

Summaries of articles

Autochthony : an athenian topic The myth in the civic space

Nicole LORAUX

To study a myth in its civic anchorage does not correspond to considering it as a mere instrument at the disposal of political manipulations but implies also an attentive examination of the work it operates on the city's expression, even at a certain distance from its own location. For a myth inscribed in a given civic space is worded in a different language according to whether it is evoked on the Acropolis, at the Ceramica or in the Agora. Nevertheless, it is always its voice that is heard, even within the most « secularized » formulations, such as that of the topos of autochthony in a funeral oration. Thus, on the sacred hill of the Acropolis and in the national cemetery of Ceramica, the myth of autochthony presents two models of identity conception of the Athenian city... assembly of a collective community for a religious celebration around the hero-founder Erichthonios—an original unit without the mediation of the autochtones' polis ; but the political transparency of prose expression does not exclude the myth's meaning and in the funeral oration, autochthony is voiced as in the Panathenae, in a language of kinship.

Humiliation of saints

Patrick GEARY

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries many monastic communities employed ritual humiliation of relics in order to pressure adversaries. These rituals established physically and liturgically three interdependent structures : inversion of the proper hierarchy between God and man ; interdiction of access to cult objects ; and punishment of saints for having failed to protect their communities. Analysis of actual uses of the ritual indicates that it effectively focused public opinion on the crisis created by the dispute and subsequent mistreatment of the saints, and in all cases the dispute was settled through third party arbitration. The ritual physically resembles popular beatings of relics by peasants undertaken to gain saints' protection. The practice was condemned by the Second Council of Lyons (1274) in the context of forbidding arbitrary cessation of liturgy and of requiring the use of legal, hierarchical channels to obtain justice.

The morphology of monastic maledictions

Lester K. LITTLE

Liturgical curses found in ninth-century texts from Saint-Martial and Saint-Wandrille are explained and compared with sanction clauses and excommunication formulas from the same period. The most elaborate and significant form taken by maledictions was in the monastic liturgy known as clamor, to be performed in times of great trouble. The clamor had its origins in Carolingian legal usage, by which the poor presented their complaints or claims before a judge. In the clamor, the monks made their complaint at the altar to God and his saints. The use of curses had a role in the reconstruction of an orderly society based on law, as seen in the formal maledictions and prayers pro tribulatione that were integral parts of the Peace of God.

**Historical and genetic demography :
the geographical concentration of a
rare hereditary disease**

Alain BIDEAU, Henri PLAUCHU,
Albert JACQUARD

The Rendu-Osler disease is caused by mutation of a gene transmitted by autosomic domination. The vitality of the carrier-families ensures the perennial continuity of this slightly disadvantageous gene with a low mutation rate. Although there may be considerable variation in the forms manifested by this gene, its degree of penetration is close to 100 % ; this means that for any person affected by the disease it will always be found that one of the parents has been similarly affected and that the transmission of the gene can be traced back genealogically. If cases can be found in "two families" of two persons afflicted with this disease, and if, by tracing back their genealogies for several centuries, a common ancestor can be established, it may be reasonably concluded that the disease was transferred from the infected ancestor through succeeding generations to each of the present sufferers.

The initial purpose of our study was, therefore, to find as many as possible of the families afflicted by the Rendu-Osler disease in one of the villages (Chézery) where it had most frequently occurred. Subsequently, through retrospective and comparative analysis, we endeavoured to determine which person or persons had served as original transmitters of the disease. Following the compilation of this data, we were able to proceed with the historical and genetic demography. Owing to the presence of a dominant genetic mutation which, over centuries of transference had become a biological and historical pointer, it was possible to draw a distinction between populations afflicted and unafflicted by the disease. Differential analysis of the demographic and social behaviour of these two "sub-populations" is a subject of further interest. The demographic and genetic details available for each family enable one to retrace their history and hence to gain insight into the biological, sociological, geographical and genetic factors that have contributed towards shaping the present epidemiological profile of the Rendu-Osler disease, thus enabling us to learn about the epidemiology of a hereditary disease and to study its causality.

**A study in regional anthropology :
The social history of Saguenay
in 19th and 20th centuries**

Gérard BOUCHARD

There can be no doubt that between 1960 and 1970 the advances made in social history, particularly in France, did not entirely match expectations. To start with, the method of reconstructing the family has been used solely for demographic purposes. In addition, only sporadic use has been made of the continual advances in computer techniques, and data retrieval and analysis methods have not always been able to match the scope of the more comprehensive problematic issues. Likewise, close-knit and stable research teams have been the exception rather than the rule. These are some of the many reasons why it seemed worthwhile undertaking a collective experiment in regional history, combining all the material and personal conditions required to implement genuinely interdisciplinary research and covering the main lines followed in social history. This project, which has been in progress since 1972 at the University of Quebec-Chicoutimi, has now become designated as the Social history project on the population of Saguenay. In this paper, the co-ordinator presents the aims and methods of this project, and the results thus far achieved.

**Was there a crisis
of the seventeenth century ?**

Immanuel WALLERSTEIN

The concept of the "crisis of the seventeenth century" is examined first theoretically, then empirically. Theoretically, a "crisis", defined as a moment of basic structural change, has been asserted to have occurred roughly in 1500, in 1650, in 1800, each date reflecting a different theory of the modern world.

If one assumes that the basic structural change (occurring in the long sixteenth century) was the creation of a capitalist world-economy, then the so-called crisis of the seventeenth century turns out to be simply the first major "B-phase" in the history of this world-economy. The empirical literature is reviewed in detail to show what this meant in terms of the economy, the state structures, the cultural themes. The conclusion is that the seventeenth century was both a slowdown of growth and a moment of consolidation of the capitalist mode of production.

**Income inequalities among nations
before the Industrial Revolution**

Paul BAIROCH

Six different approaches were used to estimate the greatest spread on national income per capita before the Industrial Revolution. The most significant is that of the determination of the minimal cost of living in current prices for countries which has already reached a level of development leading to a level of living higher than those of the richest countries in the framework of traditional societies. The confrontation of the minimal cost of living to the average level of consumption provides an excellent indicator of the extreme spread of income before the Industrial Revolution.

The other methods were : calculation of real per capita income for countries at a stage of development preceding or close to traditional societies ; situation of European countries at the beginning of the 19th century in terms of real GNP per capita ; long term (more than 2-3 centuries) evolution of real wages in traditional societies ; per capita income of European cities in the 16th and 17th century ; last but not least, the contemporary views of national inequalities as assessed by 17th and 18th century pioneers of national accounting.

All those approaches yielded very converging results which allows to conclude that before the Industrial Revolution, the gap of income between the poorest and the richest country was probably of the order of only 1.0 to 1.5. However, regional differences were probably more important.