Summaries of articles

Creation of a political myth :
Solon, "founding father" of the Athenian democracy   Cl. Mossé

  Solon is depicted in 4th century (B.C.) orators' discourses and in political writers' works as the "founding father" of Athenian democracy. Doubtless the legislator who suppressed by means of the seisachteia *the servitude of a certain number of Attica's peasants helped to make possible the subsequent establishment and prosperity of Athenian demo-cracy. However, the idea of a moderate democratic system is a preoccupation of the 4th century rather than of Solon's times. It is because of the need to restrict the excesses of the radical democracy, that 4th century men felt the need to imagine an ancestral democracy whose foundations could be attributed to a uniquely genial legislator, Solon.*

Two ways of legitimizing French society
in the 18th century :
Mably and Boulainvilliers   F. Furet et M. Ozouf

  The purpose of the article is to compare the descriptions and analyses of the history of France written at the beginning and end of the 18th century by Boulainvilliers and Mably. The aristocratic interpretation of the first author seems totally opposed to the democratic theory of the second. But in reality both historians use the same conceptual elements, drawn from the enlightened milieux of the period : Germanic invasions, formation of the nation, the traditional liberties periodically reaffirmed in the "Champs de mai", the contract binding nation and monarchy together. Thus the growth of a civil society, its movement toward the seizure of power which emerges openly in the reign of Louis XIV, is explained in one case as the revival of aristocratic prerogatives, in the other as the just rights of the Third Estate.

Three theses concerning the Rāmāyaṇa   D. Dubuisson

  The three theses discussed in the text although complementary, refer to the distinct levels of analysis applicable to any epic text.
  Rama's career revolves around three serious transgressions : the murder of Valin, the murder of Ravana, and the repudiation of Queen Sita. Each of these transgressions concerns exclusively one of the ideological levels attached to the three ideological functions (characteristic of Indo-European society generally). Hence the Rama legend is built up

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from a stable, rigorously structured model. One may compare its central thematics to an equivalent episode described in the career of Indra, a warrior god who also sinned three times (Markandeyapurana 5).

However, the strict organisation of epic texts does not stop here : we will show that it is developed within the precise limits imposed by its mythic substructure. This structure is examined both diachronically (the mythic structure respects, throughout its transpositions, the essential principles characteristic in Vedic theology of the second-level), and synchronically (the general framework within which mythic characters and individual actions pertaining to the legend are inscribed, is rigorously maintained).

This triple approach to the Epic (syntagmatic, paradigmatic, and sub-structural) makes it possible to account for nearly the entire legend as well as for variants developed in later periods.

Land, power, markets : the formation of a real-estate market in the Ganges Plain (19th and 20th centuries)
J. POUCHEPADASS

The emergence of a market for land in the 19th century has been a crucial factor of social change in India. At the outset of British rule, the idea of private property in land was still wholly foreign to the traditional mind, and the hierarchy of rights in land was one with the social distribution of power in the countryside. As a result of relentless British efforts to create the conditions of a modern market economy in India, notably through land and debt legislation, land gradually became a freely saleable commodity, which meant its emancipation from the sphere of power. This evolution was further accelerated by the growing demographic pressure on the soil and the increasing commercialization of the colonial economy. But the minds of men were slower to change. This modernization from above was achieved in the face of enduring resistance on the part of the traditional power holders, who seriously hampered the free play of market forces right up to the early decades of this century.

A Latin abbey in Islamic society : Monreale in the 12th century
H. BERCHER, A. COURTEAUX, J. MOUTON

Under Islamic rule since 841, Sicily was progressively reconquered by Latin Christians from 1030 onward. The struggle for control over maritime routes and the supply of wheat was oriented in a North-South direction. The few Norman men-at-arms who conquered the area at first limited control to towns. Implantation in the islamised countryside proceeded in a doubly colonializing sense, both economic (the landholding abbeys) and military (the feudalized army). The abbey of Monreale exemplifies this political process.

In 11 years' time control was established over one thousand square km of land occupied by an Islamic population. The abbot, perfectly integrated into the Norman feudal structure, was the ruling lord of the land responsible for collecting ground-rents which weighed heavily on land and men. Hence the Moslems revolted against their Christian overlords choosing as centers of resistance the hill-top strongholds of Iato, Kalatrasi, Entella. As for the abbey, the turmoil of wars and the crusading atmosphere led to the flight and deportation of the Moslem population, the collapse of the abbey's revenues, and hence the necessity of restoring the production system. At the end of the 13th century, the Moslems' land had ceased to be an area of polyculture around a casale, *and had been transformed, under the influence of the abbey, into a* masseria, *an estate intended for cultivation of wheat on a massive scale.*

**Expansion and crisis : the impact of the
conquest of Seville on Castilian society, 1248-1350**　　　　T. F. Ruiz

The Christian conquest of Seville in 1248 led to a major re-structuring of Castile. It opened the valley of the Guadalquivir to occupation by the Castilians. To exploit these lands laborers were taken from the grain-producing areas of the north. This led to a reduction in cereal cultivation, food shortages and inflation. Moreover, the distribution of Andalusian lands to the upper aristocracy increased their power in relation to the crown and other groups in the society. Small, free peasants owning their lands (the norm in the north) were now replaced everywhere by the latifundia. For the next hundred years the king sought the support of the upper bourgeoisie to balance aristocratic ambitions. Royal privileges to the urban patriciate enabled them to monopolize the political and financial resources of the Castilian cities for their own and the king's service. By 1350 a basic political, social, economic and cultural structure emerged which has remained, with some variants, typical of Castile and Spain to this day.

**A crisis of mortality in the 15th century,
as observed through the recorded wills and taxation-rolls**　　　　M. Zerner

In the small French town of Valréas (Comtat-Venaissin) a quarter of the heads of family drew up their will between the spring of 1419 and the end of winter 1420. The nominative taxation-rolls officially recorded from 1423 to 1451 made it possible to prove that 70 % of the male children reported at that time by their parents were not to survive infancy. A demographic mortality crisis struck Valréas in 1419-1420, affecting mainly young children. More than half of the families existing before the crisis were to disappear in the following generation due to the lack of male descendents.

After 1443 these diminished generations were reaching adult age, and this point in turn is marked in the official lists by a spectacular increase in the number of heirs. Few of them are superseded by men born after the demographic crisis, that is by those born after 1448. The recuperation was thus a slow process and, in spite of the recuperation, there is only a slight variation in the number of fiscal-quotas, due to introduction of new patronyms ; this situation is related to the immigration encouraged by the town authorities.