

English summaries

The Consumption of Unclean Foods and Cannibalism for Survival in the West in the Early Middle Ages

P. BONNASSIE

This article is based on a comparison of information furnished by the Libri Paenitentiales with that of the Chroniques and Annales. Seven types of food prohibitions were found, whose goal was to create a division between the pure and the impure, most of them were related to the consumption of certain meats declared to be unclean. It seems that the transgression of these taboos was particularly marked during the periods of severe famine and can thus be explained by the necessity of survival. During these crisis years, the population had recourse to the consumption of carrion, a variety of refuse and even human flesh. Nine cases of cannibalism were documented in various parts of Europe between 793 and 1032. Overly pessimistic conclusions about the behavior of men in the Early Middle Ages should not, however, be drawn : while the scarcity of food led some people to such aberrations, the struggle against hunger more generally led people to produce more food and to produce it better.

Locusts and Mentalités : The Case of Venetian Cyprus

B. ARBEL

Locusts have pestered Mankind from earliest times. Historical evidence indicates that appeal to supernatural powers and magic existed side by side with more rationalistic attitudes to this disastrous phenomenon in different civilizations throughout the ages. In Cyprus, a meeting place of various Mediterranean traditions, the locust had been an endemic phenomenon from the Later Middle Ages. This study mainly deals with the impact of Venetian pragmatic reactions to recurrent appearances of the pest, and of rationalistic methods of warfare against it on the more traditionalist patterns of behaviour of the Cypriot peasantry.

Water, the Crisis and the Remedy in the Old and New Worlds (1840-1900)

J.-P. GOUBERT

The scientific understanding of water achieved and technological progress made concerning its mastery (between 1770 and 1830) allowed for global solutions, but more often partial solutions to the water crisis brought on by the first industrial revolution (1840-1980). The religion of water can be gauged by its clergy (doctors, architects and engineers), its temples (aqueducts, purification plants and fountains) and the size of its congregation. Using local examples, as well as Western Europe and America's east

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Annales ESC, septembre-octobre 1989, n° 5, pp. 1311-1313.

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coast, this article demonstrates how, despite the diversity of eras and situations, purification came about. Such cleaning up operations could be reenacted in our world today where two-thirds of humanity has no drinkable running water.

Electricity and Society in the Paris Area (1880-1939)

A. BELTRAN

Electricity consumption in the Paris area developed in three chronological stages closely associated with particular uses. The first involved streetlights. Discussions about electricity bore the hopes of a society convinced that Science and Progress went hand in hand. The advent of electricity seemed to be a solution for the evils of industrial concentration. In effect, the first boom in electrical energy use took place in a very competitive context, tainted with fears, and was slowed down by dissuasive prices. Economic growth at the beginning of the 20th century and world war I gave a decisive boost to widespread use of the electric motor. Practical and economical to use, it paved the way for the rationalization of workshops. Despite serious problems, electricity succeeded in showing the full gamut of its possibilities in 1914-1918. Lastly, intense propaganda during the interwar period, based on the model of American life, revolved around electrical applications in the home. These latter had the three-fold advantage of alleviating effects of the economic crisis, regulating everyday consumption, and endorsing the new woman's lifestyle. Though its conquests were not complete by 1939, electricity had nevertheless succeeded in keeping its progress-related image and the sense of marvel that had accompanied its birth.

The Oulemas/Soufis in Mogul India : An Historical Anthropology of Religious Muslims

M. GABORIEAU

This article attempts to establish a model for the study of the roles played by highranking religious specialists in Muslim India up until the end of the 18th century : the oulemas or doctors of Law, devoted to the study of the exoteric sciences, and the soufis, mystics versed in the esoteric sciences. The first section of the article criticizes current interpretations which strongly oppose oulemas and soufis as anachronistic ; they read recent political issues into the past, erroneously postulating continuity between the 18th and 20th centuries. It must be recognized, on the contrary, that the beginning of the 19th century marked a break that was due less to British presence than to the emergence of the fundamentalist Islam of the Wahhabites. Taking this break into account, the second section of the article sketches out an alternative model which stresses the close link of mystic and exoteric sciences : prior to the 19th century, oulemas and soufis formed a restricted class of scholars, grouped according to scholarly lineage ; held in subordinate positions, they were little interested in having political influence or interacting in a missionary capacity.

Semiology and History in a 16th Century Algerian Hagiographic Document

H. TOUATI

Though coming under several genres, the manêqib are above all distinguished in the Maghreb as the literary expression of one of the most fruitful forms of its religious life : the worship of the saints. In that respect they are hagiographic.

As literary fictions seeking to extol exemplary behavior, they are naturally assigned to produce models to be imitated. Their narrative schemas are almost entirely mobilized and oriented, at least on a superficial level, so as to realize this canonic objective. Historians and anthropologists of symbolico-religious practices cannot neglect their structuration without condemning themselves to not understanding that a hagiographic discourse is first and foremost meaningful because of its narrative effects. Edification is not, however, the only social use made of them ; there are others as well. One of them — no doubt the most important — consists in regulating the stakes of filiation that involve both the lineage of the saint, his companions and disciples, and the community, all of whom are interested in one way or another in harnessing his good fortune. That is what makes these manêqib from the Maghreb regulating discourses, i. e. in the last analysis, they are a way of routinizing the saint's charisma.

Lancelot : The Prehistory of an Arthurian Hero

D. BOUTET

The variety of hypotheses put forward thus far to explain Lancelot's origins seem unsatisfactory as they fail to shed light in a coherent way on a number of important points, and do not permit us to understand why scattered themes cristallized around one and the same character. A comparative examination with the Scandinavian god, Heimdallr, and with the Indian hero, Bhisma (counterparts of the Irish god, Lug according to G. Dumézil) allows us to detect correspondences and even to explain why it was Lancelot, and not Perceval or any other hero who was chosen by the authors of « Lancelot – Graal » in the 13th century as the hero of the first vast novelistic fresco of the French Middle Ages. It is thus probable that Lancelot constitutes a full-fledged example of a type of Indo-European god or hero found in Ireland, Wales, India and Scandinavia.

Armand Colin 1989

Le Directeur de la Publication : Marc AUGÉ

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Armand Colin éditeur. Paris — Dépôt légal : 1989 — N° 6118 — 3^{er} trimestre 1989

IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE (FRANCE)

N° 9.565.001.5 — Printed in France

N° commission paritaire : 20 816