

## Summaries of articles

### ***A Bureaucratic Cycle : Salt Administration in East and West***

S. A. M. ADSHEAD

*Salt administrations were a widespread institution of premodern bureaucracy in both East and West. They were concerned both with the assessment, collection and receipt of tax, and with the production, distribution and consumption of salt. This article examines five such administrations : medieval Venice, eighteenth-century France, the Ottoman empire, China and India in the early twentieth century ; and seeks to establish similarities and differences in both structure and conjuncture. It concludes that overall similarities outweigh differences, and that this type of institution, a true bureaucratic species, is characteristic of the adolescence or senescence of the state. The history of salt administrations is thus inscribed within a bureaucratic cycle.*

### ***Food Riots in China and Western Europe***

R. BIN WONG

*Two centuries ago, conflicts over the food supply—demands for cheaper grain or bread, blockages of supplies leaving local areas, and seizures of hoarded foodstuffs—broke out in China and Western Europe. These violent events, food riots, shared certain traits ; moreover, some of the conditions making them frequent forms of collective action were much the same. The striking similarities lead us to expect a common explanation for the occurrence of food riots. But locating food riots within two quite different political economies of food supplies suggests, on the contrary, distinct sets of reasons for food riots erupting in these two parts of the world. The food riot, therefore, serves as a lens through which parallel and divergent features of China and Western Europe in the 18th century come into focus.*

### ***Grain-Stocking in China***

P.-É. WILL

*The system of public grain-stocking developed at the beginning of the Qing dynasty is no doubt unique in the history of imperial China, because of the size of the stocks involved, the complexity of its operational rules, and the multiplicity of its objectives. Yet this institution was in a state of crisis by the late eighteenth century, and lost all importance after 1850. This study seeks to show why it was increasingly difficult for public granaries to maintain their stocks at a constant level while insuring a steady turnover. This difficulty was largely due to factors such as the rigidity of price regulations, scheduling procedures, and purchasing methods, as well as to the cumbersome nature of transactions. The complex system of controls was powerless to prevent local officials from neglecting the problems of granary management, depleting stocks, and keeping only the cash equivalent of the reserves they were supposed to maintain.*

**Alien Foods : the Dual Language  
of Algerian Jews in France**

J. BAHLOUL

*The ethnography and analysis of dietary practices of Algerian Jews settled in France since the early 1960s clearly reveal—in the food habits of a minority—the existence of a social and ethical code informed by a strong pattern of distinction and otherness. The language of culinary practices—in which the attachment of the group to the North African Jewish tradition is combined with a keen desire for integration into French society—is based on a distinction at every level of culinary activity between foods that serve as keepers of a tradition and those that serve as a means of exchange ; between traditional, festive cooking and unsophisticated recipes for daily use ; between the family conviviality of holiday meals and the extra-domestic conviviality of ordinary meals. It is exactly as if the function of foods in North African Jewish cuisine—according to the manner in which they are prepared and eaten—were to label and classify gestures, individuals and moments in time by distinguishing between a time reserved for the group's own food and a time reserved for extraneous foods. The cuisine of Algerian Jews is the locus of the daily reassertion of their group status with respect to the social majority.*

**The Cooking System in Traditional Chinese Cuisine**

F. SABBAN

*This article begins by analyzing the terms used to describe Chinese culinary techniques. It proposes an interpretation of the notion of cooking in Chinese gastronomy, by showing that this notion has no real autonomy, and cannot be dissociated from the concrete operations involved in preparing food—operations requiring the use of fire. Cooking, in this context, acquires its full significance, as it is defined by a number of gastronomical and gustatory constraints internal to the Chinese culinary system.*

**Taste and Necessity : Some Thoughts about the Use of Fats  
in Western European Cooking (14th-16th centuries)**

J.-L. FLANDRIN

*To what extent do the culinary practices of a society and the changes in these practices depend on its tastes, and to what degree are they conditioned by constraints clearly perceived as such ? The shift from the spicy and acid seasonings used in the late Middle Ages to the fatty seasonings of classic European cuisine seems to have been caused by changing tastes, and not by a change in the availability of certain foodstuffs. But the shift from cooking with oil in the 14th and 15th centuries (a low-fat cuisine) to cooking with butter in the 17th to 20th centuries was connected with the lifting of certain religious restrictions that had been very unpopular in the non-Mediterranean regions of Europe and had failed to change the patterns of taste in those regions (in contrast, as we know, the dietary rules of other religions, such as those of Jewish and Moslem society, have had lasting effects on patterns of taste).*

**The « Ruga delle Pescherie » in Bologna in the Eighteenth Century :  
Conflicts and Compromise**

F. GIUSBERTI

*The starting-point for this study is a dispute between fishmongers and the wholesale merchants who controlled fishing and the conveyance of fish to the city. The norms and practices associated with the fish trade are analysed and detailed documentation of the quarrel offered. This permits a close reconstruction of the day-to-day running of the market at a time of lively conflict. From this there emerges a clear picture of complicated relations between norm and behaviour.*

**Two Thousand Years of Climate History in Southern France**

J.-É. BROCHIER

*The sedimentological study of deposits in two rock shelters in southern France—the Font-de-l'Oule in the Vaucluse and the Font-Juvénal in the Aude—makes it possible to establish a coherent sequence of climatic events spanning the last two millennia.*

*There were two cold periods, beginning in the 7th and 14th centuries respectively, separated by a clearly identifiable climatic optimum between the 8th and 13th centuries. This optimum can apparently be divided into two parts.*

*The anthropic deterioration of the landscape was a late phenomenon, whose acceleration—in both Provence and Languedoc, as paleobotanical research indicates—can be dated to the 13th-14th centuries.*

**When Was Latin No Longer Spoken in Gaul ?  
On a Poorly-Formulated Question**

M. RICHTER

*The relationship between Latin and Romance in Gaul in the late eighth and early ninth centuries is discussed in this article on the basis of historical sources. Several documents relating to the reform policy of Charlemagne give insight into levels of comprehension of spoken Latin and thereby indirectly into the position of the vernacular vis-à-vis Latin. The historical sources illumine the linguistic division of Gaul at that time into the area of the langue d'oc and that of the langue d'oïl. The legislation of 813 about preaching to the general public makes it plausible that spoken Latin was understood, in the early ninth century, in the southern half of Gaul but less so in the northern half.*

**The Mexican Revolution : a Miner's Revolution  
or a Serrano Revolution ?**

A. KNIGHT

*This critique of the article of F.-X. Guerra begins with a brief outline of Guerra's argument, which displays certain ambiguities : in particular, it is not clear if popular revolt is thought to correlate with the modern mining sector, or with some ill-defined transitional zone between modern and traditional sectors. Two major criticisms are then advanced : (1) that the evidence put forward is selective ; and that varieties of violence are indiscriminately "lumped" when they should be analytically "split" ; and (2) that there is a basic ecological fallacy, whereby regions and revolts are appropriated for the "mining" hypothesis when, in fact, mining was either absent or of very limited importance. Finally, the critique offers two alternative hypotheses. First, it is argued that the revolts under consideration were essentially serrano movements, in which miners and mining communities were far from being pre-eminent participants. Second, it is suggested that miners should be disaggregated into "traditional" and "modern" groups, the first of which displayed a penchant for sporadic, urban violence, after the manner of the Bajío artisans, the second of which followed the practice of the industrial proletariat, that is, peaceful unionization and pragmatic political participation.*