

CHAPTER I

The Inquiry

In this book we deal with two small villages located on the high alpine rim of northern Italy—two microcosms caught up in the play of forces larger and more powerful than themselves. It is our purpose to describe and explain this interplay between microcosm and macrocosm, between peasant settlement and an expanding market, between community and more inclusive polity. The two villages lie next to each other, but they are separated by provincial boundaries: German-speaking St. Felix today forms part of the Italian Province of Bozen or Bolzano, officially designated as Alto Adige or Tiroler Etschland; Romance-speaking Tret, its neighbor, belongs to the Province of Trento or Trentino. Both provinces formed, before World War I, an integral part of the Austrian *Land* of the Tyrol, and were thus component parts of the large Austro-Hungarian Empire (see Figure 1). Province Bozen then had a population of 285,000, of whom fewer than 10,000 spoke Ladinsh, a Rhatéo-Romansh language, and another group of fewer than 10,000 members spoke Italian; the rest were German speakers (Fiebiger 1959: 17; Leidlmair 1958: 39). Province Trento, in comparison, counted 387,000 inhabitants; most of them spoke Italian. Ladinsh speakers and German speakers there numbered fewer than 14,000

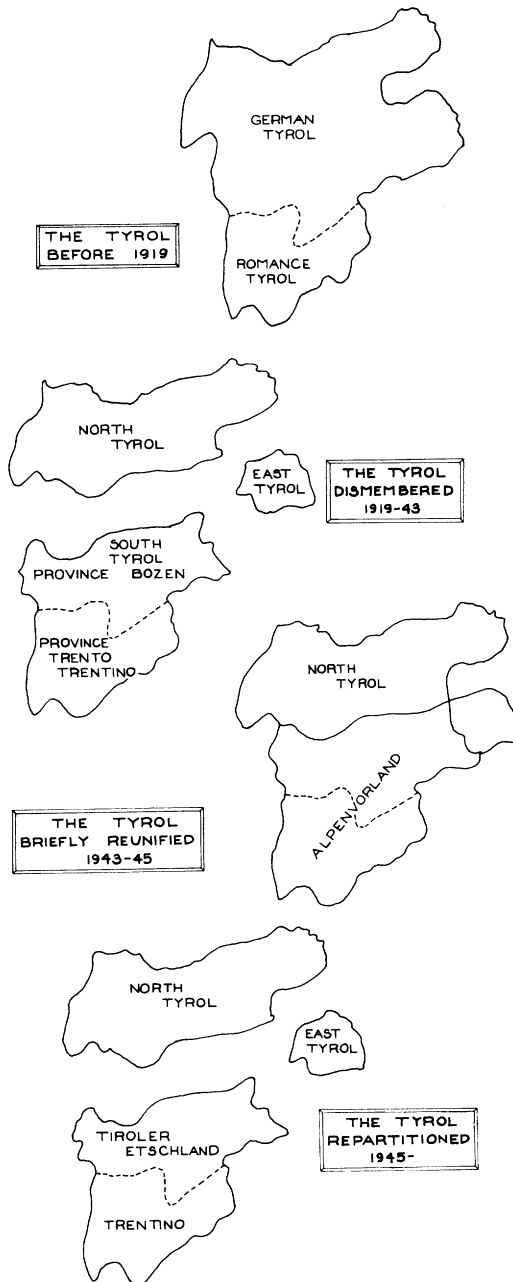


Figure 1. The Tyrol in history.

(Dörrenhaus 1959: 91; for population figures see Appendix 1 of this book).

After World War I both provinces were transferred to Italy and—with the exception of a brief interlude during World War II—have formed parts of the Italian state ever since. The political settlement at the end of World War I, in dividing the German-speaking Province of Bozen/Bolzano, or the South Tyrol, from the remainder of the Tyrol, thus also granted the Italian state political jurisdiction over more than 200,000 German speakers, who henceforth constituted an ethnic minority within Italy; the inhabitants of predominantly German-speaking St. Felix belong to that minority. In contrast, the largely Romance-speaking Province of Trento was claimed by the victorious Italian state as part of Italian territory liberated from Austrian domination. For the Italians, the Trentino was *terra irredenta*, “unredeemed land,” and the Romance speakers of Tret, consequently, were incorporated into the Italian nation.

Yet these two villages, different in ethnic identity and often at loggerheads in politics, live side by side and share very similar modes of adaptation to a common mountainous environment. We are interested in the commonalities that unite them and in the social, cultural, and political oppositions that divide them. We hope, in the course of an historical and anthropological analysis of St. Felix and Tret, to come to understand the forces that have shaped them and to better understand the larger processes of economic and political involvement at work in the wider enveloping societies.

We know that a study of small populations will not reveal all there is to know about the total societies in which they are embedded, and we are similarly aware that the study of total societies will not in and of itself provide grounds for predicting how small populations react to more wide-ranging systemic processes. The total society is not a community writ larger, nor is a small settlement in the mountains a replica of a larger whole in miniature. Nevertheless, we are convinced of the utility of an approach that sees the *relation* between village and nation as problematic, and hence as a source of potential insights. That relation is for us not simple and mechanical; rather, we understand it as complex and dialectical. It is dialectical because village and total society exist in opposition and often in contradiction. It is dialectical because these two units in opposition interpenetrate each other and act upon one another in social and cultural interchanges. It is dialectical, finally, in that this interaction generates an ongoing transformation over time, which subjects the narrower unit to ever more comprehensive

processes of integration, or synthesis. As anthropologists, we want to focus on the transformations worked upon small populations; but we also want to know something of the way in which what happens at the village level supports or stands in contrast to the character and direction of movement in the larger system. We are interested in the transformations of local ecological patterns and political alignments in relation to the promptings of market and nation-building.

Every study has a history and develops its own characteristic problems and solutions. In this chapter we want to address ourselves to the considerations that brought us to the high alpine villages of St. Felix and Tret in the upper reaches of the valley of Anaunia, and to detail the manner in which the study was carried out.

This inquiry had its formal beginnings in Eric Wolf's application to the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation for financial support in 1957—its informal origins extend further into the past. Wolf had visited the South Tyrol as a child, in the summer of 1934, for a stay in the Val Gardena, or Gröden Tal, a popular tourist center. It was an eventful summer outside the valley: Ernst Roehm and his left-wing National Socialists were slaughtered by Hitler in June, and in July, Chancellor Dollfuss of Austria was assassinated in Vienna by the Nazi underground. The Gardena, by contrast, seemed idyllic in its peacefulness; yet one could feel undercurrents of hostility between the inhabitants of the valley and the officialdom of a Fascist Italy bent on their forcible acculturation. Having grown up first in Vienna and then among the Germans and Czechs of the embittered Sudeten frontier of Czechoslovakia, even a boy could not help but become sensitized to the conflicts of ethnicity and nationalist loyalties left unresolved by the collapse of the Habsburg Empire; long before he became an anthropologist, Wolf was led to ask of himself and others why ethnic and nationalist loyalties so often crosscut allegiances of class or formal citizenship.

Wolf saw the area again, at the end of World War II, as a member of the United States' mountain troops, and once more witnessed the hostile encounter between German-speaking Tyrolese and Italians. The anthropological question of the why and wherefore of ethnic boundaries and loyalties arose once more, still without satisfying answers. While his later interests in graduate studies shifted to Southeast Asia and Latin America, Wolf did maintain a continuing concern both with the narrower problems of the divided Tyrol and with the larger problems posed by the existence of ethnic conflicts and accommodations. Thus, in 1947–48, he interviewed

Tyrolese in New York for Columbia University's Research in Contemporary Cultures, directed by Ruth Benedict, and his first field work in Mexico in 1951 was prompted by an interest in the genesis of Mexican national identity. Hence, in the late 1950s, it seemed worthwhile to initiate a study aimed specifically at gaining a clearer understanding of ethnic contrasts. Several European regions suggested themselves—for example, Schleswig-Holstein or Cyprus. Since either study would have meant learning Danish, Turkish, or Greek, Wolf decided on the South Tyrol in the Italian Alps: he was familiar with the area, spoke German as a mother tongue, and had learned some Italian in the course of the war. He selected for intensive attention the twin villages of St. Felix and Tret. St. Felix is German speaking, whereas the people of Tret speak a variant of Romansh. The two village centers are located no more than a half-hour's walk from each other, one mile apart as the crow flies, on a mountain plateau south of Meran and west of Bozen. This mountain plateau is called the Nonsberg by the German-speaking Tyrolese, and the Val di Non by Italians. To avoid the ethnic connotations that these names suggest, we shall refer to it hereafter by its Roman and Medieval name, the Anaunia.

The South Tyrol was selected as the general area of study, and St. Felix and Tret chosen as the particular villages to be studied, to allow us to investigate ethnic coexistence or conflict with a minimum of additional linguistic preparation. On the face of it, this criterion proved to be the product of an undue optimism. Although Viennese will readily tell you that they experience no difficulty in understanding Tyrolese, their claim is not borne out in practice. Tyrolese, in turn, experience a language gap between their own dialect and standard German, and veterans of the Galician campaign of World War I have told us that they could understand Yiddish, equally a peripheral dialect of German, more easily than the speech of other Austrian soldiers. In Galicia, they averred, they encountered "*lauter Tiroler*," many Tyrolese; however, these Tyrolese wore long, black coats, sidelocks, and black hats. Nor did familiarity with Italian ease communication in Nónes, the Romance language spoken in the Anaunia. Nónes belongs to the Romansh family of languages, and Wolf's knowledge of French and Spanish often proved more useful than Italian.

There were other unforeseen problems, both practical and methodological. Finding sufficient firewood for cooking and heating in villages not provided with facilities for lodging outsiders proved time consuming. Working in an area with a long tradition

of record keeping required a shift from more synchronically oriented fieldwork to a more workmanlike concern with local and regional history. Most obvious of all difficulties, however, was the challenge of a field situation that proved too close, both psychologically and culturally, to Wolf's Austrian background. This was least obvious in the collection of genealogical data and family histories, and most obvious in the recording of information on political history, especially where past experiences with National Socialism and Fascism still obtruded into the ethnographic present. After the initial year of fieldwork, 1960–61, and a return visit in the summer of 1962, Wolf, therefore, sought to counteract his self-perceived lack of distance. Ideally this could best be done by inviting a restudy of the two villages by another anthropologist who could add perspective. The work was thus taken up by John W. Cole, then a graduate student at the University of Michigan, who carried on independent field work in the same area for eighteen months, from September 1965 to March 1967.

Cole complemented Wolf's inquiry in several ways. He brought to the study an interest in cultural ecology, as well as a measure of previous acquaintance with the culture and language of the area, gained between 1957–60 while serving with the United States Army in Germany. Frequent trips into the Alps provided him with welcome relief from the regimentation of army life and from the insularity of the American community around the army base. In beginning his own field work he could draw on Wolf's data on social organization as a basis for his own study of village ecology and economy. The timing of his fieldwork also proved auspicious, since he came to live in the villages at a time when agricultural machinery made its first appearance and the migration to take up work in the adjacent lowlands or in Germany had begun in earnest. These events marked a shift toward both a greater commitment to commercialized agriculture and nonpeasant sources of subsistence. Cole's restudy thus allowed us to witness a major change in response to external factors, and offered some insight into the consequences of a growth in economic well-being for villages poorer and more isolated at the start of the decade. Wolf again visited the area in the summers of 1965 and 1968, and both authors returned in the summer of 1969.

The selection of St. Felix and Tret as field sites requires still further explanation. The ethnic frontier between German and Romance speakers is divisible into many sectors; any of these would have furnished an equally propitious—and certainly more comfort-

able—location for study. Some readers may find it ironic that we selected one of the least known and most inaccessible of these. We could have returned, for example, to Gröden, with its lush, upland meadows, its villages of wood carvers, and its tourist hotels. We could have settled in the Unterland, the vineyard region in the Etsch River valley below Bozen. We could even have studied ethnic conflicts and symbiosis in the twin cities of the area, Bozen and Meran. Instead, we selected villages in a little-known valley: we would comment jokingly about the villages as examples of Danubian II, and came to call the Val di Non the “valley of nothing.” But we purposely made this selection. First, St. Felix and Tret provided us with an opportunity to study ethnic interrelations that were age-old and not merely the product of recent exacerbations of ethnicity due to political conflict. Second, we wanted a simple field situation in which we could get to know all the relevant actors and participate as fully as possible in their various activities. This meant that we wanted to avoid cities and towns. Urban anthropology, while an important and growing branch of anthropology, had not yet developed the research tactics and strategy that would have justified an extended stay in Bozen or Meran. Third, we wanted to avoid areas where cultural and political conflicts were so extreme that we could have worked only with one side, to the exclusion of the other. Fourth, we did not want to deal with a situation in which the annual influx of large numbers of tourists would blur our research focus—though we are fully aware of the importance of tourism as a cultural phenomenon demanding study in its own right. At any rate, in St. Felix and Tret there were no tourists—only a handful of summer guests with ties in the villages and in no position to reshape or drastically restructure the ongoing way of life.

In choosing St. Felix and Tret we thus followed the anthropologist's traditional penchant for the study of relatively isolated and “unspoiled” situations, but we make no apologies for the choice. We believe, in fact, that, if anything, the study of poor, peripheral communities has been rather slighted in the study of complex societies; even in well-studied Mexico, there are few studies of poor, isolated Mije or Otomí-speaking populations. Tret and St. Felix are certainly not statistically representative of the entire gamut of South Tyrolean and Trentino communities. However, they are characteristic of the social and ecological world of mountain peasantry in both the South Tyrol and the Trentino, the world of villages in which more than 50% of the economically engaged population carries on agriculture and livestock-raising (Leidlmaier 1958:

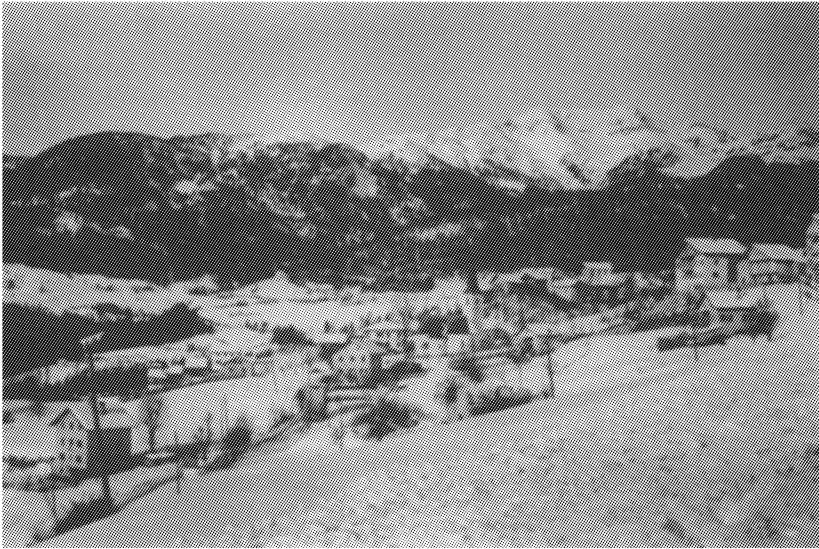
108). Such villages abound in Schnals, Martell, Ulten, Sarntal, and in the periphery of the Valley of the Puster in the South Tyrol; in the Giudicarie, Val di Sole, Fiemme, or Fassa, within the Trentino. St. Felix and Tret are, of course, not representative of the cultivator-wageworker villages of the Vintschgau, nor of artisan and craft-producing villages near Meran and Bozen; nor do they reveal anything of the life of fruit growers and vintners along the Etsch. They are, nevertheless, diagnostic in exhibiting, in stark form, social and cultural processes that remain more muted elsewhere, since their close coexistence for more than seven hundred years permits insights into their ecological and ideological differences in particularly profiled form.

TWO VILLAGES

Some of the ecological and ideological differences are apparent in their external structures. Tret is a nucleated village of thirty-seven inhabited dwellings. Multiple farm structures are the most common type; the thirty-seven structures contain a total of sixty inhabited apartments. At the center of the village is its largest building, the *setti-communi*, which contains several apartments and barns, as well as one of the two village stores. Three other structures, including the second store, adjoin the *setti-communi*, forming what the villagers jokingly call their *piazza*, or village square. Fields in Tret characteristically lie outside the settlement area, extending for some distance in every direction; holdings are fragmented—the plots belonging to a household may be widely dispersed. St. Felix, in contrast, is characterized by a predominantly scattered pattern of settlement. Its core consists only of the church, the tavern (which also houses a store), and four other buildings; all other houses and barns lie scattered over the landscape, each surrounded by a solid block of fields and meadows separating it from its nearest neighbor. St. Felix possesses sixty-one such buildings, comprising a total of seventy-four apartments. Each building, with its attached fields, meadows, and pastures, bears a name that endures over the generations: its occupants characteristically bear that name and are called by it, rather than by their legal surname. In Tret, houses also bear names, usually those of some past occupant, but people are referred to by nicknames or the name of the stock to which they belong, in order to differentiate, for instance, two Bepo Bertagnollis as Bepo



"Tret is a nucleated village of thirty-seven inhabited dwellings." At the beginning of spring, fields and meadows will receive their cover of manure.



In St. Felix, in contrast, "houses and barns lie scattered over the landscape."

Cru and Bepo Franzett. The difference in settlement patterns and in the layout of fields in the two villages is illustrative of a more general contrast between the rural Trentino, which tends toward a pattern of nucleated settlements and dispersed holdings, and the rural South Tyrol, with its characteristic pattern of isolated homesteads and compact estates (see Dörrenhaus 1959).

The two villages also illustrate a more general political contrast between the Romance-speaking Trentino and the German-speaking South Tyrol. The rural community in the Trentino, as in most of Italy, characteristically forms part of a political entity governed from the seat of the municipal government, which is located in an urban center. Rural settlements do not administer their own affairs but send delegates to the dominant town. Thus, Tret is a *frazione*, or *ward*, of the commune of Fondo; it has a *capo frazione*, a ward headman who is under orders to the town government; and it sends two delegates, the *capo* and one other, to represent its interests in the meetings of the communal council in Fondo. In contrast, St. Felix—like other South Tyrolean rural communities—is a self-governing commune, with its own mayor (*Bürgermeister*), its own elected communal council of twenty heads of households, its own committee regulating access to forest and pasture land, and a committee to permit or prevent transfers of land.

The contrast between the dependence of the Italian rural settlement on an urban center and the autonomy of the Tyrolean rural settlement is illustrated still further in St. Felix and Tret in ecclesiastical matters: St. Felix has its own priest to whom the community assigns a residence and farm lands for subsistence (*Widum*), rendering him comparable in the operation of a holding to other owners of homesteads. It also possesses a plethora of religious associations (see Chapter XI). In contrast, the priest serving Tret lives in Fondo and alternates his services to the *frazione* with attendance at mass in nearby Dovenà.

The political and ecclesiastical contrasts have larger social implications as well. The Italian, and thus Trentine, cultivator, the *contadino*, belongs to a *contado*, the rural orbit of a city. It is the city that is regarded as the seat of civilization and urbanity; the *contadino* is defined not merely as a second-rate citizen in a polity where urban dwellers take precedence, but also as an individual lower on the social scale, lacking in the civilized graces. The Tyrolean peasant, on the other hand, the *Bauer*, is not merely the owner of a homestead, but as such, holds political rights in his community

and in a politically defined peasant estate within the Tyrolese assembly.

FIELDWORK

In fixing our attention on St. Felix and Tret, we did not choose communities representative of the wealthy and often opulent life of the lowland valleys, but poor and isolated settlements with few specialties and little chance to share in the richness of cultural forms so characteristic of the more prosperous Tyrolese peasantry. Poverty and isolation have also limited the number and kinds of social honors the communities can bestow upon their members. In St. Felix, a man may be elected mayor or communal councilman; in Tret, a man may be chosen ward headman or representative to the town council. Beyond these formal rewards, most tokens of recognition are informal, granted by fellow villagers to the successful manager of a holding; to the individual with a cool head who can give reasonable advice; to the woman who raises a garden of beautiful vegetables; to the man who is continually successful at cards. Being informal, these tokens of esteem—and conversely, their withdrawal—are based largely on individual performance. We soon became aware of the great range of idiosyncratic behavior among our informants and of the value granted, in gossip or social interaction, to the individual characteristics of particular men and women.

The two villages are poor, and diet is meager to the point of insufficiency. It consists of dumplings, potatoes, sauerkraut, and cheap wine, supplemented by smoked bacon on festive occasions or during periods of intense physical activity. Also lacking are most of the elaborations of art and ritual that make visits to other parts of the Tyrol, both North and South, rewarding to the urban visitor. Here there is no separate folk costume, nor idiosyncratic forms of music and song. Only one family does a little wood carving, and the use of decoration in painting interiors and exteriors is minimal, in contrast to the elaborate murals that often decorate Tyrolese houses elsewhere. The comfortable wood paneling and beautiful tile stoves of other Tyrolese houses are also absent. Religious ritual and art is not elaborate. What is lacking in other art forms, however, is made up in verbal play—and here our skills as linguists were not always up to the exigencies of the field situation. Though Wolf spoke

German as his mother tongue, he often could not follow joking except in translation or after careful explanation; he acquired only a smattering of Nónes, in which the Trettners communicate as in their very own "secret" language. Cole acquired a good speaking and reading knowledge of German, and a passable acquaintance with standard Italian. We are not, after this fieldwork, too sanguine about our capacity to claim firm command of the informal content of communication among the people we studied.

Though we have talked to all the people in both communities and participated in many different events during more than three combined years of fieldwork, we shall be quite content if we can explicate the more formal and structural aspects of village life. We will be exceedingly pleased if our work prompts other investigators, with greater skills in linguistics and more psychologically oriented inquiries, to carry out further work on the more informal aspects of communication in these two villages.

Although we hoped to divide equally our residence between St. Felix and Tret, both of us were forced to take up lodging in Tret, since no housing was available in St. Felix. Wolf, in 1960, found lodging for himself and his family on the second story of a house that had just become vacant upon the death of the owner's father. Cole, in 1965, occupied, with his family, a basement apartment, also recently vacant due to the death of a former tenant. On summer visits we stayed in the small inn in Tret, but in the summer of 1969, Cole and his family rented a newly built cabin above the village. During the first month of his year in the field, Wolf briefly had use of a car; after that he walked or took buses. In all later fieldwork we had access to a car, and could offer rides to villagers on their way to or from the market, or from the doctor in town. Yet, we did a great deal of hiking and walking over the extensive mountainside, inevitably becoming members of an information network that required everyone, German and Romance alike, to report to whom-ever he met the identities and whereabouts of all persons previously encountered on the trail. Also, like the villagers, we learned to walk through stands of forest with our eyes glued to the ground in search of potential firewood.

The people of Tret and St. Felix greeted our entry into the villages with predictable curiosity and a measure of reserve, but without much self-consciousness. There were rumors at the outset that Wolf's real reason for seeking a residence in the Upper Anaunia was its reputation for invigorating air: he had perhaps had a mental breakdown for which mountain air could have a salutary effect.

There did not seem to be anything else that could commend two villages, otherwise avoided by the tourist trade, to a visitor from America. At the same time, an interest in local history and customs seemed to be the sort of idiosyncrasy expected from a professor. Cole's entry was in turn eased by Wolf's previous stays, and his explanation that he was preparing a dissertation for an American university seemed sufficient for all concerned. Unexpectedly, perhaps, our acceptance in the villages was aided by the presence of older men who had once migrated to the United States and then returned; conversing with us with their few phrases of English validated their experience abroad in the eyes of other villagers, and we were able to rely on a few of these returnees for both advice and information.

We both were, during our first residence in the villages, accompanied by our families. Our wives, in charge of small children, were necessarily much tied to their own households, especially during the long and bitter winter months. This precluded for them, for instance, a role such as Katia Wolf had filled in previous field work in Puerto Rico, when she had been able to collect extensive data on the subculture of women and on the socialization of children. On the other hand, we also had children who attended school in Tret, and from whom we learned a great deal about both schoolmates and their parents. Wolf's six-year-old son, David, also became a kind of apprentice to the village smith, and in this capacity mastered much of the locally available metallurgical techniques. Both Cole's daughter, Sherry, and Wolf's son, David, developed a wide circle of acquaintances, and often visited village homes long before the authors. Subsequent summers we spent alone in the village supplemented our knowledge of the life patterns of unmarried males and females, as did Cole's participation in card games and Wolf's interest in skiing. The smith of Tret provided his own model of where we fitted into the local scheme of things. For him people fall into three categories: those who work with their hands, like peasants or artisans; those who work with their feet, like policemen and foresters; and those who work with their heads, like priests, teachers, and ourselves.

Due to the small size of the two villages, we in due course were able to come to know everybody and to participate in most structured public events. We watched people set out for work in the early dawn and talked to them during work breaks. We accompanied them to the fields when they spread manure on the melting snows of spring, and we walked with their herds in the annual move-

ment to and from the high pastures. We took part in the critical task of bringing in the hay before the onset of rains ruined the hay crop, and we were invited to the festive cookouts of *polenta* (a maize porridge), sausages, and red wine held in the mountain meadows during haying season. We helped to gather mushrooms and wild flowers, and we were invited in to taste a particularly successful *grappa* brewed from eleven different wild plants, or to try a side of smoked bacon newly removed from the soot-covered chimney. Like other villagers, we shopped at the local stores and discussed the price and quality of produce. We also attended the regular markets in Fondo, and visited the cattle markets in Lana, Malé, Cles, and Bozen. We took part in the ceremonies surrounding a marriage; we attended funerals; and we walked in ritual processions, such as the Easter procession of 1969, which took place in a howling snow storm.

Much of our information came to us in unstructured and informal interviews. We obtained a great deal of this kind of data in bars and taverns where men gathered to drink and talk. We engaged people in conversation whenever we could—we would talk to passengers on the bus or awaiting its arrival; we would wait for church on Sundays and talk to the assembling faithful; we would chat with men returning from a hunt, or with those who accompanied the horse-drawn plow used to clear village streets after a heavy snow fall. We took photographs of various events and persons, and gave copies to people who appeared in them, using the opportunity to discuss other features of interest to us. Wolf on occasion played the accordion at dances, and Cole spent a great deal of time playing cards—the favorite local pastime. His skill at card games varied still further the kinds of participant situations to which we had access. In card playing, old and young men interacted with ease: card playing was thus one of the few occasions when we could break out of the social definitions imposed on us by our roles as husbands and fathers.

We also did a considerable amount of formal interviewing. Cole especially sought systematic answers to a questionnaire (see Appendix 2). He interviewed members of sixty-one households, drawn in equal numbers from both villages. The interviews ranged in length from two hours to the longest, twenty-five hours, carried out on five different occasions. The average interview consisted of about two sessions of four hours each. About thirty villagers whom we interviewed became our friends and best informants. While we have striven to retain something of the color and warmth with



"Playing cards—the favorite local pastime."

which our informants responded to our queries and reported their own life experiences, we have forced ourselves to be quite rigorous in omitting all information that could in any way threaten the anonymity of the persons offering opinions and accounts, and that could identify them to their own detriment. We are aware that this will detract from the colorfulness of our account, but we feel most strongly that certain disclosures can infringe on an individual's right to privacy. We have not, however, disguised the names of the villages from which our data are drawn. In our account we shall aim at general statements, offered as characterizations of the two populations at large, rather than description and analysis of the action patterns and verbal reports of particular individuals.

It is our impression that our friends responded most easily to questions formulated around ecological concerns and most warily to queries that explored past political commitments. For instance, we still do not know all the names of the Trettners who participated in a partisan assault on the German command post in Unser Frau in the waning months of World War II, nor do we know the identity of all the Felixers who opted for removal to Germany. We have become convinced that in both communities the political movements of the period before 1939 and the war thereafter created conflicts so disruptive of social relations within and between the villages that

most villagers are quite willing to forget the conflicts productive of such social tensions. Only an occasional dramatic event, notably the capture of Adolf Eichmann by the Israeli secret service and the acts of terrorism carried out by activist groups in favor of South Tyrolese reunion with Austria during 1961, would set villagers talking about political commitments and happenings of the past. Inevitably, because we worked at different times and with different emphases, we came to share some informants. At the same time each of us developed his own circle of friends and acquaintances; and one of the delights of repeated visits consisted in testing each other's impressions of the people we had come to know well separately, and to make the acquaintance of people who had become the friends of the other.

In addition to interpersonal interviews, we also worked to some extent with archival records. Wolf consulted the church records in St. Felix and Tret and the archives in Fondo, Unser Frau, and Trento. He also worked in the holdings of the Ferdinandeum and the University of Innsbruck. Cole consulted the registry offices in Fondo, Meran, and Cles, as well as the library of the Capuchin monastery in Cles. Both of us made extensive use of the holdings in the library of the Südtiroler Kulturinstitut in Bozen.

As we survey the data, we are reasonably certain of our ability to construct an interpretative model faithful to the events we have witnessed and the information we have collected both from informants and written records. We are also aware that our knowledge is by no means complete. We know more about some people than about others, more about Tret than about St. Felix, more about public events than about the private aspects of life, more about the lives of adults than about the lives of children, more about men than about women, more about ecology than about religion. We have better records on day-to-day interaction from Tret than from St. Felix, but we obtained better formal interviews in St. Felix than in Tret. Archival records also proved to be more complete in St. Felix than in Tret. We know that we have only partial answers to some of the questions that sent us into the field: in general, we have favored discussion of those topics on which we were able to gather reasonably complete information, rather than attempt to present a "well-rounded" study of a culture and society based on information that is highly variable in reliability.

We are well aware of the complex politics of the area, and we have tried sincerely to be dispassionate about the issues and reactions involved. We are both conscious of our personal sympathies

for Tyrolese claims to continued cultural identity, though we refrain from judgments as to where the political boundary between Austria and Italy is now drawn, or whether it should be redrawn in the future. This stance has created some difficulties for us, not the least of which is posed by the use of various names for the area and its populations.

THE POLITICS OF PLACE NAMES

All place names carry implicit and explicit political connotations. Thus, the designation "Tyrol" goes back to a time when the now Austrian *Länder* of Tirol and Osttirol formed a common political province (within the Habsburg Empire) with the Romance-speaking Trentino and the predominantly German-speaking, but now politically Italian, Province of Alto Adige, or *Tiroler Etschland*. Before 1919, under Habsburg rule, the German-speaking population of this entire political complex on both sides of the Brenner Pass was called *Deuschiroler*. After 1919, when Alto Adige and the Trentino passed into Italian hands, German speakers began to restrict the term "South Tyrol" to the predominantly German-speaking area in Italy between the Brenner and Salurn (Italian, Salorno). South Tyrol thus now explicitly *excludes* the Italian-speaking area of the Trentino.

The Trentino, before 1919, was also often known as *Welschtirol*, as contrasted with *Deuschirol*. *Welsch*, often in use now by German speakers with a strongly derogatory connotation, traces its origins back to an ancient Indo-European root *walos*, that is, stranger, once applied by Teutonic tribes to both Celts and Romance speakers. (It survives today in such names as Welsh, Wales, and Cornwall in Western Europe, and as *Vlach* in the Balkans.) This term, *Welsch*, no longer has political currency, though it is still employed by German and Austrian historians writing about the formerly Italian-speaking component of the historic Tyrol. There are also some Italian-speaking inhabitants of the modern Trentino who, through continued fidelity to the Habsburgs, continue to refer to themselves as Trentine Tyrolese.

Locally—around St. Felix and Tret—there is some use of the purely administrative terms of "Provinz Bozen" (Provincia di Bolzano) to designate the German-speaking South Tyrol or Alto Adige, while "Trento" (Provincia di Trento, Provinz Trient) refers to the Trentino proper. This seems to be based on the villagers' differential involve-

ment with the major administrative centers of the two provinces, Bozen/Bolzano and Trento/Trient, respectively. Before 1948, the German-speaking villages of St. Felix, Unser Frau im Wald, Proveis, and Laurein belonged administratively to the province of Trento; after that date they were transferred to Bozen.

We have tried to cope with the plethora of politically loaded terms by speaking of "the Tyrol" when we mean the undivided political unit of the pre-1919 past. When it is necessary to distinguish between the components of this unit to the north and south of the Brenner Pass, we speak of the cisalpine Tyrol as the area to the south of the pass, and of the transalpine Tyrol to the north of it. We use "South Tyrol" as isomorphic with the post-1919 Province of Bozen, and "Trentino" for the post-1919 Province of Trento. When we speak of "South Tyrolese," we mean the German-speaking people south of the Brenner; when we speak of "Trentini," we are referring to the Romance-speaking inhabitants of the Trentino. We give the German names of geographical features such as rivers, towns, or mountains when these occur within the confines of the Province of Bozen, and the Italian designations when these occur within the confines of the Trentino. As mentioned earlier, we have substituted, wherever possible, the name Anaunia for the German Nonsberg or the Italian Val di Non. We do, however, on occasion use the term *Nonsberger* for the German-speaking inhabitants of the Anaunia and *Nónes* for its Romance speakers. We have left untranslated a very occasional use of the German term *Deutschgegend* (German area) for the four German-speaking communities of St. Felix, Unser Frau, Laurein, and Proveis, which were administratively part of the Province of Trento before 1948.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

As we look back upon our study, we see that we have been engaged in a dialectic between our somewhat divergent research interests and modes of interpretation. Wolf began the work with a concern for cultural differentials and sought answers primarily by asking questions about social and political organization; he was concerned only secondarily with ecological and economic problems. Much of his work was taken up with the eliciting of genealogical material and with the study of the church archives on baptisms, marriages, and deaths. Yet the inquiry into family histories inevitably

drew him into study of inheritance and succession, and their implication for the continuity or dismemberment of homesteads in the two communities. By the end of the field work in 1961 Wolf had reached the conclusion that the cultural differences between St. Felix and Tret could be formulated primarily in terms of two major contrasts. The first, operative in the social microcosm of the two villages, could be discerned in the repeated assertion in St. Felix that its inhabitants favored impartible inheritance by the eldest son, whereas the Trettners were in favor of complete partibility. The second contrast characterized the relation of each village to the social macrocosm in which it was encased. The Trettners sought the largest possible involvement with the urbanizing and modernizing outside world, whereas the St. Felixers clung steadfastly to their identity as cultivators and equated that identity with their larger cultural continuity as Tyrolese or non-Italians. The two contrasts, microcosmic and macrocosmic, appeared to be related in that impartibility in inheritance appeared to favor continuity upon the land, while partibility seemed to favor mobilization, or dispersal, of resources within the context of the larger urban-oriented market. Wolf thus completed the first part of his field work with the hypothesis that the key to an understanding of the cultural differential between the communities lay in their different systems of inheritance.

It was the theme of inheritance that Cole selected for closer analysis and that formed, after his first fieldwork, the subject of his doctoral dissertation. He began, however, with a primary interest in ecology and economics, rather than in social organization and politics, and his questions were initially directed more toward identifying and analyzing the characteristics of ecological adjustments in the two villages. His questions and answers led him in the opposite direction from that taken by Wolf—toward an underlining of the similarity in ecological adaptation in the two villages and of the convergence of their actual practices in inheritance. We thus were forced by our data to acknowledge, as Edmund Leach (1961) had done before us, that social structure—conceived as a template of ideas for the ordering of social life—and actual practice, as apparent in the data when ordered numerically, were to a surprising degree antithetical.

We thus have been led from the initial hypothesis emphasizing differentials in inheritance systems to a more complex view that notes convergence between the two villages in ecologically grounded practice and divergence in politically grounded ideology. We note that different political orientations, productive of divergent ideologies, react in turn upon ecological processes, to produce, in the

present, divergent reactions to expanding economic opportunities within both villages. In the course of our work we have come to see the relation between ecology and politics as a complex dialectic, rather than as a mechanical sum of significant variables. In this book we shall explore the interplay between thesis and antithesis. People live their local ecology and they also live in terms of social and political commitments to a larger social and cultural orbit. If we have not solved the problem of why people are able to combine such mutually inconsistent involvements, we are, at least, now better able to specify the nature of the problem.

We thus discovered, in the course of our study, a disjunction existing between the processes growing out of the local ecology and aspects of the local cultures that seemed to originate in their relations to the "outside" world. We therefore were led to try to specify the characteristics of that world. That endeavor, in turn, soon led us away from assumptions underlying much recent work by anthropologists interested in the study of complex societies.

The study of communities in complex societies was originally modeled on the study of isolated tribal groups. The temptation to treat these groups as "closed" systems was further reinforced by views that held that the community constituted a replica of the nation writ small, containing within its boundaries the significant features of the nation writ large—just as the homunculus in the male sperm was once thought to contain all the features of the future adult. Closely related to the temptation to think of the community as a closed and typical system was the tendency to elevate the explanatory sketch of *functional* relationships developed in the course of fieldwork into a *causal* model. In this causal model, the features selected for attention were conceptualized as the components and mechanisms of a small machine. The community, as characterized by the fieldworker's sketch of functional relationships, thus came to be conceived as a closed system driven by its characteristic small machine. The role of the anthropologist, in consequence, became defined as the study of such small, closed systems and of the little machines that drove them. The workings of the larger whole, the enveloping society, was relegated as subject matter to other social scientists.

Such an approach, however, begs the question of how small social and cultural systems are related to the larger systems of which they form a part; and it precludes further questions as to how these different phenomena determine each other. It is soon obvious in fieldwork that the community is neither a closed system nor a homeostatic machine: the functional relationships that obtain within it are rela-

tions of adaptiveness and congruence, and not the causal components of a homeostatic motor. Underlying any process toward adaptation or congruence are causal impulses that flow from the requirements of the physical environment, on the one hand, and from the forces at work in the larger world, on the other. In complex societies, these larger, "external" forces often dominate and reshape the forces at work in creating the local ecology.

What one sees in the local community, then, is the outcome of two sets of forces, ecological on the one hand, economic, political, and ideological on the other. The resulting interplay at the local level influences not only what goes on "on the ground"; it also influences the nature and capacity of the larger system in the "outside" world. The characteristics and capabilities of such a system depend directly upon the successful or unsuccessful outcomes of these local interplays. In this view, neither the local system nor the larger world can be understood as if each constituted a closed system, connected to the other only by some mechanical umbilical cord. They are products of the shifting relations obtaining between them, and hence cannot be understood without an attempt to understand these relations.

The investigator thus requires a discovery procedure that will allow him to identify these relations and to determine their relative strength. We found that the best way of grasping their characteristics and their capabilities was to see them in the process of development, from a point in time when they were weak or absent, to another point in time when they had grown strong enough to affect local outcomes. In other words, we needed to think in historical terms, to visualize the relations of St. Felix and Tret to the Anaunia, the Tyrol, Italy, Germany, and Europe as a whole in historical perspective.

The reader therefore will soon discover that we promised him a study of two communities, but that we have set that study within the framework of a more general history. Should he not want to be encumbered by this concern with the past, he may skip directly to Chapter VI. Yet we think that a certain kind of history is essential in our task of explicating the small, mountainous universe of the Upper Anaunia. We are not interested in history conceived as "one damned thing after another," but in a history of structures relevant to the Anaunia, in their unfolding over time, and in their mutual relationships.

There indeed have been attempts to short-circuit the need for historical understanding by introducing a falsely schematic sociology that counterposes "traditionalism" with "modernity," and assigns fail-

ing or passing grades to particular societies and cultures in terms of their location on one or another end of a scale of "modernization." We do not want to follow this approach, which seems to us to labor under the handicap of misplaced abstraction. The terms in which it formulates its problems and methods fail to account for the ways in which "modernization" and "tradition" interpenetrate and determine each other; "modernization" is often mere "tradition" in overalls, and "modernization" often dons peasant dress. Nor can one short-circuit the intellectual process of understanding complex societies by merely speaking of them as "larger systems" without taking note of their internal morphology, for they exhibit both spheres of patterned coherence and spheres of contradiction and disjunction; they contain autonomous, peripheral, and secessionist spheres, as well as those held in tight control. These spheres and their organization—their location, scale, and scope within the total society—have their own "structural" history of growth and development, of integration, and frequently of disintegration, too. Most important for the understanding of such societies is the manner and timing of their "crystallization": in Chapter II we make the claim that one cannot understand the Tyrolese of St. Felix without knowing something of the time and manner in which the Tyrol as a whole achieved its characteristic cultural profile, nor can one claim to understand Trent without knowing the means and ends of the Italian *Risorgimento* and its burning desire to reconquer the "lost" provinces in the mountains from its Austro-Hungarian enemies.

Nor do "larger systems" exist in isolation from each other: their very growth, crystallization, and demise depend only in part on their internal course of organization building; the "larger system" is also the product of political and ecological movement by which nations in the process of industrialization develop their economies, politics, and ideologies in response to the successes and failures of their predecessors. We certainly could not understand the forces at work in the encounter of Tyrolese and Trentini without some understanding of the interplay between systems located to the north and south of the Brenner.

Finally, while the combination of factors on the level of the national or international system depends upon the ways it can affect localities, it is not isomorphic with the combination of factors on the level of village or valley. What macrosystem and microsystem offer each other and demand from each other is of necessity different: this kind of transaction, too, has a historical dimension, as each sequence of pressure and response determines the sequence of pres-

sure and response to follow. We have written history not for its own sake, then, but to explicate the Upper Anaunia, one valley in its structured interplay over time with forces emanating from the outside world.

If we had listened better at the outset of our work, we would have discerned these lessons in a story told by the octogenarian curate of St. Felix about some of his tribulations during World War II. Like most German Tyrolese village priests, he was of peasant stock and lived among his parishioners as a peasant among others. He was also strongly dedicated to the maintenance of Tyrolese identity in the South Tyrol and to the continuation of the bond between that Tyrolese identity and Catholicism. He thus opposed both the Nazis and the Italian fascists; at the same time, he was a saintly man, beloved by all in the region, Germans and Italians alike. During the war, like every other peasant, he killed his pigs and hung them in his chimney to make smoked bacon. But there was a war on, and all meat was handed to the occupying German authorities for distribution through the ration system. One of his parishioners, a fanatical Nazi, heard that the curate had slaughtered a pig and denounced him to the German command post located in Unser Frau. Thereupon the Germans came, located the pig in the curate's chimney, confiscated the smoked remains, and announced a date for public sale. On the day of the sale, the curate's faithful parishioners repaired to the command post in Unser Frau, bought their rationed shares of the pig, and returned the sum of pig shares to the priest. But the story did not end there. At the war's end, the partisans from Tret who knew the accuser's identity broke into his pigsty and carried off one of his own pigs to replace the pig taken from the curate. Up the road they marched toward the church, red bandannas around their necks and armed to the teeth, carrying the Nazi's pig between them. The curate, in turn, explained that he could not accept stolen property. The pig was left in his pigsty, and a message went out to the Nazi to retrieve his pig.

The story presents a number of familiar themes: the curate in St. Felix, as in most Tyrolese villages, is *primus inter pares*, a peasant like any other, entitled to smoke and consume his own pig. Outsiders, especially those in uniform, should not be allowed to interfere with their rules and regulations in what are essentially village affairs. For both Germans and Italians, the priest is a special personage; even partisans, in a situation of group conflict, could act in terms of the legitimacy of the priestly role, held in this case by a good man, though *todesk* (German). Thus, in this isolated valley the transcendental issues of war and fascism, national liberation, and of re-

ligious faith were transmuted finally into ecological counters—pigs confiscated and pigs returned. What we have learned in the course of this study is that the “imponderabilia of daily life” and the greater agonies of the human spirit are not divergent aspects of reality; they interact within one constellation that bears the hallmarks and stigmata of larger contradictions. It is with this realization that we ordered and thought through our field materials.