way to organize by chapter the examination of a tremendous amount of evidence throughout world history. Nothing else is intended by the use here of those categories. In fact, one conclusion to draw from the previous chapter's examination of those societies in antiquity that may be characterized as nations is that, while there are obvious differences between ancient and modern societies, there may also be perennial patterns of human activities and social relations. There certainly were in antiquity markets, international trade, private property, contracts, laws, courts, and large metropolises. While there were numerous city-states and empires, there were also nations. And there certainly in modern times are not only empires but also various forms of kinship, ranging from the family to the territorial kinship of the nation.

Historical categories such as antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and modern times are tools to aid our understanding of an enormous amount of evidence. Their justification is to clarify the historical evidence as it appears to us, but those categories may also obscure that evidence if the historian loses sight of unexamined assumptions that those categories may convey. These and other categories must not be taken for granted. For example, there clearly has emerged from antiquity to today a developed international trade and division of labor, extraordinary advances in transportation and communication, and a remarkable increase in the standard of living and life expectancy. To reach the age of 30 was the norm for much

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of human history, while today the average life expectancy is over 70 years. The historian also has reasons to conclude that from antiquity to today there has occurred a noteworthy moral development in how humans view one another. Today, women have the right to vote in all countries, with Saudi Arabia recognizing women suffrage in 2015. Slavery is outlawed throughout the world; and there is recognition that all humans have rights, as expressed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948, and enforced by the European Court of Human Rights. Given these economic, technological, and moral developments, one might understandably conclude that the chronological sequence from antiquity, through the Middle Ages, to modern times conveys progress. However, the historian also has reasons to question this progress from the past to the present. The twentieth century was a barbaric period of human history, when state-organized violence resulted in not only two wars that spanned the globe, but also the death camps of the German fascists, the Soviet gulags, and the killing fields of Cambodia. "Progress," however understood, has occurred, but clearly there are compelling reasons for the historian to qualify how that progress is to be evaluated.

There are complications as to how one should understand what the historian might mean by the category of the Middle Ages. The historical periodization intended by the category of the "Renaissance" was to refer to a time of the rebirth of humanism, based on the retrieval of the works of classical antiquity during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries CE. It was also meant to contrast the period of this rebirth to one of cultural decline that had occurred between that rebirth and antiquity, hence the use of "middle" for the Middle Ages. Thus, the historiographical formulation of this intermediate period conveyed the idea that the Middle Ages was an intellectually desolate, if not entirely barbaric, time between antiquity and its rebirth beginning in the fourteenth century. However, just as the evaluation of the progress of modern times faces the complication of a shocking barbarism that must qualify that progress, so, too, complications exist in the evaluation of the Middle Ages.[1]

One problem with the evaluation of the so-called Middle Ages as a culturally desolate period is that it overlooks developments during the reign of Charlemagne (768–814 CE), for example, the support for monastic scriptoria, that some historians have characterized as a "Carolingian Renaissance."[2] It may very well be that those developments did not spread widely throughout the early medieval population, thereby calling into question how much of a cultural rebirth actually took place during Charlemagne's reign.[3] We need not enter into arguments over the extent of those developments, as for our purposes it will suffice merely to have noted what may be obscured by the assumptions that accompany the historical category of the Middle Ages.

There can, however, be no doubt about the extensiveness of the cultural rebirth that took place later during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, as observed some time ago by Charles Homer Haskins in *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* and more recently by Harold Berman in *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western*

Legal Tradition. [4] Some of the developments that support Haskins' and Berman's different description of what had been understood to have been the putatively "dark" period of the Middle Ages were the eleventh-century recovery of Roman law, the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, which had been codified around 530 CE during the reign of the (eastern) Roman emperor Justinian (although the continuing influence of Roman law in the west can be observed in the seventh-century CE *Leges Visigothorum* in Spain); accompanying that recovery, the establishment of the study of law as a distinct subject within universities that were founded also in this period in Bologna (1088 CE), Paris (1150 CE), Oxford (1167 CE), Cambridge (1209 CE), and Salamanca (1218 CE)[5]; the organization by Gratian of the Church's canon law, the *Decretum* (c. 1140 CE); the study of classical works from antiquity such as Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aquinas (1273 CE); and beginning in the twelfth century the commercial confederation of mostly German cities known as the Hanseatic League, which conducted trade throughout the North and Baltic seas. There also emerged during this period territorial states such as Sicily under the reign of Roger II (1112–1154 CE) with its promulgated law of the land (*The Assizes of Ariano*), state bureaucracy of administrators (bailiffs), and professional judges (justiciars). Similar developments occurred in England during the reign of Henry II (1154–1189 CE), with a system of professional judges and royal courts throughout, thereby unifying, the land—legal developments that led Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland to characterize England at the time as a national state. (By the time of Edward I, who ruled from 1272 to 1307 CE, a foreigner could not own land in England.[6] It was not until 1870 that English law allowed an alien to own land in England.) These kinds of developments during this period could just as well be characterized by the historian as "modern," with one important qualification.

During the Middle Ages, the exercise of authority tended to be limited because it was fragmented. It was limited by the existence of different spheres of authority, each of which had its own set of distinctive laws. The state had its law, regulating relations between one citizen and another, for example, in commercial dealings, and between those citizens and the sovereign, for example, taxation and military service. However, the state was not the only sphere of authority. The Church was another. The Church, especially in the aftermath of the so-called "Investiture Controversy" at the end of the eleventh century CE over who had the authority to select and install bishops, and the reforms of Pope Gregory VII (1075 CE), had its own codified law, the canon law. That law regulated the actions of the believers and the relations between them that were judged to be within the Church's jurisdiction, for example, marriage, charity, and the transfer of property through inheritance. There was, thus, a legal pluralism that limited the exercise of authority of what was viewed as being different spheres of attachments and activities.[7]

In contrast to this medieval legal pluralism, the exercise of legal authority of the modern state tends to be unlimited throughout its territory. One consequence of the Protestant Reformation was to eliminate the Church's canon law as a juridical limit on the authority of the state, as, theologically, Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms (of

grace and of man), as presented by him in *On Secular Authority* (1523) and in his commentaries throughout his life on Paul's Letter to the Romans, replaced Gelasius's doctrine of the two swords (church and state), as formulated by Gelasius in his letter (494 CE) to the Roman Emperor Anastasius. Over time, the independent authority of other associations or corporations with their own laws and regulations such as universities has been severely curtailed by the modern state, as seen most notably in France during and after the French Revolution. Thus, the chronological sequence of antiquity–Middle Ages–modern times may obscure the loss of associational independence that has occurred over time. In fact, the generally unrivaled exercise of authority of modern states throughout their respective territories is a characteristic that they share with ancient states. If the historian's interest is examining the history of the freedom of associations in their relation to the state, the historian will conclude that medieval states were different in this regard from states both in antiquity and modern times.

In order to capture the apparent similarity of a juridically overbearing state found today and in antiquity in contrast to the medieval state's greater freedom of associations or corporations with their own laws of varying kinds, the legal historian Otto von Gierke used a historical category different from the periodization of ancient–medieval–modern: "antique-modern."[8] To be sure, qualifications must be made to Gierke's recognition of the similarity of the exercise of unrivaled authority in both ancient and modern states. For some ancient imperial states, for example, the Persian empire beginning with Cyrus, conquered peoples were, as long as they were loyal to the empire, permitted to keep their own religions and many of their laws, thereby providing a basis for national attachments, however beleaguered, to continue. The historian uses the category of "vassal (or client) state" to describe a quasi-independent society under imperial domination. The possibility for those attachments to continue within an imperial framework is what surely accounts for the Jews' surprisingly favorable evaluation of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian (or Achaemenid) Empire, conveyed in the Bible, Isaiah 44:28, 45:1 (see also Ezra 1, 5), where Cyrus is described as the LORD's "shepherd" and even as the LORD's "messiah" ("his anointed"). And for some modern states, the federalism of their structure allows for a degree of legal pluralism, often territorial, to exist. In those circumstances, that federalism, within the modern national state, facilitates the continuing existence of the attachments of national minorities located within semi-autonomous regions. These kinds of qualifications to Gierke's analysis of the history of associations need not be pursued further here. The purpose of introducing that similarity in the exercise of authority between ancient and modern states, as expressed by Gierke's use of "antique-modern," is to highlight how both the category Middle Ages and the chronological sequence of antiquity–Middle Ages–modern times may obscure important characteristics of the Middle Ages, in this instance, a greater degree of freedom for corporate bodies. Drawing attention to one of those characteristics—the greater freedom afforded by legal pluralism—that may otherwise be obscured opens the door to expose one further, persistent prejudice about the Middle Ages that is important to an examination of nations during this period.

In many analyses of nations in world history, it often appears to be taken for granted that the horizon of the average person, say, a peasant or serf, during the Middle Ages was restricted to his or her immediate surroundings of the village or manor, thereby precluding the possibility of the image of a more extensive attachment, specifically, that of a nation. But is the certainty of this narrow horizon for the majority of medieval populations justified? By the end of the thirteenth century CE, there were a number of cities throughout Europe with populations of more than 50,000 inhabitants such as Paris and London, with numerous towns of smaller size. These cities and towns had regular fairs and markets that, as they did in antiquity, brought together town and countryside for the exchange of goods. The historian should not understand these cities and towns as being self-contained, but as urban centers exerting cultural and economic influence over the countryside. Commercial law accompanied this urban development, for example, in the English Magna Carta (1225 CE) there was, as noted in the previous chapter, also in ancient Near Eastern law (and biblical law, too, Deuteronomy 25:13–15), legal regulation for the standardization of weights and measures in order to establish a basis for fair exchange in those marketplaces.

> There shall be standard measures of wine, ale, and corn throughout the kingdom. There shall also be a standard width of dyed cloth, russet, and haberject [a kind of cloth], namely two ells [unit of length] within the selvedges [edges of the cloth]. Weights are to be standardized similarly.
>
> *(Clause 35)*

Legal provisions similar to this, as well as for the standardization of coinage, appear in earlier law codes, for example, that of Canut (c. 1018 CE). Surely, the small landowners and serfs, as they brought their goods to the marketplaces of those cities and towns, were aware of this standardization of measures and coinage for the purpose of equitable exchange.

There were other developments that indicate the existence of more expansive components within the understanding of the self and the individual's relation to others. The English King Henry II's Assize (Edict) of 1181 CE required that all free men have arms to defend the country. The requirement was, by 1252 CE, extended to the serfs. The requirement that the latter be armed was, with the development, likely during the thirteenth century, of the armor-piercing longbow, financially within their means. These kinds of economic, legal, and military factors would have all contributed to expanding the horizons of medieval populations beyond the local village or manor.

The most obvious, additional factor making possible, or indicating the existence of, geographically extensive social relations in the absence of modern means of communication and transportation was observed in the previous chapter, namely, religion. The spread of Christianity in antiquity and the Middle Ages calls into question, if not entirely undermines, the view that during these periods social

relations were narrowly confined, limited to localities and within those localities segmented by strata. The inhabitants of those localities, however else they understood themselves, knew that they were Christians. They knew that individuals, lord and serf, living within their local community and elsewhere, were also Christians. It would be churlish for the historian to dismiss in this period the probability of this self-knowledge and awareness of the peasantry in the absence of written records such as personal diaries. Are historians to ignore the construction of those magnificent cathedrals during the Middle Ages, for example Durham Cathedral (late eleventh century) and Canterbury Cathedral (late eleventh and twelfth century) in England; St. Andrews (1158 CE) in Scotland; and in France, the Vézelay Cathedral (early twelfth century), Chartres (1154), and Notre Dame (1163)? Are we to ignore what their construction required; and, when completed, the influence these cathedrals assuredly had on the populations that saw them and worshipped in them?

Surely, the historian must not overlook the bearing of these architecturally imposing creations on the diffusion and support of Christianity throughout the population both in those towns and throughout the countryside. Moreover, in a number of cathedrals were the relics of saints; and because they were there, those cathedrals were pilgrimage sites throughout the Middle Ages. Durham Cathedral, for example, housed the relics of St. Cuthbert. The intention of the reference here to these cathedrals, the popular veneration of saints, and the pilgrimages to these cathedrals is to undermine the confidence in the assumption of the narrowness of the putatively isolated life of much of a medieval population. The historian should especially note the veneration of saints. The historian will not be wide of the mark to suspect that a part of the importance of that veneration is the merging of Christian tradition with territorial tradition—a coming together that, as we shall see, was easily adapted to contribute to the formation of a national tradition.[9]

Those Scots who worshipped at St. Andrews, or those English who worshipped at Durham or Canterbury, or those French who worshipped at Notre Dame and Chartres should, of course, not be understood as being the same as the Scots, English, and French of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In ascertaining whether or not, or the extent to which, these medieval "peoples" were nations, it would be procedurally quite peculiar to judge those medieval peoples from the vantage point of how they appear in a much later period. To do so is to eliminate historical development from history! It is also to misunderstand the category nation. A nation is always changing, both at any particular time and certainly over time. The culture of a nation is only relatively stable. Just because the Scots, English, or French of, say, the thirteenth or fourteenth century are different from today does not mean that in evaluating those peoples in that earlier period it is necessarily inappropriate for the historian to use the category nation.

As has been briefly noted, the historian has reasons to consider that in the medieval period there existed trans-local cultures. There are reasons to consider the category nation to describe those cultures. To take one of those reasons, at the Church Council

of Constance (1414–1418 CE), the ecclesiastical participants were organized along, and voted by, nations, the so-called *nationes principales*: Gallicana, Italica, Anglicana, and Germanica. These four voting members of the Council encompassed what were designated as *nationes particulares*, for example, the Poles, Hungarians, Czechs, Danes, Scots, Welsh, and Irish. What was explicitly clear at the Council was that a *natio*, a nation, was understood to refer to a cultural, linguistic, and political community inhabiting a territory of its own.[10] It should go without saying that this ecclesiastical organization by nations was not the self-serving invention of the proponents of conciliarism—the view, represented, with variations, by William of Ockham, Marsilius of Padua, Nicholas of Cusa, and Jean Gerson, that the authority of the Church rested with the council of bishops and not the Pope. That the conciliarists contrasted the authority of the council of bishops to that of the Pope is obvious enough, but within the Council those bishops were designated by nation. There had already been a long tradition within the Church of its organization by different territories, for example, Scotland and Poland. This distinction between various "peoples" and their respective territories within the organization of the Church had a long period of development.

As we observed in the previous chapter, not only religion but also law was a factor contributing to that development. Consider the description of the Franks in the "Long Prologue" to the Salian Laws. The original *Lex Salica* was composed probably sometime between 507 and 511 CE during the reign of Clovis, who had joined together the Franks throughout northeastern Gaul, the central and northern parts of what later became France. The law code was revised numerous times, including during the reign of Charlemagne around 802 CE. The Long Prologue is to that revision during his reign, the *Lex Salica Karolina*.

> The whole Frankish people, established by the power of God, are strong in arms, weighty in council, firm in the compact of peace, pure of body, distinguished in form, brave, swift, and austere … Let him who esteems the Franks live by the present decree. May Christ protect their kingdom, give them rulers, fill them with the light of his grace, protect their army, and give them the protection of the faith … For this is the people who while small in number are great in strength. In battle [the Frankish people] shook off the powerful and very harsh yoke of the Romans from its neck. And, after the knowledge of baptism, the Franks decorated with gold and precious stones the bodies of the blessed martyrs whom the Romans had mutilated with fire or sword … It was pleasing and agreed to between the Franks and their notables that to preserve peace among themselves they should with care prevent all growth of quarrels. And just as their people was preeminent among other peoples located next to it on account of the strength of its arms, so also it should undertake to make an end to criminal acts with its legal authority.[11]

The historian observes in this prologue an emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Frankish people, with putatively unique characteristics. As we shall see later in

this chapter, there are numerous examples of the assertion of the distinctiveness of one people in contrast to another throughout the Middle Ages.

The historian also observes in the Prologue the idea that a people, in this instance, the Franks, have a special relation to God, thereby indicating a deflection from the universalism of Christianity, as that universalism is expressed in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5–7, and by Paul in Romans 10:12, Galatians 3:28, and Colossians 3:11. There is no turning of the cheek in the Prologue, but rather an extolling of the military prowess of a people "preeminent among other peoples located next to it on account of the strength of its arms." This coming together of the Christian idea of the universal brotherhood of all of humanity and the traditions of a particular people, in this case the Franks, is repeatedly found throughout the Middle Ages, for example, in the veneration of national saints, in the case of the French, the canonization in 1297 of Louis IX, parts of whose body were placed in cathedrals and monasteries throughout France. This coming together can also be seen in the image of those Christian nations as being the chosen people of a "new Israel."[12] While the self-understanding of Christian nations as being "new Israels" occurred most obviously during and after the Protestant Reformation, for example, among the Dutch, English, and Americans, it is also found earlier, for example, during the reign of the King of France Philip the Fair (1285–1314 CE), and outside Europe as in the fourteenth century CE Ethiopian epic *Kebra Nagast* (*The Glory of the Kings*).[13]

It appears that the *Lex Salica* was a territorial code of law, applicable to all who lived within the realm of the King of the Franks. Clearly, it was understood as providing the means for those within its jurisdiction "to preserve peace among themselves," "to make an end to criminal acts with its legal authority." Repeatedly throughout the code, the historian finds stipulations for the adjudication of disputes by local courts, where there is substitution of monetary fines (the *wergeld*) for acts of personal vengeance. Surely, these legal provisions were known to, and appreciated by, the freemen and serfs, just as the Church's decrees of the "Peace of God" or the "Truce of God" during the tenth and eleventh centuries CE, and later the "peace statutes" (*Landfriede*) by secular rulers during the twelfth century must have been.[14]

It is, however, also clear that Charlemagne's rule was imperial. Only after the death of Charlemagne's son and heir, Louis the Pious (d. 840 CE), was his kingdom, described as ruling over all the "Romans," divided among Louis' sons into a kingdom of the western Franks, *Regnum Francorum*, which would later become understood as comprising French, and a kingdom of the eastern Franks, *Regnum Teutonicorum*, which would later become understood as comprising Germans (although encompassing "Saxons" and "Bavarians").[15] Although linguistic differences between western and eastern Franks existed, the western Franks lacked at this time the relative cultural stability of "being French" for the historian to understand them as a nation. The latter would appear later in the Middle Ages, when the people of the Kingdom of France was designated by law and custom as those who lived in its territory, as one finds during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century reign of Philip the Fair.[16] Still, developments contributing to the eventual, but not inevitable, formation of a French

nation can be observed. How should the historian of nations deal with those developments? In thinking about how to approach this problem, let us for the time being leave European history, which has too often been the exclusive focus of the historians of nations, and return to an example from a different part of the world that was briefly examined in the previous chapter and where the category of the Middle Ages, whatever its usefulness for understanding European history, is less useful: Iran.

The historian faces the fact that, despite the universalism of the Islamic *ummah*, Iran has set itself apart since the beginning of the Safavid dynasty (1502–1736 CE) by the official proclamation that its religion is *Ja 'fariya Ithna 'ashariyah*, the "Twelver" version of Shi'ism. How should this fact be understood? It is the case that, by doing so, the Safavids distinguished themselves and the Iranians from the Sunni Ottomans. However, to be content with this explanation would, for the historian, be overly simplistic, for it begs the question of the development of the very existence of a distinctive Iranian self-awareness. What were those traditions that, while influenced by politics and military conflict, specifically the tensions between the Ottomans and the Iranians, are nonetheless distinct from politics and that contributed to the formation of the "self," that is, not merely being a Muslim but being an Iranian Muslim, albeit Shi'ite? Beyond that Shi'ism was a tradition that had long existed in Iran, in cities like Qum, what other factors were there? In trying to account for a distinctive self-awareness of "being Iranian," the historian wants to ascertain what bearing, if any, did the earlier traditions of the Zoroastrian Sasanians (221–651 CE) and the Sunni Samanids (819–999 CE) have on the Safavid's self-understanding?

Under the Samanids, the Qur'an was translated into Persian, and Persian (albeit written with Arabic script) was proclaimed to be the language of the land. It seems reasonable for the historian to conclude that these and other similar developments indicate a pronounced Iranian pride in their cultural heritage as a distinctive Iranian heritage.[17] That pride would be further indicated by compositions like Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, the Iranian *Book of Kings*, which, as noted in the previous chapter, while written 400 years after Iran had become Islamic, deals with, even extols, the pre-Islamic Iranian tradition. This work and the compositions of other Iranian intellectuals conveyed a pride in Iranian culture as a contrast between Iranians and Arabs.[18]

It would be wrong for the historian to claim a seamless continuity of Iranian culture running from the Sasanians through the Samanids to the Safavids, if for no other reason than that the Arab conquest and, with it, the spread of Islam disrupted the earlier understanding of what it meant to be *Arya* or *Ēr*, first appearing in the *Avesta* and then among the Achaemenids, for example, in the previously discussed inscription of Darius, and later transformed into what appears to be a combination of religious and territorial meaning under the Sasanians. There does, however, appear to have emerged a relatively stable cultural distinctiveness of "being Iranian" under the Sasanians. Recall the persistent distinction between *Ērān* and *Anērān*. Some of those national traditions persisted, creating the cultural conditions for the continuation of an awareness of a distinctive Iran even within Islam among Iranians under the Safavids.

One sees that continuation in works like *Nizam al-Tawarikh* (*The Arrangement of History*) by Baydawi (last half of the thirteenth century CE), who was also the author of one of the more important interpretations (*Tasfir*) of the Qur'an. His history encompassed, thereby presenting as a continuity, the history of Iran from the pre-Islamic kings to the Caliphs. In this and other subsequent histories of Iran, the composition of history can contribute to (and be an indication of) the continuing formation of a nation by presenting the nation, in this case Iran, as an object of focus. The existence of these works of history does not mean that their understanding of the pre-Islamic past and its relation to the present went unchallenged. We have already noted that Ferdowsi's history was criticized. Challenges to these histories, particularly when Iran was dominated by the Turkic Seljuqs (last half of the eleventh and twelfth centuries CE) and later by the Mongols, were common. Arguments over history are to be expected, for how to understand the past is inseparable from how the present is understood. And they are all the more to be expected as Iran existed within Islamic civilization, given the imperial implications of the Islamic *ummah*, the community of the faithful.

When considering how to evaluate those histories and their place in the formation of a nation, the historian takes on the previously mentioned task of determining the relation between change and continuity. It is clear enough that dramatic changes occurred in Iranian history, specifically, the spread of Islam. However, it is also clear that even with those changes, continuities are to be observed. A noteworthy indication of the (selective) continuity of the Iranian past in the ongoing development of Islamic Iran during the medieval period and, for that matter, subsequently, was the celebration of the originally Zoroastrian festival of the New Year, *Nowruz*, within an otherwise Islamic culture. Needless to say, the celebration of *Nowruz* was also challenged, yet it persisted, even though "Islamized."

The formation of a nation of Iran likely occurred during the four-century-long period of the Sasanians, but that formation drew upon earlier Zoroastrian traditions. A number of the traditions of that nation persisted into the medieval period, as can be seen in the pride of an Iranian heritage, for example, the translation of the Qur'an into Persian and the celebration of *Nowruz*. There is too much evidence, however qualified by the Arab, Turkic, and Mongol conquests, of those various processes—religious, legal, economic, and political—to dismiss the existence of an Iranian nation in the late antique, early medieval periods. If one does doubt the existence of an Iranian nation during these periods, how is the historian to account for the Iranians maintaining their own language, in contrast to other countries in the Middle East such as Egypt and Syria, which adopted Arabic; the composition of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*; the focus on Iran in Baydawi's *History*; and the Safavid's insistence on a distinctive Shi'ite Iran within Islam? As the historian considers the continuation, however disputed, of Iranian traditions, and their inevitable modification over time, it becomes clear that it would be foolish to point to one moment or particular event as being decisive for the formation of an Iranian nation or, in fact, any nation.

In contrast to the evidence for the existence of an Iranian nation in the periods of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, the historian lacks similar evidence for a relatively

extensive, yet bounded territorial kinship of a nation of Franks during the time of Charlemagne. Furthermore, it would clearly be wrong to claim a seamless continuity between the Franks during the period of Charlemagne and the French of the thirteenth century. One, however, does observe adumbrations of those processes that distinguish one people from another in the Long Prologue to the *Lex Salica* and the later division of what had been Charlemagne's empire during the reign of his grandson, Charles the Bald (823–877 CE), when the western Franks were politically separated from the eastern Franks. The historian will have clearer evidence for the processes involved in the formation of a French nation with the ascendancy of Île de France, with Paris as its center, about which a bit more will be said later. The analytical conclusion to be drawn here from briefly examining the further development of an Iranian nation and then returning to Charlemagne and the gradual emergence of a French nation from Charles the Bald to Philip the Fair is that historians of nation are better served by focusing on the ongoing processes in the formation of a distinctive national culture rather than being preoccupied with one particular event as indicating the existence of a nation.

When the historian looks further east to Asia, other examples of processes contributing to the formation of nations appear during this period. By the end of the tenth century CE, the territory south of the Yalu River, its northern border, was known to its inhabitants and to those outside that land as *Koryŏ*, Korea. That *Koryŏ* was understood to designate more than an area of land is clear from the "Ten Injunctions" (943 CE) of the Korean King Wang Kŏn, known as T'aejo, "the great founder." We will not concern ourselves here whether the "Ten Injunctions" were actually those of T'aejo or were a product of the next, eleventh, century, but attributed to T'aejo as the unifier of Korea, as their significance for our purposes remains.[19] Consider the Fourth Injunction:[20]

> In the past we have always had a deep attachment for the ways of China [Tang traditions] … But our country occupies a different geographical space [where location and soil are different] and our people's character is different from that of the Chinese. Khitan is a nation of savage beasts, and its language and customs are also different [from our own].

In addition to the existence of the name *Koryŏ* designating a bounded territory, the historian finds in this Fourth Injunction recognition that the people who inhabit that territory were understood as being different from the neighboring Chinese to the west and the Khitans, the people to the north in what is today Manchuria. In contrast to the territorial complications of Sasanian history as conveyed in the distinction between *Ērān* and *Anērān*, and of the imperial period of the Saminids, the borders of the territory of peninsular Korea were distinct and stable.

The military conflicts between Korea and both the Chinese and Khitans surely contributed to the formation of a Korean nation. And obviously so did T'aejo's political unification of the peninsula.[21] While clearly important, these factors should not be viewed by the historian as the sole developments in that formation.

The origin of the self-designation *Koryŏ* dates from the fifth century CE, when the largest of the three kingdoms of the peninsula, *Koguryŏ*, adopted the name. Because, from 37 BCE to 668 CE, the peninsula was divided between three kingdoms, it is reasonable for the historian to assume that a relatively stable image of the Korean nation encompassing the peninsula did not exist during this period, although the increasing prominence of *Koguryŏ/Koryŏ* during that time would provide the foundation for the subsequent emergence of that image.

This earlier period of the three kingdoms was characterized by a pronounced regionalism, expressed religiously by local shamanism and ancestor worship. However, beginning in the fourth century CE, the spread of Buddhism throughout the peninsula undermined over time the otherwise culturally disaggregating shamanism and ancestor worship. And, as is clear from T'aejo's First Injunction, Buddhism, as had been Zoroastrianism for Sasanian Iran, was put in service of consolidating the national state:[22]

> The success of every great undertaking of our state depends upon the favor and protection of Buddha. Therefore, the temples of both the Meditation and Doctrinal schools should be built and monks should be sent out to those temples to minister to the Buddha.

Concomitant with this injunction was—as had occurred in Sasanian history and, beginning with the emperor Constantine's convocation of the Council of Nicea, Roman history—the attempt to enforce a religious orthodoxy, in this case Buddhism, throughout the population so as to minimize doctrinal disputes and the regional differences they sometimes conveyed.

The spread of Buddhism did not entirely eliminate previous religious traditions, as can be observed in the Sixth Injunction:

> I deem the two festivals of *Yŏndŭng* [The Lantern-lighting Festival] and *P'algwan* [Assembly of the Eight Prohibitions] of great spiritual value and importance. The first is to worship Buddha. The second is to worship the spirit of heaven, the spirits of the five sacred peaks and other major mountains and rivers, and the dragon god.

Here is an obvious syncretism between local, native religious beliefs and a Buddhism that is adapted to encompass them. *P'algwan* was originally a harvest festival that had become combined with a day to honor Buddhist prohibitions (the so-called "precepts"). However interesting the syncretism is, as is the continuation of the once-Zoroastrian *Nowruz* festival in Islamic Iran, also noteworthy is the incorporation of local traditions into a national, religious tradition. The historian finds other examples of this kind of incorporation in medieval Korea.

The formation of Koreans, as Koreans, involved the continuation of particular traditions, the elevation of some over others, and their modification into a

national tradition. That this took place is clear from T'aejo's Sixth Injunction. It is also clear from the persistence of the very name *Koryŏ*. Often political factors account for the development and ascendancy of one tradition over another, for example, the unification of the peninsula under T'aejo. Sometimes other factors are important, for example, Buddhism. At times these different factors coincide, but sometimes they may exist in tension with one another.[23] Clearly, Buddhism was enlisted in support of the formation of a Korean state, but doctrinally Buddhism exists in tension with politics. And later, the Buddhist tradition would be challenged by a state-cultivated neo-Confucianism.

As Ferdowsi, drawing upon earlier Sasanian and pre-Sasanian works, composed a history with Iran as its focus, there appeared various works that have as their focus the temporal depth and the territory of the image of Korea. In the thirteenth century, the Buddhist monk Iryŏn composed a book that collected the local legends from three kingdoms, the *Samguk yusa* (the *Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*). Earlier, in the twelfth century, there appeared the *Samguk sagi* (the *History of the Three Kingdoms*), compiled under the direction of Kim Busik (1075–1151 CE). There also took place during this period the cultivation of local, native music, *hyangak*, as distinct from Chinese music, *tangka* ("Tang music").[24] These kinds of developments—a historical outlook and the cultivation of native legends and music—clearly signify a developing self-awareness and assertion of a cultural distinctiveness necessary for a nation to exist. In a different historical context, that of Europe of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historians would understand these developments as characteristics of Romanticism. Contributing further to the formation of a Korean nation was the ascendancy of Kaesŏng as the capital—and cultural and economic center—of Korea during this period (it would be replaced by Seoul in the fifteenth century); under the influence of neo-Confucianism, a state bureaucracy with examinations; a national university, Gukjagam, founded in 992 CE; an army that, by the end of the tenth century included commoners; and schools established in rural areas during the reign of Injong (1122–1146 CE).

It is, of course, obvious that Korea, during and after the *Koryŏ* period (tenth through fourteenth centuries), was socially divided between an aristocracy and peasantry, exhibited ongoing tensions between the king and prominent families, and suffered instability in the transition from one king to another. However, rather than rejecting the use of the category nation to describe Korea during this period, the historian must consider other evidence, as briefly described above, for why it is appropriate to use the category. The reason for doing so is further supported by the subsequent history of Korea. The Mongols, beginning with the son of Genghis Khan in 1231 CE, repeatedly invaded Korea during the thirteenth century, the result of which greatly weakened the country and, in effect, destroyed its independence. Those invasions and the persecution by the Mongols were resented throughout the Korean population. In 1392, Yi Seong-gye reunited Korea, for which he also became known as "T'aejo." We, thus, have a term, "T'aejo," used to describe both the tenth-century Wang Kŏn, "the great founder" who unified the three kingdoms into *Koryŏ*, and the late fourteenth-century

Yi Seong-gye, who liberated *Koryŏ* from the Mongols, thereby asserting a continuity of a national ideal of the independent sovereignty of Korea. How conceivable is it that Korea would have been unified later as Korea (albeit with differences, for example, the ascendency of neo-Confucianism) by Yi Seong-gye, if it were not for the traditions of the previous 400-year-long *Koryŏ* period?[25] And how should the historian interpret the development of a distinctive Korean script, during the reign of Sejong (1418–1450 CE), the so-called *han'gŭl* alphabet, even if not widely embraced until much later?

Before returning to medieval Europe, a brief glance at Sri Lanka and Viet Nam will further support the conclusion that there is evidence for the existence of a consciousness of a "we," of a group solidarity, throughout a geographically extensive, yet bounded, population in this period. To be content with the characterization that the societies of this time, whether in Asia, South Asia, Iran, or medieval Europe, were rigidly segmented under the rule of dynastic states is to be mindlessly captive of a historiographical prejudice. Of course, this is not to deny that important differences existed between an aristocracy and peasantry; nor is it to deny regional differences within those states. But there is too much evidence that suggests the existence of collective attachments. To recognize that evidence by no means necessarily implies that the historian is reading current distinctions between "we" and "they" into the past.

There are, to be sure, uncertainties surrounding the interpretation of the *Mahāvamsa*, the sixth-century CE Buddhist chronicle of the early history of *Lankā*, the "island" of Sri Lanka. While Dutthagamani (161–137 BCE) evidently unified the country, thereby consolidating the kingdom of Anuradhapura, which would last until the ninth century CE, it remains uncertain that he did so, as described in the *Mahāvamsa*, as a defender of the island as a Buddhist land whose people had been chosen by the Buddha to preserve the "teaching."[26] Dutthagamani, as a Buddhist hero, may be the interpretative product of the Buddhist monastic order, the Sangha, 600 or more years after he lived.[27] There can be no doubt about the ideal held by the Sangha, as conveyed by the *Mahāvamsa*'s recounting of the words of the Buddah, "In *Lankā*, O lord of gods [Sakka], will my religion be established, thereby carefully protect him [the king, here, Vijaya] with his followers and *Lankā*."[28] However, the acts required by Dutthagamani to unify the island cannot be easily reconciled with the nonviolence of Buddhist doctrine, thereby requiring an interpretative re-evaluation. This re-evaluation led to the understanding that the violent actions of a king are religiously acceptable, even appropriate, when those actions are in defense of the faith, thereby signifying the development of the coming together of religion and politics—a coming together that included the responsibility of the king for the Sangha.

This development should not be interpreted by the historian as indicating that Sinhalese Buddhism (or, for that matter, religion in general) is derivative of politics, that is, it is merely a means to legitimate political power. Religion and politics are distinct from one another; the former is concerned with salvation, while the latter is concerned with the ordering and administration of power. Of course, there has throughout world history often developed an intimate relation between

the two, as in Sinhalese history between the Sangha and the state. Even so, as observed in the *Mahāvamsa*, "[political] sovereignty, being the source of manifold works of merit [building of shrines, care for the Sangha] is at the same time the source of many an injustice; a man of pious heart will never enjoy it, as if it were sweet food mixed with poison."[29]

There is other evidence for the existence of an awareness of being Sinhalese among a large section of the island's population, of a people who, understanding themselves as speaking the same language and having the same religion, shared a tradition of living in the territory of *Lankā*. [30] The *Mahāvamsa* is by no means the only early example of a native tradition of the history of the island. There clearly was a historiographical tradition, albeit largely developed and maintained by the Sangha throughout Sinhalese history. That this tradition has *Lankā* as its focus justifies characterizing it as being Sinhalese history. The most obvious, but by no means only, example of that continual historiographical tradition is the *Cūlavamsa*, the continuation of the *Mahāvamsa*. As has been noted, a historiographical tradition is one indication for the existence of a nation. What are the other reasons that justify the historian's understanding of a Sinhalese nation during this period?

Recall that in Korea, as seen in T'aejo's First Injunction, there were two "schools" of Buddhism, the "Meditation," where an individual pursued the path of enlightenment, and the "Doctrinal," where the Buddhist monks had responsibility for preserving and preaching the Buddhist scriptures. So, too, in *Lankā* there was a distinction within the monastic order, the Sangha, between the "forest-dwelling" monks, who sought enlightenment, and the "village-dwelling" monks, who, in their duty to both maintain and preach the "teaching" were, as their designation implies, in continual contact with the villagers among whom they lived. During the Polannarwa period (late tenth through early fourteenth centuries) and certainly during the reign of King Parākramabāhu VI (1415–1467), the *parivenas* were no longer just the living quarters of the monks; they had become the Sangha's educational institutions at which there also took place lay instruction.[31] Furthermore, during the Anuradhapura period and continuing throughout subsequent Sinhalese history, the historian has evidence for pilgrimages of the local population to the regional centers of Buddhist worship, where were to be found the putative relics (tooth, collarbone, hair, footprint) of the Buddha, enshrined in the *stūpas*. The historian is justified in understanding these pilgrimages and the festivals associated with them as representing national cults. In addition to these religious developments, as well as the prominence of the cities of Anuradhapura, and later Polannaruwa and Kandy, over the countryside, there were towns or areas of those cities designated as trading centers. To ensure the proper, equitable functioning of the markets at these trading centers, weights and measures were regulated. Needless to say, taxes were levied on the goods brought for sale at these markets.[32] When these developments and others such as extensive irrigation projects are taken together, the historian has reasons to doubt that the acknowledged social division between aristocracy and peasantry precluded any expression of being Sinhalese.

Whatever uncertainties may exist in appealing to the *Mahāvamsa* for the existence of a Sinhalese nation in late antiquity, the historian has more confidence in speaking of a Sinhalese nation in the medieval period. By around 1000 CE, Buddhist and Sinhalese identities had clearly converged in the course of the opposition to the south Indian, Hindu Cōla invasion of the island during the tenth century CE.[33] The Sinhalese drove the south Indians from the island in 1070 CE. In the chronicles produced and maintained by the Sangha, the historian finds numerous references to the victorious "*Sīhala* army," "*Sīhala* warriors," and "the *Sīhalas*" who, in defense of *Lankā*, opposed the "devils" and "bloodthirsty demons" of the Cōlan "false faith."[34] During the sixteen and seventeenth centuries, the Sinhalese rebelled against the Portuguese, just as they would against the British (1817–1818 CE). Despite the occupation of Lankā by the Cōlan army, and the dynastic struggles among rival claimants, with regional bases for support, it appears that the historian has reasons to justify using the category nation in understanding the history of *Lankā*.

The apparently justifiable use of the category nation to describe medieval Sinhalese society does not absolve the historian from using that category with considerable care. During much of *Lankā*'s history, there is no clear evidence, certainly at the level of the state, of a sustained contrast between those who spoke Sinhalese, an Indo-European language, and those who spoke Tamil, a Dravidian language. It appears that the rulers of the various kingdoms of *Lankā* throughout the medieval period understood themselves as ruling over the entire island, irrespective of whether or not they actually did, encompassing its entire population. Still, tensions between a Sinhalese-speaking people and a Tamil-speaking people were stoked during and subsequent to the Cōla invasion. However, it was not until the appearance of the modern ideology of nationalism during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that it was thought that a Sinhalese-speaking Buddhist population and a Dravidian-speaking Hindu population should have separate states within the island. Nevertheless, the idea of the entire island being a "holy land," chosen by the Buddha for the "teaching," has been maintained for almost two millennia by the Buddhist Sangha.

Why some historians should think that during this period wars, for example, between the Koreans and the Chinese or Khitans, or between the Sinhalese and the Cōla Empire, should have had no bearing on the peasantry's understanding of themselves and their country is a mystery of a peculiar kind. It apparently rests upon an image of a population dispersed through putatively isolated villages inhabited by unthinking brutes. It evidently precludes any possibility that the peasantry could have thought of the king as their king, and that the king was a representative of the territory of their country—a *quoc*, to refer to a Vietnamese term signifying a state or country requiring one's loyalty.[35] The mobilization and sacrifices required to conduct those wars, some of long duration as between the Vietnamese and Chinese, only highlights the peculiarity of that view.

In 111 BCE, China invaded the kingdom of Nam Viet, which became a vassal state of the empire. It is noteworthy that the kingdom never became an integral part of China; thus, it was always seen, even though under Chinese dominion, as

being distinct. It remained a vassal state of China until 939 CE when, having successfully rebelled against the "North" (China), the kingdom achieved independence. However, during this approximately 1,000-year-long period as a vassal state, there were revolts against Chinese dominion, the most well known of which was led by the Trung Sisters (c. 40 CE). Legends grew about them, and shrines to them appeared. The Chinese invaded again in 1407 CE, but after a war of ten years, under the command of Le Loi, the Chinese were driven out of the country.[36] How should the historian understand these events? In answering this question, let us briefly examine some developments in the aftermath of Le Loi's victory over the forces of the Ming dynasty.

In 1428 appeared the *Binh Ngo Dai Cao*, the proclamation of Le Loi's victory.[37] Of particular interest, evidently conveying how at least the Vietnamese literati thought of themselves and their country, is this statement from the beginning of the proclamation:

> Now think upon this Dai Viet land of ours; truly is it a cultured country. As mountains and rivers make for various lands, so our Southern [Vietnamese] ways must differ from those of the North [Chinese].[38]

These opening lines remind us of the Fourth Injunction of the Korean King T'aejo. Both assert a national distinctiveness, developing within, or even while embracing, the influence of Confucianism (or Buddhism).

Other developments, which we have come to expect in the course of this examination, that suggest the formation of a nation occurred. In 1479 CE appeared Ngo Si Lien's *The Complete Annals of Dai Viet*, a history of Viet Nam from approximately 3000 BCE to the reign of Le Loi beginning in 1428 CE. However doubtful a continually existing Vietnamese people over this approximately 4,000-year-long period surely is, for our purposes it is significant that this people had become an object of historical analysis. Already Nguyen Trai, the author of Le Loi's victory proclamation, the *Binh Ngo Dai Cao*, had, in the poem, *Chi Linh Son Phu*, portrayed as being similar Le Loi and Kou Chien, the king of Yueh (Viet), who had, almost 2,000 years earlier, defeated the Kingdom of Wu during the period of the warring states of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE when China had not yet been unified. Trai's description of that similarity, "At that time was he [Le Loi] not like Kou Chien besieging the king of Wu,"[39] was in the service of establishing the continuity of the Vietnamese nation. Ngo Si Lien's *The Complete Annals* and works like Nguyen Trai's *Binh Ngo Dai Cao* and *Chi Linh Son Phu* assert a continuity of "being Vietnamese" over a period of more than 2,000 years through an appeal to the image of the past to legitimate the present claim to independence from China.

Because of these and other developments such as the creation of a Vietnamese script during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the historian may reasonably conclude that it will be useful to employ the category nation to describe them. However, to do so does not mean that considerable changes did not take place in

the formation of the Vietnamese nation. It also certainly does not mean that the historian should uncritically accept the claims of a Vietnamese continuity found in *The Complete Annals* or Trai's equation of Kou Chien with Le Loi. The territory of what is described in the early periods covered by *The Complete Annals* differs from the territory of the kingdom of Le Loi, just as the territory of today's Viet Nam differs from that of Le Loi. It was only during the period of the late fifteenth through eighteenth centuries that the Vietnamese moved south, defeating the Cham people, and incorporating the territory into Viet Nam. Nevertheless, the very existence of *The Complete Annals* and Trai's compositions are themselves historical facts that say a great deal about the image of Viet Nam at the time of their composition.

The combination of an assertion of a local, national tradition, in this case, Vietnamese, while adhering to the civilizational high culture of (Chinese) Confucianism may be conceptually paradoxical, but it is historically not unusual. We observed the combination in medieval Korea and, although Buddhism, in Sri Lanka. It is also observed in Thailand, and—although especially tension-ridden because of the worship of Amaterasu, the sun goddess, and early Shintoism—in Japan. The combination is also found in Islamic civilization, most obviously, as was observed, in Iran. It is precisely what also took place in Europe, where national traditions coalesced within otherwise universal Christendom. As has been repeatedly observed, national cultures are rarely, if ever, homogeneous. The relation, however paradoxical, between these and other nations and the high cultures of their respective civilizations indicates that during the medieval period the history of a nation should be seen within the context of world history.

The idea that the area we designate as medieval Europe should be considered to be a part of Christian civilization finds support in the Church's canon law, the *Corpus iuris canonici*, for the jurisdiction of that law was applicable to all Christians throughout that area irrespective of their nationality.[40] There are other reasons beyond the Church's canon law for recognizing a Christian culture throughout Europe. Although the transnational jurisdiction of canon law is a logical extension of the universalism found in scripture (Romans 3:12, Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11) to the relations of this world, it shares that universal jurisdiction with the law of the Roman Empire which, of course, with the Emperor Constantine's profession of faith in 312 CE, had become a Christian empire. That transnational jurisdiction of Roman law, the *Corpus iuris civilis*, was succinctly expressed in the *Digest* (50.1.33): "Rome is the common fatherland of us all."[41] And, of course, the medieval Holy Roman Empire was seen as a continuation of the Roman Empire. After all, Pope Leo III in 800 CE crowned Charlemagne as the "Emperor of the Romans," as the responsibility for the Roman Empire, that is, the area of Europe, and the protection of the (western) Church had been transferred (*translatio imperii*) to him. The Church viewed the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire as *salvator mundi*, savior of the (Roman) world, who was anointed by God in imitation of Christ. Furthermore, there is an intimate interplay

between, on the one hand, the development and codification of the Church's canon law and, on the other, the medieval reception of Roman law, each influencing the other, for example, in judicial procedure (such as rules of evidence) and recourse to legal categories (such as *ius gentium*, the "law of nations").

Although the historian clearly has reasons to use the category "Christian civilization," within Christendom distinctions between peoples continued to exist; and, in the course of numerous developments, those distinctions underwent further consolidation, just as had taken place within Confucian and Buddhist civilizations. So, while Louis II was "Emperor of the Romans" of the Holy Roman Empire from 850 to 875 CE, he also described himself as reigning over all the Franks, over "all the territories of those who are of our own flesh and blood."[42] His polemical reasons for describing himself this way need not concern us here, for what is important for us are the categories he employed, specifically, particular territories and the people of his own flesh and blood who inhabit them. In so doing, he was, although a Christian, continuing a tradition of a distinction between peoples already expressed in the "Long Prologue" of the *Lex Salica*. The tradition of drawing these kinds of distinctions between peoples is part of what led, 500 years later, to the different national jurisdictions within the universal Church at the Council of Constance. Recognition of those distinctions was by no means limited to Church prelates. There is a great deal of evidence throughout the medieval period that individuals of one society distinguished themselves from those of another society by territorial location, language, and even by dress, diet, and temperament. For example, the eleventh statute of the 1297 Irish Parliament forbade Englishmen to wear the clothes of the "degenerate Irish."[43] The French diplomat Philippe de Commynes (1447–1511) noted that the French thought that "the Germans were dirty … and had no such manners as we have."[44] Later, in the seventeenth century, the English thought that the Dutch were "lusty, fat, two-legged cheese-worms."[45]

Now, it is clear that the existence of a kingdom, its expansion through war, and its further consolidation as a state—with a promulgated and enforced law, taxation, and military service—transformed over time a land and its population into, respectively, a bounded territory and a "populus," "gens," or "natio," to use the largely interchangeable medieval terms for a designated people. Those terms signify a coming together of a political jurisdiction of the exercise of power with a cultural community, where a kingdom and a people were seen to be identical—a relatively extensive, yet bounded territorial kinship. In France, for example, the wars between the kings of France and the kings of England during the thirteenth century led to the incorporation of Normandy into France, just as the so-called "Albigensian Crusade" during the first half of the thirteenth century brought the areas of Toulouse and Languedoc into France.[46] Those who lived within France looked to the king and his agents for justice in the enforcement of the law, thereby creating a legal community. The functioning of the French state, above all, warfare, required revenue, which was raised through taxation, for example, the "hearth tax" (*fouage*), often, during this period, with the consent of the Estates General.[47] When taxation was thought to be

too onerous, protests were directed to the king. Even with those protests and the continuing attachments to a region, recognition of the "community of the realm"—formed through the developing image of a territory, its laws, and customs—emerged.

Numerous expressions of this idea of the community of the realm are found. Here, I cite only two examples. The "Declaration of Arbroath" (1320 CE), written by 39 Scottish barons to Pope John XXII in defense of the independence of Scotland from England, was described by its authors as having been made on behalf of the "whole community of the realm of Scotland."[48] In Clause 61 of the *Magna Carta* (1215 CE) appears the phrase "the whole community of the land." References to customs common to their respective countries are found in both documents; and so, too, are references to the law. In the *Magna Carta*, for example, one also finds the category of the "law of the land," that is, the law of England. And, as Edward Coke (1552–1634 CE) observed in his Prologue to the *Second Institutes*, citing statutes during the reign of King Edward (r. 1272–1307), that law was to be "read and published in every county four times in the year."[49]

This "whole community of the realm" or "the whole community of the land" was represented by the king. He was its focus, both held in awe and resented. Responsibility for defense of the realm, as the protector of life, and the enforcement of its laws, as the upholder of the order of life, thus rested with him. He could even be thought to have the miraculous power to heal those suffering from disease, specifically scrofula.[50] To be sure, recognition of this community of the realm was uneven. Medieval Scotland was always a country with pronounced regional allegiances, although beginning with Malcom Canmore (1057 CE) and continuing for more than 200 years Scotland had a fairly stable royal house. In France, throughout the medieval period, attachments to areas, especially but not only in the south like Languedoc, by their inhabitants persisted, yet that distinctiveness coexisted with acknowledgment that those areas were part of the kingdom of France ruled by the Capetian family for centuries. Thus, the emergence of "being Scottish" or "being French" was an untidy process of developments. Long ago, the historian Henry Sumner Maine, in *Early Law and Custom* (1883), was correct in his formulation of this untidy process when he remarked that "no country grew together originally so much through chance and luck as France." It was out of a number of fortuitous events that there arose a nation of France, the territory of which, beginning with the area of Île de France, ended up encompassing what is today France. What Maine characterized as the "French national spirit" was not the cause of those events, as perhaps an ideologically driven, nationalistic historian might claim, but the product developing along with them.[51]

This untidiness that is characteristic of the medieval period requires interpretative flexibility and nuance. The historian should not conclude that because of the persistence of regional attachments it is necessarily illegitimate to use the category of nation in describing Scotland or France of the fourteenth century. Once again, the historian must keep in mind that there is no such thing as a fully formed, culturally

homogeneous nation. The latter is an unrealistic understanding of the category. Few, if any, modern nations are free from regional attachments; and it is certainly characteristic of the members of modern, liberal democratic societies both to hold in awe its center, as the protector of life and its proper ordering through law, and to resent the demands that the center places on those members.

Although political developments such as the consolidation of states and the conduct of wars have an important place in the emergence and consolidation of the image of a community of the realm, the transformation of a land into a territory and its population into a "populus" or "natio" in medieval Europe should not be viewed by the historian as merely a consequence of those developments. Memories of the past, customs and traditions, previous law codes, and linguistic differences were also important in the formation of these territories and "peoples" or nations. For example, it was remembered during the reign of Philip the Fair that much earlier the Rhine had been the eastern boundary of Gaul; hence, some thought that the river should mark the eastern boundary of France.[52] However specious are these memories—assertions of continuity, as has been observed in Iranian, Korean, Sinhalese, and Vietnamese medieval historiography—these retrievals of the past into the present in the service of justifying a nation are themselves facts for the historian. A historian could, of course, seek to minimize the significance of these retrievals by insisting that they were limited to the literati. However, to do so is for the historian to ignore the different ways by which a national culture emerges, in particular, religion.

As has been repeatedly observed, religion was an important factor in the formation of ancient and medieval nations. Christianity, despite its universal jurisdiction that supports the historian's reference to a Christian civilization, did not only accommodate itself to national distinctions, for example, at the Council of Constance; it could also contribute to them. Consider, in contrast to the Islamic tradition of maintaining the Qur'an in Arabic (with the Iranian translation of the Qur'an into Persian being the exception), Christianity's accommodation to linguistic distinctions as expressed by Cyril and especially Methodius's (d. 885 CE) translation of the Bible into Old Church Slavonic and the latter's efforts to establish a Slavonic liturgy, Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into English (c. 1380 CE), the Hussite translations of the Bible into Czech and Hungarian (c. 1430 CE), and, as is well known, Luther's translation of the Bible into German (1520 CE). These translations stabilized their respective vernacular languages, and by "opening up" scripture to the laity popularized, even nationalized, the Bible and liturgy. None of these translations were the results of state-directed policies; rather, they were undertakings by individual members of the Church who, thereby, contributed to the formation of their respective nations.

The historian also observes how Christianity contributed to the formation of nations through the medieval veneration of national saints such as Olaf for Norway, Louis IX for France, Patrick for Ireland, George for Scotland, Stanisław for Poland, and Savia for Serbia. Sometimes this veneration was clearly in the service of the political purpose of increasing the authority of the king's lineage, as

in the case of Louis IX. However, at times the veneration of a saint was in opposition to the king, as was the case of Stanisław who in 1079 CE was murdered by the Polish king Bolesław II. Even Mary, mother of Jesus, was believed to have been the divine protector of Poland from the invading Swedes at the Battle of Częstochowa (1655 CE).[53] The veneration of these saints and Mary, the "Queen of Poland," conveys a fragmentation of Christian civilization, for their veneration, while vertically directed to a heavenly protector, is also horizontally directed to an image of a bounded territory and its population as the distinctive objects of that protection within Christendom. Variations of this paradoxical relation between universal Christianity and nationality are ubiquitous throughout medieval and early modern European history: clearly so in the description of several European nations as being a "new Israel," as the Dutch and English were understood throughout their respective populations during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,[54] also in Lutheran Sweden,[55] and even medieval Russia as a holy land before and subsequently in tension with the imperial Holy Russia as the New, Third Rome.[56] If the historian is not overly seduced by the assumption of an unequivocal, religious development from antiquity to modern times, from paganism to monotheism, then he or she has reason to wonder if the veneration of national saints, the image of the Christian "new Israels," and the idea of a national, holy land represent a re-emergence, albeit implicitly as it is within monotheism, of the ancient Near East worship of the god of the land.

Christianity and the Church influenced the formation of nations during the Middle Ages in other ways. During the period before the Norman Conquest and after that until the subsequent consolidation of an English national state during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE, the Church in England was centered at Canterbury, with bishops distributed throughout the smaller kingdoms on the island. Thus, from the perspective of the Church, the English were viewed as an ecclesiastical jurisdiction before the formation of England as a national state. The question arises how this ecclesiastical structure may have influenced the development of an English nation. Similar questions arise for other ecclesiastical jurisdictions, for example, Poland, which had become a separate ecclesiastical province from as early as 1000 CE and continued as such despite the country's tumultuous history of invasion, foreign domination, and dismemberment.

The historian has good reason to pursue the question of how the Church and the religious geography of its ecclesiastical jurisdictions may have influenced the development of the English nation, namely Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*) (c. 730 CE). It is certainly clear from the conclusion of Bede's work that there remained a pronounced salience of the local areas of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria within what must, as a consequence, be judged by the historian to have been the relatively unstable, but nonetheless employed, term "English." However imprecise Bede's use of the term "English" as a *gens* (or *nacio/natio*, both terms are used by him, seemingly interchangeably) may have been in the eighth century CE, he clearly had in

mind, as can be seen in his opening description of Britain in Book One, distinctions between what he described as the four nations (*gentes*, but *nationes* in other places in his *History*): English, British, Scots, and Picts, each with their own language but with Latin in common among them.[57]

Over time, the terms "English" and "England" would achieve greater stability in other histories, in the early twelfth-century works of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regnum Anglorum* (*The Deeds of the Kings of the English*), and *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* (*The Deeds of the English Bishops*), and Aelred's *Genealogia Regum Anglorum* (*Genealogy of the Kings of the English People*), and in the mid-twelfth century work of Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* (*History of the English People*). No doubt the political and legal developments during the twelfth century account for a great deal of that developing stability. That they did is not to be denied. There are, however, other factors, other traditions, that contributed to the consolidation of the English people, ecclesiastical jurisdiction being one of them.[58] Recall that the body of St. Cuthbert was, in the late tenth century, interred in Durham Cathedral, which, as a consequence, had become a pilgrimage site. These other factors should not be ignored. For example, there were the monastic reforms, including the establishment of 40 or more monasteries throughout England by King Edgar during the last quarter of the tenth century. It is reasonable for the historian to conclude that those 40 monasteries joined together the English people as Christians.[59] Perhaps a somewhat similar, early medieval religious geography is to be observed in the distribution of Vedāndist monasteries (*mathāmnāyas*), established by Śankara, throughout, and thereby contributing to the formation of what was to become the territory of India.[60]

During the history of medieval Scotland, the historian also observes how the Church contributed to the formation of the nation. The Scottish Church had always insisted on its independence as an ecclesiastical province separate from the English ecclesiastical jurisdictions of Canterbury and York.[61] It did so even in the aftermath of the late eleventh-century reforms of Pope Gregory VII, which freed the jurisdiction of the Church from the territorial authority of the kings of different Christian realms and, thus, could have provided the occasion for a unified Church throughout the island. Yet, the Church in Scotland continued to assert its independence, which was formally recognized by Rome in Pope Celestine III's *Cum Universi* (1192). This ecclesiastical independence presents the historian with a development that is important for understanding how different processes are involved in the formation and continued existence of nations.

The papal bull *Cum Universi* marked the successful conclusion to a several-centuries-long claim to the jurisdictional independence by the Scottish Church, the de facto center of which was at St. Andrews. It is important for the historian to note that this formal recognition of the independence of the Scottish Church came more than 100 years before the reign of the Scottish King Robert the Bruce and the "Declaration of Arbroath"; it was not a result of those latter political developments and the wars of independence of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries with which the name of William Wallace is popularly associated. Thus, the historian

has reason to consider the likelihood that the idea that Christianity in Scotland, by virtue of being in Scotland, should have its own Church; that this idea followed its own tradition, a tradition that included the canonization, in 1250 CE, of Queen Margaret, wife of the Scottish king Malcolm Canmore (r. 1058–1093 CE); and that this tradition contributed to the formation of Scotland as a nation.

Recognition of religious traditions that contributed to the formation of the Scottish nation does not mean that those traditions were not influenced by the development of the state in Scotland. We observed that Scotland had its own king since early in the eleventh century. Wars with the Vikings and later with England were certainly additional factors influencing the formation of a Scottish nation. By the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries, the existence of a widely recognized nation of Scotland seems to be beyond doubt. One indication for the existence of a Scottish nation at this time is the appearance of various works, the focus of which was Scotland: John Barbour's epic poem, *The Bruce*; Andrew of Wyntoun's *Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*; and, in 1582, George Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*. These factors or processes—religious, political, historiographical—all contributed to the formation of a Scottish nation; they are intertwined with one another. The focus here on religion as one of those factors is by no means to deny the importance of those other factors. It is, however, to draw attention to the importance of a factor relatively distinct from the state and its exercise of power in the formation of a nation, its territory, and its people.

It must never be forgotten that a nation is a cultural community of territorial kinship, the existence of which depends upon how individuals understand themselves and their relation to others through reference to various categories and symbols. The exercise of power through the state is, by itself, never sufficient for the existence of a nation. Necessary for that existence are the various traditions about that existence: who is sovereign, and, above all, the jurisdiction of that exercise of power. Proceeding this way was the merit of Anthony Smith's analytical approach to the study of nations, the so-called "ethnosymbolism": the focus on how various, developing traditions—their symbols and myths—were necessary for any nation to exist over time.[62]

There is no good reason for viewing, during the Middle Ages, "being Iranian," "being Korean," "being Sinhalese," "being Vietnamese," "being English," or "being Scottish" as representing an ethnicity, other than a stubborn unwillingness to view the possibility that nations could exist before the so-called "age of nationalism" from, say, the Peace of Westphalia (1648) through the right of national self-determination recognized by the League of Nations after World War I and the United Nations after World War II; a misunderstanding of a nation as being culturally homogeneous; and an insistence that the sole source of national attachments and the loyalty that accompanies them are a result of the policies of the modern state. To do so only obscures the image of a territory in the (unevenly) shared traditions of those medieval populations. There is also no good reason for describing the development of those identities as "ethnogenesis," other than as an expression of that unwillingness and insistence.

It may be appropriate to describe those "peoples" who were not inseparably connected to a territory as an "ethnic group" or a "tribal confederacy," for example, the Getae, Huns, or the Avars. But when they are connected to a territory, when territorial traditions arise about that connection, and especially when there are also histories of those "peoples" written by their members, the historian would more accurately understand their early development as "natiogenesis." To be sure, the historian has many reasons to qualify the use of the category nation to describe the medieval Koreans, Vietnamese, Sinhalese, French, Scots, and so forth as a nation; but there are also many reasons for the historian to qualify many, if not all, modern nations as nations.

Notes

1 The problems with the assumptions conveyed by the category "the Renaissance" as a contrast to the Middle Ages had already been observed in 1920 by Johan Huizinga, "The Problem of the Renaissance," reprinted in *Men and Ideas: History, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 243–87. For a recent overview, see William Caferro, *Contesting the Renaissance* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2011). On the scholarly formulation of the category "Middle Ages" and the different understandings of it, a useful introduction is Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages* (New York: William Morrow, 1991).

2 See, for example, Warren Treadgold, ed., *Renaissances Before the Renaissance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1985) and particularly the chapter, John J. Contreni, "The Carolingian Renaissance," 59–74.

3 See Janet L. Nelson, "On the Limits of the Carolingian Renaissance," *Studies in Church History* 14 (1977): 51–69.

4 Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927); Harold Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Legal Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983).

5 See Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, ed., *Universities in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), vol. 1 of the four-volume *A History of the University in Europe*, edited by Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992–2011).

6 Frederick Pollock and Frederic William Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd rev. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898), 138.

7 For recent analyses of legal pluralism, see David Runciman, *Pluralism and the Personality of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Jacob Levy, *Rationalism, Pluralism, and Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

8 Otto von Gierke, *Das deutsche Genossenschaftsrecht* (Graz: Akademische druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1954 [1868–1913]).

9 In this regard, note the suggestive observations by Anne Dawtry, "The Benedictine Revival in the North: The Last Bulwark of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism," and R.K. Rose, "Cumbrian Society and the Anglo-Norman Church," in Stuart Mews, ed., *Religion and National Identity, Studies in Church History*, vol. 18 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 87–98, 119–36.

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16 See Joseph R. Strayer, *The Reign of Philip the Fair* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980); *On the Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970). Note the admission by Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 113, "It is true that nations existed before they were so called, as a sense of community rooted in collective emotions, as language, shared traditions and simple comradeship in arms … following the end of the European middle ages."
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34 Roberts, "Nationalism," 143.
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