

## Summaries of articles

### **A genealogical approach to an insular population : Terre-de-Haut des Saintes in the Caribbean**

J.-L. BONNIOL, J.-M. HEGESIPPE

*The island of Terre-de-Haut is part of the Saintes, a group of islands off the coast of Guadeloupe. Populated in the seventeenth century, it now supports a population of 1500, often called "poor whites". Unlike the rest of the region, the black element never came to prevail, since no plantations could be organized in the island. The study of such a small, isolated, largely endogamous population sample makes it possible to trace the network of family ties for several generations. On the basis of the abundant data provided by the records of the etat civil, the use of computers was possible. After reconstituting the different families on the island, and applying the tools of historical demography, the author succeeded in tracing the various lineages back to their original ancestors. Such an approach confers new interest to the study of family structures, frequent in Caribbean studies, and allows for the development a demographic model proper to the island. Ultimately, this approach allows one to confront the problems raised by matrimonial economy, particularly the process of miscegenation, since the whole population derives from two different initial genetic stocks. The reconstitution of family trees takes on added importance, the relationship between race and social status make this island a privileged place where biological history and social history meet and merge. A close survey of two lines of descent suggests that no obstacles existed to intermixing and that this is a population relatively sheltered from contact with the outside world, a fact which emphasizes the originality of the population.*

### **The emergence of the Latin American bourgeoisies in the 19th century : the case of Ecuador**

A. GUERRERO

*In many Latin American countries, integration into the international division of labour and the world market under the impact of the industrial revolution led to the development of certain agricultural products and crafts for export. This triggered a complex process of regional capitalist accumulation and the emergence of new classes, in which social structures were not necessarily the outcome of the dissolution of forms bequeathed by the Iberian colonization.*

*Taking the case of Ecuador, which in 1904 became the world's foremost producer and exporter of cacao, we examine here the nature and evolution of social classes, from the landowners to the commercial and financial bourgeoisie which developed in the port of Guayaquil.*

***Demons, marvels and philosophy in the Classical Age***

J.-M. GOULEMOT

*The appearances of the comets in 1654 and 1680 provide an illustration of the manner in which 17th century absolutism formed a culture specific to a social elite through a process of marginalization. The formerly common culture thus became restricted to the popular masses. It became the object of a tripartite attack : that of the fashionable social elite, that of the Enlightenment and of the Church itself which denounced superstition. One finds evidence for this in the writings of Bayle, of Abbé Thiers, of Père Lebrun, of Dom Calmet and of Lenglet Dufresnoy.*

*It is thus false to suppose that the rationalism of the Enlightenment destroyed popular culture. Repeated denunciations of it prove that it was still very much alive.*

*Analyses of the articles devoted to "The History of Superstitions" in the Encyclopédie demonstrate the ambiguity of the philosophical position. For those who know how to read them and to take into account their formulation, they translate unmistakably into what has been termed—in another context—"the return of the repressed".*

***Merchants, bankruptcy and the historian***

J.-C. MARTIN

*What significance should one attribute to bankruptcies ? It is this simple question that the present article seeks to answer. It is based on examples of bankruptcies which occurred in Niort (Deux-Sèvres) between 1817 and 1874 and upon the liquidation of property and the judicial settlements declared at Nantes in 1974. Bankruptcies cannot provide us with an accurate picture of the economic situation of a city or region during any given period, just as they do not inform us of the real economic situation of the merchant affected by this procedure. Because of the modalities which govern these judicial and economic operations, bankruptcies are to be seen in the context of the entire mercantile society, its structure and the possibilities which it affords. The phenomenon of bankruptcy is not reducible to one particular order of explanation, but is an encompassing social fact.*