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AND

HISTORICAL WRITING

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Editor

KELLY BOYD

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Bloch, Marc 1886–1944

French social and economic historian

One of the most innovative French historians in the first half of the 20th century, Bloch stands as a prominent representative of the generation that rejected positivist orientations, and laid the foundation for an entire renewal of the historical discipline. Together with Lucien Febvre, Bloch is the father of the Annales school, thus named after the journal that the two founded in 1929 – the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* – which, under a similar title, is still issued. Bloch acknowledged his debt to Henri Pirenne, and was a lifetime friend and collaborator of Febvre. At the University of Strasbourg, in particular, Bloch benefited from disciplinary exchanges with his colleagues, historians and social scientists such as Maurice Halbwachs, Gabriel Le Bras, Charles Blondel, André Piganiol, Charles-Edmond Perrin, and Georges Lefebvre. Bloch's research focused on medieval France and Europe, his interests ranging from social and economic to political and cultural history, with special regard to rural societies.

Rather indifferent to philosophical matters, Bloch did not outline a coherent methodological theory; still, each of his studies broke new ground, and set the agenda for further developments. Meditations on the nature of his profession, and on explanation and causation in history can be found in the notes that he drafted while in the army, during both world wars, and then in the Resistance. In *Apologie pour l'histoire* (1949; *The Historian's Craft*, 1953), Bloch formulated his "regressive method," as he labeled the need to understand the past through the present no less than the present through the past.

Bloch's first major book, and possibly the most influential in the long run, ploughed the fertile field of what has come to be known as *mentalités*. In 1983, a new edition of *Les Rois thaumaturges* (1924; *The Royal Touch*, 1973) appeared with a preface by Jacques Le Goff, who cited Bloch as a pioneer in the history of collective representations and anthropological political history. In this book, Bloch highlighted the rituals performed by French and English kings (from about the 11th century, until respectively 1825 and 1714) in order to heal those who suffered from scrofula. Having evaluated a considerable amount of evidence according to criteria inspired by the "psychology of the testimony," Bloch concluded that the kings' miracles were nothing but "gigantic false news," in analogy with the contemporary war phenomena he had described in his 1921 article "Réflexions d'un historien sur les fausses nouvelles de la guerre" (A Historian's Observations on the False News of War). As he argued, from studying the dispersion of irrational popular beliefs in the Middle Ages – ever after the favorite domain of the history of *mentalités* – historians could gain insight into deeper mental structures.

The Royal Touch comprised many significant elements of Bloch's historical investigation: the comparative perspective; the interdisciplinary approach; the preference for anonymous masses and social groups rather than for individuals. In this book, Bloch was also a forerunner in the use of iconographic sources, and in the social history of medicine and the body. Moreover, he inaugurated the combination of Marxist structural analysis with the Durkheimian concept of "collective consciousness," thereafter a distinctive trait of French historiography.

Later in his career, Bloch devoted his attention to French rural history, of which his second book is a major synthesis. *Les Caractères originaux de l'histoire rurale française* (1931; *French Rural History*, 1966) was primarily a work in historical geography. Bloch relied on the teaching of Vidal de La Blache, on his personal observation of the French countryside, and on cartography – especially on those land-registry maps that illustrated what he called the "anatomy of the soil." By establishing interrelations between field patterns, agricultural techniques, and customary practices of community life, Bloch divided France into three different regions. He was particularly concerned with the process of enclosures, with the emergence of the much debated agrarian individualism. *French Rural History* also introduced topics which he discussed fully in *La Société feodale* (1939–40; *Feudal Society*, 1961). Now a classic in medieval history, it analyzed interdependence ties within the frame of medieval social structure, pointing at both legal status and an economic definition of class, with an emphasis on the antithesis between freedom and serfdom. *Feudal Society* eventually attempted to capture similarities and differences between European and Japanese feudal institutions and class relations. Bloch thus pushed forward what he had labelled as the "historical comparison," as opposed to the "universal comparison" advocated by linguists, and wider in scope. In his 1928 essay "Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes" ("A Contribution Toward a Comparative History of European Societies"), Bloch had maintained that, by comparison, historians should expect to test their explanations and hypotheses rather than search for universals. This pragmatic disposition was later favored by William Sewell and Sylvia Thrupp, while challenged by Alette and Boyd Hill for its lack of rigor.

Bloch's individual contribution cannot be judged separately from the evolution of the French "new history," which reached its height in the 1960s and 1970s. The interdisciplinary approach, the notion of *mentalités*, and even Braudel's "long duration" and "total history" owe a lot to Bloch's pioneering explorations in the new terrain of historical analysis. Meanwhile, his posthumous works presented Bloch to a larger public, both as a scholar and as a man personally involved in the tragic events of his time. Besides the very popular *Historian's Craft*, his other memoirs were also published – *L'Etrange Défaite* (1946; *Strange Defeat*, 1949) and *Souvenirs de guerre, 1914–1915* (1969; *Memoirs of War*, 1980). A collection of his articles and essays, *Mélanges historiques* (1963), also became available in accessible English translations (*Land and Work in Medieval Europe*, 1967, and *Slavery and Serfdom in the Middle Ages*, 1975).

FRANCESCA TRIVELLATO

See also Agrarian; Anderson, P.; Annales School; Anthropology; Barkan; Boorstin; Braudel; Burke; Chevalier; Duby; Environmental; Europe: Modern; Febvre; Feudalism; France: 1000–1450; Fustel; Ganshof; Haller; Hilton; Labrousse; Lefebvre; Literature; Lopez; Mabillon; McNeill; Mentalities; Pirenne; Postan; Power; Rashid; Reformation; Renouvin; Rörig; Seignobos; Simiand; Social; Spain: Modern; Vovelle; Weber, E.; White, L.

Biography

Marc Léopold Benjamin Bloch. Born Lyon, 6 July 1886, son of Gustave Bloch, Roman historian. Trained at Ecole Nationale Supérieure, Paris; University of Leipzig; and University of Berlin. Served in French army during World War I. Lecturer, later professor of medieval history, University of Strasbourg, 1919–36; professor of economic history, the Sorbonne, 1936–40. Founded (with Lucien Febvre), *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*, 1929. Married Simone Vidal in 1919 (6 children). Army volunteer, 1939–40; leader, Franc-Tireur group, French resistance, Lyon, 1942–44. Captured, tortured, and executed by Gestapo near Lyon, 16 June 1944.

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Blum, Jerome 1913–1993

US historian of modern Europe

Jerome Blum was one of America's leading historians of ru Europe. In a career that spanned fifty years, he produced series of major studies of the relationship between lords a peasants: first in Austria, then in Russia, and finally, in Euro at large.

Blum wrote his dissertation at Johns Hopkins Universi under the direction of Frederic Lane, an outstanding econom historian whose studies of Venetian shipbuilding and commer were admired by no less a figure than Fernand Braudel. Blu derived from his mentor a conviction of the primacy economic and material factors in history. If Lane began wit ships, Blum began with trains: his first major article was study of the impact of the advent of the railways (and improve roads) in Austria. His dissertation showed how improvement in communications generated larger markets, and convinced significant number of landowners to opt for profit-oriente agricultural production. Here was the solution to a paradox why the Austrian nobility, ostensibly the beneficiaries of th hereditary subjection of the peasantry, provided the impetu for peasant emancipation during the 1840s. Paid labor, the discovered, was more efficient and profitable than the servil variety (the *robot*).

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The third volume (1916), on the Punic Wars, was written against the background of World War I, in which de Sanctis had been a fierce upholder of Italy's neutrality and loyalty to the Triple Alliance. Less pleasant aspects of his thought became apparent. He approved of Carthage's destruction, just as he approved of Italy's African imperialism in the 19th and 20th centuries, and there was a strange combination of Providence, xenophobia, and Hegelian necessity in his explanation of the defeat of this "parasitic" culture. He spoke of victories of Indo-Europeans over Semites.

The fourth volume (1923) was a turn to moral history: the Roman conquest of the East. This in de Sanctis' view was a fatal mistake. Rome should have directed her energies to conquering the backward West, instead of ending the brilliant Hellenistic age. The result was also the failure of the ruling aristocracy to address the various internal crises, so the middle class was destroyed, the citizen army was replaced by "mercenaries," and loyalty to the state by loyalty to military leaders. de Sanctis recognized the fate of his modern-day Italy. Here were his fatal contradictions, however, most notably the failure to see that his much loved struggle for freedom applied just as much to the Carthaginians and Spaniards as to the Romans. His notions of national unity were derived from the 19th century.

No further volumes of the history were to appear for 20 years. In the meantime, in 1931 de Sanctis was stripped of his chair for refusal to take an oath of loyalty to the regime, and during the 1930s he went blind. He became editor of the classical section of the *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Italian Encyclopedia). Yet he had been at work on the Gracchi as early as 1920. They were revolutionaries, but for him the real destroyers of the republic were the reactionaries who could provide no constructive alternative. Finally, just before de Sanctis' death appeared his description of Roman culture in the 2nd century BCE: literature, art, religion, and law. Chapters on the Social War published in 1976 show that he viewed that war as a turning point: Roman victory ensured decadence, then Sulla trampled on every constitutional norm. After crushing the freedom of others, the Romans *necessarily* lost their own.

De Sanctis also wrote on Greek history. *Atthis* (History of Athens, 1898), his first major work, and still of great value, traced the city's history from the remote tribal past down to the 5th century. It was, as even he admitted, too philological (utilizing the newly discovered Constitution of the Athenians) and neglectful of archaeology. *Storia dei Greci* (History of the Greeks, 1939) addressed the conflict in Greek history between the freedom of the city-state and the pursuit of national unity, as de Sanctis wrote on the eve of World War II. Within the city-state there was another tension: between the individual and the laws. de Sanctis obviously identified strongly with Socrates: the same tensions had been played out in his own life. His attempt to fit the very varied Greek states into a pattern was difficult. His *Perikle* (Pericles, 1944) studied the ruin brought to Athens through imperialism and war. The contemporary relevance was obvious. The great problem for de Sanctis was how any state could succeed, if Athens had failed, considering the level of her cultural achievements?

The main influences on de Sanctis could be summarized as his fervent Catholicism, his teacher Beloch, and the French philosopher Henri Bergson. As for his legacy, his Roman history remains the classic 20th-century account of the republic. It was composed as the Italians tried to create their own historical school – and De Sanctis' school at Rome, along with Pavia in the north retain their positions as the most influential in the country. De Sanctis' opposition to both Marxists, and popularizers such as Ferrero, was rooted in his belief that documents do not speak until the historian invests them with life. Perhaps, then, his most important legacy is the opinion that "where there is no freedom, there is no history."

RONALD T. RIDLEY

See also Beloch; Greece: Ancient; Momigliano

Biography

Born Rome, 15 October 1870. Studied at the Apollinare and at Rome University 1883–92. Professor of ancient history, Turin University, 1900–29; and of Greek history, Rome University, 1929–31; dismissed for refusal to take oath to fascist regime, 1931. Edited the classical articles of the *Enciclopedia Italiana*. Restored to his professorial chair, 1944. President of the Institute of the Italian Encyclopedia, 1947–54. Senator, 1950. Married Emilia Rosmina di Mondovi. Died Rome, 9 April 1957.

Principal Writings

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Sarpi, Paolo 1552–1623

Italian political and ecclesiastical historian

Author of a landmark in European post-Renaissance historiography, Paolo Sarpi was also a distinguished scholar and polemicist, as well as a scientist. While he conceived the writing of history as part of his vigorous and active antagonism to the Counter-Reformation church, his innovative method and style broke with the humanist tradition and inaugurated "problematic historiography," with its monographic approach to single issues. As a Servite friar, Sarpi promoted some reforms within his Order; later, as theologian canonist and juridical adviser of the Venetian government for 17 years, he led the republic's resistance to the temporal claims of the papacy. As a historian,

Sarpi enjoyed more freedom than as a spokesmen of the Venetian republic, and could learn from contemporary historians no less than from Guicciardini. His historical works are to be read in the context of the 16th- and 17th-century European wars of religion, as Sarpi himself was a European intellectual. In Venice, he became acquainted with Dutch merchants and members of the Jewish community. His friends and correspondents were the leading scientists, scholars, diplomats, and ecclesiastical men of his age, including Calvinists, Anglicans, and French Gallicans.

Sarpi's undisputed masterpiece is the *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino* (*History of the Council of Trent*, 1620). Because of its direct attack on the Roman church, it had to be published under pseudonym; sponsored by James I of England, the book was printed in London in 1619. In the so-called "pamphlet war" during the major confrontation between Venice and Rome, Sarpi had already demonstrated his awareness of the power of print as an instrument of propaganda. Though put on the *Index* of prohibited books within a few months, the *History* received a large positive response mostly but not exclusively in Reformation countries: in ten years, one revised edition and four translations appeared.

Unlike all the other historical works by Sarpi, the *History* did not originate from a particular circumstance; instead, it was the accomplishment of a lifetime effort in collecting sources, and in recognizing what had happened at Trent as crucial for the destiny of Europe – as "the Iliad of our century." The first part of the *History* dealt with the consolidation of the Lutheran and Calvinist reforms from 1520 to 1545, the decades preceding the Council of Trent; the rest of the book covered in details the 18 years of alternating sessions and suspensions of the Council (1545–63). Such a thorough examination of the Council's genesis and development was not intended to be a mere chronicle, but to uncover the hidden nature of this event. Sarpi showed how the Council had failed to fulfil its original purpose, that is, the reunion of Christendom, and how, in turn, it had resulted in the ultimate achievement of papal authority over bishops, and intrusion in secular affairs.

In order to stress the progressive transformation of a democratic means of settling ecumenical disputes into an oppressive tool in the hands of the papacy, the *History* opened with a brief overview of all Councils held since early Christianity. The recurrent opposition between the primitive and the contemporary church became explicit in the long-term chronological perspective adopted by Sarpi in the *Trattato delle materie beneficiarie* (On Benefices, 1610). The treatise was not finished and was possibly completed by Fulgenzio Micanzio, Sarpi's fellow and biographer. Stimulated by a contingent controversy between Rome and Venice, the book traced the history of ecclesiastic benefices, and thus presented church institutions as the product of human rather than divine will.

Sarpi's enduring influence was due also to his selfconscious originality in historical writing. From a rhetorical point of view, he dismissed Latin, preferring Italian, and used an unconventional style that was dry but clear, witty and extremely effective. From a methodological point of view, Sarpi's precision in handling chronological data and detail was not meant to imitate ancient annals as much as to attain an exact reconstruction leading to the establishment of truth and to historical understanding. This is most evident in the second part of the *History*, for which Sarpi drew on a variety of sources. Thanks to his connections he was able to acquire important printed and manuscript materials; had access to secret documents in Rome and in Venice; and could count on the oral reports of his friends who had taken part in the Council.

In his last work, Sarpi abandoned once and for all the celebratory character of "official historiography" in order to elucidate a burning contemporary issue. Published in this century but written at the end of 1619, the *Trattato di pace e accomodamento* (On Peace and Settlement) illustrated the diplomatic negotiations between Venice and the Habsburg empire over the problem of Uskok pirates in the Adriatic sea during the years 1615–19, and pointed to the responsibilities of Spain who stood behind the emperor.

Since its publication, Sarpi's *History* has been criticized by most Catholic historians for its supposedly biased use of the sources (some of which have been lost) – notable critics were the Jesuit Sforza Pallavicino (1607–67), who prepared the prompt, official answer to Sarpi's book, and, in the 20th century, Hubert Jedin. Some limits and errors notwithstanding, Sarpi's historical analysis has proved to be substantially correct; moreover, it marked a major turning-point in historical practice at a time when it was undergoing radical changes comparable to the 17th-century scientific revolution. Much more than Sarpi's accomplishments as a historian, his orthodoxy has often been called into question, especially on the basis of his correspondence and private notes – known as the *Pensieri filosofici e scientifici* (Scientific and Philosophical Thoughts). The majority of scholars, however, have increasingly disregarded this debate as a fruitless attempt to force Sarpi's very personal attitude towards the religious experience into a pre-existing reformed church or movement. Historians of political thought have generally considered Sarpi an early advocate of the separation between church and state; meanwhile, further research has investigated Sarpi's conceptions of possible cooperation between political and religious powers in the specific Venetian context.

FRANCESCA TRIVELLATO

See also Catholicism; Reformation; Renaissance Historical Writing

Biography

Born Venice, 1552. Joined Servite order, 1575, rising to vicar-general by 1599; but had strained relationship with the papal curia after several rejections for episcopal appointment and theological disputes, which ended in excommunication; became official theological adviser to Venetian government, 1606. Unsuccessful attempt on his life, 1607. Died Venice, 1623.

Principal Writings

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Sarton, George 1884–1956

Belgian-American historian of science and Arabist

The objective of George Sarton's scholarly program was to justify the inclusion of the history of science in the roster of academic disciplines along with history proper and the histories of literature, art, law, and religion. This he called the "New Humanism." Science, which he defined as "systematized positive knowledge," was "the one essential phase of human civilization which has not received sufficient attention", as he wrote on the very first page of the *Introduction to the History of Science* (1927–48).

For Sarton, Greek science constituted a kind of "lay revelation." It had generally been undervalued as had that of the ancient Near East. Although writing very much in the neopositivist tradition of western science, Sarton understood the close relationship of science and theology that, "until relatively modern times . . . was an intrinsic part of science." From the medieval perspective, moreover, theology was also positive knowledge, though of a different kind than that now recognized. The habit cultivated by medieval theologians of studying things *sub specie aeternitatis* was also a scientific attitude. Sarton boasted that his work contained "the first tolerably complete account of mediaeval science." As with ancient science, he attempted to integrate Western and Eastern science into a single whole. He stressed the problems of the transmission of science in the Middle Ages, believing it to be a culturally original and creative process, obscured by excessive concentration by medievalists on scholastic philosophy. "Classical scholars," he concluded, "have no interest in science; mediaevalists have an erroneous concept of it, which is undoubtedly worse."

Another source of misconception was general ignorance of Arabic science. Sarton's scientific background was in mathematics. As a historian of science, although he was, by choice, an extreme generalist, he could well be considered an Arabist. To be sure, he was an autodidact, but when addressing Arabists, he referred to "our field." Virtually all of the great European Arabists of his generation were correspondents of his and through the three-pronged attack of the *Isis* critical bibliographies, the bio-bibliographical entries in the *Introduction*, and the further working-through of themes in correspondence with one or more experts, he set the agenda for the historiography of Arabic science in the 20th century and legitimized it as a central field of medieval intellectual and cultural history. He insisted that a medieval scholar who wanted to be up to date had to study Arabic. Medievalists who stressed the achievements of Europe while ignoring those of the Muslim world were reinforcing the notion of a "Dark Ages." Sarton even quantified the comparative importance of different scientific traditions up to 1400 CE: 362 figures from antiquity; 373 in the Latin West; 324 medieval Jews and Muslims; 189 from India and the Far East.

Sarton continually denied the absolute differentiation between East and West that seemed to underlay Western medievalism. "The majority of historians," he wrote, "have gradually evoked a conception of Western unity (at least spiritual unity) from which Eastern people were excluded." The whole process of the transmission of Greek science to the West through Arabic intermediaries belied any such essentialist conception of Western culture: "A Latin text may represent an Oriental tradition, and an Arabic one may represent a Western tradition." Because Sarton rejected cultural essentialism, he was not interested in distinguishing what might have been "Eastern" or "Western" about medieval science; rather he stressed what was universal. Sarton was an internationalist, and his impatience with cultural chauvinism was grounded in his understanding of those aspects of science that could be considered universal.

In explaining the subordination of science to theology in the Latin West, Sarton correctly identified a number of processes that ran counter to objective natural knowledge: the inability to test basic premises by experimentation or observation; the lack of any alternation between analysis and synthesis; and the habit of inserting such new experimental data as emerged not in the basic premises of science, "but somewhere in the superstructure of their theories." In a closed system such as scholasticism, new hypotheses cannot emerge. Sarton also characterized other premodern, nonwestern cultures – such as that of Neo-Confucian China or Vedantic India – as scholastic.

Sarton tried to draw a line between pure and applied science. Thus medicine and engineering were included in the *Introduction* only if the contribution was "original" or valuable from a "scientific" standpoint. It took an entire generation of