

in Alberta set in the context of Albertans' perceptions of successive immigrant groups rated as potential or perceived threats to socio-political stability.

Fully two-thirds of the book deals with the peasant migration of the turn of the century, the Great War and the readjustments of the 1920s. It is, of course, for this period that the documentary and historical literature are richest. Palmer leaves no article unread, no thesis unexploited (in the best sense), to produce the fullest and most polished synthesis on this first wave of non-Anglo-Celtic migration that we yet have in print. Using his own variation on Higham's elements of nativism — Anglo-Saxonism, anti-Catholic and anti-radical — he takes us through the patterns of attitudes of the host society to the influx. Curiosity and optimism become anxiety and determination until insecurity is institutionalized on the national level with the creation of the official category of the non-preferred. The impacts of the Depression of the 1930s and the World War II are illustrations of the fluctuating fortunes of minority groups when Albertan society is buffeted by economic and international disasters. Of the three thematic lines followed, Anglo-Saxonism and anti-Catholicism have been in retreat in recent years, except for the odd maverick outburst against those pushy Hutterites and the bizarre pedagogy of Mr. Keegstra. Anti-radicalism, however, seems a persistent component of the Alberta psyche.

Dr. Palmer has concentrated on the attitudes and reactions of the majority group. There is no attempt to explore the converse complex — the attitudes of the various immigrant groups toward their hosts, or the almost unknown web of relationships among the minorities themselves. Perhaps this is the direction in which we should be directing new research. But it will be a formidable task given the linguistic skills necessary and the frequent reluctance of some groups to bare their collective souls. But the ethnic history of Canada — despite the generally successful series sponsored by the Secretary of State — will remain incomplete without such studies. If they even approach the quality of Palmer's work we shall be well served.

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EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE — *La sorcière de Jasmin*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, n.d. 283 pp.

Few subjects have been flogged in recent years as much as that of early modern witchcraft. The present orthodoxy holds that there existed a timeless humble local witch or magician, seen through the myopic vision of the Renaissance, Reformation and the Counter-Reformation as the devil's disciple, and horribly persecuted as such from 1480 to 1670. Clothing the traditional witch in the garb of theological categories only disguised its original features, of interest to the more anthropologically-minded scholars of our own day. The more recent historians, such as Carlo Ginzburg and Robert Muchembled, have followed the lead of ethnologists such as Ernesto de Martino (*Sud e Magia*, Milano, 1959) and tried to strip the village sorceress (for most of them were in fact women) of her diabolical attributes and to seize her role in the cultural framework of a pre-scientific society. The originality (yet again) of Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie consists in recourse to traditional narrative forms, in this case the folk-tale, in an attempt to extract the kernel of ethnographical reality from the heart of the myth surrounding beliefs in witchcraft in seventeenth-century Aquitaine.

The source is a long poem in Gascon published by the barber-poet of Agen, Jasmin (Jean-Jacques Boé), who in 1839 or 1840 heard from a peasant in nearby Roquefort the story of Françoneto, a legend which the poet recounted in the style of an operetta complete with choruses of peasants (*Les Papillotos de Jasmin*, Agen, 1842; reproduced in the original bilingual text, in the *Sorcière de Jasmin*). As Jasmin tells it, Françoneto was the village belle in Roquefort at the time

of the Maréchal de Monluc, circa 1565, whose principal suitors were the soldier Marcel, to whom she was promised, and the blacksmith Pascal, the man of her heart. In the village games, Françoneto inadvertently injured the arms and hands of Pascal and other young men in the village. At Christmas, in order to eliminate his rivals, Marcel put up the local wizard of the Black Woods to denounce Françoneto as a witch, the abandoned daughter of a Protestant father. The old man proclaimed that any husband of hers would not survive the wedding night. Boycotted by her village, Françoneto set out in a procession to the Virgin's shrine at nearby Bon-Encontre to be delivered of her "condition", only to have her prayer dramatically rejected by the holy image, a hailstorm simultaneously devastating Roquefort but sparing her own land. She and her grandmother narrowly escaped lynching in their house in the hamlet of Estanquet, on the outskirts of the village, by frightened villagers. Pascal at that point announced his intention to wed Françoneto in order to prove her innocence, and Marcel ultimately conceded defeat. The neighbours imagined an infernal din emanating from Françoneto's house during the wedding night, but the couple appeared smiling the following morning to the astonishment of all.

From this sentimental tale, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie seeks to extract the ethnological contours of Gascon witchcraft from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. He compares the allusions in the poem to a curious case of libel in nearby Montesquieu in 1786, sought by an entire family of suspected sorcerers, the Mimalé (p. 3). The local judges had no interest in assimilating these "superstitions", as they were now called, with theological models of the preceding century.

From an analysis of both cases it is possible to outline popular beliefs of Gascon peasants in the early modern period. Witches may or may not have been marginals in their village, he concludes, refuting the rather Manicheistic theory of Robert Muchembled whereby witches and victims were adversaries in a "class struggle". Witches were designated as such by their neighbours, although the accused invariably proclaimed their innocence. They attacked the life cycle in its various forms. Witches inflicted illness and injury upon their neighbours, causing injury to arms and hands and through spells of madness cast by their touch, their evil eye or through the fragrance of enchanted flowers. They would attack procreation through spells of impotence (*nouer l'aiguillette*) or ritual castration, provoke miscarriages and kill small children. Along with people, animals were also victims, through witches' touch, their sight or through supposed powders and poisons. The witch herself had a shamanistic link with the animal kingdom and the nether world, her spirit, in the form of a goat, a dog or a wolf, wandering while she slept. Finally, the witch attacked the harvest, through hailstorms and through the magical blunting of agricultural implements. The sorceress was thought immune to these catastrophes, she and her family always doing well through the possession of a mystical plant known as the "mandragore". There are allusions to all of these traits in Jasmin's poem on Françoneto, and even more explicit evocations concerning the Mimalé. The unmasking of the witch, if there was room for doubt, was the work of another witch or wise man (*devin*), paid by the neighbours to reveal the source of their misfortunes.

The importance of the poem in an ethnological context, and therefore the value of our author's book, depends upon the veracity of Jasmin's tale. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie first verified the existence of the legend of Françoneto today, interviewing residents of Roquefort and Estanquet who remember the "witch's house" which was demolished shortly after 1940. The analysis of the poem further permitted the establishment of a plausible date for the "real" Françoneto. Whereas in the first part of Le Roy Ladurie's work devoted to the structures of Gascon beliefs on witches, the method employed involves an "atomisation" of the texts into segments of signification, each with equal value (which is not always convincing), the pages in which the witch herself is placed in her milieu bring out a classical and impeccable assembly of local records. The evocation of Monluc was probably invented by Jasmin as an effect of local colour. Allusions to specific feast days, the procession to Bon-Encontre and the feeble place of Protestants all point to the latter half of the seventeenth century, and particularly to the years after 1670. Françoneto never appears in the surviving parish registers, but Le Roy Ladurie does find one Pierre Pascal (c. 1645-1708), probably a blacksmith, with known Protestant links, living in Estanquet after 1690. A genealogy of his descendants painstakingly traced until the mid-nineteenth century leads to the building known as the house of Françoneto.

Our own research on the Agenais of this period, and on elite reaction to witchcraft at the end of the seventeenth century, has uncovered the existence of the soldier Marcel. In another case of enchantment in the northern Agenais in 1689, some 60 kilometres from Roquefort, we find him in the role of a "consultant", counselling a possessed girl on various herbal remedies to break the spell cast by a local witch (Montresse, *Nouvelle histoire d'une fille du diocèse d'Agen, laquelle a vomie plusieurs horribles Animaux acatiques, en vie et de différents espèces; expliquée par des raisonnements nouveaux et Phisiques*, veuve P. Rey, Toulouse, 1695, p. 100 et sq.). In Jasmin's poem the soldier Marcel works with the local "devin" to unmask Françoneto. Apparently, Jasmin inserted this historical figure, who may or may not have been a character in the original folktale, into the position of Pascal's rival, to complete the amorous quadrilateral in keeping with Occitan literary conventions (for Occitan literary models from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and their historical pertinence, see the previous work by E. Le Roy Ladurie, *L'Argent, l'amour et la mort en pays d'oc*, Paris, 1980). This coincidental discovery of a key figure in Jasmin's poem reveals the distortion between fact and fancy, or poetic license, but it corresponds exactly to the time period proposed by Le Roy Ladurie and verifies the poem's reference to real people.

The eminent historian seeks, in *La Sorcière de Jasmin*, to establish an archetype of Gascon witchcraft relevant for the entire early modern period (p. 62). Françoneto and the Mimalé are considered "créatures de synthèse" which characterize the history of Gascon witches at least since the fourteenth century, if not before. They bear the stereotype of the village witch as projected by their frightened neighbours. The author suggests that, to the original rural beliefs where the witches manipulate storms and lightning and traverse the frontiers with animals, were grafted in the late Middle Ages themes associating these sorcerers with the devil, ultimately leading up to the doctrine of the sabbath which does not seem to have ever taken hold in peasant imaginations. In this we believe he is correct.

However, in the seventeenth century, there was a progressive, perhaps rapid confusion of traditional beliefs in witches, only marginally influenced by Christianity, with demonic possession. The famous case of the bewitching of the noble Sirène de Bajamont, cited by the author, in which an entire monastery of Franciscan monks was suspected and one monk hanged, is a case in point. The vehicles of enchantment and the symptoms of the victims, the enchanted flowers and the injured arms and hands, were perfectly traditional, but according to the reports of exorcisms there was a fairly close adherence to Catholic doctrine on the part of the demons. The amalgamation of these two streams of civilization that we witness through the various affairs of witchcraft and demonic possession (which, although each is a specific phenomenon, are nevertheless closely related) shows a fusion of the two genres. Possession filters down from the nobility (1618) into rural and para-urban elites, and into the lower classes of towns both Catholic and Protestant by 1650. Local archives reveal a spate of cases of demonic possession and witchcraft in the Agenais-Condomois. The documented ones include both Catholics and Protestants, peasants and city dwellers between 1620 and 1662 (for details, see our unpublished doctoral thesis, "Culture et comportement des elites urbaines en Agenais-Condomois au XVIIe siècle", Université de Bordeaux, 1983).

As the number of cases of demonic possession multiplied, trials against witches became rare, since the phenomenon of demonic possession centred around the victim, not the witch, although there were still plenty of these. After 1680 we find a wave of possessions in rural areas in which the victims and neighbours denounced local witches as being agents of malefice. This epidemic was clearly in part the result of pedagogical missions by monks and nuns at the village level, multiplied after 1680 as part of the anti-Huguenot campaign. An epidemic of this type, for example, broke out in a village identified simply as St.-O, near Toulouse, in June 1692, during a mission of the nuns of the Maison de l'Enfance de Jésus from the convent of Toulouse. One girl ran about proclaiming "qu'elle était Robert et maître de tous". The doctors Bayle and Grangeron attributed this hysteria to the villagers' belief in the devil (Bayle, Fr. and Grangeron, Henri, *Relation de l'état de quelques personnes prétendues possédées, faite d'autorité du Parlement de Toulouse, où ces Docteurs expliquent clairement par les véritables principes de la Physique, des éfets que l'on regarde ordinairement comme prodigieux et surnaturels*, Toulouse, 1693). Throughout the sermons of these missionaries, there was

a curious amalgamation of witchcraft, the devil and Calvinism, the same amalgamation that we find in naive form in Jasmin's tale. After 1750, however, rural witchcraft was ignored again in its complex of beliefs, either in a reversion to "archetype", as in the affair of the Mimalé family where the devil and Calvin are totally absent, or in conjunction with ideas about diabolical possession.

None of this detracts from the importance of *La Sorcière de Jasmin* as an exercise in historical anthropology. The author's verification of the authenticity of the original characters was constructed according to all the rules of the art from those remaining parish registers, cadasters and notarial archives. We cannot help but feel that had more complete sources survived, particularly the notarial registers, the mystery of exact identities could have been totally elucidated. This probably successful verification of a folk-tale confined to oral tradition for 150 years is in itself an exciting event in modern historiography.

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JOHN E. MARTIN — *Feudalism to Capitalism. Peasant and Landlord in English Agrarian Development*. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., 1984. pp. xxii, 255.

This book is likely to be read mainly by those already versed in Marxist historical categories and rhetoric, which will be a pity, for those least sympathetic with its general positions may perhaps stand to profit most from considering it carefully. With only the caution that the "development of the argument in this book is complex" (p. xvi), its author projects the reader into the midst of an enduring historical debate over the nature of the "transition" from "feudalism to capitalism" in western Europe between the fifteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. Because Marxist historians have defined and occupied the central grounds of this debate, their concepts and terminology dominate the argument, as they do this study. But on one level the book under review speaks universally, for it raises, urgently if indirectly, the problem of the nature and logic of categories of historical analysis and of their relationship to the concrete events they at once identify and seek to explain.

Martin argues that the role of class struggle in the transition from feudalism to capitalism has been ignored by Marxist theories which, whatever their other differences, agree that historical change is produced "by theoretically specified components of modes of production, either internal to the F[eudal] M[ode of] P[roduction] (internal dissolution), or external to this mode and identified with incipient capitalism (external dissolution)" (p. 46). Both positions result from the failure of existing Marxist definitions of the economic and political structures of feudalism to establish the separation of the peasant producer from his economic resources in land and from "ancillary means of production" (p. 15), the former being the result of an economic power of exclusion, the latter of a political power of "denial of possession", which "feudal economic and political relations" vest in the landlord. This definitional failure accounts for the failure to recognize the importance of the role of class conflict — the "central concern" (p. 115) of this book — in the development of a new capitalist mode of production, and shows up another failure, a false conception of the nature of the feudal state and hence of its role in the process of transition. The argument on this last point, as "complex" as any in the book, presents the feudal political structure as intervening directly "at the level of individual tenancies" (p. 107) to assure the landlord of his power of "denial of possession", which, because it taxes peasant resources in addition to land, guarantees the peasantry's poverty, and hence the continued domination of the feudal lord. This "fusion" of the political and economic structures in feudalism "is replicated throughout the entire structure... [T]he distribution of political power was isomorphic with the distribution of economic power" (p. 108). Although, in the crisis of the fifteenth