

English summaries

Piety and the Demand for Art after the Black Death

S. K. COHN

From over 500 artistic commissions found scattered through thousands of last wills and testaments in Tuscany and Umbria, this paper draws new conclusions about art production after the Black Death of 1348. The “notable disturbances” in painting magisterially discussed by Millard Meiss and other art historians, I argue, were not the results of new waves of pessimism spawned by the plague’s unprecedented mortalities. Rather, the opposite was the case. With the recurrence of plague in the late Trecento patricians and plebeians alike broke from the grip of mendicant piety and sought out new ways to memorialize themselves and, more importantly, their male lineages. This flood of new patrons to the art market conditioned new workshop practices, leading to that “strict uniformity and regimentation of figures” that Meiss and others have interpreted as “a return to the Dugento.”

Love and History : the Renaissance Italian Connection

L. MARTIN

Poetry was a capital means of communication in Italian Renaissance cities, thus its importance for historians. In the ideal of a perfect love, amatory verse made a shadowy critique of the troubled social world, and its religious trappings endorsed the critique by pressing the poet-lover closer to the promise of salvation. Elevated in tone and employing a highly select diction, Renaissance love poetry had a variety of social uses. It served to define the upper-class male; it was a distillation of the language of compliment and lament at the princely courts, hence an idiom for clients when addressing patrons; it was a code of refinement for learned or socially-ambitious men, whether at the courts or in the republics; and with its noble stances, it was a ready means of finding temporary solace from distress and social frustration. But it was most at home in the narcissism of the princely courts, where all its adjectival and metaphorical referents found their vital ground, terminating in the self-love of the male lover. The refined love poetry of the Renaissance had nothing to do with marriage or “popular” love, a more “carnal” and practical sentiment. Misogyny was and is the secret darkly hidden in that well-wrought verse.

Justice, Crime and Punishment in 16th-Century Morocco

F. RODRÍGUEZ MEDIANO

In this article, we have tried to analyze the punitive systems in 16th-century Morocco as one element in the political power strategy aimed at obtaining a monopoly over legitimate violence. From this particular point of view, we explore the sentences

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and the forms of execution, their pedagogical and exemplary character, the symbolic meaning of the physical mark, the discourse on order and disorder, etc., all the while emphasizing the fluidity of the frontier between the legal and marginal world.

Seized Letters as Legal Evidence in the Paris Revolutionary Tribunal, 1793-1794 C. HESSE

This article examines the workings of one central mechanism for the adjudication of political differences in modern European political culture: the Paris Revolutionary Tribunal of 1793-1794. The Revolution marked a transformation of the key political institution by which the nation drew the line between citizen and traitor, replacing the confessional practices of the old regime courts with a trial procedure aimed at producing objective material proof of subjective political allegiances. The “seized letter,” through its unintended revelation of private sentiment, became the most powerful means to arrive at proof of the authentic political intentions of suspects. These letters still serve as the crucial historical evidence of revolutionary legitimacy to this day. The history of the political practices, rather the political discourses, of the French Revolution, suggest that the French Revolutionaries may have taken more from Rousseau’s Nouvelle Héloïse than from his Social Contract in inventing the politics of republican transparency.

Sexual Violence, Study of Archives and the Practice of History J.-C. MARTIN

The systematic reading of the files constituted by the Vendean “juge d’instruction” (investigating judge) in the 19th century concerning vice cases (exhibitionism, rape...) serves as a pretext for studying how historians use archives. These files reflect less a particular social reality that merits being brought to light, than they bear witness to legal customs peculiar to the Vendean men and women in the 19th century in their daily life, to actions by police and by priests, and to orientations put into effect by judges. The historian must respect the autonomy of individuals from the past, their sufferings, and he must understand the process by which a new collective consciousness is founded by refusing the facility of a manicheistic reading of the past. From this example, what is essential is to uncover and follow the progressive instrumentalization of the law by the Vendean women.