

M. V. AMASUNO SARRAGA, *La peste en la Corona de Castilla durante la segunda mitad del siglo XIV*, Junta de Castilla y León, Consejería de Educación y Cultura, 1996, pp. 252.

The subject of the Black Death, which Amasuno Sarraga addresses in the book under review, is hardly a new one as far as economic history is concerned: many Italian and foreign historians, have explored it widely, such as M.W. Dols (*The Black Death in the Middle East*), R.S. Gottfried (*The Black Death. Natural and Human Disaster in Medieval Europe*) and P. H. Ziegler (*The Black Death*), etc. Amasuno Sarraga's work is in the tradition of such studies but undoubtedly has a touch of originality since it sets out to examine the age-old subject of the plague and its consequences in the territories of the Kingdom of Castile, an area which has not been sufficiently explored not only on account of the lack of primary sources but also through the scarce attention paid to the medical aspects of the problem. Such aspects are focused on in the present work.

Subdivided into five parts, the book may be seen as a journey through the so-called *literatura loimologica*, a literary genre which flourished in Europe in the fourteenth century and which was especially associated in Spain with the thought of two contemporary writers: Alfonso de Cordoba and Juan de Aviñon. When it appeared, the plague, the terrible "black death", caused many writers to produce medical treatises containing analyses which were mostly invented and remedies which were nearly always ineffective. Such writings are extremely important for increasing our understanding of the kind of world which gave rise to this typical late-medieval literary genre: *literatura loimologica*.

As a genre it certainly does not provide a serious medical and scientific explanation of the phenomenon, but as the German historian Max Neuburger has also pointed out, it is a valuable source for historians. These writings not only enable us to understand more clearly the impact of the Black Death on society but they are also a quite unique source for studying the late-medieval doctor's *modus operandi* and his attempts to get the better of a disease whose causes were unknown to him and which he was therefore unable to treat. Such efforts were made on two levels since he oscillated between medicine, astrology, philosophy and religion with very little coherence. Doctors sought both to heal and to console, to further official medicine but also to mitigate the fears of a population in distress. Thus the population had to be informed as much as possible and this explains why the first two treatises published on the subject were written in the vernacular and why another medical work dealing with the same problems was quickly translated from Latin.

As it is known, the remedies proposed were largely ineffective; they rested on the authority of certain "classical" writers and on experience which had been scarcely pondered upon. This explains why the author dwells on those aspects which were treated in the main medieval works on the subjects as well as in much earlier works. Starting with Hypocrate and Galeno, he goes on to consider Avicenna and other Arab masters, ending with several

fourteenth-century scholars such as Ibn Khatimah and Gentile of Foligno. The latter two scholars went deeply into the subject and stressed the importance of astral phenomena. No lesser attention is paid to the uncertain author of the treatise *Utrum mortalitas*, perhaps a German, who upheld the seismic theory in polemic with the French and the ideas expounded in the writing *Epistola et regimen Alphonsi Cordubensis de pestilentia* by Alfonso de Cordoba which appeared in 1348, a year when Europe was overrun by the plague.

Prompted by the epidemic which broke out in that year, Alfonso de Cordoba carefully investigated its causes. He discovered three. The first was undoubtedly linked to natural factors, namely the eclipse of the moon, accompanied by the conjunction of several planets and earthquakes, an explanation in which astrological theory combined with seismic theory, both widely upheld among mid-fourteenth-century thinkers. But if the causes of the 1348 epidemic had been exclusively sidereal, on the basis of astrological considerations the epidemic would have only lasted a year and would have struck South Italy and other lands lying in front of the Iberian peninsula. This was not the case. Thus there had to be a second cause; one, which according to the Cordoba, was "provocada por medios de tipo artificial" (p. 32). If the epidemic continued, this was ascribed to the doings of the enemies of Christianity, in particular Muslims and Jews. This was a commonly-held view and one which was handed down from generation. In fourteenth-century Spain it explained the widespread and deeply felt hostility towards ethnic and religious minorities in the country, which stemmed from an extreme proselytising zeal but also from various economic interests. Jews and Muslims were therefore guilty of having poisoned the water and in such a way as to have caused an epidemic of bewildering proportions and intensity which no doctor was able to deal with. Escape appeared to be the only remedy.

However Alfonso de Cordoba and other contemporary writers did not disdain the "idea of contagion" as a "*tercera causa extrinseca*". Such contagion derived from the foulness of the air which in turn was caused by the natural phenomena we have referred to. A healthy person who came into contact with a plague victim seriously risked falling ill. This was an idea which was typical of the Christian view of the plague. Nonetheless the epidemiological interpretation, according to which the plague was a mercy for the believing and martyrdom and punishment for infidels, was rejected. By accepting that the plague was sent directly by God, they did not believe that it was possible to avoid it and so they did not attach any importance to the idea of contagion. It was this resigned acceptance of the divine will which distinguished the Christian from the Muslim world and which explained why the latter did not believe in the effectiveness of flight.

After having explained the caused of the pestilence, de Cordoba then goes on to examine remedies for fighting it, stressing the difficulty in distinguishing between prevention and cure. For contemporary medicine the plague was an obscure phenomenon; and this was quite significant when it

came to suggesting treatment for combating it. Flight was undoubtedly the first practicable remedy, at least for those who could resort to it. Since only a few could afford to do so, the gap between rich and poor widened in quite a dramatic way: the former were able to save themselves, leaving the plague-ridden area with relative ease while the latter were obliged to stay in their own town which offered little hope of escape.

What drove people to flee from their homes? The answer is easy. If the plague was caused by the foulness of the air it became imperative to have a "change of air" and so flight was the only solution. For those who remained behind the only thing to do was to try to make the air purer, a task which was by no means easy, as those who remained imprisoned in the town found to their cost.

Yet flight and the purification of the air were not the only remedies proposed by experts. There were also many suggestions regarding diet and the kinds of foods that were deemed suitable or dangerous. Excess in eating and drinking, as well as in sleeping and in physical exertions, was to be avoided. At the same time it was important to look after one's humour and to keep up one's spirit and be cheerful and carefree, as well as to rest and pursue agreeable pastimes, listening to music or reading. In other words, the advice was not to give up hope and to surrender oneself to the disease. This was not just to avoid the spread of panic but also because pharmacological and medical remedies had proven so ineffective. According to Sàrraga "los loimografas que producen sus obras en torno a 1348-50 plasmaràn en sus tratados la dolorosa impotencia, personal y colectiva, del hombre ante lo desconocido" (p. 58).

The same feeling of impotence emerges in the thought of Juan de Aviñòn, "*medico converso y radicado en la ciudad de Sevilla desde 1353 basta por lo menos 1381*" (p. 73). Sàrraga examines in his work, *Sevillana medicina*, which was published by Monardes in 1545, in the rest of the book (the second, third and fourth parts), paying special attention to the last six chapters of the treatise, a re-edition of which he reproduces in the fifth and final part. Starting from the events taking place, the writer examines quite closely the spread of the disease which had given rise to a state of permanent and widespread pathology "pestilentia", justifying the use of a number of "organic" remedies known as "Regimiento contra la pestilencia".

Juan de Aviñòn also sought to provide an explanation for the plague, on the basis of the convictions shared by many contemporary doctors and taking up the ideas of a philosopher who was highly rated in the fourteenth century: Aristotle. His explanation also rested on a very close connection between medicine, astrology and religion, which was typical of past centuries: medicine derived from theory (largely inspired by the teachings of the philosophers) and practice (arising out of everyday experience which was not always acted on with common sense).

According to de Aviñòn, certain individuals were more pre-disposed towards contagion because they happened to be under a particular sign or

astrological conjunction while other were afflicted by the disease through divine will. The latter had only to "limitarse a aceptar resignadamente la voluntad de Dios, que es, en definitiva, el que envia aquella calamidad" (p. 159). Thus, de Aviñón, too, ultimately linked pestilence to astrological and religious beliefs. These were the two faces of the same world, the medieval world, which, with its uncertainties and fears, considered God as the motive force behind everything.

Despite such a resigned acceptance of divine will, Juan de Aviñón, like the writers of other treatises, proposed a *regimiento de sanidad* to be adopted in times of plague, which in turn was sub-divided into a *regimen preservativum* and a *regimen curativum*. The medieval writer was in fact drawing on established principles: the first preventive measure was flight from infected places in order to avoid contagion which was certainly caused by foul air but which could also have resulted from the negative effects produced by fear, an idea that was not without interesting implications. Fear, or rather, auto-suggestion, could lead to catching the disease; therefore it was best to keep all fears at bay, not to think about plagues nor to speak of plague victims but to trust in God's hands, as the Florentine doctor Nicolò de Burgo advocated.

As for cures, the remedies proposed were often the same as those suggested for prevention: a proper diet, clearing one's bowels, *sangria*, using a fire-fan to treat buboes and medicines able to draw out the disease from the body and to purify and heal the infected part.

Above and beyond such remedies, however, the doctor had to trust in divine will, just like any other human being. And so Juan de Aviñón ended his treatise trusting in God, who, he argued "es causa de la salud" (p. 211). Thus he too was a man of his time and it could not have been otherwise. Like his contemporaries de Aviñón did not practise, nor did he set out to practise, medicine as an autonomous science.

Sàrraga shows very effectively how the supernatural permeated the whole of medieval society. Not even a man such as Juan de Aviñón, who sought with courage to re-assert the value of science, medicine in particular, by demonstrating its usefulness and effectiveness, managed to free himself from unearthly influences.

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G. LABROT, *Quand l'histoire murmure. Villages et campagnes du Royaume de Naples (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle)*, École Française de Rome, 1995, pp. 686.

The relationship between the feudal system and commercial and financial networks is an ideal vantage point for studying the Old Regime economy; in the transition from the medieval period to the early modern era, the progressive transformation of the fief from a military and political stronghold

into a productive structure and area of investment for mercantile capital necessitated the creation of analytical instruments which by describing the fief's territory, settlements, population and the products facilitated sales transactions among private citizens and the process of alienation from the Crown.

This process is well documented in the Kingdom of Naples from the sixteenth to eighteenth century when the fief as the principal source of the family's wealth and income was strengthened in such a way as to make it necessary to assess periodically its commercial value and market price. In the specific historical context of South Italy, which was under Spanish rule up to the beginning of the eighteenth century and which, after a brief spell under the Austrians became an independent Kingdom with the Bourbons, the instrument for making this assessment was the *apprezzo* and the person responsible for the *apprezzo* was the *tavolario*.

Whenever the need arose to know the value of a fief, the Sacro Regio Consiglio, one of the Kingdom's most important economic and political bodies, sent out an expert called the *tavolario* who was usually a functionary or engineer employed in one of Naples' courts. He had the task of measuring the fief in its entirety, visiting all the places and main buildings in the populated areas, questioning local administrators, community representatives, the clergy and ordinary citizens. After he had finished his assignment, which was usually carried out in the summer and which might last days or months according to the size of the property under assessment and according to whether it was a simple rural fief or an entire feudal complex, the *tavolario* drew up his report on returning to Naples, the so-called *apprezzo*, giving a detailed description of the fief with its resources, revenues and buildings and made his assessment of its value. On the basis of *apprezzo* the central government formulated a sale price which might be accepted by the parties involved in the transaction or contested through the drawing up of a new *apprezzo*.

It is clear that the *apprezzo* is an invaluable source of information for the historian and in this book Gérard Labrot, who has already researched into the relationship between society and territorial organisation in the Kingdom of Naples in early modern times¹, examines the contents of more than three hundred *tavolario* reports which were drawn up from the 1570s to the 1770s. They contain a rich store of data covering all the provinces in the Kingdom, including small and scattered mountain communities on the Apennines, prosperous trade centres on the coast and their agricultural hinterland, and large feudal estates.

¹ Cf. *Baroni in città. Case e comportamenti dell'aristocrazia napoletana*, (Naples, 1979); *La committenza nobiliare e le sue fabbriche*, (in G. Doria ed.), *I palazzi di Napoli*, (Naples, 1986), pp. 51 *et seq.*; "La città meridionale", in AA.VV., *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, vol VIII, (Naples-Rome, 1991), *Palazzi Napoletani. Storie di nobili e cortigiani, 1520-1750*, (Naples, 1993), pp. 94 *et seq.*

The wide time-span and the great variety of situations under study has prompted Labrot to make a qualifying remark on the source regarding methodology. To use the same metaphor employed by Labrot in the introduction to the book, the historian looks through the eyes of the drafter of the *apprezzo*, that is through the eyes of the *tavolario*. If this is true for all evidence about the past, it is even more true for documentation which had a precise administrative function: namely to highlight what the central government had an interest in finding out.

Naturally this implied a tendency to give a somewhat one-sided view of situations, although it should be stressed that the *tavolario*'s main concern was an economic one, reflecting the need to produce an estimate of the fief's market value; this meant that, although the report might have left out some aspects concerning the fief, it always listed all the property belonging to the feudal lord, both feudal and allodial, analysing the position and products of each parcel of land, numbering the dues that were collected and the taxes that were levied, describing the conditions of the castle and manor and the financial situation of the community.

The continual attention paid to production, which certainly explains the economic historian's great interest in this primary source, does not mean that the *apprezzi* appeared in a homogeneous form over time and in different places; the common goal was pursued with a wide range of methods. Thus there are some *tavolari*, which contain meticulous quantitative data about production, average yields, and revenues and others which only provide qualitative assessments.

In such a diversification the progress in surveying techniques and the development of a more rational administration played an important role, leading to greater precision in the reports drawn up in the eighteenth century compared to the previous century. It is therefore very useful to compare all the *apprezzi* concerned with one fief over a long period of time in order to assess changes in the way the reports were drawn up, and to compare all the *apprezzi* drawn up at the same time in different communities in order to judge how far the margin of discretion left to each *tavolario* affected the final description of the fief.

To this we should add the specific characteristics of each area and its own economic context which explains the reference to certain aspects in the description of the community. For example, an analysis of a community's means of communications was more likely in the case of the communities which were not considered very accessible or if they were situated in an area whose product was sought by the market at the time when the *apprezzi* was drawn up.

These are the cautionary remarks which Labrot makes regarding his source. How, then, does he use it? And how does he avoid the distortions which he himself claims are inherent in the method used for collecting the data? Labrot's answer is to disaggregate the data contained in the *apprezzi* and to re-aggregate them according to subject. Instead of carrying out a

chronological analysis or an analysis based on geographical areas, which would only heighten distortion, he arranges the enormous mass of information around six major themes: types of settlement, buildings, population and population distribution, nature and the economic system, the concepts of space and time related to the community, religious life.

Labrot's approach to these themes clearly reflects the influence of French historiography with its traditional emphasis on socio-anthropological aspects; at the same time, however, it also acknowledges the great variety and substance of regional studies relating to the Kingdom of Naples in the early modern era. How is the continental part of South Italy depicted in this analysis? First and foremost, the image of centuries-long immobility is overturned. The signs of the deep-seated economic change that affected South Italian fiefs from the sixteenth to eighteenth century appear in a number of indicators, such as the transformation of the manor which changed from being a fortified structure and military stronghold into a place where the products of the fief were stored before being marketed.

The signs of change were equally visible in the behaviour of the feudal lord. This emerges implicitly from the *apprezzi*. The feudatory abandoned the fief to reside in Naples and the expenses he incurred by living in the capital obliged him to reorganize the administration of his property. At the same time, his absenteeism led to the growth of a class of notaries, lawyers and administrators and the spread of mansion houses in the city which reflected the owner's aspiration to rise in economic and social status.

Regarding this transformation Labrot's study brings out all its negative features: the reorganisation in the management of the fief did not lead to a rationalisation of investments but simply to an increase in the extensive exploitation of local resources which led to inevitable disputes between the feudal lord and the community; the increase in taxation, on the other hand, impoverished the provinces. Consequently, throughout the seventeenth century and before recovery in the eighteenth century the *apprezzi* describe deserted countryside and depopulated villages, disruption in the areas of production and the destruction of land due to natural causes.

If in all these respects Labrot's study and use of a new source confirms established ideas about the subject, the comparisons he makes between different parts of Italy, above all between the fiefs in mainland South Italy and those in Tuscany, the Dauphiné, Estremadura and other mountain areas in the Mediterranean, is innovatory. A fascinating picture emerges in which communities in the Kingdom of Naples are no longer to be seen in isolation and treated as a special case but rather as part of a settlement typology, the Mediterranean *koimé*, which shows surprising similarities.

In economic terms, what characterised mainland South Italy from the other areas under study was the lack of a network of medium-sized towns acting as a link between the capital – an overpopulated centre of consumption – and the area of production, the depopulated countryside. The

absence of intermediary urban centres and a wider communication network prevented the creation of a network of markets, hampered the growth of a more efficient system of distribution and did not stimulate the local economy. As a result, the middle class which expanded as a consequence of the feudal lord's absenteeism, was very late in differentiating the investment of its capital through productive enterprise.

However this comparative approach enables us to identify areas within the Kingdom of Naples which demonstrated an economic dynamism closer to other regions in the Mediterranean than to surrounding areas. In particular, Labrot concludes his inquiry stressing the peculiarity of the situation in the Salento where a strong tradition in the production of export commodities – oil, corn and wine – had already led to the creation of a network of medium-sized urban centres which provided markets of local consumption and a sufficiently broad base for a wider commercialisation of products. In other words, Labrot rearranges the data collected from the *apprezzi* around several major theories about the subject and suggests breaking down the composite picture we have of the communities in the Kingdom of Naples according to typologies delineated by a comparison with other areas. The result is a fascinating insight into southern Italian backwardness.

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W. LITTLE – E. Posada-Carbò (eds.), *Political Corruption in Europe and Latin America*, Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, London 1996, pp. X-314.

The Italian corruption scandal of 1992-1993 – *tangentopoli* – has not only swept away political parties and political leaders, filling tens of thousands of pages of legal files and lawyers' dossiers, not to mention the great mass of material available for publication in dozens and dozens of prestigious journals; it has also given birth to a specialist literature concerned with economic history and sociological history.

The explosion of the corruption scandal in Italy occurred almost with the mass youth demonstrations in Brazil which led to the resignation of President Fernando Collor de Mello, who was accused of corruption, and with the forced resignation of the President of Venezuela, Carlos Andrés Pérez, accused of embezzling government funds, as well as with the scandals which broke out in Japan, causing the demise of the long-established hegemony of the Liberal Democratic Party, and in Spain which led to the defeat of Felipe González's Socialist Party in the 1994 European Elections.

Although all these scandals occurred at the beginning of the 1990s, the authors of this book stress the fact that corruption is not a new phenomenon: it is as old as Adam. And it is a social phenomenon like prostitution and

contraband, even though over time the concept of corruption has broadened and changed and it has been given various definitions, ranging from an interpretation that involves an individual's whole moral being to one which links corruption directly to the employment of public funds for personal use. It is the latter definition which is closest to the one in current use.

Whatever the definition and the different forms it has taken, corruption appears to have spared no country, as the detailed historical studies contained in this book demonstrate.

Before the advent of democracy corruption was rife both in European countries and in the colonies. Democracy and the electoral system have hardly brought any improvement. On the contrary in the nineteenth century elections became the most efficient channel for fostering corruption, which flourished in France, Britain and the United States, even though each of these countries accused the other of being corrupt. Thus, for the British, France was the country to blame. More recently the countries involved in major scandals have been those of the Third World (Africa, Latin America, South East Asia, etc.), so much so that the Poor Countries have been considered "the rock of scandal".

But this was a *cliché* which Italy's corruption scandal, the Rubbio affair in Spain, the Shin Kanemanaru scandal in Japan and those of the Lambeth Council in the United Kingdom have dispelled once and for all; such events demonstrate the international scale of the phenomenon and at the same time they show the differences in reactions to it. Corruption has not always been the object of outright condemnation and often it has been recognised as a condition of existence. It has always been more insignificant in times of boom and more widely resorted to in times of crisis. Sometimes, it has been argued that corruption cannot be pursued when it has not exceeded certain limits; other times it has been denied that the problem exists at all. For example when it spread in the United States in 1904 H. J. Ford declared that depression and economic decline were more dangerous than corruption. Corruption was a means by which new social groups were assimilated into American society and social stability was maintained. Decades later, these ideas were then applied to the study of African underdevelopment, with the corollary that corruption came to be considered a function of economic development. Only recently (1983) has the World Bank rejected such an assumption, upholding the view that corruption weakens and hampers government action.

Where corruption has reached very large proportions the whole political class involved in it has been swept away. This has happened not only in Italy. The editors of the book argue, moreover, that political leaders everywhere have lost in popularity, to the point that some commentators are forecasting the "end of politics". Others have written that "in most advanced and wealthy societies the world of politics is already being seen as something of an anachronism: a set of rituals, a safety valve for tensions, a symbolic tie with the past rather than a dynamic force of the present".

As a result of so many scandals, institutions have been kept under greater

surveillance and corruption charges have been used as a political weapon. While in France, Spain, Greece and Italy socialists have been brought to trial, in Germany, Japan and Great Britain other political groups have shared the same fate. As the book illustrates, corruption is not confined to any specific party; sometimes it has involved the right wing, but it has also been practised by communist governments and it is more likely to take root in countries where regimes are established, either formally or actually.

Party funding and the cost of electoral campaigns are usually at the heart of the corruption issue. But measures promoting the public funding of parties in Spain, Italy, Japan and Germany have not removed these causes since in these countries the level of corruption is higher than in Great Britain where such measures have not been adopted.

Can greater control over these two aspects of political activity suffice to stem corruption? Many scholars believe it cannot. If Great Britain has a lower corruption rate even without the public funding of parties, this is not only because elections costs less there but also because in Britain they have been taking place for much longer than elsewhere and because there is a well-established tradition of public service.

Thus the problem lies in the widespread implantation of ethical and civil values. It is not surprising that in some countries courses on the subject of corruption and ethics in public life have been organised in universities. In Buenos Aires, for example, a course on corruption (causes, characteristics and means for fighting it) has been started up. In the Harvard Business School, a course on ethics has been running since 1913 and it has been recently introduced in the syllabuses of all American business schools. In 1986 a journal called *Corruption and Reform* was launched in the United States and in 1993 a body for fighting world corruption – *Transparency International* – was set up by a group of leading international figures, including the ex-Chairman of the World Bank, R. McNamara.

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G. SABATINI, *Il controllo fiscale sul territorio nel Mezzogiorno spagnolo e il caso delle province abruzzesi*, Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Naples, 1997, pp. 219.

Already known for his studies on the history of public finance in early modern times¹, in the book under review Sabatini completes the research he

¹ See G. Sabatini, *Proprietà e proprietari a L'Aquila e nel contado. Le rilevazioni catastali in età spagnola*, (Naples, 1995); Id., "Fiscalità e banditismo in Abruzzo alla fine del Seicento" in *Nuova Rivista Storica* LXXXIX (1995), f. f. pp. 77-114; *Idem.*, "Notas sobre la fiscalidad napoletana en la época de Fernando el Católico" in AA VV., *El Tratado de Tordesillas y su época* (Actas del Congreso Internacional de historia (Sétubal - Salamanca - Tordesillas 2-8 giugno 1994), vol. III, Valladolid, pp.1805-1815:

has undertaken over the last few years with an important contribution to the history of South Italy during Spanish rule which should be referred to by anyone who wishes to do research on this subject.

In the introduction Sabatini sets out the main aim of his enquiry: to identify the basic principles of Spanish fiscal policy, in particular by reconstructing the strategies of control in relation to the capacity of local communities to produce revenue. This approach is certainly innovatory and differs from most of the literature on the subject, which is itself vast. For although in recent studies the role of central institutions in public finance administration in the early modern era has been sufficiently illustrated, research on the effects that decisions taken in the capital had on the periphery have been largely unexplored.

The importance of the question is borne out by the intensification of relations between Naples and the provinces in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although the manner of the relationship and its effects varied, the growth in relations was a constant factor in the fiscal policy adopted by the Spanish in South Italy. The basic aim of the monarchy was to establish a reliable and uniform system of cross-checks throughout the territory in order to collect tax revenue which could be used on a regular basis for the various needs of government expenditure, especially military needs. The project was undoubtedly complex and ambitious; already in the fifteenth century important steps had been taken, firstly by Alfonso V during the General Parliament in 1443 and later by Ferrante with the promulgation of the law *De appretio seu bonorum aestimatione* which aimed to provide basic measures for carrying out fiscal controls in the country, the effects of which however proved to be largely unsatisfactory.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century with the advent of Ferdinand the Catholic the period of uncertainty about fiscal management came to an end. The measures adopted by the new sovereign were in strict accordance with the policies pursued by the preceding Aragonese kings. Indeed to give greater impetus to fiscal policy, Ferdinand set the annual tax for each household at one ducat and 52 grana, and ordered the census of households to be carried out every fifteen years instead of three, as had been originally envisaged. In addition, he abolished the collection of the so-called *collette* which had been frequently resorted to in the past, and introduced the practice of *donativi*, that is an extra contribution to be periodically levied, the onus of which was to be shared by the community and feudal lord and whose imposition was subject to prior deliberation in Parliament.

Idem., "Catasti e meccanismi di prelievo nel Mezzogiorno continentale nella prima età moderna" in *Le Carte e la Storia II* (1996), n. 2, pp. 131-139; *Idem.*, "Fiscalità spagnola tra centro e periferia. Un bilancio delle province d'Abruzzo per il 1683-84" in L. De Rosa - L. M. Enciso Recio (eds.), *Spagna e Mezzogiorno d'Italia nell'età della transizione*, vol. I, Stato Finanza ed economia (1650-1760), (Naples E.S.I., 1997), pp. 149-188.

In his policies, therefore, Ferdinand had to take account of the general circumstances in which he acted: as Sabatini rightly points out, the Catholic king's actions were heavily conditioned by the need to avoid a direct conflict with the powerful local feudatories, which in the wider international context might have seriously undermined Spanish interests in the area. Nonetheless, despite being generally cautious, Ferdinand did introduce several bodies to check the level of enforcement of his fiscal measures. New administrative bodies were set up alongside existing ones in order to introduce strict controls which were more in accordance with the needs and expectations of the Spanish monarchy. Thus the *Consiglio Collaterale* was set up, a body which assisted the Viceroy in the government of the country as well as the *Scrivania di Razione*, which was placed over existing bodies and had the task of controlling all expenditure incurred by the government. The creation of such bodies, however, did not prove to be sufficient for bringing about a significant change in the Kingdom's fiscal policy. According to Sabatini, the novelty in such policies lay not so much in the immediate success of the various measures adopted by these institutions which, on the contrary, proved overall to be ineffective; rather it lay in the will to create a network of cross-checks – by partly exploiting existing internal divisions – with the aim to introduce certain basic measures to guarantee stable and reliable tax controls in each province, in the medium and long term.

The beginning of Charles V's rule was marked by the disarray of public finance, which reflected the problems arising, on the one hand, from the limited effectiveness of the measures introduced by Ferdinand the Catholic and on the other hand by the high level of autonomy still enjoyed by fiscal authorities. Nonetheless, the plan to subject the kingdom's administrative system to a stricter control was taken up again with determination by the Viceroy Pedro de Toledo through the creation of tax rolls for each community. In this way the central government demonstrated its will to play a more active and efficient role in watching over the affairs of each community. The appointment of a royal agent to draw up the roll had therefore two aims: firstly the officials sought to guarantee the regular payment of royal taxes, performing a role of arbitration to avoid local abuses and injustices. Secondly their actions had political repercussions: by fixing the amounts of the tax base in the roll they helped to create new balances of power between conflicting social groups, as in the case of the town of l'Aquila. Crown intervention was not confined to tax policy in South Italy; indeed one of Sabatini's merits is to show, using both new documentation and the research already undertaken on the subject, how such intervention was carried out throughout Spanish dominions in Italy, intervention which was particularly evident in the cases of the Milanese and Neapolitan tax rolls.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, there was wide debate regarding the need to create new kinds of central and local fiscal control in South Italy's tax system. Such a debate arose from awareness of the

ineffectiveness of previous measures and from the need to produce new ideas which could have significant and positive results in the short term. The debate reached a climax when the jurist Francesco de Ponte, President of the *Camera della Sommaria*, proposed setting up a central property archive in Naples with branches in the provinces. Although it was rejected by the Sovereign, Ponte's project illustrated the importance attached to the problem of creating strict measures of fiscal control by the central government with the aim to levy regular direct taxes on the community. It also showed a will to propose radical measures which could produce tangible results.

While de Ponte's proposal was the most significant on a theoretical level, a careful analysis of a long and anonymous memorandum which also dates to the last few years of the sixteenth century, throws much light on the problems confronting the *università* and the possible remedies for solving them. After having compared the measures proposed in the memorandum and the reform of communal finances promoted by Carlo Tapia in the second half of the 1620s, Sabatini suggests, using well-founded arguments, that the magistrate was very likely the author of the anonymous document. This is in itself a significant result of Sabatini's study, which apart from demonstrating the depth of his archival research is also an important contribution to our knowledge of leading Neapolitan economists in the seventeenth century.

A large chapter of the book concerns the analysis of a specific area, Abruzzo, with the aim of testing the quality and incisiveness of central government intervention. The fruit of extensive research and intelligent reflection by the author, the contents of this chapter show how the social and economic circumstances were gradually changing with pastoral husbandry giving way to cereal growing. This transformation gave rise to a conflict both within the community and between the community and the feudal lord about the exploitation of public land. Controls carried out by Carlo Tapia over the budgets of all the *università* in the Kingdom on behalf of the Viceroy the duca di Alcalá in the second half of the 1620s are a good starting point for assessing the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the central government to verify the income capacity of local communities. The specially-appointed authority had three basic tasks: to examine very carefully the financial situation of each *università*, to plan appropriate rules of behaviour which each *università* would have to strictly adhere to and lastly to draw up a detailed plan of redemption for outstanding debts of the community towards the Crown and the settlement of debts with private parties. According to Sabatini, the increase in the pressure of taxation in the subsequent fifteen years up to the time of Masaniello's Revolt probably stemmed from Tapia's actions and their effects. Examining more directly the case of Abruzzo Ultra, Sabatini finds that the number of *università* which appeared in the census prepared for the purposes we have referred to above was 302, although we have no data available on 40 of them. For the remaining 262 *università*, the documents show that 93 presented arrears. The

most indebted communities were usually small ones, with fewer than 100 taxed households, which were concentrated in the hilly area around Teramo where sheep - farming and cereal - growing coexisted.

Further in the book Sabatini examines the period during the Viceroyalty of the Marchese del Carpio from 1683 to 1687. Although it is a narrow time-scale, it is very suitable for the purposes of this kind of enquiry since it was precisely during this period that the central authority introduced its most ambitious plan for controlling income levels in the provinces. The project was linked to a wider strategy promoted by the Viceroy which aimed to coordinate and organise the Kingdom's economy in a more rational and profitable way.

With regard to the specific case of Abruzzo, the suppression of banditry was a fundamental step towards, on the one hand, resolving the conflict between the pastoral and agrarian economy and on the other hand towards establishing the close relation between state intervention and tax collection. By combating banditry, the Marchese del Carpio steadfastly pursued the objective of bringing to heel the more insubordinate elements among the class of barons. Such a campaign, which was long drawn out and undertaken using considerable means and large numbers of men, could not fail to leave the central government indifferent: it is not surprising that the Viceroy's unpopularity among the *Consejo de Italia* and the *Consejo de Estado* became even more marked during the fight against banditry when the Marchese was forced to justify his actions on several occasions. Nonetheless, despite the lively opposition he encountered, he continued to carry out his plan with tenacity, choosing to act independently in the face of continual interference from the Court. The dissension was destined to last and became even more marked over time; indeed it ended only with del Carpio's death in 1687. Henceforth, none of his successors succeeded in carrying out military operations to recover tax revenue in the provinces as he had done; nor were they able to rally around them the support of the Neapolitan lawcourts for a broad project to rationalise the Kingdom's financial administration.

The costs incurred during the fight against banditry were largely borne by the *università* in the two Abruzzo provinces, since they were seen as the main beneficiaries of the military campaign. In the light of this fact, which Sabatini draws attention to several times, the Crown's request to be sent a separate provincial balance-sheet – quite an unusual procedure at that time – is more understandable: it reflects the will to control *a posteriori* the Viceroy's actions, which were judged to be too highhanded during the suppression of banditry. Overall 53% of the cost of the military campaign fought in 1683-84 was borne by Abruzzo Ultra, 39% by Abruzzo Citra, 7% by Contado del Molise and 1.1% by Capitanata. According to Sabatini, as a result of the greater demands of expenditure and the increasing difficulty in raising sufficient revenue to meet tax demands, the shift towards more investment in agriculture in the coastal and hilly areas did not bring about a significant

improvement in the region's economy in the seventeenth century; indeed, although its economy was more static, the interior seemed to possess greater financial resources to meet the Crown's demands for payment.

If we wish to draw some general conclusions from this book, we can certainly agree with Sabatini that both the initial and the final period of Spanish rule were characterised by the attempt to raise tax income in a significant and lasting way and at the same time by the increase in financial autonomy and a change in the political and economic equilibrium affecting the relations between Naples and Madrid. Within this context the Viceroy performed a vital role: he acted as mediator between the different and sometimes conflicting interests and the weight of his decisions had great consequence considering the circumstances in which they were taken. Owing to the well-defined nature of their actions and to the high degree of autonomy which characterised them, the two figures of Ramon de Cardona and especially the Marchese del Carpio, very clearly reflected the process of change taking place in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in South Italy, and embodied the conflict between the centre and the periphery over the issue of taxation. Within this struggle, the class of magistrates had an important role. However, unlike the Viceroys, in their support of projects to reform and rationalise the tax system, they sought to strengthen their own position and to wield greater influence over society and the economy in the Kingdom to the detriment of the barons.

From this brief review it is clear that Sabatini has successfully addressed a demanding and innovatory subject with a great mastery of the different issues involved which is based on a vast and critical reading of the literature, a thorough and intelligent consultation of archival sources and a solid and coherent methodology.

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C. ZEYNEP, *Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontation. Algiers under French Rule*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997, pp. 236.

What the ancient Romans referred to as *mare nostrum* has had a very important role in trade, war and the transmission of culture over the centuries. Ancient civilisations flourished on its shores and its waters have witnessed the birth and demise of great empires. And yet for a long time studies about this region appear to have been dazzled by the "the Mediterranean myth" which has influenced many sectors of European culture since the eighteenth century. This is particularly true in the case of disciplines concerned with area studies where pre-existing historical influences have made it difficult to set aside classical and romantic views. Moreover the presence of so many cultures, languages and ethnic groups, which are so

closely interwoven that they can only be disentangled by careful historical research, has often discouraged the study of an area that has all too frequently been misunderstood and produced superficial scholarship.

Zeynep on the other hand, has shown that he is one of the few to have conducted a scientific study of the Mediterranean region, without drawing on Fernand Braudel and without alluding to the importance of anthropological and architectural factors in the conservation of a supranational Mediterranean civilisation. Rejecting the Mediterranean myth, Zeynep has analysed in detail Algiers which was under the rule of various colonial regimes for more than a century and which as a result grew to become a major urban and administrative centre for colonial activity in the Mediterranean. In his study of Algiers "...terrain of many battles – cultural, political, military, urban, architectural", Zeynep considers not only economic and political factors but also cultural aspects including the very important influence of architecture.

What, indeed, can be more effective and penetrating for casting light on the social relations and systems introduced by colonial authorities than architecture and urban development? Their creations have always acted as a frame for human activity, supporting it and projecting it into the future. This is even more evident in the case of Algiers where French rule often had quite extreme consequences and where architecture and urban growth accurately reflected political developments and the renewal of power relations.

Zeynep bases his analysis of Algiers' urban form and its process of development on K. Lynch's concept of "imageability"¹ and above all on the cultural assumptions of the late-lamented architect, Aldo Rossi. Algiers is seen through the study of an urban image which "affects the quality of all the areas lived in and built on by man"² and which therefore shows both incisiveness and contrasts, bringing out aspects which "...can be viewed from a myriad of perspectives" according to the period and the visual details under study. Alongside the study of form, Zeynep analyses the process of urban formation which is essential for explaining the close interaction of social, economic, political, technological, cultural and artistic forces "...that bring the form about and give dynamism to the city through time".

Although it reaches into other fields of research, the study focuses mainly on urbanism and housing design and carefully examines the buildings constructed in Algiers during French rule and the major housing projects designed and executed by the colonial authorities exclusively for Algerians.

The work begins by studying the way the old town appeared to French colonisers: that is, a fortified and compact town crowded with public buildings and monuments and connected to an efficient road network. Unlike the occupiers, who perceived a unique city – "...an impressive mass of white, cubical structures that had evolved incrementally", according to Zeynep,

¹ Lynch K., *Theory of Good City Form*, (MIT Press, Cambridge, Ma.) 1981.

² Rossi A., *L'architettura della città*, (Città studi edizioni, Milano, 1978).

Algiers was a typical Islamic town founded on the separation of the sexes, in which "public spaces, hence streets, belonged to men, and domestic spaces to women", even though the organisation of space, houses and daily life was somewhat removed from the traditional view of the Islamic town and the natural morphology and the dense configuration of the casbah opened rooftops "...to the city, to the sea, to the world." The casbah was seen by the occupants as being characterised by three key aspects, that is, "gender, mystery and difference", three aspects which the occupiers identified with a symbolic Algerian woman.

Zeynep shows the changes the French brought to the casbah's urban fabric, emphasising the fact that such changes came about without any overall plan and were concentrated in the lower part of the town, that is the districts around the sea-front and the old Prefecture, leaving the upper part unchanged "in all its original barbarity". The type of intervention oscillated continuously between ruthless disembowelment and a faint attempt to preserve the casbah's authenticity. Priority was given first to military needs, and then to economic and lastly health requirements. According to Zeynep, by applying the principles of "regulation", "reduction" and "isolation" the planners succeeded in making the lower casbah seem as much as possible like a French town but they did not solve the problems of the upper casbah, where conditions deteriorated considerably, partly as a result of an alarming increase in rural immigration; if anything the planners only made things worse.

The attempts to transform Algiers into a modern French city also underpinned the colonial government's policy of urban expansion. However, as Zeynep shows, these attempts were thwarted by political difficulties within the colonial administration and by economic problems. As a result, many plans and projects were never actually carried out, including those of Le Corbusier which were much celebrated among scholars of architecture. Now, thanks to Zeynep we can finally place these projects in the real context for which they were conceived and fill a serious lacuna in the history of rationalist architecture which has all too often been centred on European and north American experience. We discover that these projects did not aim to make a clean sweep of history and local culture, as many advocates of modernism would have us believe; on the contrary, they were very attentive to the region's morphological, anthropological and cultural features. Moreover Zeynep's subsequent remarks on the traditional Algerian home through the analysis of ethnographic and architectonic studies, are essential for understanding and explaining "...women's social condition and their daily life patterns" and for understanding the large-scale projects which aimed at Algiers' renewal and urban expansion.

In the period 1930-1952 colonial building policy was concentrated on the construction of large urban districts for Algerians and on rural building projects in an attempt to curb the growth of *bidonvilles*. In particular Zeynep

focuses on the Grands Ensembles projects and on the personalities associated with them, the Mayor Jacques Chevallier and the architects Fernand Pouillon and Roland Simounet. Above all Zeynep shows how the planners interpreted the Algerian population's socio-economic structure and its way of life for the purposes of assimilation in the large new modern districts which, while keeping the spatial separation between Algerians and the French, demonstrated an openness to local typologies, something that was unusual in traditional colonial policy.

The colonialism which emerges from Zeynep's study appears more understandable, insofar as it is possible to understand a colonial regime which sought to exercise its power through town planning with the aim of heightening racial, cultural and historical differences. As Zeynep repeatedly points out, during French occupation it was this separation between the occupied and the occupiers which constituted the main feature of all building activity in Algiers, bringing out ethnic differences in a very concrete way but at the same time emphasising the ambivalence in the positions of coloniser and colonised. The interchangeability of such positions meant that after Algerian independence, the many urban problems which beset Algiers remained; indeed they were exacerbated.

In evaluating Algiers' town-planning experiment, Zeynep ascribes failure largely to the mistaken approach adopted by the French town-planner who was taken over by a sense of superiority and did not take into consideration the complexity of a city whose economy and culture was stratified. While acknowledging the presence of a strong urban structure, a florid Islamic culture and a complex morphology, Zeynep is adamant in laying most of the blame for the failure on French colonial ideology which was authoritarian and paternalistic and on the lack of those "... cultural intersections that occur on both sides of the Mediterranean"; that is, the analysis of problems which are usually at the heart of all those sciences closely connected to the processes of urban transformation.

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