

Summaries of articles

Homer, Hipparcus and the Good Word

A. SCHNAPP-GOURBEILLON

The question as to the date of the writing down of Homeric poetry is one of the major obsessions of the epic's specialists. The supporters of the notion of a "lower" period dating (i.e. the writing down taking place rather late, that is in the 5th century B.C.) generally base their claim on Plato's depiction of Hipparcus, in which we see the tyrant boasting of having "brought" Homer's poems to Athens. Aside from the narrative's historical inconsistency, an in-depth examination of the paradigm taken as a whole shows something other than what these authors had hoped to find: an exaltation of orality in an elitist culture in which the "reading" (of inscriptions) concerned the populace alone, the only receiver of the tyrant's authoritative voice. A close study of other later sources provides no solution concerning a possible "writing down" of Homeric poetry, but instead reveals an attitude towards the respective values of writing and speech which was peculiar to ancient society.

The Power of Writing: Power over Writing during the Italian Renaissance

A. PETRUCCI

The Italian Renaissance was a period characterized by rapid development of literacy in urban populations. It can be readily measured in terms, on the one hand, of socio-cultural status related to book production—manuscripts at first, then later printed books—and on the other, of two particular intermediary forms of writing: delegated writers who wrote for the illiterate, and master writers who created graphic models and simple signs. The result was a clear opposition between macro- and micro-circuits of the production and use of writing and written texts. While a maximum of control was exercised over the former, which were official and expensive, freedom of expression was concentrated in the latter, which remained private and modest.

Writing's Seasonal Workers: Schoolmasters and Clerks in the Languedoc's 18th Century Rural Communities

D. BLANC

A study of the emergence and multiplication of small schools at the end of the Ancien Régime permits us to define one of the historical figures of academic institutions: Created through contracts drawn up between schoolmasters and communities, schools established a model of teaching which is well known today. The research presented in this article highlights the multifarious competences required of the person called upon to work as schoolmaster. Far from responding to the necessities of literacy alone, his duties came to include various uses of writing which became indispens-

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able because of the evolution of 18th century communities' relations with their environment. Thus the figure of schoolmaster-clerk takes center stage in this analysis which tries to isolate his many faces. Surveyor, clothes tailor or master surgeon, he already held an intermediate position in society. Thanks to him, schools did not have to conquer virgin territory: they were inserted into already constituted sets of relationships.

Languages and Possession:

The Case of Pentecostal Groups in Southern Italy

M.P. DI BELLA

The "gift" of glossolalia (speaking in tongues) as seen in Pentecostal groups which sprang up in rural southern Italy after the Second World War, conforms to the ambient ideology insofar as it serves to handle problems of domination and hierarchization with which the local populations were preoccupied. In the groups studied—the unitary Pentecostal group from Accadia (Pouilles/Puglia), directed by a woman missionary, and the neighboring unitary or trinitary groups directed by men—an emphasis was found to be placed on "gifts" given by the Holy Ghost, especially that of glossolalia. In the Accadian group, this particular "gift" stimulates "equality", while elsewhere it "hierarchizes" the group by separating the pastor and missionary—who have the "gift" from the faithful who are deprived of it.

Structures and Mutations of a Proto-Industrial Space:

Rouen and its Region at the End of the 16th Century

J. BOTTIN

Because of its functions and commercial power, Rouen furnishes a privileged observatory of late 16th century proto-industry in one of France's earliest developed regions: Normandy. Centered on spatial diffusion and quantitative levels, the analysis of collected data from notary archives leads to two-pronged results. Starting in the 1580s, the production levels attained by the heaviest export sector—that of cloth fabrication—are comparable in volume to those of the 18th century. But from the 16th to the 18th century, the localization of this activity, due to the cotton boom, undergoes a geographical "transfer" from wooded regions south of the Seine to the Caux countryside. This change in intra-regional balance, which also affected other activities, leads one to pay particular attention to the intervention modalities and organizational capacities of the commercial metropolis in the non-agricultural productive sector.

The Distribution of Immigrants and Organization of Space

in the North-Eastern United States in 1813

J. CHASE

Recent studies of rural New England have shown how textile production was commercialized there from the mid-eighteenth century on, showing as well its key role in the rise of a domestic economy, its links with urban merchant financing, and the gradual evolution towards urban production locations. It is suggested here that this model cannot be generalized. Within the tri-state New York City area prior the 1820s, the major seaboard city and its hinterland were relatively separate in terms of economic activity, growth rates and immigrant groups. Despite the importance of rural textile production, New York City's merchant involvement in it was highly selective, reinforced traditional modes of rural production, and may well have inhibited the growth of towns. The new spatial distribution of labor that emerged in the 1820s reflected a new relation: the historical if not chronological end of the eighteenth century.