

English summaries

The Dynasty von der Leyen of Krefeld. A Family of Silk Entrepreneurs in the 18th Century between Mennonism and Modern World P. KRIEDTE

The Krefeld silk industry which increasingly grew in significance in Germany since the 18th century owed its rise to the local Mennonite community and above all to the von der Leyen family. Surrounded by an ill-disposed environment the Mennonite community and the von der Leyen family established themselves in social and economic niches and concentrated upon their extension. The strategy of survival the von der Leyen chose aimed at economic success. The more this success manifested itself, the more, however, the consistency of Mennonism was threatened. The way into the world led to the "secularization" of their own world. In addition to this, the more the von der Leyen engaged in the world surrounding them, the slighter the distance from it became. The "Ancien Régime" took hold of them.

A Culture of Respect. Clothes and their Colours in Laichingen from 1750 to 1820 H. MEDICK

This is a contribution to the investigation of the specific cultural and social dynamics of a local society in South-West Germany at the end of the Ancien Régime. At the same time it is an exercise in historical micro-analysis. Clothes and their colours (and here especially the colour blue) are investigated in the socially and symbolically distinguishing roles and functions they had in a society of standing and estate, a society, in which esteem by others and appearance were of the utmost importance.

Micro-History of a Local Society: Construction of Social Ties in the Parish of Belm (17th-19th Centuries) J. SCHLUMBOHM

On the basis of a family reconstitution, linked to census lists, cadasters and other records, it is possible to reconstruct the life courses, family histories and kinship networks for all the inhabitants of a local society. The parish of Belm near the town of Osnabrück in Northwest Germany is marked by a strong inequality between a minority of peasants with large land holdings and the majority of landless peasants, who were labourers, tenants and linen producers at the same time. This article seeks to analyze the relations between the individual families of the two classes in detail by examining economic ties like land-lease, labour and credit, as well as social ties like kinship and godparenthood. Both mobility and stability can be assessed: the micro-historical approach helps to better understand both the coherence and the tensions in local society.

"No Madonnas here". Floods and Apparitions of the Virgin in the Po Valley Countryside

M. FINCARDI

In 1872, rumours of recurrent apparitions of the Madonna caused agitation in the countryside on the South bank of the Po, in Northern Italy. The excitement spread among a marginal section of the population, mainly women, while, for the first time, the majority of people remained skeptical. The clergy, finding itself in an uneasy position in the midst of a secularized civil society, denied the miraculous nature of the events. Nevertheless, for months, many believers awaited the fulfilling of apocalyptic prophecies. A decade later, as positivist culture had become more widespread, similar phenomena were no longer tolerated, even as folkloric manifestations of popular religion, and were repressed by interning visionaries in asylums. The expectation that the Madonna would perform miracles was then eclipsed for at least half a century.

Mahomet, the Virgin and the Border

M. ALBERT-LLORCA AND J.-P. ALBERT

In the south of the Valencia country (Spain), in a hundred towns or so, people celebrate each year in honour of their patron saints the memory of the storming of their cities by the Moors and its reconquest by the Christians. Even though the Reconquest plays an important part in Spain history, it cannot alone account for the vitality of those festivities. Actually, this historical past only exists in those rituals and it is built again through them upon present. In this respect, two significant features of that area can be underlined. One is the rivalries between towns intent on asserting their specific identities; the other is the strained relationships between "Castilians" and "Valencians". Those festivities, as is shown by the example of a small town, Biar, are outward signs of those cultural differences and give people a good opportunity to express their own identities.

The Roots of Agricultural Mechanization between the Seine and the Rhine from Antiquity to the 13th Century

G. RAEPSAET

Multiple innovations mark the history of pre-industrial technology which bears witness to the use of simple or associated mechanical elements. One can enumerate the improvements in work, harvest and transportation tools from Antiquity to the Middle Ages which, in a framework of growth and with the same pragmatism, have ceaselessly with only discontinuities in utilization, played an important role in productivity. Val-lus, plamoratium, harrows, carts and various types of harnessing are analyzed from the viewpoint of the technological structure and their application or success over a period of a thousand years. The perfecting of tools can be felt particularly between the Seine and the Rhine area during the Haut Empire and the Middle Ages. However, the notion of the technological leap as an explanatory model of important economic transformations or of periodization criteria must be used with utmost discretion. Such an analysis of the history of rural technology also leads us to eliminate the dichotomy primitivism vs. modernity as a pertinent operational concept.