

English summaries

Marriage Ritual and Youth Culture in the Jewish Society in Italy during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

R. WEINSTEIN

The Jewish communities in Italy harbored a deep-rooted and rich Youth-Culture. Local written sources are biased and hostile towards that phenomenon and document its existence only slightly. The local marriage ritual discloses another perspective on the life of young unmarried men and women who created a parallel marriage pattern. Match-making, act of betrothal, property transference, courtship, donation exchange, wedding day and consummation — all had their double versions of adult versus the juvenile. They unveil different attitudes to property, leisure habits, and sexual patterns in pre-marriage years. Community authorities reacted in ambivalent mode towards the young. They objected their interference in family matters involving important interests, at the same time they defended local youth culture against non Italian, i.d. Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions carried by Jewish immigrants. The entrance of Jewish population to crowded and over-populated Ghettos in Italy during the 16th and 17th centuries enhanced the control over the young. A similar tendency might be traced in Christian society in Italy at that time. Thus Jewish and Christian local youth compartments should not be separated, they belong to the same spectrum.

Obstetrical rites in Marocco: a Merinide political wager

A. DIALMY

A rite, called the “spreading of the sheet”, was practiced in Fès from the 13th century til the 1950s. The rite finds its source in the social, religious and political history of the city during the Middle Ages.

In the first part of this study, after having established the existence of the Sheet rite in the 13th century, we will examine the content of the rite, in other words, the anthropological form of the rite that the oulema had occasion to judge. The latter, pretending to ignore the magico-pagan dimensions of the rite, were content to condemn the ritual for socio-economic reasons.

The second part of the paper analyses the main functions of the Sheet rite within the city and makes a distinction between a manifest, obstetrical function, aimed at warding off a demographic threat, and a latent function of islamic urban integration.

Finally, in the third part, the Sheet rite acquires a competitor in the Trousers rite, whose latent function is to provide the Merinides with the religious legitimacy that they were lacking since they took hold of power. One can also offer the hypothesis of a battle between the two rites, which would pose the question of the relationship of symbolic domination between the political cité and the civil society, between the Prince and the city.

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

Collective Intelligence and Architecture in South-East Asia

J. DUMARCAÏ

There are three important stages in the development of the architecture: first the builder refers to a model inscribed in the common memory of his human group, second the builder confronted with a difficulty reacts with the collective intelligence of his group, third the builder is apt to anticipate the architecture finished.

Nobody can confuse a Basque house with a Swiss chalet, these two constructions are issued from the common memory of these two human groups but the chalets are often built on the slope of a mountain, then the common intelligence of the Swiss adapts their model to the topographical conditions and they act always the same way.

The Historical Bases of American Economic Leadership

G. WRIGHT

The economic pre-eminence of the USA is one of the dominant facts of twentieth century world history, often taken as so self-evident and inevitable as to require no explanation. This paper argues to the contrary, that American economic leadership was far from inevitable, and indeed poses a challenge to historical understanding. Geographic size and natural resources were not in themselves advantageous, but they became so through the rise of an indigenous national technological community or network, engaged in adapting European technologies to the American environment. This proposition is illustrated with accounts of the so-called "American system of manufactures", and of minerals as a knowledge industry. These two sectors laid the institutional foundations for the science-based industries of the twentieth century. American economic performance demonstrates the power of increasing returns to scale, as depicted in the models from the "new" or endogenous growth theory. But the effective economic scale of the US national economy was itself the cultural and institutional product of American history.

Taxation and the Mobilization of the Agricultural Surplus during Stalinist era

R.C. ALLEN

Did the collectivization of agriculture contribute to Soviet capital formation by mobilizing the agricultural surplus? While many historians have supported this view, it has been challenged by revisionists who claim that there was never a net flow of commodities from agriculture to the rest of the economy and that agriculture's terms of trade actually improved during the First Five Year Plan since the inflation of prices on the collective farm market outweighed the effects of the low prices paid for state procurements. This paper proposes new calculations of agriculture's trade balance that show that it was, indeed, a net supplier of resources and that those resources financed the investment drive of the 1930s. A computable general equilibrium model is used to assess intersectoral linkages. These simulations show that rapid industrialization would have been possible without collectivization, but that collectivization did accelerate industrial growth by depressing peasant incomes and increasing the rate of rural urban migration. The key contribution of collectivization was the mobilization of labour surplus, not surplus grain.

***Game Theory and Historical Institutional Analysis:
Self-Enforcing, Non-Market Institutions During
the Late Medieval Period***

A. GREIF

Recent development of game theory has enabled expanding the analysis of historical institutions to examine self-enforcing, non-market institutions. This paper provides a brief methodological discussion of Historical Institutional Analysis that utilizes game theory for the study of such institutions. To illustrate the methodology, contributions, and potential benefit of this approach, the paper briefly discusses recent works applying this methodology to the study of institutions during the late medieval period. Particular attention is given to these studies' implications regarding institutional efficiency and path dependence.