

course was animated by the Roman dominion, and the Latin tongue spread over the whole West, and over a portion of Northern Africa. In the East, Hellenism still predominated long after the destruction of the Bactrian empire under Mithridates I., and thirteen years before the irruption of the Sacæ or Scythians.

With respect to geographical extent, the Latin tongue gained upon the Greek, even before the seat of empire had been removed to Byzantium. The reciprocal transfusion of these two highly-organized forms of speech, which were so rich in literary memorials, became a means for the more complete amalgamation and union of different races, while it was likewise conducive to an increase of civilization, and to a greater susceptibility for intellectual cultivation, tending, as Pliny says, "to humanize men and to give them one common country."\*

However much the languages of the barbarians, the dumb, *ἄγλωσσοι*, as Pollux terms them, may have been generally despised, there were some cases in which, according to the examples of the Lagides, the translation of a literary work from the Punic was undertaken in Rome by order of the authorities; thus, for instance, we find that Mago's treatise on agriculture was translated at the command of the Roman Senate.

While the empire of the Romans extended in the Old Continent as far westward as the northern shores of the Mediterranean—reaching to its extremest confines at the holy promontory—its eastern limit, even under Trajan, who navigated the Tigris, did not advance beyond the meridian of the Persian Gulf. It was in this direction that the progress of the international contact produced by inland trade, whose results were so important with respect to geography, was most strongly manifested during the period under consideration. After the downfall of the Græco-Bactrian empire, the reviving power of the Arsacidæ favored intercourse with the Seres, although only by indirect channels, as the Romans were impeded by the active commercial intervention of the Parthians

\* This beneficial influence of civilization, exemplified by the extension of a language in exciting feelings of general good will, is finely characterized in Pliny's praise of Italy: "omnium terrarum alumna eadem et parens, numine Deûm electa, quæ sparsa congregaret imperia, ritusque molliret, et tot populorum discordes ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret, colloquia, et humanitatem homini daret, breviterque una cunctarum gentium in toto orbe patria fieret." (Plin., *Hist. Nat.*, iii., 5.)