Too Much Geographical Emphasis!

While I agree with the importance Braudel placed on geography in the development of civilizations, I don’t think the geography of a location needs to be over-stressed. Studies revealed **“a hiatus between the society and the broad movements of history – if social archaisms (the vendetta among others) persisted, it was above all for the simple reason that mountains are mountains: that is, primarily an obstacle, and therefore also a refuge, a land of the free. For there men can live out of reach of the pressures and tyrannies of civilization: its social and political order, its monetary economy” (Green/Troup, p. 99**). As Braudel discussed throughout his work, the mountains played an important role in protecting the communities that lived within them from outside ideas, like feudalism, as well as, not being ideal places to serve out military campaigns due to the terrain. This allowed those communities to flourish individually, although, social issues would arise between those who lived in towns (in or near the mountains) and those who lived in the mountains. Mocking and distrust were among the feelings towards those secluded individuals, as was the general attitude towards people who lived secluded from “urban-life” during the times. They were outsiders to the town and the people. I think Braudel’s study into this aspect of society and social behaviors gave a new insight into daily life, attitudes, and values. But what could the study of people living secluded from the majority of the population tell historians about the society as a whole? The idea of studying societies and their economies comes from last week’s readings about the *Annales* School in *From Herodotus to H-Net*, the *Annales* School **“offered many fresh approaches to the study of the past” (p. 111)**, which included studying societies and their economies. But I don’t think that Braudel went as far as he should have in that sense. Was he unable to continue his studies into these societies that developed in the mountainous regions? Is there lack of documentation that prevented his doing so? While the mountains obiviously had importance in the way civilizations developed around them, there was no need to constantly tie everything back to the mountains. It should have been apparent in knowing about the mountains that they were going to provide obstacles that would be both beneficial and restrictive to the communities. I felt as if the mountains were more of the focus of his work rather than the civilizations who lived there. Mountains indirectly meddled into history, as they do not have a mind or ability to act otherwise. They are a permanent part of the Earth that humans have had to work around for centuries. The importance should lay in how the civilizations around them develop and finds means to live in the mountainous terrain, not within the mountains themselves.