

Summaries of articles

Smallholding in France: Reproduction and Competitiveness (late 19th Century-Beginning of the 20th Century)

R. HUBSCHER

In spite of its social importance, the smallholding is often criticized for its economic results, and its continued existence would appear incompatible with agricultural modernization. The fact that at the beginning of the 20th century the system was still in operation if not actually expanding, appears paradoxical and invites speculation as to whether the reasons for this might not be found in its possibility of access to various markets, notably those of money and labour. This exploration reveals the mechanisms of its reproduction. The analysis of a series of monographs on smallholdings, drawn from the files of candidates for the cultivation premiums awarded at regional agricultural contests, gives the measure of their performance (innovation, yield, productivity) and suggests a dynamism at least equal to that of larger holdings. The conditions of production of these smallholdings and the results they obtain invite reconsideration of the notion of their "specificity", which is less obvious than is generally assumed. Be this as it may, any comparison of the respective performances of farms of different sizes — but of the same type — must take into account not only the dimensions of the holding, but also the stage it has reached in its development cycle, a factor which is at least as important.

"La Calabre" from Father to Son: a Century in the Life of a Farm, 1650-1761

M. BAULANT

From 1650 until 1760 four generations of the Maslé family occupied the farm, "la Calabre". In a Brie ravaged first by the Wars of Religion and then by the passage of troops during the Fronde, the first Maslé fought to free their farm from the land taxes which burdened it. Their relative success gave them a certain prestige in a village where most of the properties, scanty and poorly cultivated, were barely able to maintain themselves. Their descendants found themselves at the head of "la Calabre" while

too young and isolated by repeated bereavements: They let themselves be seduced by the readiness of credit, were charged exorbitant land taxes, and ended up ruining themselves. By means of a close look at one small farm in Brie this examination is able to analyse the narrow discrepancies between demographic data, familial vicissitudes, and economic substrata and thereby shed some light upon the fragile nature of peasant land-ownership, threatened at each generation by new partitions.

Rent, Family, Innovation: a Contribution to the Sociology of the Aristocratic Estate in the 19th Century

A. GUILLEMIN

In French rural society during the first two thirds of the 19th century a number of the great aristocratic landowners, far from simply living off their rents, frequently concerned themselves with agricultural innovation. This innovative practice such as is found in la Manche, a departement in lower Normandy, is sustained by an original rationale, the examination of which is indispensable for an understanding of the connections existing between peasants and nobles. More specifically, the representatives of the landed nobility, in establishing privileged relationships with the most advanced of the superior fringe of the peasantry while opposing the excesses of liberalism in the name of a paternalistic vision of society, succeeded not only in keeping themselves in power but also in perpetuating their status as social models and in integrating themselves into the community of notables or the great rural bourgeoisie.

An Open Elite? 1540-1580

L. STONE

This article sets out to test the traditional view that for centuries English landed society has been unique in Europe for its openness to infiltration by new families enriched by trade, banking or industry. Far-reaching consequences, from the avoidance of bloody revolution to the pioneering success of England's industrialization, and even its relative economic decline since 1880, have been held to follow from this one distinctive characteristic. This article uses quantitative methods to test this hypothesis for the centuries between 1540 and 1880, and finds it largely false. Finally, the article suggests how this radical new assessment of elite mobility affects current paradigms of English historiography.

In Search of the Nuclear Family in Medieval Iceland

J. M. JOCHENS

Based on the contemporary narrative Sturlunga saga and the Gragas law code, this article examines inheritance patterns, sexual practices, and the size of households in 12th and 13th century Iceland. Most often fathers transferred wealth and political authority to the next generation by a pragmatic evaluation of the available candidates regardless of primogeniture and legitimacy, although these two strategies made their appearance by the middle of the thirteenth century. Male sexual behavior had not yet been curbed by the regulations of the Church, making concubinage and adultery ubiquitous phenomena. Although the aristocratic households could comprise up to fifty members, this article, using the terminology of John Hajnal, argues for the existence of

the "simple household" in medieval Iceland dominated by a mature male and illuminates the transition from the Sippe to the Geschlecht on the northern frontiers of Western Europe.

***The Biological and the Human
in the Secular Decline of Mortality***

A. PERRENOUD

Through a comparative analysis this study invites a re-examination of the group of factors believed to be associated with the decline of mortality and calls into question the traditional Malthusian explanation according to which the progress beginning in the 18th century was due to a general improvement in the state of health in the population as a result of better nutrition. The examination of the evolution of mortality by age raises striking analogies between geographically distant regions having few points in common with regard to their level of development, their historical traditions, and their social and cultural characteristics. In this context it seems that the long term evolution of mortality, until the Pasteurian revolution, proceeds less from human than from biological factors. The explanation could be attributed to climate though within an inverted perspective : the periods of increased cold coincide with phases of a retreat in mortality, especially among children.

Leibniz and the Mortality Table

J. DUPÂQUIER

Leibniz was interested in questions of population. Among the writings which he has left on this subject, the most remarkable is the Application of some new observations concerning the human life and the number of men which seems to have been composed between 1680 and 1689. It was written, then, considerably after the pioneering work of J. Graunt, but well before E. Halley had constructed the first real mortality table. Having chosen a very arbitrary hypothesis, Leibniz demonstrates how to calculate the average life span of human beings, the life expectancy of a given age, the corresponding mortality quotients, the gross mortality rate, and even defines, in general terms, the characteristics of a fixed population. However, when he does have the opportunity to make use of the observations of pastor K. Newmann which would have permitted him to construct a real table, he does not seize this occasion. Perhaps an understanding of the principles was more important for him than the actual knowledge.

***Gold and Silver:
the Tyrants of War***

H. A. MISKIMIN

Graph I presents the recorded levels of mint output in France for the two centuries from 1295 to 1495 as derived from published and unpublished mint records. Patterns of coinage output do not support gold/silver arbitrage as a causative factor in the movements of bullion. There is a very close relationship between military campaigns and mint output levels from 1337 to 1495. Estimates of coinage levels for the period 1290-1337 are derived from records detailing treasury profits from the mints. These also show a close relationship with military endeavor. Mint output levels are highest at the

end of the thirteenth century and decline progressively through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. War appears to have mobilized bullion reserves, to have exposed them to export loss through several paths, and to have contributed to the emerging bullion famine of the later middle ages. Royal efforts to remedy the problem, widely supported, increased the power of the crown and reduced the liberties of the French people for several centuries.

**Conceptions of Hell in 14th Century France:
Imagination and Power**

J. BASCHET

In contrast to the view which sees only stereotypes and repetitiveness in representations of hell, this article demonstrates that they are the object of strong tensions. If infernal motifs, transposing earthly fears, necessarily use fundamental schemas of distress, then one observes in the 14th century la connection evolving between such motifs and the penalties of earthly justice, and still more, the implementation of punishments. Furthermore, it is necessary to avoid believing that hell was everywhere and always an object of terror. In fact, the 14th century is the decisive stage in the effort lead to strengthen the fear of hell. The texts testify to a new severity, a greater concern for linking each punishment with the transgression it punishes, and the retreat of a conception of a hell which is provisional or reserved for certain sinners only. Increasingly, the theme of hell is subordinated to its ideological function.

**The Illusionary Metamorphosis: from Christian Theories
of Metamorphoses to Medieval Images of the Werewolf.**

L. HARF-LANCNER

The theme of animal metamorphosis, that is to say, of the passage from one kingdom of nature to another, offers in medieval literature a privileged perspective of the game of opposition and interference, or better still, osmosis between the different cultural registers: Christian and pagan, learned and popular, Latin and vernacular. A theory of metamorphosis was developed in apologetic literature beginning above all in a chapter of The City of God of Saint Augustine who interpreted metamorphosis as diabolic illusion. In comparison with these texts which recurred throughout the Middle Ages, narrative literature offered several instances which attest to the vitality of the belief in metamorphosis, especially that of werewolfs. Initially one believed in an opposition between clerical and profane culture. But the comparative study of accounts of werewolfs in medieval texts reveals on the contrary the influence of the clerical interpretation upon narratives presenting themselves as folkloric tales. The medieval tale of the werewolf constitutes a version of the tale type 449, "the dog of the Tsar", in which the hero is transformed into a wolf, and no longer a dog, by a treacherous wife. The story thus shifts from the marvelous to the magical, from pagan myth to demonic illusion. In fact, all literature in the Middle Ages offers the same rejection of the myth of metamorphosis.