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Nomad lives

From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day

Vies de nomades : de la Préhistoire aux temps actuels

Aline Averbouh, Nejma Goutas and Sophie Méry (ed.)

Natures en sociétés



This book illustrates the extraordinary diversity of ‘nomad lives’ in time and space, in a tribute to Claudine Karlin, comprising 28 texts signed by economists, geographers, historians or sociologists. These case studies, organized into five chapters, are invitations to meet women, men and children from all over the world. The first chapter focuses on characterizing nomads and nomadism through examples ranging from



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Editors' note and acknowledgements

Alain Thote and Jean-Denis Vigne

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This book illustrates the extraordinary diversity of 'nomad lives' in time and space, in a tribute to Claudine Karlin, comprising 28 texts signed by economists, geographers, historians or sociologists. These case studies, organized into five chapters, are invitations to meet women, men and children from all over the world. The first chapter focuses on characterizing nomads and nomadism through examples ranging from the Aka pygmies, hunter-gatherers in the Central African forest, Yakut and Kazakh herders from the Central Asian steppes, or "nomads of contemporary globalization". The second concentrates on the material culture of camps, from the Chatelperronians in the Grotte du Bison at Arcy-sur-Cure (Yonne) to the Manteks, Kurds in contemporary Iraq. The third examines the territories and circuits inherent to nomad lives, from the first hominids of East Africa to the break in the fishing way of life brought about by the arrival of Europeans in the Magellan Strait. Magdalenian mobility trends in the Roc-aux-Sorciers (Vienne), changes in funerary practices during the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Central Asian steppes (Kazakhstan), the sexual division of labour among the Tchouktcha of Russian Siberia, etc.: the social relations with the living and the dead, in and outside the group, are the main themes of the last two chapters. But throughout the pages a single apparently simple but extremely complex question emerges. The book ends with an attempt to answer this question from the combined perspective of an archaeologist, an ethnologist and a sociologist. Because, in the end, what does being a nomad mean?

Cet ouvrage vient illustrer des fragments de vies de peuples « nomades », passés et actuels, d'Afrique, d'Asie, des Amériques du nord et du sud ou d'Europe, sous différentes facettes (habitats, productions matérielles, organisation économique et territoriale, sociale, rites et croyances, art). Ce mode de vie a prévalu pendant des millions d'années avant qu'un autre, sédentaire, ne s'y substitue progressivement à partir de 9000 ans. Pour autant, les nomades n'ont pas disparu. Aujourd'hui minoritaires et fréquemment marginalisés, ils demeurent une composante à part entière de notre humanité. C'est ce point de vue que nous avons adopté dans *Vies de Nomades* et c'est à la découverte de femmes, d'hommes et d'enfants de tous les horizons – géographiques, climatiques, sociologiques et

même chronologiques –, mais tous unis par leur mode de vie nomade, que nous invitons nos lecteurs. Cet ouvrage regroupe près d'une trentaine de contributions signées d'archéologues, d'ethnologues/anthropologues, de sociologues, de géographes, d'économistes et d'historiens. Un rappel toutefois : à aucun moment, les nomades du présent ne sont considérés à travers ces textes comme des avatars des nomades du passé, pas plus que les nomades d'aujourd'hui (ou d'hier) ne sauraient être représentatifs d'une seule et même organisation sociale, économique, d'un seul et même rapport au monde. La diversité des contributions ici rassemblées souligne, bien au contraire, le caractère pluriel de ce mode de vie. Être nomade, vivre en nomade, ne peut se décliner de façon univoque et au fil des pages s'est imposée une question, simple en apparence mais excessivement complexe dans la réalité des peuples eux-mêmes et des chercheurs en sciences humaines : "qu'est-ce qu'être nomade?" C'est autour d'elle que se clôt l'ouvrage sous le regard croisé d'un archéologue, d'un ethnologue et d'une sociologue.

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