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Autant dans le premier volume on sentait vivre et se développer un genre littéraire auquel le christianisme a insufflé une vie nouvelle, autant ici on a le sentiment d'un émiettement de la culture selon les contrées de la Romania. C'est une réalité historique qui empêche de concevoir la biographie comme le développement d'un genre littéraire. On pourrait dire, en schématisant, que jusqu'à Grégoire le Grand, il y a un ensemble de références culturelles – un certain modèle de la sainteté par exemple – qui permet de parler de *la* biographie; au-delà, il y a *des* biographies.

En tout cas, ce second volume est tout aussi précieux que le précédent pour le chercheur. Il fournit une masse d'informations à qui voudra, à son tour, s'aventurer dans cette *selva oscura* où il reste beaucoup d'études de détail à faire. Et ce n'est pas le moindre mérite de ce livre que d'instruire ceux qui, comme moi, ne savent pas tout, en même temps que d'éveiller la curiosité.

Marc REYDELLET, Rennes

La Neustrie. Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850. Colloque historique international, publié par Hartmut AT SMA, 2 vols., Sigmaringen (Jan Thorbecke Verlag) 1989, VII-593 p. und VI-543 p. (Beihefte der Francia, 16).

›La Neustrie‹ is a magnificent collection of no less than 48 essays on the land to the north of the Loire in the central period of Frankish history. In the space of a single review it is not possible to give the pieces the attention they deserve, nor even to mention all of them. The two volumes of the collection are subdivided under the following headings which will indicate the scope of the work: Le cadre géographique et institutionnel; Royauté et pouvoir épiscopal; Maires du palais, agents du roi, abbés; Aspects économiques; Saint-Germain-des-Prés et le polyptyque d'Irminon; Les documents: diplômes, capitulaires, chartes privées; Rouen, Paris et Trèves; Saint-Denis; Monuments, architecture, sculpture; Orfèvrerie et sculpture sur ivoire; Les centres de culture en Neustrie; La diffusion de la culture insulaire sur le continent; Problèmes archéologiques. 34 of the essays were first presented at a conference in Rouen in 1985, the others were commissioned later to make the whole work even more comprehensive. The result is a publication demonstrating what one might term ›state of the art‹ continental (with two insular exceptions) scholarship on Francia. The splendid bibliography and index compiled by Hartmut AT SMA make the book simply invaluable.

From the Introduction by K. F. WERNER, and from the first two essays by M. ROUCHE and L. GENICOT it quickly emerges that the land of Neustria was a product of political rather than of ethnic geography. Its shape, size and eventual demise were all the result of political considerations. And as R.-H. BAUTIER and A. KRAH argue in separate pieces based on Carolingian capitulary evidence, Neustria became something of a political backwater once Aachen was established as the premier political centre. Neustria's high-point was therefore in the seventh century when it was the basis of a kingdom and that kingdom intermittently exercised hegemony throughout Francia. But for this period the sources do not afford a properly regional viewpoint, and given that that region was the political centre of Francia, anyone studying it tends to get drawn into a fairly narrowly based political history. Almost unavoidably, the several papers here dealing with different aspects of seventh-century Neustria (by R. KAISER, M. WEIDEMANN, G. SCHEIBELREITER, and J. HEUCLIN), traverse the same source materials and often end up saying the same things. Even where studies focus on a single locality or topic, as with Weidemann on the bishopric of Le Mans, or Heuclin on the abbots of Neustria, an orthodox narrative of political history forms the context and shapes the results of the study. Given the necessary reliance upon a narrow range of materials, it is surprising that most of the essays on the early period pay little attention to source-criticism. D. HÄGERMANN, for instance, mines the laws for information on the economy without asking

when, how, why and for whom the laws and formulae came into existence. As already suggested, one of the delights of having such a large assembly of essays to hand is the conspectus of current scholarship it affords. For work on the seventh and early eighth centuries one distinguishing feature which appears is a confidence in the previous generation's groundwork, especially in that by the great Eugen Ewig. Though justifiably placed, that confidence becomes counter-productive when it leads to closed rather than open questioning. By contrast, the essays on the later part of the period 650–850 are more dynamic, largely because they insist on substantially different readings of what material they do share in common. Here there is agreement that Neustria was a product of the Frankish state in its heyday, but dispute over what that state was like.

J.-P. BRUNTERC'H, in the longest essay in the collection, tackles the development of local organisation in the Breton march, showing how in the late eighth and early ninth centuries what had been Merovingian *centenae* collapsed under pressure from *vassi dominici* and were supplanted by the creation of vicariates. The piece has an impressive Appendix which gives a breakdown of all the known references to each habitation in the wider marcher area. Brunterc'h is also one of the few contributors to follow his theme to the end of the Frankish period, here looking to the development of private fortifications and the rise of the count of Tours as a new political focus for the area. He does not privilege the state, but lets the transformations speak for themselves. E. MAGNOU-NORTIER deals with the same area, but reads some of the same sources with a strongly statist interpretation. In what is an extension of her ideas north of the Loire, Magnou-Nortier treats the language of land ownership, possession and transaction as having primarily fiscal meaning, with particular reference to liability to land tax. She is thus certain that the land tax was levied everywhere in both Merovingian and Carolingian times. The basic objection to this line of reasoning is that meanings change. As Walter Goffart and Chris Wickham have both pointed out, when the land tax falls into private hands it becomes more like rent, and the nature of the state changes, though the language of exaction may stay the same. Magnou-Nortier can show just one example of the revenue from local exactions actually being transferred to the state, and this is the case of Ardin which has been a mainstay of the statist argument since the 1920's. But what is perhaps most wanting in her stimulating and challenging argument is some discussion of what the state did with the vast amounts which a land tax of Roman proportions would have raised.

Three essays on the polyptych of Irminon arrive at a rather softer definition of public authority and state revenue in the Carolingian period. J.-P. DEVROEY has a much more open sense of a political economy in which the state was a stimulant to the growth of the economy, but in which the dividing lines between public and private authority were blurred and complex. J. DURLIAT basically agrees with Magnou-Nortier that the term ›manse‹ in the polyptych has a fiscal connotation related to the economic value of the land in question. However, he like Devroey, stresses the exemplary nature of his source, not wishing to draw too general a conclusion from it. It is nevertheless surprising that he did not bring the Anglo-Saxon ›hide‹ into the discussion. Finally on Irminon, H.-W. GOETZ brings to light the effect of local custom in determining the rights and dues owed on each estate. He points out that services and charges were generally heavier in the east than in the west of the area covered by the document. This is a fine piece of scholarship, and one of the few to show awareness of what other contributors were thinking and saying. As a kind of afterword to the discussion on the nature and strength of public power, Volume 1 of ›La Neustrie‹ ends with an essay by G. DESPY in which he reconciles the apparent decline in quality of charters in the ninth century with the impressive development of the polyptych documents: the context for both is the decline of the ›mallus‹ as the seat of public justice, and, by implication, the rise of alternative centres.

In Volume 2 the essays are concerned with particular places and institutions and with matters of art-history, archaeology, palaeography, and intellectual life. Apart from their

location in the general area, there is little specifically Neustrian about these activities, and the influences upon them tend to come from outside the area. Again, those dealing with the early period are forced to share materials and the Merovingian crypt of Jouarre is naturally prominent in the art-historical studies. In a response to W. JACOBSEN's paper on ›Die Abteikirche von Saint-Denis als kunstgeschichtliches Problem‹, L. GENICOT questions the approach common to all the art-history in this collection, namely the tendency to explain form in terms of artistic influence rather than acknowledging individual creativity. This reaction seems rather harsh. What the essays by C. HEITZ, X. BARRAL I ALTET, M. VIEILLARD-TROÏEKOUROFF and D. GABORIT-CHOPIN do in effect is lay out a basic inventory of visual monuments in Neustria. The genius of their makers is plain to see in all of them, but they are here brought to life by being placed in a wider artistic and historical context. On the particular places, A. STOCLET manages to break important new ground on the subject of Saint-Denis under the first Carolingians.

The essays by P. RICHÉ, J. VEZIN, F. MÜTHERICH, D. GANZ, J. FONTAINE and J.-L. LE-MAÎTRE, grouped under the heading ›Les centres de culture‹ agree with the art-historical pieces, even though the term ›culture‹ seems here to be limited to writing: both see the remains of Neustrian culture as being derived from late antiquity, and they agree that what has survived must be but a fraction of the original output. A. DIERKENS, however, challenges the assumption that in the monastic sphere what did not come from late antiquity came from Ireland. Indeed the spread of an ›Iro-Frankish‹ monastic culture is one of the orthodoxies of seventh-century history. Building on his earlier work, and developing suggestions first made by Ian Wood, Dierkens shows that the term ›Iro-Frankish‹ needs heavy qualification. As R. MCKITTERICK establishes in some detail, insular influences upon Neustria tended to be more Anglo-Saxon than Irish, and according to Dierkens, even for the early Columbanan monastic movement the term ›Irish‹ may be inappropriate. He is obviously right to emphasise the complexity and incoherence of pre-Carolingian monasticism, but in the end he spoils the effect by traversing back into the traditional (and schematic) version of political history around the ›Klosterpolitik‹ of the queen Balthild.

To get beyond the world of high politics and into the lives of ordinary people, we must, as W. JANSSEN remarks, turn to archaeology. Unfortunately there is not much archaeology in this collection. N. GAUTHIER shows how little has been done on Rouen, P. DEMOLON indicates how much there is to do across the region, and C. LORREN shows what can be achieved by the study of one site (Saint-Martin de Trainecourt) from late antiquity through into the early middle ages. The latter essay serves as a sharp reminder that when we talk about most of the phenomena studied in this collection – power, leaders, secular and religious institutions, documents, artefacts and cultural influences – we are of course speaking of the élite. Back in Saint-Martin de Trainecourt it is only from the end of the seventh century that there is evidence of a christian community grouped around a church. In a world in which ›official‹ culture was so strongly christian, it is all too easy to lose sight of this background.

In his closing remarks to the collection, L. MUSSET voices one of the assumptions underlying many of the views on the cultural development of Neustria, namely, that it was sharply terminated by the Viking ›tourmente‹. This may be the correct view from Rouen, and Musset is right to argue that Neustria did not live on in Normandy, but in other ways this terminus may be a false one. For not only is the question of the effects of Viking attack a vexed one, we should also be mindful of how this work started: with the agreed view that Neustria was the product of first the Merovingian and then the Carolingian political establishments. It was the transformation of the latter, not the Vikings, which brought Neustria to an end. The overall aim of these volumes is, according to K.-F. WERNER, to ›faire revenir le souvenir d'un pays oublié‹. In fact no sense of a distinctive Neustrian ›pays‹ emerges from the mostly excellent essays gathered here. What does come out is that it is quite possible to carry on the full range

of discourses which make up Frankish studies without moving out of the area. In this way the collection serves to demonstrate the central importance of Neustria in our thinking about this early-medieval society, and in turn it makes a very significant contribution to our understanding of that society.

Paul FOURACRE, London

Früh- und hochmittelalterlicher Adel in Schwaben und Bayern. Herausgegeben von Immo EBERL, Wolfgang HARTUNG und Joachim JAHN, Sigmaringendorf (Regio Verlag Glock und Lutz) 1988, 304 p. (Region. Forschungen zur schwäbischen Regionalgeschichte, 1).

This volume of essays is the first in a series on Swabian regional history, to be published under the name of Regio. It consists of ten papers which were first read at a conference in Memmingen in May 1987 and which have been reworked and extended for publication. The volume was produced with backing from the town of Memmingen. It is well produced, and all the essays conform to a high standard of scholarship. Together they add much to the science of ›Adelsforschung‹.

The editors' foreword briefly reminds us that regional history should draw on a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The first paper, by Erwin KELLER, does indeed draw on the dual disciplines of history and archaeology, proceeding to excavation via contemporary documents. The result is some extremely interesting suggestions on the durability of the early christianisation of Bavaria. The subsequent essays are, however, all mono-disciplinary and are concerned with history in a fairly traditional sense. The core of the volume is formed by essays which are based upon what Wolfgang Hartung terms ›genealogisch-besitzgeschichtliche Methode‹ in order to cast new light on the Aleman and Bavarian aristocracies in the Carolingian period. In an essay entitled ›Tradition und Namengebung im frühen Mittelalter‹ Wolfgang HARTUNG opens the sequence with a strong assertion of the principle that in early-medieval Germanic cultures a person's name revealed his or her social identity and legal standing. Hartung's spirited defence of the validity of identification by names is made in the light of recent attacks by L. Holzfurtner and H.-W. Goetz upon this well-tried methodology. Hartung's own case is sensibly established, although he is rather less critical when dealing with his own concepts of group consciousness and aristocratic status than when questioning his opponents figures and ideas. Nevertheless, his defence frees him to make use of the documentary materials from Reichenau and St Gall which between them contain over sixty thousand early-medieval names. Where the materials afford a correspondence between names, Hartung is able to demonstrate patterns of donation to monasteries which were apparently aimed at preventing the fragmentation of family land-holdings. There are here suggestive parallels with the development of ›bookland‹ in Anglo-Saxon England.

Joachim JAHN similarly traces patterns of family grants to monasteries, this time to show how the Bavarian aristocracy in the late eighth century evolved a ›Klosterpolitik‹ aimed at bypassing an episcopate that had threatened to become a ›Verfassungsorgan‹ for an intrusive Carolingian regime. In this paper the details of the grants and the relationships around the figure of Timo are perhaps more revealing than the general observation that the Bavarian aristocracy used the minority of Duke Tassilo as an opportunity to reinforce their positions. In a second paper Wolfgang HARTUNG also deals with Carolingian expansion into Bavaria, demonstrating cooperation between native elements and incomers. This produced the kind of mixed-nationality Carolingian aristocracy to which K. F. Werner has drawn our attention, and which, as Hartung implies, undermines any simple notion of a Carolingian ›take-over‹ in Bavaria. In the fourth paper based on the methods of identification by name, Gertrud DIEPOLDER focusses on the first twenty-eight documents of the ›Traditiones‹ of the monastery