

## Summaries of articles

### ***Time as a political issue in Madagascar***

F. RAISON

*The Malagasy system of astronomy, entirely empirical and unrelated to any scientific rule, was closely associated to an inclusive form of astrology in keeping with the realities of social, economic and political life.*

*The publication and circulation in February 1864 by the London Missionary Society of the first almanach containing the Gregorian occidental calendar was thus a revolutionary event. The calendrical part of this almanach eclipsed the astrological framework which had previously organized collective life and private conduct, and it served as a symbol of a new power relationship. The almanach also placed the representation of the Malagasy government in a certain perspective. By juxtaposing the powers of the Queen and, for the first time, those of a prime minister against those of the English government, it implied that the new regime was based on a constitutional pact. Finally, a series of historical reminders presented the history of Madagascar as one dominated by its relations with the Europeans. Reconstructing the various contexts of its publication affords an opportunity to appreciate the missionary goals represented by the almanach as well as those of the indigenous authorities.*

### ***Resistance to medicine in a colonial situation : the plague in Madagascar***

F. ESOAVELOMANDROSO

*Even if the reaction of the inhabitants of Madagascar to the plague—a “new” disease which appeared in the Central Highlands in 1921—was in many respects comparable to that of the Europeans in the Middle Ages or in modern times, their colonial circumstances conferred a real originality to their attitude. In addition to the anxiety generated by the prospects of a periodic re-occurrence of the plague and of epidemics striking at entire families and villages, there was the fear not only of a certain death but also of a painful burial. In effect, the sanitary rules decreed by outsiders without taking local traditions into account, prevented the return of the deceased to the ancestral land. In the eyes of the indigenous population, by a series of severe and often inconsistent prophylactic measures, the oppressive colonial administration was seeking nothing but the perpetuation of French domination. The plague—if it existed at all—was nothing but a pretext for pressure on the indigenous population, and the ineffective anti-plague vaccines, nothing but a ruse to destroy them. Nationalist leaders thus found in the plague and the various measures adopted to*

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*combat it an excellent theme for propaganda. The indigenous reaction to the anti-plague campaign organized by the colonists assumed the character of a veritable political resistance, especially during the period of the Popular Front.*

### **The invention of French ethnography: the questionnaire of l'Académie celtique**

M. OZOUF

*Based on a hitherto unexploited source—the archives of l'Académie celtique—this article attempts an examination of the questionnaire which the Académie issued in 1807 and which can probably be considered as the very first guideline for French ethnography. Given the date of its publication, its rapid disappearance from the scene and the lasting manner in which, nevertheless, it marked the organization of ethnology in France, this is a rather amazing document.*

*This article tries to rediscover the genesis of the questionnaire, to trace its use and to sketch the personality and works of its principal author. A special attempt is made to determine those elements of the questionnaire deriving from an interest in archaic features—which made it acceptable to contemporaries—and those which can be attributed to intellectual innovation. It is in the interstices between the old and novel elements of this document that one can observe a new approach to popular life.*

### **Reflections on the Celtic origins of Ireland**

Y. PERSON

*Recent research on the prehistory and most ancient past concerning the beginnings of the celtisation of Western countries has now yielded some new elements. The earlier theory, postulating a very ancient celtisation more than 2000 years before J.-C., was never taken seriously. Nevertheless, it seems that the earliest indo-europeanisation took place at approximately that time. The hypothesis of a very recent celtisation—a few centuries before our era—can now be considered as implausible.*

*The best archeological research of recent years provides evidence for concluding—with near certitude—that the celtisation in Ireland as well as in Britain occurred during the last centuries of the second millennium before our era.*

### **Toward a study of the state economic apparatus in XIXth century France**

J.-P. ALLINNE et M. LESCURE

*The economic history of para-public institutions of credit reveals a great variability in their effectiveness. Their administrative history, in particular, suggests an inverse relationship between the degree of control by the state and its apparatus and the degree of efficiency of these institutions. Was economic irrationality the dominant trait of the French state in the XIXth century? This does not seem to be the case if one views the state's economic apparatus as a function principally of its ideological apparatus. The preeminently political function of a state which, while combining divergent social interests, used all the means at its disposal, thus appears in full relief.*