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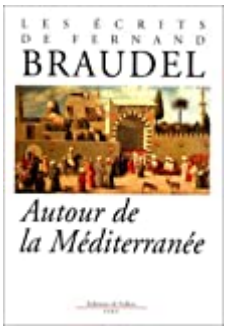
Fernand Braudel. *Les memoires de la Mediterranee: prehistoire et antiquite.* Paris: Editions de Fallois, 1998. 399 pp. 150 French francs (cloth), ISBN 978-2-87706-304-3.



Fernand Braudel. *Les ecrits de Fernand Braudel.* Paris: Editions de Fallois, 1996. 535 pp. 150 French francs (cloth), ISBN 978-2-87706-259-6.

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Braudel's Memories of the Mediterranean

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Fernand Braudel's miscellaneous writings were published by ditions de Fallois in four volumes between 1996 and 2000. The first three volumes have their respective subtitles under a common title *Les crits de Fernand Braudel*, the fourth volume is an independent monograph on the ancient history of the Mediterranean. Volumes II and III of *Les crits* contain Braudel's various essays that are, in my opinion, of secondary importance, on which I have no particular points to offer. On the other hand, there is a common subject between the first and the fourth volume that may be of interest to Braudel readers, economic historians and scholars of the Mediterranean.

Braudel's *La Mditerrane et le monde mditerranen l'poque de Philippe II* (1949) is a masterpiece that is still in print half a century later. There is another less well-known book on the Mediterranean that he edited *La Mditerrane, l'espace et l'histoire* (volume 1); *La Mditerrane, les hommes et hritage* (volume 2) (Paris: Arts et Mtiers Graphiques, 1977; reprinted by the Edition Flam-

marion, 1985-6 in the Collection Champs Nos. 156, 167). There are twelve articles in this handsomely illustrated two-volume set (often used as Christmas gift), in which Braudel contributed five: "La terre", "La mer", "L'aube", "L'histoire" and "Venise".

Yet, Braudel had some other writings (about 850 pages) on the Mediterranean, a major part of which is unfamiliar to many specialists of the Mediterranean studies and unknown to most Braudel readers. They were published more than ten years after his death in December 1985. We shall begin with *Autour de la Mditerrane of 1996*.

Autour was edited by Roselyne Ayala and Madame Paule Braudel, with a Preface by Maurice Aymard, and a detailed index (pp. 511-32). This volume collected writings of Braudel on the Mediterranean, including his early project proposal, unpublished manuscripts, published texts and many reviews. It contains three parts: North Africa (4 chapters), the Spanish Empire (4 chapters), Italy and the Mediterranean (6 chapters).

Among the abundant text, "Charles Quint" (pp. 171-212), which had already appeared in his *crits sur l'histoire II* (1990), should not be reprinted here. Another article, "Philippe II" (pp. 213-57), also appeared in *crits II*, but it was retranslated from the Italian version, the original French text is included here for the first time. For Braudel readers, neither of these add any new information, except for being the "original version".

The first two chapters of this volume attract me particularly. The very first one entitled "The Early Researches" (pp. 15-28) has an old story. In 1927, Braudel (aged 25) proposed doctoral dissertation subject to the Sorbonne, entitled "Philippe II, Spain and the Mediterranean." At the same time he used this proposal to apply for a research scholarship from the Bourse Jules Ferry, which he obtained in 1928. On March 29, 1929, he reported to the Bourse explaining his work in progress and what he was going to do that summer. This report could be found in the Archives municipales de Saint-Di and had never been published before. It reveals significant information about the young Braudel: his eagerness, his ambitions, his methodology, his initial ideas about the Mediterranean, and we can see that the initial project diverged considerably from the finished book that was published in 1949.

A few things stand out. There is no room for diplomatic history, showing that Braudel was already taking a different path. Surprisingly, he was very interested in the religious life in Spain (p. 16). The great varieties of documentation that he consulted also manifest his unique ways of selecting information from the sea of archives in various Spanish cities (as listed on p. 16). He complained about the chaotic arrangement of files in the archives, he would have been greatly relived had there been a photocopier, but he was wise enough to use a movie camera to film the files and project them on the wall to retrieve the information he needed. The zeal for the project that Braudel showed in this report is evident, for instance, from the Naples papers alone, he took 800 pages of notes. In the concluding paragraph, Braudel stated that in early 1928 he had explained to his thesis supervisor Prof. Pags about the progress of his project, some of his preliminary findings, and the questions to be studied; he would be glad to mail the same document to the Bourse. If I were to review the project, I would have endorsed it enthusiastically.

The second essay entitled "The Spanish and the North Africa, 1492-1577," was published in the *Revue africaine* in 1928 (Nos. 2-3, pp. 184-233 and 351-428). Henri Hauser (then professor of economic history at the Sorbonne) wrote a comment on this long essay in *Revue historique* (1930): "for the historians of the sixteenth century, this excellent study, with solid documentation, has a rare value of critique and is remarkably suggestive." This long essay served as the "secondary thesis" (a kind of supplementary work to show that the doctorate candidate's view is not too narrow) when Braudel presented his thesis in 1947. To his honor, it was Maurice Bataillon, then professor at the Collge de France who examined this secondary thesis (see editor's note on p. 31).

What strikes me in this 1928 essay (Braudel was aged 26) is that, although the topic is quite general in nature and very broad in scope, it is easy to see that Braudel was quite mature in writing this kind of traditional history. He was able to present an overall structure of the topic and showed the masteries of the rich documents that he consulted. What is even more attractive is his talent to depict the historical scene with big and powerful brushes, the key issues were organized systematically and the overall flow of the essay was conquering. In short, in this essay Braudel clearly manifested a kind of sophistication in the writing of traditional history, he would have been bored had he remained any longer in this old camp. It is therefore unsurprising that he soon switched to the new history camp, known as the Annales school, advocated by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch in the early 1930s.

These two 1928 writings are particularly interesting

because they allow us to see how the young Braudel was shining. But they also serve as bad mirrors reflecting that, except for the ingenious *The Mediterranean* (1949), Braudel's work on the Mediterranean in his more mature stage was not any more brilliant than those written when he was a high school teacher in Algeria before 1932.

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Les mmoires de la Mditerrane: prhistoire et antiquit (1998) was edited by Roselyne Ayala and Paule Braudel, with a Preface by Jean Guilaine (a professor at the Collge de France) and Pierre Rouillard (a director of research au C.N.R.S.). The book contains eight chapters, divided into two parts, with 42 color plates and 15 maps (pp. 352-70); the index of names and places is well prepared (pp. 371-93). As the book is printed directly from Braudel's manuscripts, the editors should be acknowledged for the many editorial footnotes, which provide updated information and corrections on Braudel's inexact knowledge of archeological matters.

Why did Braudel write this volume and why was it published posthumously? The publisher's Foreword tells us that in early 1968 the famous publisher Albert Skira in Geneva planned a series of illustrated books on the Mediterranean, from its antiquity to the seventeenth century. Skira asked Braudel to do the first volume for the series. Braudel complied and wrote it with great pleasure. He soon completed the task (no more than eighteen months), as we can see from his Acknowledgements (in four brief paragraphs) dated July 28, 1969. But Skira's health was declining in 1970 and he passed away three years later. Some hesitations arose about the whole project when considering the high printing costs, so the publisher finally aborted the plan. Braudel was then quite involved in the writing of the second volume of *Capitalism*, it would have cost him a lot of energy to do supplementary work in preparing maps and illustrative materials on that Mediterranean book. He put the typescript aside and forgot all about it.

But Madame Braudel and some other people did remember this almost completed book. It would have been difficult to publish the manuscript as such because many archeological discoveries and new techniques had rewritten the prehistory of the sea since the 1970s. The solution was simple but arduous: publish the manuscript as such, but seek clarification from specialists for ambiguities, update the related literature, and offering supplementary evidence in the form of footnotes. Readers are therefore reading Braudel's original writings along with new evidence provided by modern specialists.

How could Braudel complete 350 pages of writing so quickly? As we do not see a long list of archives or references that he consulted, one wonders if this is an original profound research or if this is a work of synthesis based on unidentified secondary literature. In his Acknowledgments, Braudel stated that "my own real researches covered only the 1450-1650 period.ˆ The present volume, designated for the general public, allows me to undertake a fantastic voyage to travel into the very longue dure. I seized the occasion".

So, should we read it as a masterpiece or as a synthesis of the state-of-the-field (1960s) by a great Mediterranean historian named Braudel? One realizes that what is interesting in this volume would be Braudel's views of the topic, his ways of selecting the materials, but not his opinions as an expert so far as the archeological aspect is concerned. His ambition was to describe a pre-fifteenth century history of the Mediterranean such that it can be connected to his already famous book covering the 1450-1650 period.

The table of contents reveals another message. In the eight chapters that were divided into two parts we see again Braudel's famous tri-partition of historical time (the longue dure, conjoncture and event). One may think that in this book that covers so many centuries, perhaps only the longue dure is the appropriate notion. This is the case for the first five chapters (Part I), in which the sea, the island, the catastrophes, in short the geography has the central role. Most Braudel readers are familiar with this in all his books, so we shall not be surprised to see that the second notion "conjoncture" plays a central role in Part II. For instance, the section in entitled "Face aux conjonctures" (pp. 223-25) begins with the statement: "Living in the Mediterranean, the Carthaginians were necessarily sensible to the overall movement of the sea, to its conjoncture. The history of the city follows step by step the rhythms of the Mediterranean life." By "conjoncture," Braudel meant the political, religious and economic crises of the era.

Is there room for the history of events, Braudel's third notion of historical time? Yes, Section II of Chapter 7 entitled "Error of Alexander the Great" (pp. 277-83) is an example. But Braudel was alert enough not to have a Part III for the history of events alone, he combined the history of conjoncture and events in Part II. How about Braudel's other important notion, the "economic world"? He had not forgotten it, as can be seen from Map 15 "L'Empire Romain sous Septime Svre (193-211)" and the related pages (mainly in Chapter 8). If I were

shown this table of contents without knowing who was the author, I would guess that it was by Braudel or by his imitators. The same framework of *The Mediterranean* (1949) was simply applied to an earlier period.

As a general reader, I find the book intriguing, the scale and scope are broad, and the story is attractively told; it expands my knowledge about the Mediterranean. Although I have, as most general readers, no sufficient background knowledge to judge the contents, I do have some feelings about the book. The writing style is basically synthetic, there is no central argument to be defended and no new concept is offered. Under the same Braudellien brushes, I find the ancient history of the Mediterranean much less interesting than that of the Philip II period.

Experts may have other complaints: the nature of the topic is not Braudel's specialty, little archeological insight is added, and no new historical proposition is offered. Perhaps it is in this sense that Braudel was not totally wrong to abandon the typescript. For him and the general readers, this is merely a "popular" book, it should not be a representative volume among his lifework; for specialists, it was wise for Braudel not to publish what he did not really know about the pre-fifteenth century Mediterranean.

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