

# Summaries of articles

## **The “chansons de geste” and the Strengthening of Royal Power (1100-1250)**

D. BOUTET

*If one examines the attitudes toward royal power and the values ascribed to kingship in the chansons de geste from their origins to about 1230, these apparently quite different—indeed contradictory—works turn out to be deeply consistent: while exploring in turn every possible configuration, they consider that kingship ought to be both a value and a power. After 1150, once royal power had begun to assert itself, one notices a slight ideological weakening, although it rarely led to a questioning of the kingship principle. From about 1200 on, many chansons restate the old convictions: they do so in rather unadorned terms, which in fact are just a stylistic usage imposed by the development of epic themes. The ideal of a weak kingship (of the Arthurian kind, for example) is nowhere to be found. The ideological continuity of the chanson genre (with all its patterns of resonance) therefore seems to have prevailed over historical circumstance.*

## **Sovereign Courts in 16th-Century France : morality and Counter-Reformation**

G. KAISER

*The “perfect Catholic magistrate”, who represented a model for judges until the Revolution, was a creation of the sixteenth century. In Paris, this ideal was largely the product of combined pressures from the crown and from hostile urban elites upon an often resistant judiciary. It was characterized by an “externalization” of values—a very Baroque solution intended to impress an urban population. The author goes on to show how, in the second half of the century, the elements of the model were steadily disseminated and combined within such curial institutions as the mercuriales of the Parlement and the inquiries into the “religion, life and morals” of new magistrates at the Cour des Monnaies. While initially intended as a system of defence, the magisterial ethic became a means of asserting social and cultural cohesion against traditional urban elites and the gentilshommes. It therefore ranks as one of the determining factors in the formation of the robe nobility.*

## **Constitutional Ideology in France : the Lit de Justice**

S. H. MADDEN

*This historical essay develops a new interpretation of the Lit de Justice of the kings of France by concentrating on the historical and legendary life of the assembly and the ceremonial ritual and modes of discourse illicit therein; the Lit de Justice assembly made its constitutional debut in the early XVIIth century, not in the XIVth century, as previously*

*supposed, and provided a forum for propagating precepts of French public law : following the novel convocation of François I<sup>er</sup> three Lits de Justice of 1527 and 1537, and again in the wake of Louis XIII extraordinary inaugural Lit de Justice of 1610, the archival research of antiquarians produced first a fiction, then a legend, about the Lit de Justice within the assembly in the ancient French constitution. In turn, that influential legend stimulated the convocation of more Lits de Justice in the XVIth century and numerous assemblies in the XVIIth century, evincing a transformation of constitutional ideology.*

***The Paris "Ligue" (1585-1594) :  
a Reconsideration***

R. DESCIMON

*The Paris Ligue, recently studied by the historian and political scientist Elie Barnavi, belongs to the series of political, social and cultural breaks that mark the end of the early modern age. The specific organizational structures of the "Committee of Sixteen" must be closely examined in order to grasp the true social content and acculturational impact of the Ligue. Far from lending itself to an anachronistic reading (for example, in terms of totalitarianism, Terror, and so on), the Ligue emerges as a concerted effort to respond to the attack launched against the "medieval urban system" by the monarchy and its servants, the relatively new stratum of royal officers. This is not to underestimate—far from it!—the religious significance of the civil disturbance in Paris.*

***A reply to Robert Descimon***

E. BARNAVI

*Following upon the polemical article by R. Descimon (supra), this article takes up the main aspects of the Ligue parisienne that were studied in my book Le Parti de Dieu...*

*My method served to establish who were the leaders of the Ligue parisienne and thereby to chart the successive stages of its development.*

*As to the organization of the Ligue parisienne, I maintain that it had a distinctly modern, partisan character—that of an authoritarian "party" whose totalitarian core is quite obvious.*

*With regard to the seizure of power and the means of action, most notably the use of revolutionary terror, the latter, according to R. Descimon, is impossible in Ancien Régime France, but, in my view, is perfectly illustrated by the events of the Ligue.*

*I perceive the roots of the motivation of the Ligue's members in the inseparable convergence of religious passion and social frustration : this explains both the make-up of the leadership as well as the dislocation of the party. This break-up was caused by the radicalization of advanced elements and the disengagement of the moderate ones. The model proposed in Le Parti de Dieu... provides a convenient frame of reference for the comparative study of revolutionary phenomena of this type.*

***The System of the Ius ducale in Poland  
and Idea of Feodalism***

K. MODZELEWSKI

*The peasants in medieval Poland originally enjoyed full hereditary property of their land, a condition which went back to pristine tribal freedom. Their obligation to the duke was of a personal nature. He appropriated their surplus through levies and services for the benefit of himself and the state hierarchy around him. Poland's case at that time was therefore that of a "state serfdom", with a political foundation. It was replaced by classical manorial*

*servitude, involving the land, in the course of the XIIIth century, when both the progress of settlement and breaking new land, and Western influences, made the old law inappropriate. The ius ducale thus appears like an intermediate, but highly significant form in a comparative study of feudalism, as yet to be undertaken, and where classical Western feudality would show as just another variant.*

***Heretical Movements and Social Rootlessness  
in the Late Middle Ages***

B. GEREMEK

*This survey article deals with two aspects of the social and ideological crisis of the Lower Middle Ages that historians have often separated : the rootlessness of marginal groups and the spread of heresy, in which opposition to the established order figured prominently at the time. This connection is obvious for several reasons : the geographical mobility of heretics closely resembles that of social drop-outs ; certain places, such as taverns, forges and mills, served as centers both for the spread of heterodoxy and for social deviance. Marginal groups and heretic groups present comparable patterns of sociability and solidarity ; both phenomena were marked in this period by significant rural participation. However, some regional differences must be noted : sometimes heresy recruited among artisans, especially weavers. In such cases its followers were considerably less wretched than the ecclesiastical controversy suggests.*