

Summaries of articles

Tradition and Modernity on the 17th Century: Biblical Exegesis of the French Protestants

F. LAPLANCHE

The rapid change from a classical-medieval culture to “modern” culture can only be understood if one takes into account scientific and political practises in the early seventeenth century (1620-1670). Based on a study of the exegetical work of the “Saumur group”, the author shows how such practises modified the awareness of Western scholars in their understanding of the Bible. On the one hand, efforts to clarify the literal meaning of the Scriptures resulted in showing that the sacred texts also possessed its own history and which history alone could explain. On the other hand, the appeal to natural law as a basis for peaceful coexistence between rival Christian churches minimized the value of political models contained in the Old Testament and Apocalypse and limited these prophetic texts to a mere historical explanation. In order to understand the origins and consequences of this evolution, which gathered speed during the Enlightenment, it is essential to combine the history of the science of texts with that of mentalities.

When the Saints Make Cities: an Anthropological Reading of the Social Practices of a Moroccan Saint of the 17th Century

H. ELBOUDRARI

The itinerary of the saint here examined is subject to a reading which aims to determine the social implications of an act of religious foundation (in this case, the foundation of a mystical “way”) which succeeds and endures through time and to define it as a practice of charismatic domination of a given geographical and social space. This reading inquires successively into the pertinence of the space invested by the candidate for sainthood, the means of the social recognition of sanctity, and above all, the kinds and degrees of action lead by the saint in the space in which he is constituted. A model of this praxis (i.e. foundation) is finally proposed as a hypothesis defining one particular type of saint: the saint as founder to be distinguished primarily from the administrators who succeeded to the head of the institution which he founded.

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The Overthrow of the Unjust Sovereign: the Islamic Legitimacy in Black Africa in the 19th Century

J.-L. TRIAUD

The 19th century in Sudano-Sahelian Africa is characterised by ideological wars of inconsiderable dimension better known under the name of jihād. The conduct of these jihād, which gave rise to an important literary production, cannot be separated from the definition of political models. An extreme case has here been chosen as a mean of providing a clear and illuminating example. This case concerns a conflict which confronted two Moslem forces, both products of jihād movements and drawing upon the same ideological sources. Thus, two conceptions of power and islamic legitimacy are in conflict. The protagonists of this story are al-Hājj °Umar Tal, leader of the Tijāniyya brotherhood, and Amadu Amadu, sovereign of the Islamic State of Masina, in present day Mali. The argument of al-Hājj °Umar, as it is notably expressed in Bayān mā waqa°a, tends to establish that Amadu Amadu is a corrupt amīr, guilty of collusion (muwālat) with the Infidelity (Kufr). This argument borrows its model from the literature of the caliphate of Sokoto and, through this, returns to the founding teachings of a modest Algerian faqīh of the 15th century by the name of al-Maghīlī.

The Causes of the Crisis

S.-Ch. KOLM

In this second half of the twentieth century the primary cause of the global crises (unemployment and stagnation) is the macroeconomic deflationist policies of governments trying to reduce inflation. This is first caused by the near achievement of full-employment and maintained by extrapolated precautions. Dynamic evolution is thus essential. In addition, these being national policies, the division of the world into nations and the international monetary system are relevant (certain countries sometimes initiated deflation as a mean of redressing their foreign balance). The break in 1974, the beginning of the crisis was caused above all by simultaneous deflationist policies.

This simultaneity results from the synchronisation of national outlooks which established themselves in the late sixties and early seventies (whereas formerly these cycles occurred alternately on one side of the Atlantic or the other). The full-employment in the United States beginning in 1965 following the country's conversion to Keynesian economics, created at the same time higher inflation and this synchronisation by influencing the American exportation of capital. The abandonment of the international monetary system of Bretton Woods from 1971 to 1973 intervenes in this dynamic both as an effect and a cause. The other causes of this crisis often suggested seem secondary at best and frequently dependent.

The Different Routes of Development in Europe

G. FUA

Since a number of years a group of economists have devoted themselves to the specific problems of those European countries for whom development is relatively recent. This article attempts to present an idea of their work. The first part of the article outlines the particular characteristics which distinguish those countries for whom development is more recent from the countries where it is an older phenomena. The second part examines one specific example (the industrialisation of northeast and central Italy) which demonstrates how a recently developed country is able to find its own appropriate path.

***The Structural Crisis of the Venetian Navy
of the 15th century: the Problem of the mude***

B. DOUMERC

While the maritime system established by the Republic of Venice has been for some-time presented as a generic model, nevertheless a detailed study permits the disclosure of the weaknesses of this organisation. The complexity of the utilisation of merchant galleys on a grand scale presents problems which are difficult to resolve. To the technical difficulties associated with the quality of the boats and the adequacy of the crew should be added the doubts of the representatives of the State when confronted with the needs of the patricians concerning customs and fiscal regulations. The senators were unable to respond effectively to a great many questions without undermining the equilibrium of the society as a whole. The crisis of the Venetian navy which broke out around 1450 was the result of a slow decline of the system of the mude. The crisis was due not merely to the consequences of the interminable war against the Turks which was responsible for an enormous consumption of ships but also to the crisis of confidence which struck those using state galleys. All these elements combined served to bring about the disorganisation of the system of the mude and the irrevocable decline of the convoys at the beginning of the 16th century.

***Feminine and Masculine Careers in the Postal
and Telegraph Service at the End of the Nineteenth Century***

D. BERTINOTTI

The Ministry of the General Post Office and the National Archives have kept more than 30 000 career files of post office clerks who worked between 1870 and 1939. The treatment of these archives by computer has allowed us to retrace the hiring policy applied to that personnel at the end of the XIXth century, their career prospects and the abilities they displayed. For budgetary reasons, the Ministry successively adopted two solutions: the appeal to auxiliaries and the hiring of women. The massive arrival of women entailed the apparition of careers totally different from those of the men. The inferior status they received and accepted until the twenties nevertheless allowed young ladies from the not particularly wealthy lower middle class to occupy jobs "without losing caste". The study of the Post Office and Telegraph clerks' careers can thus fully find its place within the dynamics of the French society at the end of the XIXth century and reveals the contribution made by these civil servants to the formation of the tertiary sector, the emergence of women in the working world, and the affirmation of the political part played by the middle classes.

***The Constitution of an Urban Space: Paris and its
Suburb from the End of the 19th Century to 1970***

J.-P. BRUNET

At the end of the 19th century, the urban landscape of the département of the Seine is more or less established, though one cannot yet speak of agglomeration, in the full meaning of the term, to the extent that there was little circulation and the urban space seemed markedly heterogeneous. The suburb becomes conscious of its subjection to the capital. The irritation is reciprocal. The very rapid industrial evolution due to the war and the decade which followed, the prodigious demographic growth of the suburb which was its corollary, and the establishment of an effective network of public transportation, came to disturb the previous relationships: during the thirties the daily

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commuting reached a size of nearly six times that of the beginning of the century. As a solidarity of interests developed among the communes of the agglomeration, as the department was led to take on a responsibility of equal financial disbursement and of administrative coordination for the numerous intercommunity services, so the agglomeration is thus on its way to a certain homogeneity and a new urban space is in the process of being constituted.

Bread, Wine and Just Measure at the Table of the Carolingian Monks

J.-Cl. HOCQUET

In 1984, an article of M. Rouche raised the monastic or canonical food rations which had been calculated in 1973. The enormity of these rations had justly raised doubts and trying to better substantiate them, Rouche increased them by a third or more. These astonishing results, however, are tainted by serious methodological errors, by a failure to carefully follow the sources which refuse to be reconciled to the historians views, by the contempt shown to the latin language and the laws of physics, and by the complete ignorance of the problems posed by weights and measures. The legislation adapted at the council of Aix (817) and the statutes of the Abbot of Corbie (822), rehabilitated from all the errors to which they have been subjected, are examined in order to calculate and establish the system of weights and measures. These calculations are carried out by means of three hypothesis. And yet while based upon hypothesis, the result of the research enables one to observe the great stability which linked the two extreme values attached to the measurement of the hogshead (muid), here calculated, and the values of the minot of Paris (or of the King), as measured in the 17th century. Still, in all cases, the alimentary rations of the nuns and monks seem well balanced, not very abundant, and adapted to the season and to the physical demands of labor.

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