

English summaries

The Culture of the Imago

J.-C. SCHMITT

Contrary to a restrictive conception of the image, the latin term imago is understood here in all its medieval connotations: in the theological and anthropological sense of man created “ad imaginem Dei” and of the son of God incarnate presenting himself as “imago Patris”; in the sense of a material image whose forms and functions are of the most diverse variety, and finally in the sense of a visionary and oniric mental image. The historian relates these meanings and usages on the one hand to the evolution of society over a long period from the IVth to the XVIth century, and on the other hand, with the simultaneous development of Christian conceptions about subjectivity. If devotion and liturgy during the Middle Ages are more attached to the sign of the cross than to images, a veritable revolution in Christian imagery occurs between the IXth and Xth century. Starting with the millenium, the Christian culture of the imago in which the mutual relationship between cultual and devotional images and dreams and visions experienced before or under the influence of images affirms itself in all senses of the word, in one of its most striking expressions. The holy images of Veronica or Volto Santo in the XIIIth century acquire a universal political value. In the following centuries the contemplation of images underlies the mystical and visionary experience of monks and nuns, as well as of pious lay persons. All the threads followed in this study seem to converge in the work of Albrecht Dürer, the first to paint a personal dream and to resolve by the Christic experience of his self-portrait the fundamental question concerning the Imago Dei.

The Ornaments of History

J.-C. BONNE

It is always a delicate matter to place an esthetic phenomenon within its historical framework, a fortiori when it concerns ornamentation. We would like to bring to light the function of the acanthus borders of the Carolingian ivories by referring to an important binding plate which represents in particular the baptism of Clovis by Saint Remy with the holy phial descended from Heaven by a dove (the first representation of this eminent regalia). Apart from any formal, thematic and symbolic relations which the border in question has with the scenes represented, its indomitable beauty confers a particular persuasive power upon the image. Through this beauty, it is also the sacred and power itself which asserts its authority.

The Byzantine Image: Production and Practices

D. BARBU

The article first examines the “schism of images”, i. e. the moment when Carolingian Europe and Byzantium (mostly after the Triumph of Orthodoxy of 843) started on producing and practicing religious images according to different theological principles. The miracles set apart, to be looked at was perhaps the main function of the byzantine image and, at the same time, a procedure used by the Church authority in order to control the religious attitudes and conducts. Once related to the exercise of power, the production of images and the organization of the practices involved by the images is analyzed, in the last section of the paper, by means of two particular examples of the fourteenth century, from the St Nicholas Church of Curtea de Arges (Vallachia).

Inventivity and Seriality of Medieval Images

J. BASCHET

Within the framework of the present-day renewal of historical approaches to medieval imagery, it seems necessary to propose a methodological redefinition of the iconographical method. This particular approach aims specifically at the plastic implementation of meanings, but can only be deemed pertinent on the condition that it takes the whole work into account, without disassociating meaning and form and by considering the modalities of its reception as well as the effects it produces. On the other hand, if the traditional conception of a medieval art at once codified and subject to dogma could be satisfied by the classification of iconographic types, the recognition of the extreme inventivity of this art invites one, on the contrary, to define a serial approach. This kind of approach aims at constructing ranges of transformations, allowing for the articulation of regularities and variations, constants and sudden bursts. Finally, we suggest the extension of the serial method to the study of hyper-themes, thematic networks which, without postulating the unity of a global iconographic system, reveal their structuring, multiform and complex relations (for example, here, between several themes concerning divine Kinship).

***Incest Theory and the Construction of the Object.
Françoise Héritier, Ancient Greece and the Hittites***

B. VERNIER

In her effort to elaborate a unified theory regarding the prohibition of incest, which takes into account ally tabous, Françoise Héritier postulates the existence of a secondary form of incest between blood relations of the same sex who share the same partner. The example of ancient Greece and the Hittites shows all that this theory owes to the construction of an object in which the encounter of identical moods becomes the sole dimension in a complex system of psychological and social relations. A sociology of power interests and relations facilitates the defense of another theory which owes a lot to B. Malinowski, B. Seligman and E. B. Tylor.

Condorcet. Two other Paradoxes

L. GILLARD

At the occasion of the republication of “Mémoires sur les monnaies” (Memoirs concerning Money) of 1790 and of “Discours sur les finances” (Discourse on Finance) of 1792, several apparently contradictory scenarios appear in these texts by Condorcet. They regard the choice of the bi-metallic monetary regime and the inflationary

effects of the issuing of paper money during the revolutionary period. What would seem paradoxical from the point of view of a logician becomes much less so when one envisages the man of action, engaged in a combat for justice as much as for truth. If we place Condorcet's argument within its context, we see the true nature of economic reasoning at the moment when it was affirming itself as a scientific discourse. This discourse which belonged to the moral and political sciences is fundamentally normative; it defines itself by a process of trial and error in accordance with the commitments of its author, adapts its argumentation to the evolving circumstances and, what is more, ends up by creating its own truth.

***Economic Rationality and Rationalization
of Production in Russia. 1892-1930***

A. STANZIANI

The paper analyzes two generations of Russian economists specialized in peasant economy. In particular, the author tries to point out the main categories of the economic analysis: market, progress, work, property. Economic rationality as an expression of the ideal world of the economist is the crucial notion.

Rationality is opposed to rationalization, i.e. an administrative project of economic reforms. In this context, the author analyzes the use of economical and statistical knowledge by bureaucracy.

Third, the paper tries to elucidate the impact of economic knowledge and economic policies on the peasantry. By this way, the main turning points of Russian history between 1890 and 1930 are discussed.

Questions on the contemporary use of "economic rationality" in economics (in developed as well as less developed countries) are equally raised.