

Paulin Isnard

Writing the History of Slavery: Between Comparatism and Global History

Should we consider, along with the great specialist Patrick Manning, that “the field of slavery studies has become a model of comparatism in social and economic history”? This depends on what we mean by the term “comparatism,” which has come to denote approaches as different in their methods as they are varied, and even contradictory, in their goals. Since the end of the 1990s, the global history of slavery has highlighted the epistemological naivety of a certain comparatist tradition that understands slavery from the perspective of its institutions, and not as a dynamic process resulting from specific historical conditions. It is nevertheless important to identify the limits of such a “global” approach when it claims to be the only method capable of defining slavery throughout history. After reviewing the theoretical challenges that traverse the contemporary historiography of slavery, this article seeks to show what a “morphological” comparatist approach, using redefined scales of observation, methods, and goals, can contribute to the study of one particular society: Athens during the Classical period. By looking at a specific organization of servile labor common to numerous slave societies, in which a slave tied to the running of a piece of land, a workshop, or a commercial store made regular payments to his master, it is possible to reinterrogate some fundamental aspects of the institution of slavery in ancient Athens.

Michel ReddéNative Farms and Roman *Villae* in “Long-haired” Gaul: A Confrontation between Classical Sources and Archaeological Data

The terms “native farm” and “Roman *villa*,” often contrasted by historians, stem from a long-standing and still-unsettled historiographical debate. In northern Gaul, they particularly evoke the work of Roger Agache, whose aerial surveys showed a landscape populated by large *villae* that were readily interpreted as great aristocratic estates in contrast to small native settlements. This view became more or less dominant, giving the impression that the Roman conquest swiftly and radically altered the agrarian system of northern Gaul. In spite of many attempts to correct it, the idea of an agricultural economy based on the production of large estates remains widely accepted among historians. This article offers a reminder of how difficult it is to apprehend the complex situation of ancient rural landscapes through the lens of Classical sources. It then goes on to consider the recent contribution of development-led archaeology

and the interpretative problems posed by the intermeshing of numerous rural settlements whose size and luxury are not necessarily relevant indicators of productivity.

Hélène Dessales

The Archaeology of Construction: A New Approach to Roman Architecture

Representing a new disciplinary orientation, the archaeology of construction is defined as the study of all material traces furnishing information about the design, the construction, and the organization of a building. It thus offers a way of broadening our approach to Roman architecture, until now considered mainly from the perspective of monumental and decorative typologies. This article aims to set out its various specificities and potential contributions. While the archaeology of construction has clear methodological links with the archaeology of standing structures, notably through the vertical stratigraphy of elevations, it is distinguished by its scale of study, which covers the entirety of the worksite and seeks to reconstitute its context of production and its dynamics. Seven elements are considered, illustrated by recent archaeological research: the initial project, the preparation of the site, the setting up of infrastructure, the production of materials, their transformation, their implementation in the construction, and finally the finishing and decorative operations. The data collected make it possible to combine an archaeology of technology with socioeconomic history, considering the building process in all its interactions with Roman society as a system of production and trade.

Dominique Iogna-Prat

The Meaning and Usages of Medieval Territory

Based on Florian Mazel's book *L'évêque et le territoire. L'invention médiévale de l'espace (V^e–XIII^e siècle)*, this article seeks to revisit the spatial turn that has marked medieval studies in France over the last thirty years. Historians of *dominium* in the feudal period draw on the phenomena of *incastellamento* or *inecclesiamento* to suggest a territorial anchoring of populations around the “poles” or “cells” of domination represented by the castle, the church, the cemetery, and the parish. Mazel, however, offers a reflection on another scale. He sees territory as a space for the expression of political sovereignty, with the Church and its establishment of a new form of spatiality—the diocese—preceding the state as an institution realized via a territorial construction. Through its focus on the diocese, this analysis concentrates on a scale which makes sense within a general hierarchical dynamic of ecclesial spatialization, from top to bottom, from local to universal. But it also and above all enables an interrogation of how the territorial practices of the medieval Church made possible the transition to space in the modern, homogeneous and isotropic, sense.

Florian Mazel

The Church, the City, and Modernity

Dominique Iogna-Prat's latest book, *Cité de Dieu, cité des hommes. L'Église et l'architecture de la société, 1200–1500*, follows on both intellectually and chronologically from *La Maison Dieu. Une histoire monumentale de l'Église au Moyen Âge (v. 800–v. 1200)*. It presents an essay on the

emergence of the town as a symbolic and political figure of society (the “city of man”) between 1200 and 1700, and on the effects of this development on the Church, which had held this function before 1200. This feeds into an ambitious reflection on the origins of modernity, seeking to move beyond the impasse of political philosophy—too quick to ignore the medieval centuries and the Scholastic moment—and to relativize the effacement of the institutional Church from the Renaissance on. In so doing, it rejects the binary opposition between the Church and the state, proposes a new periodization of the “transition to modernity,” and underlines the importance of spatial issues (mainly in terms of representation). This last element inscribes the book in the current of French historiography that for more than a decade has sought to reintroduce the question of space at the heart of social and political history. Iogna-Prat’s stimulating demonstration nevertheless raises some questions, notably relating to the effects of the Protestant Reformation, the increasing power of states, and the process of “secularization.” Above all, it raises the issue of how a logic of the polarization of space was articulated with one of territorialization in the practices of government and the structuring of society—two logics that were promoted by the ecclesial institution even before states themselves.

Vincent Gayon

Debating International Keynesianism: The Sense of the Acceptable and the Neoliberal Turn at the OECD

Published in 1977 by the OECD in a context of widespread stagflation, the McCracken report has become emblematic of the “neoliberal turn” in international economic cooperation. This study undermines this shared teleological interpretation by revisiting the sense of what was acceptable among the actors mobilized in its writing, and the structural uncertainty into which they were plunged by their attempt to anticipate the economic and political future. Rather than an uncontested victory of neoliberalism, the sociogenetics of this bureaucratic text uncover the coping strategies of the “international Keynesianism” inherited from Bretton Woods and the plausibility structures of this space situated at the confluence of the political, bureaucratic, and academic fields. The dynamic of production is analyzed as a situational logic through which the Secretariat of the OECD was exposed to polymorphic external rationales and resources that collided with and were measured against one another. The report form allowed for this confrontation of informational, bureaucratic, and political capital, in a way objectifying their differential value or exchange rate for the participants. The socially structured expectations of what was feasible, costly, or risky are traced throughout the collective process of composition based on four key moments: the commissioning of the report, the establishment of its framework, the constitution of the group, and the crystallization of the report. The article thus proposes another way of investigating the nature of “turns.”