

Summaries of articles

Economy, society and institutions in the 2nd century BC : from the *lex Claudia* to the *ager exceptus*

C. NICOLET

*In Roman society, it was not the economy, through some autonomous development, which created or modified social relations or fashioned "civil society" through the life of the institutions. The inevitable focal point of all these different spheres of social and political life (which the moderns have artificially isolated) was the organization of property ownership, which acts as a matrix of a "society based on orders". The author has conducted a statistical review of known interactions (their distribution is interesting in its own right), and of two cases in particular. First, the prohibition of senators to engage in trade in 218 (*lex Claudia*) which must be seen in the context of ancient civic life (Greek or Punic), by referring to the writings of Aristotle and Polybius; this characterises aristocratic-type organizations. The author attempts, furthermore, to explain why the framework of Roman society, based on "orders", did not break down but was, on the contrary, consolidated under Augustus. The other example reviewed is the role of the legal category of *agri excepti* (i.e. at the disposal of the agrarian commissioners) (*Siculus Flaccus*, 157, 7-8 L) in the process of the concentration of landed property in the 2nd century BC.*

Economy, society and politics in the last two centuries of the Roman Republic

Y. THÉBERT

*What was the equestrian order? The meaning of this term is now well-established, thanks in particular, in France, to the work of C. Nicolet. The precise manner in which he delimits the social content of this *ordo* does away with older interpretations, which essentially boiled down to unwarranted confusion of knights with businessmen. But the question remains open, for the way in which past errors have been rectified is itself not neutral: it implies—more or less explicitly depending on the author—a primitivist conception of Roman society in the last two centuries of the Republic, one whose specificity is thus concealed. In my view it is necessary to make this specificity clear, on the contrary, and we can advance a number of hypotheses flowing from one observation: the orders, by now completely at odds with the new social realities, constitute a blind alley for historians wishing to study the problems of that age. To regard them as a type of social organization "apart" from classes, endowed with their own perfectly autonomous mechanisms, ultimately makes the profound conflicts which marked the end of the Republic incomprehensible: the roots of these conflicts in fact lay in the social structure of a world in the throes of far-reaching change.*

Reply to Yvon Thébert

J. ANDREAU

"Did the politically influential milieux in late-Republican Rome belong to a single social class?" Replying to this question in the negative, Y. Thébert distinguishes a class of

SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

businessmen standing in opposition to the landowners (neither of which could be closely assimilated to the senatorial milieu or the equestrian order). But it is impossible to define social classes on the basis of the dividing lines between the main sectors of the economy, and it would be more fruitful to view all the different Roman oligarchies as forming a single class—although this scarcely facilitates study of the way in which the different economic interests influenced of the State policy.

Town planning and society : the case of Nîmes in the 17th and 18th centuries

L. TEISSEYRE-SALLMANN

Sustained growth, founded on its successful silk industry, totally modified the bases of urban spatial representation in 17th and 18th century Nîmes. The old medieval core suffered no important alteration ; but the outskirts which took in the influx of immigrants attracted by the development of manufacturing began to swell. Breaking with the traditional policy of leading citizens under the Ancien Régime, the new bourgeoisie did not invest in property, but rather imposed a new form of town planning tailored to its own economic interest. This involved the gradual absorption of the outskirts by the town, which led to the recognition of a new urban unit based on two main forces : a directing centre, and the outlying industrial zones. The ideological justification for the development of Nîmes in the 18th century lays in the rediscovery of the Roman city, with which the modern town identified itself.

The size and growth of towns : contribution to study of urban growth in early 19th century France

B. LEPETIT et J.-F. ROYER

The aim of this article is explicitly to show how the size of towns may be a potentially explanatory variable of urban growth. As no new sources have been used here, this article merely takes a fresh look at the problem in the light of economists' research into the economies and diseconomies of urban growth, and with the aid of a tool as yet little used by historians, namely one or two-dimensional analysis of variance. When applied to towns of over 5 000 inhabitants, this study points to a threshold effect in the period between 1806 and 1836 : the fact of reaching a population in the region of 5 800 can prove advantageous : but below or above that figure, differences in size seem, on the contrary, to have little effect on growth.

Strategies of expropriation and "haussmannisation" : the case of Montpellier

M. LACAVE

The great "Haussmannian" schemes in Paris and the provinces called for new kinds of legal instruments, capable of expanding the scope of the traditional procedures for expropriation in the name of the public interest. It soon became clear that the right to expropriate, which had been regarded primarily as a means of protecting property rights, would have to be superseded by town planning rights, seen as a means of furthering the "general interest".

In Montpellier, in 1863-1864, the modernist ruling group, which was predominantly protestant, sought to push to its logical conclusion a body of law conceived in the first place for Paris, as also the Haussmannian approach itself. Their purpose was to adapt the national (Parisian) town planning model and to revive the ancient town centre. The scheme ended in

semi-failure, partly because people were ill-prepared to countenance the implied outrage against "sacred property rights". And yet more or less all over Europe, and in Italy especially, similar legislation was beginning to enter the statute books...

**Environment and settlement :
breakdown in the Great European Plain
in the 13th century**

T. DUNIN-WĄSOWICZ

The research carried out by English and American geophysicists into the changes which took place in the natural environment of Europe during the Middle Ages is corroborated by the work of Polish researchers on climatic changes and their effect on the patterns of human settlement in Europe during the same period. Their research enables us to put forward certain hypotheses. I would like to draw special attention to two of them : the first concerns the effect of human activity in the field of irrigation in forested lowland areas ; closely related to this is the exploitation of natural resources. The other pertains to the general climatic changes which have taken place irrespective of man.

During the last twenty years, geographers, historians and archaeologists have charted the pattern and evolution of early medieval settlement in the lowlands of Central and Eastern Europe. The works of Z. Hilczer, S. Kurnatowski, and J. Herrmann provide evidence that human settlement during the early Middle Ages gradually moved from river valleys and marshy areas onto higher land. This trend was significantly intensified in the middle of the 13th century, although a pattern of migration to areas of higher land can be detected earlier.

**Feminine observation and masculine ideology :
woman's body as viewed by Greek doctors**

A. ROUSSELLE

The women of Greece, whose learning is related in the Cnidian treatises that form part of the Hippocratic Collection, had observed the principal symptoms of infections of the female genital tracts. Fear of these infections and of sterility seem to have been stronger than the desire for contraception. They examined themselves, looked for symptoms, and had some effective means of treatment. They supposed that in orgasm they emitted a sperm which played a vital part in procreation. Aristotle disagreed, denying both the necessity of female orgasm and the role of the female's sperm in conception. Soranos, in 1st century AD Rome, adapted this knowledge of the female body to the requirements of an aristocratic, Malthusian society, which the Augustan laws constrained to marriage and procreation. Progress in gynaecology, better maternal and neo-natal care, were the fruit of these legal and social conditions. In a world in which the question of the superiority of virginity was held to be of vital importance, medicine offered a form of sexual hygiene. Galen, in the 2nd century AD, drew attention to the relation between troubles affecting single women and the absence of sexual relations, thereby acknowledging the strength of female desire.

**Man as machine and man as microcosm :
a comparison of Western and traditional
Japanese approaches to patient care**

M. M. LOCK

Recent studies in epidemiology and the behavioural sciences demonstrate that environmental, social and psychological factors play a large role in the incidence of all types of

SUMMARIES OF ARTICLES

diseases. This information along with new models derived from the pure sciences have called into question some of the premises upon which "cosmopolitan" medicine is based. The traditional East Asian medical model and the Western, bio-medical model are analysed and compared as products of their respective historical and cultural traditions. It is demonstrated that attitudes of both doctors and patients towards diagnosis, therapeutic goals, the sick role and the meaning of illness, among other factors, are profoundly modified by cultural context. It is suggested that in light of current epidemiological trends the biomedical model could be complemented by systems theory in which environmental, cultural, social and psychological variables are attributed as much consideration as biological factors.