

English summaries

Violence of History, Stories of Violence. Frontier, Communalism and Memory in Southern India (Karnataka)

J. ASSAYAG

Owing to several surveys in Southern India, the last one conducted during a communalist conflict through the whole sub-continent, one observes that the frontier dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka States—echo of an old ethnic, linguistic and political competition—is blurred by the common muslim enemy gathering the hindus (maratha/kannadiga). On the one hand, the forgetting of ancient cleavages gives rise to the rewriting of history; and, on the other hand, the muslims use their saints' memory on purpose to restate clearly their local islamic identity.

From Violence to the Djihâd

A. MOUSSAOUI

October 1988 was the beginning of a cycle of confrontations between opposing forces. It was the official birth date of islamism as a political movement in Algeria.

The mosque played an important role in this equation. It became the ideal space for protest and it produced new leaders who were both more credible and more representative than before. These leaders were the imam-s, often university educated and young as are three quarters of the population of Algeria. Their argument involves essentially a radical denunciation of those who in the process of governing have deviated from the behavior pruned by their own very ideological discourse: i.e. justice, equality and respect for the moral values which religion inspires.

The new imam-s, basing their arguments on the culture of the djihâd transmitted by the schools and other ideological institutions for the past thirty years, incite the population, and the young people in particular, to reenact the exploits of the war of liberation against those who marginalise them.

In order to understand this behavior, only anthropology offers the necessary insight. According to the holistic culture of Algeria which is still strong, honor is one of the highest values. This concept is at the basis of the order to fight against the "big man" (in this case the State) which has failed in its mission of "necessary generosity". The combat for honor is therefore imperative. Its goal is not necessarily victory: to resist, at the risk of dying, is sufficient. As they have nothing to lose here on earth, the young people who have rallied to the call, hope that, at least, they will earn a place for themselves in the hereafter.

Rural Credit in Early Modern Switzerland

U. PFISTER

This essay presents a synthesis of the available literature on the economic and social function of rural credit in early modern Switzerland. It sets out by describing different types of credits and the patterns of exchange between different urban and rural actors. In particular, the class-specific pattern of rural indebtedness is examined as well as the role of social proximity in explaining the type and size of credits. Furthermore, the contrasting aspects of institutional protection and informality of credit relations are discussed, with particular focus on the role of credit in clientelistic networks. The final part is devoted to the function of life-cycle specific indebtedness in the permanent income strategy of peasant households. It is maintained that credits were used unproductively in the first instance, but that rural indebtedness nevertheless contributed to the expansion of cash crop production and proto-industry.

Rural Credit in Seventeenth-Century England

P. SPUFFORD

P. Spufford has begun a large project on the 33,000 surviving probate accounts exhibited by executors and administrators a year or more after the corresponding probate inventories had been drawn up. From work done so far he has been able to show that, as well as the all pervasive amount of credit involved in buying and selling, already worked on by Dr Muldrew, there was also a broad network of formal, long-term, interest-bearing loans on bonds, which underpinned the development of agriculture in seventeenth-century England. Many of these loans were provided by lenders whom historians can recognize as family, and others by those known to the borrowers. However, brokers, such as money-scriveners, were also used as intermediaries between investors and borrowers otherwise unknown to each other. It is not yet clear how far these loan-brokers were the precursors of country bankers.

Spaces, Uses and Dynamics of Debt in High Alpine Valleys (xviith-xviiith Centuries)

L. FONTAINE

This study would like to enter into the complexity of the "spider's web of credit" in villages of the high alpine valleys. In the first part, it presents the geographical diversity of the spaces of credit in which the village elites are involved, taking the case of two different kinds of elites: one mainly protestant and merchant and the other catholic and turned towards the use of the State and of local resources. In the second part, it analyses the various kinds of credit which are at work inside the villages, stressing the diversity of needs and the variety of relations they create, seen through the interest rates, the time allowed for reimbursement, and the warranties required to secure the debt, in order to show the complexity of the economic and social roles of credit in the villages. In the third part, it tries to show the effect of certain dynamics (the lack of currencies, the actors' wish to escape the interpersonal relations, the rivalries among elite families, the inability of women, particularly widows, to deal with certain kinds of debts) on these personal links. Those transformations create market dynamics.

From Annuity to Mortgage in a Period of Industrial Transition: Family Strategies in the xviiith Century in the Region of Liege

P. SERVAIS

Loans in the European countryside represented an essential instrument of credit in the modern era. Within the context of the Liege region of Belgium, the first on the

continent to become industrialized, an analysis of the xviiith century enables us to state that on the macro-economic level, it fits in perfectly with the regional and economic structures and conjunctures, which evolution it reflects, even with regard to its most modern, notably postindustrial facettes. On the micro-economic level, an analysis of the individual portfolios of the participants in the loan market nevertheless obliges us to nuance our first impressions both with regard to the extent of the phenomenon as concerns number and characteristics of the participants, who seem rather to be local and traditional, if not patriarchal in nature, than modern and motivated by an enterprising spirit. Finally, it raises the question of the co-existence of different types of credit space, of the characteristics and of the bridges which link them together.

Land and Credit during the Preindustrial Era

G. BÉAUR

Since the beginning, markets for land and for credit have been tied together by a very solid chain and the historiography of the preindustrial era has generally taken this into account. But most of the time, it has given precedence to one type of relation: the role of debt in the expropriation of the peasantry. Obviously, there exists, however, relations of the opposite nature: the market for land is a motor for credit, or, from a totally different perspective: credit and land are entirely interwoven. Moreover, the observation of the behavior of certain groups of individuals would suggest that it is possible to pick out cases of complete overlapping, the roots of which and the reasons for which it is important to demonstrate. The new independence between the two kinds of phenomena poses the question of the role of money and of land as patrimony and their function as it was conceived at the time.

Too Much and Too Little: Capital and Power Relations in a Southern Italian Village (xviiith-xviiith Centuries)

G. DELILLE

By means of crosschecking financial data supplied by ordinary sources of documentation with data supplied by a book concerning the genealogies of all of the families, this article analyses the ensemble of relational mechanisms (family, marriage, political clientele, factional belonging...) and power conflicts which underlie the loan transactions made in a small southern Italian village between the xvth and xviiith centuries.

The author shows the gradual transition (end xviiith-xviiith century), after a period of speculation and of financial and political upheaval (end xvth beginning xviiith century), to a closed system in which the different financial institutions provide their services to a political clientele which is at once highly exclusive and isolated one from the other.