

Anciens Systemes de Poids et Mesures en Occident. (Variorum Collected Studies)



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ANCIENS SYSTEMES DE POIDS ET MESURES EN OCCIDENT. (VARIORUM COLLECTED STUDIES)

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Variorum, 1992. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: No Dust Jacket. First Edition. The history of pre-metric weights and measures is without doubt an intractable subject, yet an understanding of what they meant is an essential prerequisite for the study of economic history. This is not simply a matter of calculating a metric equivalent, but of discovering how the systems of weighing, measuring and counting actually worked. When this is done, as Professor Hocquet shows, the chaos of a score of differing and often seemingly conflicting systems resolves into coherent structures: units and their multiples and fractions form rational patterns; different measures were used for different purposes (for instance, one for buying, one for selling); and the use of a given measure reflects economic and political power. The studies here cover the period from the early medieval West up to the European expansion, but the focus, reflecting the availability of the source material, is on the salt trade and on Venice in the later Middle Ages. Ce livre présente vingt années de recherche dans un domaine encore peu exploré, l'histoire des anciens poids et mesure, souvent tenus pour un casse-tête. Il s'organise autour du concept central de système qui ordonne, met de l'ordre, dans ce qui apparaît initialement comme "le chaos" et montre comment les anciens systèmes et leurs procédés de numération s'organisaient autour de trois opérations centrales: mesurer, peser et compter, qui introduisaient stabilité et cohérence dans une économie fondée sur l'échange marchand. Le trouble apporté par le pouvoir ou les puissants à ces systèmes simples a lui-même sa cohérence sociale: l'usage de la mesure révèle le détenteur du pouvoir. L'histoire économique, quantitative ou non, doit montrer le même souci de clarification et de conversion des anciens poids et mesures quelle en a mis à étudier les monnaies,...



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