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Annex 12 (Book XXI, chapter 7)

- The Spirit of Law - Annexes to the edition of 1758 -

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It appears that in the time of Homer, the opulence of Greece was in Rhodes, Corinth, and Orchomenus. Jupiter, he says, "loved the Rhodians, and gave them great wealth." [1] He gives to Corinth the epithet rich. [2] Similarly, when he wants to evoke cities that have much gold, he cites Orchomenus, which he joins with Thebes of Egypt. [3] Rhodes and Corinth retained their might, and Orchomenus lost it. The position of Orchomenus, near the Hellespont, Propontis, [4] and the Euxine Sea, naturally gives the impression that it owed its wealth to trade on the coasts of these seas, which had given rise to the fable of the Golden Fleece. And indeed the name of Minyan is given to Orthomenus [5] and also to the Argonauts. But as these seas subsequently became better known, as the Greeks established a great number of colonies there, as these colonies traded with the barbarian peoples, and as they communicated with their metropolis, Orchomenus began to fall, and rejoined the crowd of other Greek cities.

The Greeks before Homer had traded almost exclusively amongst themselves, and with some barbarian people, but they extended their domination as they created new peoples. Greece was a large peninsula whose capes seemed to have made the seas recede and the gulfs open on all sides as if still to receive them. If we glance at Greece, we will see, in a rather compact country, a vast expanse of coastline. Her innumerable colonies traced an immense circumference around her ; and in them she saw, so to speak, the entire world that was not barbarian. When she reached the interior of Sicily and Italy, she created nations there. When she sailed towards the seas of the Pontus, towards the coasts of Asia Minor, towards the coasts of Africa, she did the same. Her cities acquired prosperity as they found themselves near new peoples. And what was admirable is that islands without number, situated as if on the front line, still surrounded her.

What causes of prosperity for Greece were the games she gave, so to speak, to the world ; temples to which all kings sent offerings ; festivals to which people came from all over ; oracles that attracted the attention of all human curiosity ; in short, taste and the arts elevated to such point that to believe they can be surpassed is not to know them !

[1] *Iliad*, book II.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.* book I, v. 381. See Strabo, book IX, p. 414, 1620 edition.

[4] [Today, the Sea of Marmara.]

[5] Strabo, book IX, p. 414.