

English summaries

The Economic Mentalité and Great Hydrological Works At the Origins of a Model: The Drainage of Lake Fucino

PH. LEVEAU

Swamplands have long been regarded as undesirable ecological features and their drainage a wholly beneficial operation. In modern times, the disappearance of marshes has been advanced as a benefit brought by conquering European societies to colonial peoples. As in many other cases, the Roman precedent has been widely cited. Yet a close examination of the historical record indicates that the comparison of modern with Roman imperial ends and methods is not entirely accurate. This becomes especially apparent when we consider the draining of Lake Fucino, an enormous undertaking that serves as a point of reference for modern engineers. Still, with respect to the means at their disposal and their objectives, the Emperor Claudius and his successors did not fail; rather, the results are not what we would expect when those expectations are based on the observation of modern drainage operations.

French Archaeology and Environmental Factors F. AUDOUZE and J.-L. FICHES

Environmental data constitutes an "archive of the earth" whose information can be used in the same way as archaeological data, yet which need not to be used in connection with or subordinated to the latter. Recent methodological developments have prompted the realization that geological deposits provide remarkable records not only of climactic variation, but also of many events and processes linked to human activity. This article presents chronologically a variety of examples from the Paleolithic era to the early modern period. These examples demonstrate that the interpretative problems involved are not identical throughout time. Rather, they differ as a function of the relationship between man and his environment, environmental factors peculiar to the period, and the nature of the archaeological strata containing the evidence.

In addition, the scope of the questions posed here encompasses an ever-widening area in the study of human-technological-environmental interactions. This development is fostered by the growth in the amount of information available as a result of archaeological research conducted in connection with major construction projects. Such archaeological activities also open new perspectives by furnishing random examples of anthropological effects on the countryside as well as long transects across great geographical units. By analysing the impact of these technological factors (short-term phenomena) on the societies that employed them (mid-range phenomena) and on the environment (phenomena evolving in the long term), archaeology contributes to a better understanding of how our environment and our landscapes are shaped by successive human interventions.

***Unity-Pluralism in French Agricultural Trade Unionism:
A False Debate***

R. HUBSCHER and R.-M. LAGRAVE

The research efforts of two disciplines—history and sociology—have revealed agricultural syndical unity as a historically constructed myth shaped by social factors. At the same time, belief in such unity is undercut by empirical evidence of pluralist forces. From the beginning, agricultural syndicalism has been characterized by a right-left political cleavage and by social antagonisms. Yet the internal dynamics of the union movement and, even more, state legitimization have required the affirmation of unity. This article thus reveals the mechanisms by which a facade of unity is constructed from divergent interests.

***Land, Peasants and Economic Power —
Greece, 18th-20th century.***

G. B. DERTILIS

After obtaining its independence in 1830, the new Greek State converted all Ottoman estates into “National Lands”. The notables and merchants were neither much interested nor allowed to buy them, but kept their traditional control on taxfarming, trade and credit. The peasants kept their holdings and were allowed to expand to rented and illegally occupied public land. Meanwhile, traditional clientelism blended with early parliamentary democracy and universal male suffrage; and the peasants became a formidable electoral force. Such conditions favoured negotiation, compromise and privilege-sharing between the two politically dominant classes. The Bourgeoisie enjoyed tax-haven legislature, large subsidized credits, and unconditional protectionism, abandoning tax-farming and agricultural credit to the State. The Peasantry peacefully obtained land, tax, and credit reform, product subsidies and cancellation of debts—and this in just over eighty years (1871-1955). The lower urban classes, under-represented in Parliament, paid the bill through heavy taxes and waves of inflation. Their discontent was diverted to chauvinist and populist ideologies; contained through social mobility, civil service recruitments or other spoils; and occasionally suppressed by authoritarian regimes, brief and relatively mild. The interwar crises and World War II reversed this unstable equilibrium and led to a period of conflict and instability.

Disease and its Representation:

The Svette Miliare and its Treatment During the 19th Century C. BEAUCHAMP

Outbreaks of the disease known as suette miliaire—an ailment probably of infectious origin that has now disappeared—were occasions of intense panic during the nineteenth century. Doctors of the period have left behind strange accounts concerning this malady, account that reveal the symbolic treatment of the disease. The author explores the impact of the representation of the illness on the relations between the doctor and the patients.