

English summaries

The Alms Game in the Middle Ages

J.-L. ROCH

Medieval charity was not always a sacred exchange making beggars the gateway to heaven; it was also the locus of a cruel game—true ritual mockery. Beyond the gestures and words we get a glimpse of in literature, the arguments in treatises on alms allow one to reconstitute the logic of the exchange of which they were a part, and to propose a model of ambivalence in charity and of perverse gifts, which more specifically characterizes the Medieval western world beginning in the 12th century in the history of piety. Mockery aimed not only at dismissing beggars, but on many occasions even accompanied gift giving. It was a way of getting around social constraints and escaping from the fever of piety. It did not so much announce the exclusion of beggars in the modern age as the inevitable underside of charity, defusing its merging power, putting everyone in his place and keeping misery at a safe distance.

Business and Workers: the Ciompi in Florence

A. STELLA

The world “Ciompi” brings to mind the actors in a famous “uprising” which took place in Florence in 1378. A rich literature grew up revolving around the event, initiated by its contemporaries; but the social, structural and original reasons which sparked it off remain little known.

Who were the people who dared rise up in revolt in “beautiful sweet” Florence? How did they live? In this article, the author examines the working conditions of these Florentine wool manufacturing laborers. In crossing an analysis of the accounts of a big wool manufacturer with the regulation sources and treatises on the art of wool-making, certain characteristics proper to this group of workers can be brought out: their form of remuneration, and the rhythm and the technical and physical conditions of their work. As unqualified, interchangeable, massified, piece-work and hourly wage laborers, carrying out the most painful and repetitive of operations, their fate depended solely on productive necessities. And, what’s more, they were scorned: Ciompi!

Tepeaca: A Local Mexican Market at the End of the 19th Century

J. C. GARAVAGLIA AND J. C. GROSSO

This paper takes on the task of qualifying the dominant view in historiography that haciendas and corn played predominant roles in supplying Central Mexican markets and in consumption. Herein we try, without minimizing the general validity of this view, to shed light on the multiform structures and complexity of markets and con-

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sumption in New-Spain. Our study allows us to show that, while the haciendas indeed played an important part, Indians, half-breeds and poor Spaniards competed with them for market shares; these social groups controlled a great many resources in the region. Secondly, while corn was indeed the most notable product on the local market, animal herds also played a major role in the supplying of food and raw materials in this provincial town, so representative of other small and medium-sized markets in Central Mexico.

Thucydides, Historian of the Present

C. DARBO-PESCHANSKI

While relating the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides elaborates primarily on the basis of the case of Athens—a representation of political activity from a threefold vantage point: the analysis of facts, debate and action. This was an eminently critical representation which grounded his explanation of Athenes' defeat and traced out the right way to politically think and act. Now it seems that, in both his principal intellectual operations and his practical aims, his activity as historian claims to be and is conceived as political activity. The only difference between them is that Thucydides' history affirms itself as a completed form of politics, exempt from the perversions of which Athenes provided examples during the Peloponnesian War. But neither politics nor history is able, however, to ground in truth its claim to apprehend facts and determine what is useful.

One would thus be in some sense justified in thinking the so-called beginnings of history with the help of models found in works that are said to be historiographical: political activity would, in Thucydides' case, be one of the main models.

France in Castilian Medieval Historiography

A. RUCQUOI

France plays a very specific role in Castilian historiography, starting at the end of the 12th century, inasmuch as it symbolizes Europe—that of Charlemagne, Rome and the Germanic Holy Roman Empire—confronted with which, and outside of which, Castile rose up to be the “Spanish nation.” “Better to die free than live under the yoke of the French”: this expression appeared in chronicals beginning in the first half of the 13th century; it determined what was to become France's image in Castilian Medieval mentality: that of an enemy and rival, but even moreso, of the only European “nation” that Castile, aspiring to be Spain, could recognize at that time as worthy of it.

Kingly Power and Biblical Commentaries (1150-1350)

PH. BUC

A preliminary study of the king in high medieval exegesis, this article postulates a tight (though not rigid) formal relationship between the potestas of the king and those of the “mystical” kings, the bishop, Christ, the just man, and reason. Political conceptions shape the discourse on these non-earthly princes. Hence political ideas can be recovered from “allegorical” texts that seemingly do not deal with politics. Through the hermeneutical interaction of these figures emerges the portrait of a christomorphic dual-natured king, loved and feared, humble and majestic, meek and terrible, merciful and punishing. The monarch emanates two auras of splendor which express the ambiguity of power. The second, negative aspect of the ruler manifests itself in the

hunt, a display of the coercitive violence of the prince over the animality which inheres in his vicious subjects. Medieval exegesis also shows the progressive promotion of its earthly king from being characterized by anger to being granted wisdom and knowledge. Globally, there seems to have been a progressive bettering of the commentators' opinions on kingship (and a growth in their interest in politics), culminating with Nicolas of Lyra. This Franciscan is both a political realist, sensitive to the practical needs and means of power, and a devout propagandist of the French kings. His revolutionary exegetical style is the formal shell of a thought foreshadowing Commynes and Machiavelli. This is in the dark years of the dynastic change to the House of Valois, just before the Hundred Years' War.

The Classical Interpretation of Probability Calculations

L. DASTON

The classical interpretation of probability calculations (c. 1660-1840) was characterized by a goal—describing the intuitions of reasonable men in situations of uncertainty—as well as by three hidden oppositions: between the concurrent meanings of the word “reasonable”, between description and prescription, and between the subjective and objective meanings of probability. This goal determined the applications of calculation up until the beginning of the nineteenth century, at which time such oppositions were recognized and typically classical applications were rejected. The new probabilists moved from the rationality of the few to the irrationality of the many.

Professional Ethics: Selflessness

L. KARPIC

Selflessness constituted the main strategy through which the legal profession, threatened by strengthening of the State and development of the capitalist market, managed to preserve its social being. This principle of action—whose course from its beginnings at the end of the 17th century until its waning in the 1950's is examined here—is expressed in writings, speeches, doctrines, rules, disciplinary practices, and more generally speaking, in the organization of a specific economic system. The similarities between this economy of moderation and primitive exchange show the generality of this practice: selflessness allows one to concretely establish balanced mutual exchange, thus transforming enemies and indifferent parties into allies, and to thereby maintain, in the face of adverse forces, the permanence of the collectivity's mode of existence.