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H-France Review Vol. 11 (January 2011), No. 26

André Burguière, *The Annales School. An Intellectual History*. Translated from French by Jane Marie Todd. Foreword by Timothy Tackett. Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London 2009, xiv + 309 pp., \$45.00 U.S. (cl). ISBN 978-0-8014-4665-8

Review by Matthias Middell, University of Leipzig.

This is neither the first, nor will it be the last, attempt to tell the story of the famous Annales School. The ongoing interest in its intellectual legacy and reasons for institutional success is evidently not abandoned by the more critical approaches to the phenomenon surrounding the school. These evaluations resulted in a discussion on a substantial or even final crisis of the school in the 1990s, as well as a debate if this school had ever existed or is only a powerful myth disseminated by those profiting from its presumed existence.

The advantage of André Burguière's elegantly written account, which first appeared in 2006 published in French, is that here another insider promises a look behind the scenes. He does so from a very specific perspective that is related to his own career within the institutional framework of the *Annales* and his interest in the history of mentalities. The term history of mentalities became prominent in the 1970s when a professed third generation of historians took over both the journal and the leadership of the Sixth Section of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (later renamed École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), which was transformed by Lucien Febvre and Fernand Braudel into a very specific kind of research university with a focus on interdisciplinary graduate training.

Burguière refers to the quarrels of the early 1970s when his generation worked hard to overcome the long shadow cast by the heritage of Braudel's worldwide scope and Ernest Labrousse's emphasis on socioeconomic structures. In spring 1969, Burguière became at the age of thirty the *secrétaire de rédaction* of the *Annales* precisely at the moment when Braudel retired from the editorial board of the journal. At the same time, he became a staff member of the École Pratique and started publishing a series of books and articles on the history of family structures and demography. He became a well-known author in the field of peasant studies and published in 1975 the culmination of a collective *longue durée* study on *Bretons en Plouzévet*. As editor and author of multi-volume histories of France and French family, as well as a permanent member of the board of the *Annales* from 1981 up until today, he occupied an influential position within French academia. Already in 1978, he started to redefine the history of French historiography with an article in the American journal *Review* followed by another dozen of articles that can be seen as the basis for the book under review.

His book can be regarded as not only an account of the *Annales* since the times of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, but a plea for the superiority of a history of mentalities over other approaches tested by different authors who claim(ed) to be part of the Annales School.

As all attempts of this kind, it begins with evidence that Bloch and Febvre, the famous founders of the journal, already appreciated the history of mentalities very much and wrote exactly this kind of history that later emerged in its full fruition. This first part is followed by a description of an aberration during what is called the "Labrousian moment" and the trajectory "from Total History to Global History." The subsequent part, labeled "Questions", is devoted to the history of mentalities since the early 1970s. Surprisingly enough, the author resists the ambition to describe in further detail the journal's policy since 1989 and to comment on more recent turns towards cultural encounters and new global constellations.

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Thus, one may celebrate the book as a contribution to a better understanding of arguments used in the disputes of the late 1960s and 1970s. However, one may doubt if students reading only this book will get a sense of the plurality and ongoing fruitfulness of an approach that inspired so many historians to identify themselves with what was called the “style of thinking and historiographical practice”, which goes far beyond the concept of mentalities. Timothy Tackett, in his very nuanced introduction, hints at a much broader story of the Annales School and invites readers consider Burguière’s book a contribution to an ongoing discovery of a chapter in the history of historiography that might not yet be forever closed.

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ISSN 1553-9172