

English summaries

The Transformation of Peasant Society in Medieval Provence

S. WEINBERGER

Between the ninth and eleventh centuries the Provençal peasantry experienced a number of dramatic improvements in its social, economic, and legal status. By the end of the tenth century greater political stability and a expanding agricultural market presented peasants with the opportunity to move about from one area to another, to exercise greater control over the land they worked, and in many cases, to become landowners. At the same time however, through an extension of the seigneurial ban, local lords introduced new methods of exploiting the peasantry.

Proto-industrialisation, Culture and Social Drinking in Sweden, c. 1800-1850

L. MAGNUSSON

This essay have discussed the drinking customs of cutlery and metal artisans in Eskilstuna, Sweden, during the first half of the 19th century. It was argued that such customs played a considerable role in the handicraft culture of this town. In Eskilstuna during this period the social relations of production were characterized by putting-out forms of production. In general, the small artisanal producers were heavily in debt to their Verlag capitalist who in most cases delivered them raw materials as well as marketed their finished goods. The view taken here is that what is needed is a processual interpretation of culture which treats it as a semiotic structure relating to the daily social practices of a certain set of people. Thus cultural practices can carry many different meanings which are also altered over time—through use in praxis. In Eskilstuna specifically, we must understand social drinking in taverns not only as a means for self-expression, in order to express artisanal “honour” in a world of changing relations of production. It is specifically argued here that most of the symbolic qualities of social drinking were related to its role as a means to establish informal social networks for providing short-term credit in periods of let offs, for providing basic social security, etc.

Peasants' Incomes and Social Relations in Greece in the 19th Century

P. PIZANIAS

The author argues that presumed land-rent produced by commercial and self-consumed holdings should be considered in relation to lending and taxes. One way to prove this point is with the example of wheat production. The formation of peasants' revenues is analyzed in relation to the peasant family, the basic social unit of production. By analyzing the specific activities done by each family member, the author indi-

cates social divisions in terms of gender and age. Lastly, he examines possible additional revenues (e.g. daily wages), viewed in relation to how free time was disposed of, and to the absence of stable, ongoing relations between peasant families and developing city markets. The mechanism that appears in these social relations is one detaching the surplus of agricultural production from commercial capital, as well as the organization that allowed peasant families to resist the pressure of this capital through lending.

***Mobility and Unemployment in Mid-Nineteenth Century France.
The Seasonal Migrations between Industry and Agriculture***

J.-P. BOMPARD, TH. MAGNAC AND G. POSTEL-VINAY

Seasonal migrations between industry and agriculture were widespread in France until late in the nineteenth century. The scattering of manufacturing firms across the country, regardless of the local conditions of employment and wages, made competition intense between the two sectors in summer when wages were generally higher in agriculture than they were in industry. According to their economic situation, plants reacted in different fashions to the threat of seasonal quits, still, in the 1860's, those who let the workers leave in summer employed around one-third of the industrial labour force. This article examines the conditions and the impact for each sector of such an important temporary migration which took place mainly at a local level. At a wider stage, it was also significant but failed to unify agricultural wages and allowed a coexistence of both employment tightness and partial unemployment areas.

On Present Directions of Economic Research

E. MALINVAUD

These personal and critical reflections, addressed mainly to economist friends, concern both the positive and the normative parts of their science. To really make progress towards objective explanations of phenomena, one must be lucid on what can reasonably be expected to be achieved and on the uncertainties of present knowledge: trying to cover social as well as economic aspects appears to be unwise; pretensions about the broader implications of results often are unwarranted; sometimes abstract theorizing might go beyond the limit of relevance. Although not responsible for present economic evils, academic economists often were deficient with respect to sound policy advising.

About Understanding in History

A. BURGUIÈRE

The originality of Annales'school has been incorrectly attributed to the list of new topics with which it provided the historian and to the valuation of collective social and economic phenomena what was really new in the "spirit of Annales" and could appear as a copernician revolution in the conception of history as a problem, because it implied a reversal of the relations between the historian and the past. The object of research could no more be considered as given by the past, or by the Archives but had to be built. The revival of critics against Annales expresses the difficulty for some historians to leave the dreams of resuscitating the past for a complete investment in the process of understanding and interpreting. Most of the conceptual and methodological innovations carried out by historians and particularly the history of mentalities or the quanti-

tative history can be explained by a requirement of totalisation, by the need to compensate the splitting out of the object of history, the multiplication of specialized fields of research by a unifying approach.

Fief, Féodalité, Feudalism

A. GUERREAU

The notion of “feudal system” emerged in the 18th century in the context of polemics connected to the profound social transformation of that period; at the same time it also served as an instrument in these confrontations. Above all, the “feudal system” served as a foil against which the two key demands of “freedom of commerce” and “freedom of conscience” were argued. It is thus important to pinpoint exactly in what way these two claims constituted, in and of themselves, a decisive break with the feudal system. The first claim corresponded to the advent of the contemporary idea of property, and thus opposed the conception of the unity of the “personal” and “real” relationships in the feudal system; and the second claim established the present conception of religion which made it impossible to think of the church as the dominant institution of the feudal system. The rest of the article attempts to follow the evolution, beginning with the 18th century, of the social condition, particularly in France and Germany, in which these two important conceptual departures operated.

Grain Policies and Collective Violence in Eighteenth Century Europe

H. L. ROOT

In this article the author contends that French policies designed to defend consumer interests produced price distortions that reduced overall income and transferred income from the countryside to the town. The term “moral economy” does not capture this aspect of early-modern crowd action. A more accurate description would emphasize the monopolistic character of the policies that crowds were trying to defend and the costs their actions imposed on the population at large. Although crowd actions promoted policies that imposed costs spread broadly across the population, these actions generated benefits that were localized and highly visible. Urban groups often benefited at the expense of the more numerous but geographically diffuse peasantry. The moral economy argument does not account for these macro-economic outcomes of policies which in effect subsidized grain consumption for town dwellers. Moreover, the term ignores the competition between rural and urban interests. Most importantly, recent discussions of grain riots do not examine the different national outcomes of collective action.