ampoulée, pour ne pas dire ombilicale, des hellénistes et des latinistes du temps; il rompt hardiment en visière avec ce style du XVI^e siècle qui n'a rien à voir avec le nôtre, plutôt direct, nerveux, haché menu. Aussi sa traduction est-elle fort agréable à lire; elle coule de source. Il conserve le ton amical et les termes généraux des deux correspondants. "Le très doux Erasme est le plus cher de tous les mortels," écrit More. "More est ce que la nature a produit de plus tendre," écrit Erasme. Ces deux esprits étaient donc faits pour se comprendre, s'estimer, s'aimer. Leur amitié dura un quart de siècle.

Mais on ne le saurait pas d'aussi belle façon si Marc'hadour, le spécialiste français des questions moriennes, n'en expliquait le déroulement avec une aussi minutieuse précision. Ses gloses érudites nous permettent de suivre les deux amis pas à pas dans tous leurs déplacements. Elles ont surtout le mérite de reconstituer avec une exactitude exemplaire le calendrier même de cette historique amitié.

Malgré quelques erreurs typographiques et quelques fautes de français, cette publication fait honneur tout ensemble à son auteur et au Centre d'études de la Renaissance de Sherbrooke. Elle mérite de figurer en bonne place parmi les travaux d'érudition déjà publiés par les éditions de l'Université de Sherbrooke.

MAURICE LEBEL, *Université Laval*

Carlo Ginzburg. *The Night Battles. Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Translated by John and Anne Tedeschi. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983. Pp. xxii, 209, \$18.50.

Carlo Ginzburg is widely recognized as one of the pioneers of the history of popular culture and the reciprocal relationships between subordinate and dominant classes in early modern Europe. *The Night Battles* was his first major study. Published in Italian under the title *I Benandanti*, it appeared in 1966, when Ginzburg was twenty-six years old. The book has the verve and profusion of ideas characteristic of his more mature work and has become a standard in the historiography of European witchcraft. We may now welcome a felicitous translation, which brings it to the English language audience.

From his researches in the archives of the provincial Inquisition of the Friuli, in the remote north-eastern corner of Italy, Ginzburg has drawn the story of a remarkable folk cult, the *benandanti*, literally, the well-farers or good-doers. When Paolo Gasparutto and Battista Monduco, the first of the cult to be called before the Inquisition, were questioned in 1580, they reluctantly divulged a very odd tale. As *benandanti*, they said, they went forth to battle witches in the service of Christ and for the sake of the crops. They went out not bodily, but in spirit, travelling over vast distances to arrive at fields where they jousting with fennel stalks against witches wielding sorghum canes. If the *benandanti* were victorious, there would be good harvests, but if the witches won, there would be famine. They were predestined to their role; they had been born with the caul, or intact amniotic membrane, which their mothers had preserved for them and which they wore around their necks.

Ginzburg proves himself a sensitive analyst of these difficult and ambiguous documents, the recorded exchanges between accused *benandanti* and their

inquisitors. He measures and turns to his benefit what in lesser hands would have been a major obstacle: the chasm in culture that separates the questions of the inquisitors, trained in theology and in concepts of the diabolic sabbat, from the replies of the peasant *benandanti*. He extracts from the inquisitorial record the individual expressions and nuances of their "lived myth": their power to see and speak with the dead, to heal victims of witchcraft, and to identify witches. He also draws comparisons between the beliefs of the *benandanti* and other groups from the annals of folklore. He finds parallels to the *benandanti* in a sect of benevolent werewolves in Livonia, who also battled witches to ensure the fertility of the fields. He finds echoes of the *benandanti*'s participation in the procession of the dead in the widespread but nebulous popular beliefs in the troops of a female deity such as Diana or Holda and of the Furious Horde, composed of souls who had died before their time. He then concludes that the *benandanti* were remnants of an age-old fertility cult, one that in the Friuli combined with Christianity to form a variant tradition of great richness and internal consistency.

Ginzburg's treatment is an episode in history, however, not a static description of folklore. His major thesis, based on Joseph Hansen's turn-of-the-century work about the origins of the witch-craze, is that prosecution by the Inquisition caused the collapse of the cult and brought the *benandanti* to believe that they themselves were witches. During the trial of the first two of them, the inquisitor had suggested that the angel who led them was in reality the devil and that their nocturnal battles were the witches' sabbat. In subsequent trials they confessed first to isolated features and then to the whole panoply of diabolic witchcraft. The transformation was completed in 1649, when a *benandante* named Michele Soppe confessed that he had attended the witches' ball, adored the devil's hindside, denied Christ, and killed three children by sucking their blood.

Ginzburg's case study elicited a great response from historians of European witchcraft. It was seen as at least partial confirmation of the discredited theories of Margaret Murray, which linked pagan fertility cults to witch belief. It was hailed by H. C. Erik Midelfort as "as the only authenticated witch cult in early modern Europe." It became the touchstone of a debate between Norman Cohn and Jeffrey B. Russell over the actuality of witches' gatherings. In his introduction to the English edition, Ginzburg distances himself from the theses of these debaters. In his view, the documents do not answer such questions, and to ask the questions is only to repeat the mistake of the inquisitors, who were interested only in the physical reality of the sabbat.

The majority of reviewers have not challenged Ginzburg's view that the Inquisition must be held responsible for the deformation of the *benandanti*. Fewer have challenged his claim for the "unprecedented richness of the materials" (p. xiv) upon which the work is based. Only Alberto Tenenti, in a review of the Italian edition (*Studi storici*, 1967, p. 386), questioned why Ginzburg undertook no statistical analysis of the *benandanti* cases. Just how extensive is the trial data upon which Ginzburg bases his thesis? One reviewer, Peter Burke, (*New York Review of Books*, Feb. 28, 1985, p. 32) has stated that there were some 850 accusations against the *benandanti* between 1580 and 1634. My own survey comes up with a very different quantitative base, and one which I believe does not support Ginzburg's conclusions.

To begin with, the total of 850 cases is a misreading of the text and completely in error. Rather than trials solely against *benandanti*, that figure represents the total number of trials for all cases of heresy in the Friulian inquisitorial archives from its founding in 1551 to 1634. A study of Ginzburg's notes (for he includes no separate apparatus enumerating trials) reveals instead that he draws his information from only forty-eight trial dossiers, and briefly mentions some fifteen additional denunciations after 1647. In seven of the forty-eight cases, it is not a *benandante* who is on trial, although information about the sect emerges coincidentally. In the remaining forty-one trials, only six *benandanti* were found guilty of any degree of heresy and were formally sentenced, although another, Michele Soppe, surely would have been had he not died in prison. Indeed, from the evidence that Ginzburg presents, it would seem that only twenty of the *benandanti* denounced to the Inquisition were actually interrogated. The remaining "trial" dossiers contain denunciations that were never followed up.

Trials of the Inquisition were conducted in strict secrecy. There was consequently no ostensible means for those *benandanti* who were not interrogated to know that they were under investigation. Similarly, the six public sentences over a period of seventy years were the only means by which the general community might learn that the beliefs of the cult had been declared suspect. Some *benandanti* were questioned suggestively and even badgered, but none was tortured. No *benandante* was prosecuted twice, and we know of only one instance of acquaintance-ship between two individuals who were brought to trial. Given the wide geographic area and isolated settlements of the Friuli, it is very unlikely that inquisitorial prosecution can be held responsible for a deformation of the cult.

Although the *benandanti* trial records are rich in detail and in suggestive nuance, they are not substantial enough in number to support Ginzburg's conclusions. Ginzburg acknowledges that the Inquisition was desultory at best in its proceedings against the cult, a trend that he adduces to an increasingly skeptical attitude toward witchcraft within the hierarchy of the Roman Inquisition. At one point he also hedges his thesis and makes "confessors and preachers" (p. 110) responsible along with inquisitors for the change in the *benandanti*. In my opinion, the fragmentary documentation affords no conclusions about what caused the collapse of the *benandanti*'s myth. Perhaps it did not collapse at all. Some of the later testimony cited by Ginzburg speaks of agrarian beliefs of the traditional sort, albeit in watered-down form.

When it first appeared, *The Night Battles* was a revolutionary attempt to "reconstruct the peasant mentality" and thus to investigate a segment of society outside the reach of traditional historical research. The book remains today an exemplar of the possibilities and the pitfalls of this approach to social history. Ginzburg succeeds brilliantly when he allows the documents to speak for themselves, evoking from them the lived realities of the peasants' beliefs and experiences. He fails when he imposes upon the documentary record a theoretical superstructure whose weight it cannot bear.

Ginzburg, who is noted as a stylist, has been well served in this translation by John and Anne Tedeschi, which captures both the literal meaning and the *brío* of the original. The edition is on the whole a very clean one. I have found only two

errors of any importance. On page 173, a portion of note 8 for the preface to the English edition has been dropped. On page 106, a key date is misprinted; instead of 1623, it should read 1634.

PATRICIA H. JOBE, *The University of Chicago*

Discours viatiques de Paris à rome et de Rome à Naples et Sicile (1588-1589).

Edition critique, introduction et notes de Luigi Monga. Biblioteca del viaggio in Italia, No. 15. Geneva: Slatkine, 1983. 328 pp. Fr.S. 50.

This volume brings to print for the first time the travel journal of an anonymous Frenchman who, in 1588-89, leaves Paris for a grand tour of Italy. The only surviving manuscript of the journal (MS 222 R 424 of the Bibliothèque Méjanes of Aix-en-Provence) has been diligently and carefully transcribed and edited; the printed text retains the orthographic peculiarities of the original (without, however, encumbering the reading), and clearly shows the necessary editorial intrusions into the original text with appropriate symbols or with a footnote. The text is prefaced by a concise introduction (pp. 9-40) which manages to give a brief description of the political circumstances which permitted a Frenchman to undertake such a leisurely journey in Spanish-dominated Italy (pp. 9-13), a resumé of the voyage (pp. 13-24), a plausible description of the author (pp. 24-32), a short linguistic analysis of the text (pp. 32-38), and the obligatory explanation of transcription standards followed by the editor (pp. 39-40).

The travel journal is divisible into two major sections. The first describes the voyage from Paris to Rome. Its entries are usually jotted down on a daily basis, in the hurried and direct style of evening recollections of the day's activities. The second section describes the voyage from Rome to Sicily, Malta, and then back up the peninsula to Naples, Rome, Ancona and Rimini. In this section there are large time gaps between entries, and as a result the activities for entire days (or even weeks) are sometimes described in a few concise words or well formed phrases. It seems that as the traveller immerses himself into Italy and as the novelty of the voyage fades away he is not as concerned with recording his immediate (or daily) experiences, but instead lets time slip by and then tries to recapture it at a distance.

This is not the only noticeable change in the traveller. As Professor Monga keenly observes, the Frenchman becomes progressively more Italianate. His handwriting becomes less angular and more cursive, so much so that after Rome "le caractère anguleux de l'écriture bâtarde a presque complètement disparu, l'orthographe a décidément acquis un caractère plus 'italianisé'" (p. 17). This may in fact be directly related to the manner in which the entries are now made, that is, in a more leisurely and consciously literate fashion. The vocabulary as well begins to reflect a greater amount of Italian influence, be it in grammatical structures (the use of certain Italian suffixes, such as -issime, for example), or in vocabulary (especially technical terms relating to art; cf. pp. 34-35). Also, after his arrival in Rome, the traveller seems to visit the sights and make his journal entries with at least one travel-book at hand, which Professor Monga identifies as Leandro