

- 8 GARCIN, J-C. Le JESHO et la recherche sur l'histoire économique et sociale des pays musulmans. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 36 ii (1993) pp.139-153

03 SUBA 1993

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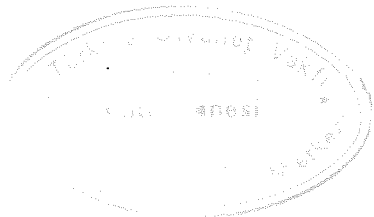
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D B KASIM 1996



to do, because their area is vast, their sources numerous, and the problems to be tackled often complicated. Moreover there is a heavy demand on their productivity by the current assyriological or orientalist journals and by a continuous stream of festschriften, congress proceedings and special volumes resulting from seminars and symposia. But their contributions to *JESHO* are needed, both to inform ancient historians on what is going on in Assyriology and to keep in contact with developments in their particular discipline elsewhere in the Orient, receiving and giving by the study of what is related, similar or different. Recent publications of a few more general volumes on the cultures of ancient Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East have made basic information more readily available and may have raised new, also comparative interest²¹).

²¹) H. Klengel, *Kulturgeschichte des alten Vorderasien* (Berlin, 1989; written by a group of a dozen different authors from the former DDR); M. Liverani, *Antico oriente. Storia società economica* (Roma, 1988); J.N. Postgate, *Early Mesopotamia. Society and Economy at the Dawn of History* (London, 1992). I must also mention here the extremely interesting volumes on bureaucracy, already referred to in note 2, and on *Labor in the Ancient Near East*, edited by M.A. Powell (*American Oriental Series* vol. 68), (New Haven, 1987).

LE JESHO ET LA RECHERCHE SUR L'HISTOIRE ÉCONOMIQUE ET SOCIALE DES PAYS MUSULMANS

PAR

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Lors de la première parution du *JESHO*, il y a maintenant trente cinq ans, une Introduction définissait les buts du Journal. On se proposait de réunir dans ses pages les matériaux d'une grande Histoire économique et sociale de l'Orient, en 30 volumes. Cette Histoire devrait rendre compte de l'évolution économique et sociale des pays compris entre l'Afrique du Nord et le Japon, depuis la préhistoire jusqu'à l'impact européen du XIX^e siècle. L'objectif fixé au Journal était de recueillir les études trop techniques pour entrer dans la synthèse finale ainsi que les interrogations des chercheurs susceptibles de stimuler des études nouvelles. Aujourd'hui, la rédaction d'une grande Histoire économique et sociale l'Orient a disparu des objectifs fixés, sans doute parcequ'on a pris conscience des longs délais encore nécessaires avant de pouvoir écrire une telle Histoire. Le *JESHO* est resté un instrument de recherches sur l'ensemble de ces pays qui ont en commun de n'avoir pas été le lieu du même développement économique que l'Europe. Claude Cahen qui fut pendant longtemps un de ceux qui guidèrent l'évolution du Journal, demandait encore, il y a près de dix ans (1983), que les compte-rendus d'ouvrages soient rédigés dans une perspective trans-disciplinaire, pour que ceux qui travaillaient dans l'aire d'une grande civilisation puissent prendre la mesure de l'évolution des recherches sur les autres. Il n'est pas certain que cet objectif ait été réalisable. Mais peut-être ce 35^e anniversaire du *JESHO* est-il l'occasion de mesurer le chemin parcouru dans le domaine musulman, si on essaie, difficilement, de faire le bilan des recherches auxquelles le Journal à été mêlé.